

# Scandal-hit Zuma quits finally

FROM PAGE 1  
economic slowdown and falling popularity among voters, the ANC had threatened to oust Zuma via a no-confidence vote in parliament.

Hours before announcing his resignation, Zuma said he had received "very unfair" treatment from the ANC, which he joined in 1959 and in which he had fought for decades against white-minority rule.

He said he was angered over "the manner in which the decision is being implemented... I don't agree, as there is no evidence of if I have done anything wrong."

**MARKET BOOSTED**  
Zuma, 75, had been embroiled in a divisive power struggle with Ramaphosa, the deputy president.

Ramaphosa won control of the ANC when he was elected as its head in December.

Benchmark South African stocks scored their biggest gains since June 2016 after news that a pro-business reformist would be taking the helm.

The FTSE/JSE Africa All Share Index rose as much as 2.7 percent, while the rand reached its strongest level since February 2015, gaining 0.5 percent at 11.6570 to the dollar in early trade.

"Ramaphosa's arrival in the presidency will be met by a surge in investor and consumer confidence over the coming weeks in anticipation of his reform agenda," said the London-based Eurasia consultancy group.

Zuma, who had no formal education, was jailed on Robben Island for 10 years alongside Nelson Mandela under apartheid and rose through the ranks of the ANC to take power in 2009.

Local media reported that he had been pushing for a resignation deal that included his legal fees to fight multiple criminal charges -- but he denied the allegations in his resignation speech.

One case against him relates to 783 payments he allegedly received linked to an arms deal before he came to power.

Other graft allegations have cen-



Ramaphosa

tered on the three Gupta brothers, who are accused of unfairly obtaining lucrative government contracts and even hand-picking Zuma's ministerial appointments.

Police confirmed yesterday that an arrest warrant had been issued for one Gupta brother, Ajay.

The political standoff in recent weeks plunged South Africa -- the continent's most developed economy -- into confusion over who was running the country, with last Thursday's annual State of the Nation address postponed at the last-minute.

**DECLINE OF MANDELA'S PARTY**  
Zuma, a Zulu traditionalist with four wives and a proud singing voice, had been scheduled to stand down next year after serving the maximum two terms.

In local polls in 2016, the ANC recorded its worst electoral result since coming to power in 1994 with Mandela at the helm as white-minority rule fell.

Ramaphosa, 65, must revive the economy and crack down on what he has admitted is rampant government corruption if he is to boost the party's tarnished reputation before a tricky general election next year.

He is a former trade unionist and Mandela ally who led talks to end apartheid in the early 1990s and then became a hugely wealthy businessman before returning to politics.

Zuma's hold over the ANC was broken in December when his chosen successor -- his former wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma -- narrowly lost to Ramaphosa in a vote for the new party leader

**Jacob Zuma**

- 1958-87 • Joins ANC as a teenager. Spends 10 years as political prisoner, 15 in exile
- 1994 • Junior minister in first post-apartheid government
- 1999 • Vice president under Thabo Mbeki
- 2005 • Charged with corruption over 1990s arms deal. Sacked
- 2006 • Acquitted of raping HIV-positive family friend
- 2007 • Replaces rival Mbeki as ANC leader
- 2009 • Elected president
- 2016 • Ordered to pay back state funds used for his private residence
- 2017 • Targeted in report by national corruption watchdog
- 2017 • Replaced as ANC leader
- 2018 • Forced by ANC to resign as president

Map of South Africa showing Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town. Aged 75.

# A trick Dhaka fell for

FROM PAGE 1  
preparations are complete, Bangladesh will hand-over the list to the Myanmar authorities in phases.

After Myanmar verifies the list and sends it back with feedbacks, Bangladesh will arrange the repatriation, making sure the return is voluntary, he added.

Officials and experts say this process of verification and ensuring voluntariness are quite a complex process as the Rohingyas are still fleeing Rakhine State of Myanmar amid allegations of severe human rights violations.

What experts found ridiculous is Myanmar on January 23 announced that they were ready to welcome the refugees and blamed Bangladesh for the delay.

"We are right now ready to receive... we are completely ready to welcome them according to the agreement," Kyaw Tin, minister of international cooperation, told journalists in Naypyidaw, reported AFP.

