



Women's role in toppling the government

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Mob justice goes against the spirit of the student movement

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Students protest removal of graffiti in the hills

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'BNP-linked' group now after control of slums, footpaths

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Tk 45,000cr stuck in shady loans

Eight banks provide loans to directors of other banks in a murky practice, bringing significant risks to the entire sector

AHSAN HABIB

Directors of eight private banks borrowed heavily from each other's banks in reciprocal lending practices fraught with serious risks. Some banks went one step further and lent thousands of crores to relatives of these banks' chairmen or directors.

The loans going in and out of these eight banks for directors amounted to Tk 25,000 crore at the end of 2023, according to their financial reports analysed by The

serious risks.

The combined contribution of the eight bank directors in question to the lenders' paid-up capital is Tk 2,400 crore, or about 5 percent of the Tk 45,000 crore loans they have taken from each other.

Most of these groups were not capable of getting loans if their business practices and financial health were taken into account, and so they lent reciprocally.

As the central bank rules prohibit the lending of a bank to its own directors, the directors deployed this cunning method.



Raiyan Mehezad Kazi, a second grader, paints graffiti on the wall portraying the quota reform protest, while his mother looks on. Students across the capital are covering walls with graffiti that convey messages of protest, patriotism, and equality. The photo was taken in the capital's Central Shaheed Minar area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Prof Yunus assures Modi of protecting minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday assured Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the interim government's commitment to safeguarding every citizen of Bangladesh, including minorities.

In the first call between the two leaders, he assured the Indian PM of the "protection, safety and security" of Hindus in the country.

He invited Indian journalists to visit Bangladesh and make reports on the issues of minority safety and protection, saying that the "reports of attacks on

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Jahangir new home adviser

Replaces Sakhawat; 4 advisers take oath; 4 ordinances on local govt bodies on the cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hussain was replaced as home adviser by Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury last night, hours after four new advisers, including Jahangir, were sworn into office.

Sakhawat was given the charge of the textiles and jute ministry as the interim government redistributed the portfolios of eight advisers, according to the chief adviser's press wing.

The other new advisers are noted economist Wahiduddin Mahmud, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumdar and former power secretary Muhammad Fozul Kabir Khan.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to the four advisers at the Bangabhaban around 4:15pm. With them, the number of advisers to the interim government rose to 21.

In another development, the advisory council in a meeting yesterday approved the drafts of four ordinances, seeking to empower the government to remove the elected representatives of four local

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Law enforcers used unnecessary force on protesters: UN

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN Human Rights Office has said that there are strong indications that the security forces resorted to unnecessary and disproportionate use of force and extrajudicial killings during the mass uprising that led to the ouster of the Awami League government.

"According to available public reports by media and the protest movement itself, between July 16 and August 11, more than 600 people were killed. Of these, nearly 400 deaths were reported from July 16 to August 4, while around 250 people were reportedly killed following the new wave of protests between August 5 and 6," reads a report by the UN agency.

The reported death toll is likely an underestimate, as information collection has been hindered by restrictions on movement due to the curfew and the internet shutdown, it says.

The report titled "Preliminary Analysis of Recent Protests and Unrest in Bangladesh" was released yesterday by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

It comes a week ahead of a UN team's visit to Dhaka to discuss the modalities for an investigation into human rights violations.

The report details the background of how the students' peaceful protests

eventually turned into a mass upsurge and the law enforcers used disproportionate force to quell the demonstrators.

"The police and paramilitary forces appear to have frequently used force indiscriminately against both peaceful protesters as well as those with elements of violence, employing rubber bullets, sound grenades and firearms with live lethal ammunition, including birdshot pellets and bullets.

"Additional, alleged violations, that also warrant thorough, impartial and transparent investigations, included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, and severe restrictions on exercise of freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly."

One of the recommendations made by the UN was to ensure accountability for those who applied or ordered the unnecessary and disproportionate use of force.

"Considering that certain individuals among the protesters were seen typically using sticks, bricks or similar types of makeshift weapons, the security forces' recurring and persistent use of firearms, including pellet shotguns, handguns and rifles, would have regularly involved unnecessary and disproportionate force.

"Reports indicate that security forces also used helicopters to fire on protesters,

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UN calls for protection of peaceful assembly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN has called for the security forces to ensure that people can hold peaceful assemblies in Bangladesh.

"...we encourage the right to peaceful protest to be respected by all. And we call on security forces to ensure that no one engaging in peaceful protest is harmed," UN Secretary-General's Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq said during a routine press briefing on Thursday.

He was answering a question about the obstruction of people wishing to pay respect to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi-32 on the 49th anniversary of his murder.

