



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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16 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE : Tk12.00



## BUET STUDENT ABRAR MURDER VERDICT

# 20 students get death

5 others sentenced to life term; all convicts are BCL men

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER, TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Twenty Buet students were sentenced to death yesterday for their direct involvement in the murder of a fellow student in a dorm room, an incident that shocked the nation two years ago.

The Dhaka court also sentenced five other Buet students to life imprisonment for their role in the grisly murder of Abrar Fahad Rabbi, who was a second year student of the country's premier engineering university.

The five students are also fined Tk 50,000 each, defaulting which would mean one more year in prison. Life imprisonment means 30 years in jail.

Twelve of the convicts were members



of Buet Chhatra League, the student wing of ruling Awami League, while the rest were their followers. Twenty-two of the convicts are in jail and three are on the run.

Abrar was a student of electrical and electronics engineering. The convicts began torturing him with skipping ropes and cricket stumps inside a room of Sher-e-Bangla Hall on the night of October 6, 2019. They kept beating him up until early morning even though the 21-year-old threw up, urinated, and pleaded for water.

His battered body was found by several students under the staircase of the dormitory early in the morning. The killing sparked widespread student demonstrations on campuses and other places for justice and

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PHOTO: PRABER DAS

GESTURE OF VICTORY, FACE OF LOSS... Barkat Ullah, father of slain Buet student Abrar Fahad, shows the V sign after a Dhaka court delivered the verdict over the murder of his son.



### This must not happen to any other child

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The parents of slain Buet student Abrar Fahad said they do not want to see anyone else being killed by fellow students on university campuses like their son was.

They demanded the quick execution of the verdict that sentenced 20 Buet students to death and five others to life imprisonment for killing Abrar.

"I am primarily satisfied, but I will be fully satisfied when the verdict will be upheld and executed by the higher courts," Abrar's father Barkat Ullah said in a prompt reaction on the court premises.

"Then Abrar's soul will be at peace."

Barkat came to Dhaka all the way from Kushtia with some relatives to witness the

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## HORROR IN ROOM 2011

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

October 6 evening, 2019.

Abrar Fahad, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering (EEE) department, was studying mathematics inside his room at Buet's Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

He had come back from his home in Kushtia a couple of hours ago and

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## Strong message to offenders

Teachers call for end to criminality in the name of student politics

STAR REPORT

The Daily Star talked to several current and former university teachers after a Dhaka court yesterday convicted 25 Buet students, who were also involved with the Chhatra League, for killing their peer Abrar Fahad in October 2019.

The teachers observed that the tragic incident of Abrar murder is the outcome of the descent into criminality of student politics, which apparently

controls most educational institutions in the country.

They also blamed mainstream political parties and even teacher politics for the situation.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Professor Anu Muhammad said both Abrar and his killers are victims of corrupt politics on campuses over the years.

"They were all brilliant students... national assets. But when one is killed by others, it becomes

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### TRIAL AT A GLANCE

Murder took place

OCTOBER 7, 2019

Charge sheet filed

NOVEMBER 13, 2019

Charges framed

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

Convicted 25

(22 in jail, 3 fugitive)

## Khaleda Zia again starts bleeding

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia, now undergoing treatment at the Critical Care Unit of the capital's Evercare Hospital, has started passing blood again, the BNP said yesterday.

"Her condition has become critical. She is bleeding again. There is no technology in the country that can treat liver cirrhosis completely," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said at a programme.

Addressing a human chain in front of the National Press Club, organised by Shikkhok-Karmachari Oikya Jote demanding that Khaleda be allowed to go abroad for treatment, Fakhrul said the BNP chairperson did not get (any medical) treatment

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## Inequality rising

1pc of country's population holds 16.3pc of national income

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Just 1 percent of Bangladesh's population holds 16.3 percent of the total national income in 2021 and the bottom half 17.1 percent, according to a report -- making it a quintessence of poor and unequal country.

The report, titled 'World Inequality Report 2022', by the World Inequality Lab of Paris did not give any ranking to Bangladesh.

Seeing that neighbouring India -- where 20 percent of the national income is held by the top 1 percent -- topped the list, Bangladesh would rank quite high.

The latest update of the index, published on December 7, showed 44 percent of Bangladesh's total national income is held by only 10 percent of the population.

The figures did not change much from the previous year but showed how income inequality has been rising since the 1980s. In 1981, the share of pre-tax national income of 1 percent of people was 11.8 percent while the bottom 50 percent held 20 percent wealth.

The scenario has been stable in recent years but the number of poor is increasing day by day and also the number of rich, according to economists.

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## Hasina 43rd on Forbes' most powerful women list

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been ranked 43rd on Forbes' list of the most powerful women in the world.