"We have seen the news that the Bangladesh side is not ready, but we have not received any official explanation," he added.

Ko Ko Naing, director general of Myanmar's Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, also told Reuters on January 22 they were ready to welcome the refugees, in a sheer contrast to ground realities.

Experts here, however, say such statements are totally baseless and a way of bluffing the world as the Rohingyas are still fleeing from Myanmar and the environment in Rakhine State is not conducive at all to the return.

In the first 10 days of this month, about 1,500 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh.

The Amnesty International in a new report on February 7 said Myanmar security forces were continuing their campaign through forced starvation, abduction of girls and women and sexual violence.

"Myanmar's security forces are building on entrenched patterns of abuse to silently squeeze out of the country as many of the remaining Rohingya as possible," the rights body said.

Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of international relations department at Dhaka University said the statements by the Myanmar authorities are totally ridiculous, and nobody is going to believe those.

Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas fled Myanmar military crackdown since August 25 last, while more than 300,000 others, who crossed over from Myanmar in the previous years, are also staying in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh wants a sustainable solution to the problem that the country has been facing since 1980s, Imtiaz said, adding: "However, Myanmar's attitude has not changed yet."

**A COMPLEX PROCESS**  
Bangladesh is now preparing a list of the Rohingyas families and collecting names, gender, birthplace, names of mother and father, date of birth, address in Myanmar, profession, signs, number of family members and a family photo.

"Once the list is prepared, Bangladesh will send the list to Myanmar for verification," Kalam said. As per the deal, the Rohingyas will



Myanmar Home Minister Lt Gen Kyaw Swe calls on President Abdul Hamid at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

have to submit documents to the Myanmar authorities to prove their past residency in that country. The documents include "old and expired citizenship identity cards" or national registration cards or temporary registration cards.

They can also be verified based on other documents issued by the Myanmar authorities or on information indicating their residency in Myanmar, such as address, reference to household or business document, school attendance or any other relevant particulars.

Asif Munier, an independent researcher on migration, said most of the Rohingyas sheltered in Cox's Bazar do not have these identity cards as their houses and properties were burnt.

Even if information like reference to household or business documents or school attendance is considered, the verification in Myanmar will not be very easy.

"Many of their houses and properties have been damaged. So, verification by Myanmar too will take time," he told this correspondent.

As per the agreement signed on January 16, Myanmar will receive only 300 refugees a day and 1,500 a week.

**NO GUARANTEE OF CITIZENSHIP**  
Prof Imtiaz Ahmed said Myanmar has yet to amend its controversial 1982 citizenship law that denies citizenship of the Rohingyas, their right to free movement and other basic rights including healthcare and education.

The minority group, also facing persecution time and again, cannot trust Myanmar authorities anymore. And that's why they are demanding peacekeepers in Rakhine State and full UN involvement in the repatriation process, he said.

Miroslav Jenca, UN assistant secretary-general for political affairs, at a Security Council meeting on February 13, said, "Concerns persisted over threats and intimidation against the remaining Rohingya population from Bamar and Rakhine communities and security forces."

The UN did not have sufficient access to make a meaningful assessment of the situation there, he noted.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi says construction of infrastructure to support the logistics of return should not be confused with the establishment of condi-

tions conducive to voluntary repatriation.

"Let me be clear: conditions are not yet conducive to the voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees," he told the Security Council meeting, speaking by videoconference from Geneva.

Myanmar should address the issues of Rohingya citizenship, rights of freedom of movement, access to services, livelihoods in Rakhine. It is important to set up a monitoring mechanism in Rakhine for the returning people. However, they have heard nothing about those until now, he said.

Bangladesh on the other hand, says Prof Imtiaz, has engaged all stakeholders -- Myanmar, the UN, foreign countries -- and deployed its resources for a problem for which Bangladesh is not responsible in anyway.

He also said it is only a conducive environment, safety and citizenship guarantee that can help the Rohingyas choose voluntarily to return. Myanmar is ignoring all these aspects and shifting the blame on Bangladesh.

"This is Myanmar's fantastic way of public relations," he said, adding that putting the blame on Bangladesh is nothing but Myanmar's efforts to fool the world.