Haq said the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Bangladesh's interim government chief, Muhammad Yunus, discussed the UN's potential support for the interim government, particularly on accountability issues, ahead of the UN fact-finding mission's visit to investigate recent killings and atrocities in Bangladesh.

Next week, a team will arrive in Dhaka to discuss the potential areas of support and the specific modalities for

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Four new advisers to the interim government take oath of office at the Bangabhaban's Darbar Hall yesterday. President Mohammed Shahabuddin, not in picture, administered the oath.

PHOTO: P10

Ex-Padma Bank chairman faces ACC probe

He allegedly embezzled Tk 800cr from share market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched an investigation into alleged embezzlement of Tk 800 crore by ex-banker Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat.

An ACC director, requesting anonymity, said Nafeez took control of Padma Bank, formerly Farmers Bank, with the help of top officers of an intelligence agency and police.

There are allegations that he embezzled around Tk 800 crore from the stock market, said the director, adding, "We sent letters to Bangladesh Bank and some other authorities, asking for information regarding his irregularities."

Nafeez hogged headlines because of his involvement with Farmers Bank, which became a hotbed for irregularities in less than three years of its establishment in 2013.

According to a Bangladesh Bank report, over Tk 3,500 crore was siphoned out of the bank.

To rescue the bank, state enterprises Investment Corporation of Bangladesh, Sonali Bank, Janata Bank, Agrani Bank and Rupali Bank bought 60 percent stake in the bank for Tk 715 crore.



Nafeez Sarafat

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PHOTO: STAR

DHAKA'S UNEXPECTED TRANSFORMATION

From chaos to community

RBR

During the recent protests, the amount of people demanding to rebuild our country again were many. For good and bad, a lot has changed for Dhaka and its residents since then, and a new chapter in history was written. Just as the nature of any revolution, it was achieved through bloodshed and mindless atrocity.

Even as the dust settles, with an interim government in place, we are witnessing a renaissance, regarding societal, and mindset change.

We are no longer accepting autocracy or extremism in any form. Dhakaites now know who their neighbours are, and find strength in unity.

Let's see how Dhaka is now a better place because of it.

Our men in uniform

These men obey orders; however, there is no reason to forget their early actions against protesters, or forgive them for it. Then again, I realised the importance of our police force. The minute they went on strike, I felt defenceless and exposed to a hoard of serious crimes that had put my security at stake. I never thought I would say this, but when I saw police officers back in active duty on their bikes and standing at street corners, I was genuinely relieved.

Citizens did a laudable job in protecting their own, but in all seriousness, the job of a police officer cannot be undertaken by ordinary citizens.

Traffic woes sorted

You know, I have always seen that when our ordinary public vehicles and personal cars enter the cantonment area, they instinctively abide by traffic rules, for the fear of fines and punishments that are in place there.

Unfortunately, out in the real world, things are different. Even my car, on any other road, would change lanes without indicators, block the left lane, and take a U-turn just like that. Motorbikes would dance through the traffic chaos, rickshaws would stick out their front wheel in front of a moving car, or a pedestrian would lift a hand and start crossing a busy road. We have been at it for so long that this kind of behaviour felt as the norm.

However, it was our students who showed us how bad our traffic mannerisms are. They made sure foot-over bridge and zebra crossings were used, lanes were maintained and if anyone broke the rules, they put the guilty on traffic duty as a punishment. What an ingenious way to teach them traffic rules!

Clean Dhaka

When we travel abroad, we keep

their cities clean, but do not show the same care when in Dhaka. But we have seen that the students have cleaned Dhaka's alleys, thoroughfares, debris, and garbage. Just the other day, I wanted to throw my banana peel on the island as plant food, but refrained from doing so for fear of being chewed out by youngsters!

I loved how the kids placed garbage boxes, and dustbins at road corners, how they picked up trash and kept Dhaka clean. I hope these basic civic duties are carried forward by the rest of the populous.

Without the Internet: Dhaka's unplugged resilience

If nothing else, the forced detox from our obnoxious online addiction did us good. Young and old, rich or poor, we were all stuck to posts/reels on our social media profiles. We were in a toxic relationship with social media.

Having said that, we do need the internet for work and all sorts of financial transactions. The pre-paid electric meter conundrum was very real for many of us. The fear of our electric connection from DESCO being cut off, our meter showing bills in the minuses, the DESCO office being closed, and online money transfer services being disabled was exasperating. ATM booths had their shutters down and banks were closed, so life with no cash at

hand and with no cashless card service, was upsettingly dreadful.

Now that internet has been restored, if nothing else, it has taught us to always keep physical cash on hand at home in case of emergencies like this.