MacKenzie Scott, Kamala Harris and Christine Lagarde have been ranked first, second and third respectively.

Queen Elizabeth II is ranked 70th.

The American business magazine says Sheikh Hasina Wazed, the longest-serving prime minister in

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## Ray of hope in eye healthcare

National survey finds rate of blindness declines 35pc over two decades

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The rate of blindness in Bangladesh has dropped by 35 percent over the last two decades, finds a national survey.

Although the rate of blindness has fallen, 19 percent of the population aged 30 and above still suffers from different types of visual impairment. The global rate of such cases are 30 percent, it said.

The study titled 'Nationwide Blindness Survey 2020' also found that more than 80 percent of the blindness cases are avoidable with timely intervention.

Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB), with technical and financial support from the National Eye Care, conducted the survey aimed at finding the prevalence of blindness and visual impairment among the population aged 30 and above and their causes.

Data was collected between November 2020 and January 2021 from 18,810 participants from both urban and rural areas of all 64 districts.

The survey results will be made public today.

- One in every 100 adults aged 30 years or older suffers from blindness in Bangladesh
- 19% adults suffer from any degree of visual impairment
- More than 80% of the blind cases are avoidable with timely intervention
- Cataracts are the primary cause and are responsible for 81% of severe visual impairment

According to the report, the prevalence of blindness from cataract was one percent which equates to 534,000 people.

A nationwide survey on blindness conducted in 1999-2000 had found the prevalence of blindness to be 1.53 percent, with a total of 650,000 blindness cases from cataract.

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## NEW GERMAN ERA Scholz takes reins from Merkel

AFP, Berlin

Olaf Scholz became Germany's new chancellor yesterday after 16 years with Angela Merkel at the helm, pledging his centre-left-led coalition would offer a "new beginning" for Europe's top economy.

Scholz was officially named the country's ninth post-war leader by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who urged him to "ensure that the pandemic does not keep

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### HELICOPTER CRASH IN INDIA

## Defence chief, wife among 13 killed

AGENCIES

India's Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin C Rawat, his wife Madhulika and 11 other people were killed yesterday when an Air Force helicopter carrying them crashed on a forested hill enveloped in dense fog in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu.

"With deep regret, it has now been ascertained that Gen Bipin Rawat, Mrs Madhulika Rawat and 11 other persons on board have died in the unfortunate accident," the Indian Air Force said in a post on its official Twitter handle.

The Mi-VH17 helicopter crashed in Katteri-Nanchappanchathram area near the hilly Nilgiris district and went up in flames.

There were 14 people on board the helicopter, including two senior army officers and his other personal staff. Only one male, a captain working at the DSSC, survived the crash, Nilgiris District Collector SP Amrith said. He was being treated for his injuries at a nearby military hospital.



GEN BIPIN RAWAT

The chopper was on its way from Sullur airbase in Coimbatore to National Staff College in nearby Wellington where Rawat, along with Indian army chief Manoj Mukund Naravane, was slated to participate in an event later, the sources said.

The chopper was already making its descent at the time of the crash and

came down around 10 kilometres (six miles) from the nearest main road, forcing emergency workers to trek to the accident site, a fire official told AFP.

An eyewitness at the scene said he had seen passengers falling from the helicopter before the crash, and that one person had crawled out from the wreckage.

The IAF said a Court of Inquiry has been ordered into the accident, involving the chopper that took off from the Sullur IAF Station in nearby Coimbatore.

TV visuals showed the mangled chopper in flames, possibly under the impact of the crash. The helicopter fell at some distance away from a human habitation.

The remains of the ill-fated IAF chopper were strewn along the crash site and rescue personnel were seen carrying bodies in stretchers to waiting ambulances.

It was a horrific scene at the accident site with trees being reduced

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**Congratulations**

Engineer Abdus Sobhan, Managing Director & his elder daughter Nabila Tasnim, Director of AUKO-TEX GROUP, has been honored with Green Factory Award for the year 2020 by the Ministry of Labour & Employment in recognition of his Extra Ordinary Performance in terms of Ethical Business Practices and massive contributions towards Corporate Responsibility on Environment & Social Issues, Job Creations & Skill Development, Research & Innovation. We express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina & the Ministry of Labour & Employment for honoring us with this Prestigious award which will definitely inspire us to go further ahead.

On this auspicious occasion, we acknowledge and appreciate the Honesty, Integrity, Strong Leadership, Intellectual Rigor, Determination and Dedication of our beloved Managing Director which has helped him in paving ways to achieve this significant milestone.

On behalf of all members of AUKO-TEX GROUP, we express our warm greetings to our beloved Managing Director & his elder daughter for this great achievement with the hope of achieving more glory and laurels in future.

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