"If Myanmar thinks the world is blind, they are in the paradise of the fools," he added.

## RETURN OF ROHINGYAS Hamid urges Myanmar to take steps

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday called upon Myanmar to take steps so that the displaced Rohingyas can return home in Rakhine with dignity and safety.

He also requested the neighbouring country to create a congenial atmosphere and build confidence in this regard.

The president made the request when a seven-member delegation, led by Myanmar Home Minister Lt Gen Kyaw Swe, met him at the Bangabhaban in the evening.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 1

# High Court weighs in

FROM PAGE 1  
leaked questions of Chemistry theoretical part in the Facebook group at 11:32am while the exam was still going on.

The leaked question papers of yesterday's exams, which did the rounds on different Facebook groups, were found to be identical with the original question papers.

Question papers of all the SSC exams held so far this year have been leaked out and circulated in Facebook pages hours before the tests began. And days before the exams, the leakers every time dared to announce in the Facebook pages that they would post the leaked questions there.

This has drawn fierce criticism with educationists and guardians fearing the education system would be ruined if the leak continued.

Arrests have been made almost regularly and cases filed, but finding out the root cause and people behind the leak remains a far cry.

Failing to check the leaks despite various measures, the education ministry is now expressing its helplessness and insisting on devising a new system to prevent the leak.

"It is not possible to stop question leaks in public exams, keeping the existing system in place," Secondary and Higher Education Division Secretary Sohorab Hossain said yesterday.

**PROBE COMMITTEES**  
The HC ordered formation of the two committees after it heard a writ petition filed by four Supreme Court lawyers seeking its directive to the authorities to prevent future unfair practice in public exams.

The judicial committee will be headed by Dhaka District and Sessions Judge SM Kuddus Zaman while the administrative one will be led by Prof M Kaykobad of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The judicial committee also includes chief judicial magistrates of Narayanganj and Gazipur, and two deputy secretaries of the law and the education ministries.

Talking to this newspaper, Jyotirmoy Barua, counsel for the writ petitioners, said the other four members of the administrative committee are Buet teacher Prof Sohail Rahman; the director general of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education; an IT specialist and a deputy inspector general of the CID of police.

Citing from the HC order, he said the judicial body will find out how the question papers were leaked and the people involved. It will also suggest steps that should be taken in this regard.

The administrative committee will look into ways to stop the leak and also suggest methods for preventing it in the future, he said.

sistent failure to prevent the leak should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of education, primary and mass education, law, home, and science and technology; the chairman and the secretary of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission; the chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Ltd; the DG of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education; chairmen of nine education boards and the inspector general of police have been made respondents to the rule.

SC lawyers Aynunnahar Siddiqua, Sikder Mahmudur Razi, Raja Mia and Nur Mohammad Azmari filed the writ petition with the HC as public interest litigation on Wednesday.