The show of patriotism from Gen Z

Hats off to these spirited young individuals who proved how much they love Bangladesh and its future. Their movement, which started from demands of quota reforms, are now trying to reform the culture of our bad politics. We, who always say that we saw the War of Liberation or we fought for our country, actually believed that we were the sole saviours of the state. We have always stayed silent when we saw the misuse of power by any political party. We were stuck in a vicious cycle of political corruption practised by all political parties; we turned a blind eye to their aggression, and remained a pawn to their ruinous policies. We never demanded clean politics.

With a fair election on the cards, I plead that no undeserving person stand up as our future leader. These students have lit the fire of patriotism in us. So, now, someone with a good heart and true love for the country should give this nationalism and loyalty a real chance. Let no one encash this spirit for personal gain.

Prof Yunus assures Modi

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the minorities have been exaggerated", according to a press release of the chief adviser's press wing.

"The chief adviser has told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that his government is committed to safeguarding every citizen of the country including the minorities when the Indian prime minister raised the issue of the protection of the minorities," said the release.

"Prof Muhammad Yunus said the situation in Bangladesh has been brought under control and life is becoming normal across the country," it said.

The chief adviser told the Indian PM that his government is committed to making all state apparatus fully functional and effective and ensuring human rights for every citizen of the country.

During the conversation, Modi felicitated Prof Yunus on his new role. He also expressed his desire to work closely with the interim government, said the release.

The Indian PM said he had known him for a long time. He hoped that Prof Yunus' vast experience and leadership qualities would bring positive results to the people of Bangladesh.

The Indian PM also invited Prof Yunus to join the "Third Voice of Global South Summit" to be hosted virtually by New Delhi on August 17. The chief adviser agreed to join the summit virtually from Dhaka.

UN calls for protection

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investigating human rights violations amid the recent violence and unrest.

Haq said, "The high commissioner is deeply committed to aiding the interim government and the people of Bangladesh in

aspirations of the students and people," said the press release.

The chief adviser thanked Modi for the telephone conversation and the tweet he posted immediately after he was sworn in. He also congratulated the Indian leader and the Indian people on the country's Independence Day, celebrated on August 15.

According to a readout issued by the Indian PMO on the conversation, Modi conveyed India's commitment to supporting the people of Bangladesh through various development initiatives.

During the call, Modi "reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He emphasised India's commitment to supporting the people of Bangladesh through various development initiatives," according to the readout.

The two leaders also discussed ways to take the bilateral relationship forward in line with the respective national priorities, said the readout.

Sharing the information on social media handle X (previously known as Twitter), PM Modi said they exchanged views on the prevailing situation.

"Received a telephone call from Professor Muhammad Yunus, @ChiefAdviserGoB. Exchanged views on the prevailing situation. Reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He assured protection, safety and security of Hindus and all minorities in Bangladesh," Modi tweeted.

Hindus constitute about 8 percent of Bangladesh's 170 million people.

Tk 45,000cr stuck in shady loans

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following the orders of the directors, and bank officials had nothing to do, according to three mid-level bankers at Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank and Exim Bank.

Requesting anonymity, they said several banks lent some companies large sums, in many cases multiple times their annual sales.

"So how will they repay the loans?" said one of the three bankers. His view was echoed by the two others.

'UNDUE BENEFITS'

Data show Islami Bank and Social Islami Bank started engaging in reciprocal lending in 2016 when these two banks were taken over by S Alam Group.

Exim Bank, National Bank, and IFIC Bank have already been involved in such lending practices for years, but on a limited scale. The size of such loans multiplied over the last 10 years.

When banks lend to relatives of their directors, they put the banks at risk since the financial strength of the borrowers is not seriously considered while sanctioning these loans, experts say.

"These borrowers usually get undue benefits in taking loans, and repayment. Several banks are already facing risks because of such lending."

The financial statements of the companies in question should be analysed to see whether their assets and liabilities support the lending, Bangladesh Bank spokesman Mezbaul Haque told The Daily Star.

"If it is over-lending, the central bank will take action," he said.

EXIM BANK

Exim Bank provided Tk 8,115 crore, the highest amount of reciprocal loans, to several firms owned by directors of other banks. Of the amount, Tk 3,982 crore went to three companies owned by S Alam Group, whose chairman is Mohammed Saiful Alam, also chairman of First Security Islami Bank.

For its part, First Security Islami Bank lent Nassa Group, whose outstanding loan at the bank was Tk 734 crore at the end of 2023.

Nazrul Islam Mazumder, chairman of Exim Bank, himself took loans from most of these banks in the name of Nassa Group, which he owns. Nassa Group also secured loans from Islami Bank, where S Alam's son Ahsanul Alam is the chairman.

Exim Bank lent Tk 801 crore to Unitez Spinning and its associates, whose managing director Belal Ahmed is the chairman of Social Islami Bank (SIBL).

Nassa Group's outstanding loan to SIBL stands at Tk 651 crore.

Beximco and its various concerns' loan outstanding at Exim Bank was Tk

661 crore at the end of 2023. Beximco's Vice chairman Salman F Rahman is also chairman of IFIC Bank. To IFIC Bank, Nassa Group's outstanding loan is Tk 637 crore.

Exim Bank lent Tk 2,671 crore to PowerPac Mutiara Keraniganj Power Plant, a sister concern of Sikder Group, controlled by Rick Haque Sikder and his brother Ron Haque Sikder. They had also directorships at the National Bank before they were forced out by the regulator.

Nassa Group's loan outstanding to National Bank was Tk 1,632 crore at the end of 2023.

Exim Bank's financial reports show Mazumder and his family contributed around Tk 250 crore to the paid up capital of Exim Bank by holding 25 crore shares.

Under central bank rules, he is eligible to secure only Tk 125 crore (50 percent of the share value) of loans from the bank.

"This is a concentration of lending and this type of lending creates risks for a bank though this loan has not become defaulted yet," said Muhammad A (Rume) Ali, a veteran banker.

"If any big borrower defaults, it would make the bank vulnerable. A good bank usually does not allow this type of lending due to such concerns," he said.

To avoid the loan concentration, the central bank rolled out a rule of a single exposure limit. But these banks have systematically dodged the rule by taking loans in the name of several firms.

"From the banking side, it is not difficult to find out who is the ultimate beneficiary of the loans, so they should be careful," said Ali, a former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank.

SOCIAL ISLAMI BANK

Social Islami Bank (SIBL) provided loans of Tk 1,700 crore to directors of other banks, and its Chairman Belal Ahmed took loans from their banks. For instance, it lent Tk 1,049 crore to several firms of Infinita Group whose chairman is Ahsanul Alam, also chairman of Islami Bank.

In return, Islami Bank lent Tk 2,221 crore to two firms of Unitez Group whose managing director is Belal Ahmed.

Apart from these reciprocal lending, SIBL lent Tk 3,199 crore to several firms and sister concerns of S Alam Group. SIBL Chairman Belal Ahmed and S Alam Group's Saiful Alam are relatives.

Unitez Group holds around 4.5 crore shares in SIBL. This means the company's contribution to the paid-up capital of the bank is less than Tk 50 crore. Several relatives of S Alam also hold shares at the bank and their

combined contribution to the bank's paid-up capital is around Tk 230 crore.

ISLAMI BANK

Islami Bank reciprocally lent Tk 4,333 crore to directors of other banks.

Apart from this, the bank's lending to S Alam Group's several firms alone stood at Tk 14,167 crore.

In Islami Bank, Ahsanul Alam, who is the bank chairman, and his relatives hold shares equivalent to Tk 350 crore of the bank's paid-up capital.

Since S Alam Group did not invest in Islami Bank in its own name, the bank has no legal binding in lending to the Group's companies.

OTHER BANKS

Similar practices were widespread at National Bank, IFIC Bank, First Security Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank and Union Bank.

National Bank for example lent Tk 7,080 crore to several companies whose owners are also directors of other banks. These loans were provided to Beximco Group, Nassa Group, and S Alam Group.

Sikder Group, in return, received loans from IFIC Bank, Exim Bank, and First Security Islami Bank.

Similarly, IFIC Bank lent Tk 1,075 crore to Nassa Group and Sikder Group. In return, Beximco Group got loans from Exim Bank and National Bank.

IFIC Bank provided loans of Tk 1,020 crore to Sreepur Township Ltd, where Beximco is a joint venture partner.

Salman F Rahman and his son Ahmed Shayan Rahman hold 4.11 percent or 7.51 crore shares of the bank worth Tk 75 crore.

First Security Islami Bank provided those types of loans amounting Tk 2,442 crore.

Global Islami Bank and Union Bank's reciprocal lending to each other was Tk 1,618 crore.

Several relatives of S Alam hold 30 crore shares at Global Islami Bank, meaning their investment is around Tk 300 crore in the bank. In Union Bank, S Alam Group holds shares worth Tk 570 crore.

The Daily Star first contacted most of these banks on June 15 and followed up with them on August 12-13. Representatives from National Bank, First Security Islami Bank, IFIC Bank, and Exim Bank did not respond or declined to comment.

Zafar Alam, chief operating officer at SIBL, said they sanctioned all loans in line with banking rules, and that the borrowers, including S Alam Group, are eligible for big loans.

Islami Bank CEO Mohammed Monirul Molla said they have been investing in Nassa Group and S Alam Group since the 1990s, and that the two groups' performance was excellent.

Jahangir new home adviser

FROM PAGE 1
government bodies under "special circumstances".