**NEW SYSTEM IN OFFING**  
The government plans to introduce a

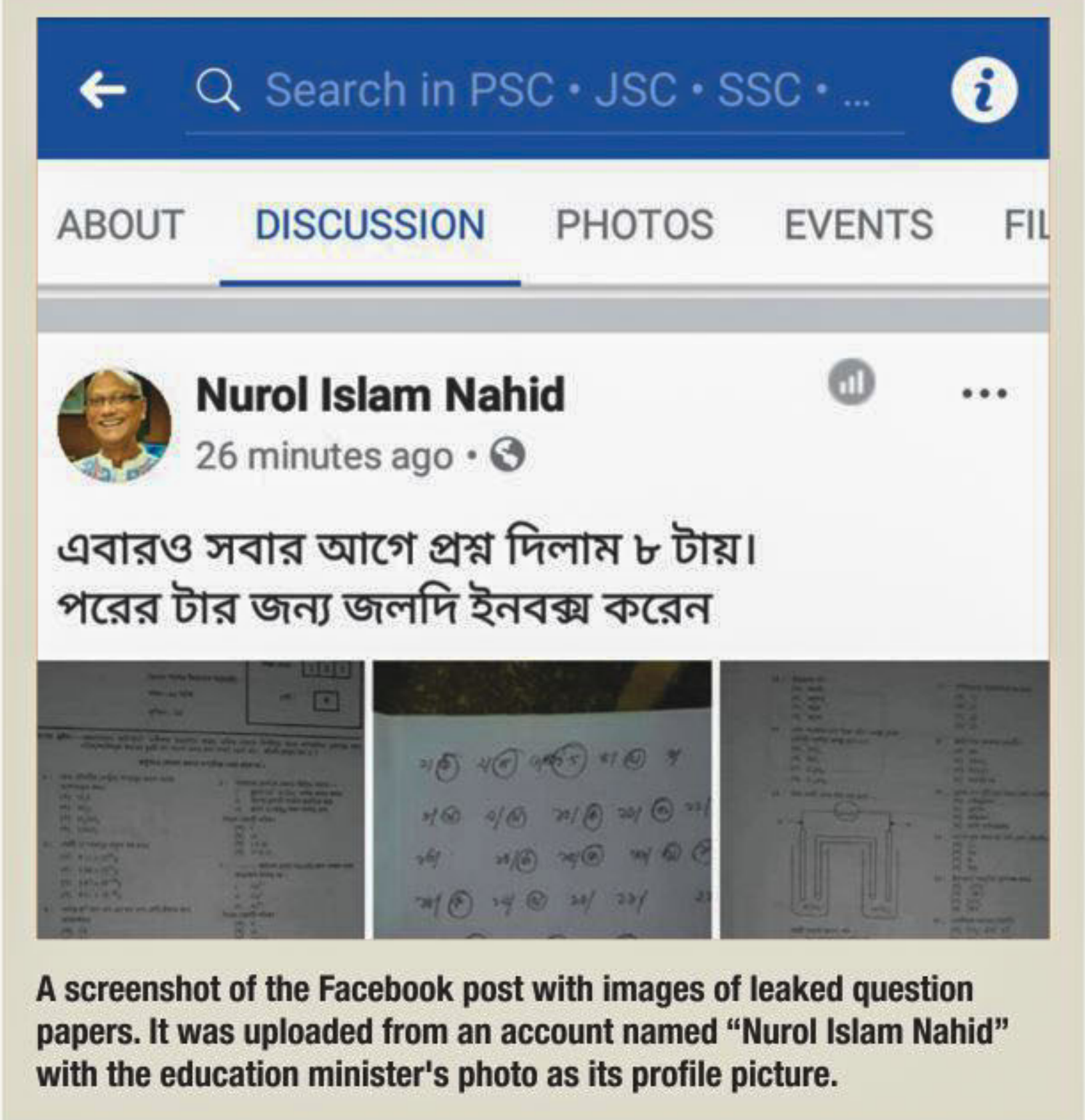
Replying to a query about the HC rule, Sohrab said, "We have not received the court directive yet. We will obey its order once we get it."

**STUDENTS, TEACHERS EXPELLED**  
Ten examinees were expelled from Chandpur High School Examination Centre in Natore's Lalpur upazila as a Rapid Action Battalion team caught them with answer scripts of Chemistry at about 9:10am yesterday.

Executive Magistrate Tasmina Khatun expelled them for two years and handed them over to their guardians.

Six teachers were also expelled at Shree Sundori Pilot High School in the same upazila for allowing students to share their answer sheets.

There have been widespread allegations of leak of question papers of all public exams including the JSC, the



A screenshot of the Facebook post with images of leaked question papers. It was uploaded from an account named "Nurol Islam Nahid" with the education minister's photo as its profile picture.

new method for public exams from next year, aiming to prevent the widespread question leak, said Sohorab, according to a report of news agency UNB.

"The public exams will be held under a new method from next year," he said, adding that they are trying to devise such a method that will check all scopes for leaking question papers.

"The new method will be introduced in consultation with eminent people, taking the advice of scholars into consideration."

"Around 27,000 to 28,000 people are involved in the process of printing question papers and transporting those to exam centres. In this process, no one can ensure that question papers will not be leaked," he added.

SSC and the HSC, medical college and university admission tests, and state-owned banks' recruitment exams over the last several years. In most of the cases, leaked questions were circulated on Facebook pages.