Of the seven advisers, Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, two key organisers of the recent student movement that led to the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government, were given the additional charges of the information and broadcasting ministry and labour and employment ministry respectively.

Nahid is the adviser to the post, telecommunications and information technology ministry while Asif is at the helm of the youth and sports ministry.

Wahiduddin Mahmud, an adviser to the 1996 caretaker government, was given the charge of the planning and education ministries while Ali Imam Majumdar, who was appointed as special assistant to the chief adviser on Monday, was attached to the Chief Adviser's Office.

Fouzul Kabir, an economist and the founding chief executive officer of Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL), was given the responsibility of three ministries — power, energy and mineral resources, road transport and bridges, and railway.

Jahangir, the new home adviser, will also hold the portfolio of the agriculture ministry. He served as the director general of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) from January 21, 2003 to February 18, 2006.

Then quartermaster general of Bangladesh Army, Jahangir headed a 20 member army probe committee to investigate the carnage at the BDR's Palkhaha headquarters on February 25-26 in 2009 that left 74 people, including 57 army officers, dead.

The service of Jahangir was placed in the foreign ministry in December 2009. He went into retirement a year later.

Brig Gen (ret'd) Sakhawat hogged the headlines for his various comments after assuming the office of the home adviser. A coordinator of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement criticised him for some comments while BNP and its three associate bodies demanded his resignation.

Sakhawat, also a former election commissioner, on August 11 warned all political parties and said, "Now, if you think you'll take control of the markets and resort to extortion, you can go ahead and do it for a while. But I have requested the army chief

to break your legs... I don't care, go to hell."

The next day, he advised the Awami League leaders and activists not to do anything that may put their lives in danger, and to reorganise the party with new faces.

"No one has banned your party [Awami League]. Banning any party is a bad culture," he told reporters after visiting some injured Ansar members at the Combined Military Hospital in the capital.

Mentioning the contribution of AL to the country, the retired army official said, "We cannot deny it [AL's contribution]. Reorganise the party and participate in the election whenever it is held."

The same day, Hasnat Abdullah, one of the key coordinators of the student protests, at a rally said, "We have seen the advisers talking about rehabilitating the murderers [Sheikh Hasina and other Awami League leaders]. We want to remind those advisers that you have come to power through the student-people uprising."

"We will not hesitate tooust you the way we made you advisers."

PORTFOLIOS REDISTRIBUTED

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed was given the additional charge of the commerce ministry while Law Adviser Asif Nazrul was given the responsibility of the ministries of cultural affairs and expatriate welfare and overseas employment.

Industries Adviser Adilur Rahman Khan was given the extra portfolio of the housing and public works ministry, and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan was given the additional charge of the water resources ministry.

Liberation War Affairs Adviser Farooq-e-Azam, who took oath of office on August 12, will also be in charge of the disaster management and relief ministry.

The portfolios of the other advisers will remain unchanged, said the chief adviser's press wing.

Thirteen advisers of the interim government, led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, took office on August 8 after Awami League President Sheikh Hasina resigned as prime minister and fled the country on August 5. Two more advisers took oath on August 11.

DRAFTS OF FOUR ORDINANCES OKAYED

The advisory council yesterday approved the drafts of the Local

Government (city corporation) Ordinance-2024, Local Government (municipality) Ordinance-2024, Local Government (zilla parishad) Ordinance-2024, Local Government (upazila parishad) Ordinance-2024.

The advisory council felt the necessity of amending the four related acts regarding these local government bodies to ensure seamless services to the people and continue administrative activities for public interest in the current context, according to a press statement of the chief adviser's press wing.

The drafts will be placed before the president for promulgating ordinances.

According to the section 13 (Ka) (1) of the draft of the Local Government (city corporation) Ordinance-2024, in view of special circumstances, the government can remove the mayor and councillors of a city corporation in the public interest if it deems necessary.

The 13 (ka), (2) section of the draft said the authority defined by rule can, by order in the official gazette, make the removal of the mayors and councillors effective.

The government can also appoint "competent persons or officials" as the administrators to the city corporations until further notice, said the draft.

Similar provisions are there in the drafts of the three other ordinances to empower the government to remove the elected representatives of municipalities, zilla parishads, and upazila parishads in the public interest if it deems necessary.

Ex-Padma Bank chairman faces ACC probe

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Nafeez took over the bank in 2018 after Muihuddin Khan Alamgir, a former presidium member of the Awami League, stepped down as chairman. Farmers Bank was renamed Padma Bank in 2019.

In 2021, Muihuddin, founding chairman of the bank, alleged that Nafeez misused Tk 100 crore from the bank.

Nafeez resigned from his post at the bank in January this year.

Burdened by high default loans, Farmers Bank agreed to merge with another bank in March this year.

'KOLKATA RAPE' Female students protest at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Female students from several universities in Bangladesh staged a protest yesterday at Dhaka University, demanding justice for the rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor in Kolkata, India.

The rally, titled "Awaj Tolo Nari" (Raise Your Voice, Women), saw participants calling for the exemplary punishment for the culprits.

Protesters held placards with messages such as "How Old Were You?", "Hang the Rapists," "Am I Next?", "Stop Violence," and "Don't Be an Alpha Male, Question What It Represents."

"This society focuses on exposing the victim's identity while shielding the rapist or harasser. We see this even in our media. Some people blame incidents of rape on women's clothing. We've

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

People from all walks of life light candles in front of Raju sculpture at Dhaka University yesterday, demanding justice for the rape and murder of a 31-year-old doctor in Kolkata, India. They also called for a proper investigation into all previous rape cases in Bangladesh.

Tk 3.11cr found in former senior secretary's flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police recovered cash worth around Tk 3.11 crore, including local and foreign currencies, from the apartment of a former senior secretary on Babar Road in Mohammadpur yesterday.

DMP informed the matter to the media through a text message around 7:30pm. The message said based on secret information, DMP conducted a raid and recovered a large amount of currencies from a house on Block F on Babar Road.

It said the flat belonged to Shah Kamal, former senior secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Kamal served as secretary from 2015 to 2019 and senior secretary from 2019 to 2020.

According to DMP, they recovered approximately Tk 3.01 crore in BDT, prize bonds worth Tk 74,400, and various foreign currencies worth around Tk 10.03 lakh. The foreign currencies include \$3,000; 1,320 Malaysian Ringgit; 2,969 Saudi Riyal; 4,122 Singapore Dollar; 1,915 Australian Dollar.

Visiting the spot around 8:00pm, this correspondent found that army personnel were deployed at the eight-storey building. The former secretary owned a flat on the first floor.

Mostafa Gazi, a trader, said they saw vehicles entering the building with sacks over the past few days. Suspecting something amiss, they kept watch on the house and learnt from a source that the sacks contained money. They later informed the army, he added.

Nurul Islam, a security guard at the building, said six to seven men, identifying themselves as DB members came to the house around 2:00pm. Nurul said Kamal did not reside there.

"He used to come here once or twice a week with two vehicles and stay for about an hour. One of the vehicles was still parked there," said the security guard.

CONTROL OF DHAKA SLUMS, FOOTPATHS Out goes AL, in comes 'BNP-linked' group

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

With a shift in political landscape, new groups are vying for control at some slums and footpaths in Dhaka.

These new groups, claiming allegiance to the BNP, are attempting to assert dominance over areas previously controlled by the Awami League. Their targets include shanties, shops, and AL-affiliated clubs and offices in the slums.

However, in some areas, the grabbers have pulled back after warnings from BNP high-ups and the government.

In many places, citizen groups, including students, have become active in thwarting extortionists.

area, a new group has taken over several hundred shanties and shops that were previously controlled by pro-AL men.

They also vandalised some shanties and shops, looting valuables, locals said. A local AL leader from Karail slum's Bou Bazar unit said he is a wholesale trader with a shop there but is currently in hiding.

"I heard they tried to break the locks of my shop but were unsuccessful. I engaged in politics to protect my business from extortion, but now I fear it might be looted any time," he said.

Another trader, who was previously associated with the AL Bou Bazar unit, said that pro-BNP men are now threatening him to leave the slum.



Controlling the slums is crucial because these areas are often used by political parties to mobilise crowds for rallies and processions in exchange for money. Besides, AL syndicates made crores of taka by operating in the slums.

Controlling the slums is crucial because these areas are often used by political parties to mobilise crowds for rallies and processions in exchange for money.

Besides, AL syndicates made crores of taka by operating in the slums, illegally supplying gas and electricity to residents with the help of corrupt city utility staff.

The Daily Star visited five slums in the capital and found that in most cases, the new groups are targeting the shanties and shops that were previously under the control of the then ruling party.

In Karail slum, the largest slum in Bangladesh located in the capital's Banani

"I took a loan of Tk 16 lakh and built 10 shanties in the slum recently. About 10 years ago, I was involved with the Awami League. Because of this, they are now threatening my family to leave the shanties immediately," he said while in hiding.

A slum dweller said while the new group has been taking over shanties, offices, and shops primarily used by AL-affiliated men, the general public has not yet been targeted.

In Sattola slum in Mohakhali, this correspondent found that pro-BNP men had taken control of the area by driving out members of pro-AL units.

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Four more injured in Aug 5 clashes die in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people who were shot and burnt during clashes in the mass protests on August 5 have died over the past two days.