The education ministry initially brushed aside those allegations. It, however, took some measures later to stop the leak, but the menace continues.

As many as 63 question papers of primary terminal, JSC, SSC and HSC exams were leaked in four years since 2012, shows a 2015 study of Transparency International Bangladesh.

According to media reports, at least 80 question papers of public exams have been leaked since 2012.

# A thank you and a pledge

FROM PAGE 1  
strength, courage and energy to continue to work hard. They are the reason why advertisers come to newspapers. Bigger the readership, bigger the revenue and, therefore, greater a newspaper's opportunity to do better journalism and thus better serve its readers. That has been, and continues to be, our motto.

There have been many ups and down during this 27-year journey. But we have been steadfast throughout in adhering to the principles of ethical journalism and speaking truth to the power.

Since our birth in 1991, coinciding with the fall of Ershad regime and the restoration of democracy, we have been an integral part of the nation's endeavour to build a democratic society and rejoiced at every effort to give it an institutional shape and protested loudly at any step that pushed the process backward.

We have been a staunch advocate of a responsible private sector-driven economic growth and have published lengthy reports on bank defaults, tax frauds, bad business practices and the like. We have advocated government policies that would make our industry more competitive and legal reforms that would spur growth. We have also supported business practices that would take our corporate world forward towards global standards.

On fighting corruption, The Daily Star's voice has been louder than the most and the paper has never shied away from warning the government and the regulators about its severe negative consequences, often to no avail.

Since the last general election in 2014, we have witnessed a gradual but definite rise of intolerance for dissenting views and a shrinking of space for the civil society. The enactment of the ICT Act and later the draft approved by the cabinet of the Digital Security Act

has further added to our worries.

Independent journalism lies at the heart of the democratic future of Bangladesh just as it did in its democratic past. It is only when we deviate from our commitment to freedom and fundamental rights that democracy suffers, and along with it independent journalism and the country as a whole.

As the process of graduating from the status of a least developed country (LDC), to a lower-middle income to a middle income country moves forward, so must the process of strengthening all legal instruments and institutions that ensure the fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens.

The days of measuring development only through the prism of economic indicators have long gone. Today's concept of development is far more comprehensive, as it incorporates the relevant economic as well as social indicators with special emphasis on fundamental freedoms, particularly freedoms of thought, of speech and of action whose integral part is freedom of the media.

Why freedom of the media lies at the centre of all these essential freedoms? Simply because free media is the most important vehicle for exercising the above mentioned freedom. It is obvious that without a free media there can be no freedom of thought or expression in the modern sense of their practice.

A point that is often forgotten and needs constant reiteration is that constitution of every democratic country, including that of Bangladesh, provides special protection for ONLY TWO professions, namely the JUDICIARY and the MEDIA. Examine the constitution of any country in the world committed to freedom of its citizens and to democracy, and you will find that every one of them has special articles that provide for protection of the judiciary

and the media.

The question is why? Because experience has shown, over the years and across countries and cultures, that to protect democracy, to ensure rule of law, to hold public officials accountable, to ensure that elected governments fulfil their electoral mandates, to play the role of a "watchdog" of those holding high offices, to ensure that public money is spent properly and dig out cases of corruption and so on. For all of this, it is extremely necessary to have an independent judiciary and media specially protected by the constitution.

Because of that protection, the Bangladesh media has played a seminal role in the progress that has made our country a reference point in the global discussion on development and democracy. The image of Bangladesh that truly makes us proud is not only one of its economic success but of its democratic advancements as well.

And that is what is at stake today. An idea has been surreptitiously put forward that Bangladesh needs development first and that democracy will come once we have achieved a certain level of economic growth. The idea is fundamentally flawed and is belied by history and experience.

We strongly believe that for the future growth of Bangladesh we need both democracy and development simultaneously which is inclusive in the political sense and all -- encompassing in the economic sense.

And for that to happen we need an independent judiciary and powerful and professional media deeply committed to both the values of our Liberation War and those of ethical journalism.

That is the role that The Daily Star pledges to play today and tomorrow in spite of the obstacles that have already been placed in our path and the ones that may come our way in the future.