The deceased are -- Abul Kalam, 55, a lawyer from Cumilla Sadar upazila; Ujjal Hossain, 30, a mason from Chuadanga; Md Asif, 26, a shop employee in Noakhali and Al Amin Hossain, 27, a pharmaceutical sales representative from Barguna.

After completing autopsies, the bodies were handed over to their families yesterday.

Among them, Abul Kalam lived on Women's College Road in Cumilla.

According to the report filed by Akib Noor, a sub-inspector of Dhanmondi Police Station, Kalam participated in a one-point demand protest for the government's resignation on August 5.

He was allegedly attacked and shot by ward councillor Raihan and his group near Cumilla High School, adjacent to Cumilla Sadar Police Station.

He was taken to a local hospital that day and later transferred to Dhanmondi Popular Hospital in Dhaka on August 6. He passed away around 7:30pm on Thursday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

India needs to move on from one person, rebuild ties

Says analyst M Humayun Kabir

PORIMOL PALMA

New Delhi needs to avoid stereotypes about Bangladesh and rebuild relationships with other political parties and people, instead of focusing on one person and party, said international relations analyst M Humayun Kabir.

It is also time for Dhaka to present ground realities regarding the students' movement and the aftermath of Sheikh Hasina's fall, and take initiatives to address Delhi's concerns, he said.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star recently, Kabir shared the challenges of relationships with India and other foreign governments, along with the way forward in the aftermath of Hasina taking refuge in India following the mass upsurge on August 5.

"A few dimensions are emerging following Hasina's fall. First, India is feeling a sense of loss. In the last 15 years, India enjoyed various strategic benefits and the relationship with Bangladesh deepened. Now there appears to be a pause in it," said Kabir, former ambassador to the US and now president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

"There is a sense within Indian society that the movement that ousted Hasina was initiated by BNP-Jamaat, which is not right," he said.



A few dimensions are emerging following Hasina's fall. First, India is feeling a sense of loss. In the last 15 years, India enjoyed various strategic benefits and the relationship with Bangladesh deepened. Now there appears to be a pause in it.

"Second, they are trying to discover a foreign hand in the movement in Bangladesh, indicating Pakistan and China. Practically, none of them existed," he also said.

"Third, India is concerned over the attacks on minorities, mainly Hindu community, and thinks the right-wing groups are behind them. However, it is mainly the miscreants that are conducting the attacks," Kabir added.

"These are our concerns as well. The fact that students, citizens, and political and religious leaders have taken the initiative to ensure the protection of minority communities does not have much appreciation in India," he continued.

The interim government needs to take serious measures to stop any violence against minorities, engage the Indian government and society and present the facts, the expert said.

On anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh, Kabir said, "When it comes to bilateral relationships, there are two layers -- government to government and people to people. However, the relationship with Bangladesh became mostly government-to-government due to India's role in the last three elections of Bangladesh, which created a major gap in people-to-people relations."

"Now, there is an opportunity for India to fill up this gap. If we get a sensible response from them and if they positively support our transition to democracy, then I think the loss will be recovered," Kabir said.

"India has a challenge regarding what it will do with Hasina, who fled after massive killings. India should consider this aspect," he said.

"Otherwise, India cannot recover the lost ground, because when they are focused on a person, it sends the wrong signal to Bangladeshi people," Kabir said.

"My gut feeling is that India prefers Hasina to go to another country."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Need to be vigilant against 'neo-fascism'

Says Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday called on party leaders and activists to stay vigilant to prevent "neo-fascism" from coming to power.

"We have defeated one fascism. We need to be vigilant so that neo-fascism does not come," Fakhru said at the BNP's central office in Nayapaltan during an event marking party Chairperson Khaleida Zia's birthday.

"...This struggle must continue. Otherwise, we will face a lot of danger," said Fakhru.

He said, "There might be a new conspiracy starting again to deprive people of their right to vote, and whether a new form of fascism is emerging... we need to remain vigilant about this."

"We have to keep in mind that this government is still a new government, an interim one... Its responsibility is to hold an election," Fakhru said.

"We have fought a long battle... If you

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Two friends enjoy a bike ride on a rainy afternoon on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Yunus should be head of state'

Farhad Mazhar tells
discussion; questions
validity of constitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poet and writer Farhad Mazhar yesterday called for the removal of President Mohammed Shahabuddin and proposed that Prof Muhammad Yunus be declared the head of state.

He said the mandate for Yunus comes from the students and citizens who led the mass upsurge, which toppled Sheikh Hasina.

He was speaking at a views exchange meeting at Dhaka Reporters Unity, organised by Rastrachinta.

He said instead of focusing on the constitution, there is a need for a "people's framework" rooted in the spirit of the mass upsurge to lead the country.

He said colonial powers required constitutions to control their subjects.

Mazhar accused the ousted prime minister of allowing torture camps, such as Aynagar, along with enforced disappearances and murders, to operate under the guise of constitutional legitimacy.

He underscored the need to protect the gains of the mass movement, suggesting that if Dr Yunus were to assume office [of president], he could align the country's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Dipu Moni, brother sued over attack on BNP leader's house

UNB, Chandpur



A case has been filed against former Social Welfare Minister Dipu Moni and her brother JR Wadud Tipu for attacking the residence of Sheikh Farid Ahmed Manik, president of the Chandpur district unit BNP.

Besides, 510 known and 1,000-1,200 unnamed people were made accused in the case. The case was filed on Thursday following a complaint lodged by A Razzak Hawlader, joint convener of Chandpur Municipal Jubo Dal, said OC Sheikh Mohsin Alam of Chandpur Sadar Model Police Station.

Manik, who was abroad for medical treatment during the attack, claimed the attack was carried out over political issues. The incident occurred on July 18 when armed individuals reportedly vandalised, looted, and set fire to Manik's house on JM SenGupta Road.

Rangpur jail: inmate dies in scuffle

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Tension remained high at Rangpur Central Jail after a prisoner died in a scuffle between two inmates yesterday.

The jail security fired bullets to bring the situation under control following several chases and counter-chases between prisoners and the jail security members. The deceased is Baharul Badsha.

Mohammad Mobassher Hasan, deputy commissioner of Rangpur, said two prisoners—Badsha and Rafiqul Islam—had a scuffle over a fruit at the jail complex around 8:00am.

During the scuffle, Badsha fainted. The jail authorities took him to Rangpur Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead, he said.

As the news of his death spread among prisoners around noon, they started staging protests inside the jail. At one stage, the guards had to open fire to control the situation. Rangpur DC said strong security measures have been taken in and around the jail.

STUDENT MOVEMENT

5 coordinators resign at CU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A coordinator and four assistant coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement at Chittagong University resigned from their posts yesterday.

"We decided to resign as central coordinators are ignoring our decisions," Al Masnun, a coordinator, said at a press conference at CU. The four others are Sumaya Shikder, Dhruva Barua, Saidduzzaman and Esha Dey.

Masnun alleged central coordinators Rasel Ahmed and Khan Talat Mahmud have allowed students to enter halls defying a combined decision.

Besides, both coordinators failed to give them specific answers about increasing the members of the coordinating committee in CU, Masnun said.

Rasel or Mahmud could not be reached for comments.

They shot my boy

FROM PAGE 5

While visiting the village home of Raihan, this correspondent saw the family in despair. Raihan's mother stood beside his grave and said, "What was my son's fault? He wanted a system without any

discrimination but they shot my boy six times."

His father added, "It was our dream that he would someday join government service and support our poverty-stricken family. His untimely death has left our dreams shattered."

Inaugurated but

FROM PAGE 5

CDA, however, failed to complete it within the stipulated time, so the project's deadline was extended twice till June 2024, while its cost went up from Tk 3,250 crore to Tk 4,298.95 crore.

The 16.5 metre wide expressway has a four-lane path with 14 ramps at nine points.

In August 2023, CDA decided to name it after former Chattogram city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Visiting Lalkhan Bazar point of the expressway recently, this correspondent observed that workers were installing electric cables to connect lamps.

Contacted, Mahfuzur Rahman, project director and executive engineer at CDA, said there is no work left except installation of lights on the expressway.

Asked why the expressway has not opened to traffic yet, Mahfuzur dodged the question and requested this correspondent to contact the CDA chairman to know the date for opening the expressway to the public.

Asked why it was

inaugurated last year before all works were completed, the CDA official said, "They [high officials of public works ministry] forced us in this regard."

This correspondent went to the office of CDA chairman Mohammad Yunus for his comment on August 13 but found that he has not been coming to office since the former government's fall on August 5. He could not be reached over phone despite several attempts.

Safety, equal

FROM PAGE 3

the state's responsibility to ensure the protection and equal rights of all people in the country, regardless of religion or ethnicity.

It also called upon everyone to ensure the protection of life and property by abandoning all forms of division, enmity, oppression, violence, and destruction.

In a separate press release, it also condemned the murder of three youths in the capital's Jatrabari area.

Yunus should be head

FROM PAGE 3

regulations with international laws and repeal the existing ones that contradict these standards.

Badiul Alam Majumder, secretary of Shushashonor Jonno Nagorik, also questioned the validity of the current constitution.

He stressed the importance of thoroughly investigating and bringing to justice those responsible for wrongdoings over the past 16 years to end the culture of impunity in the country.

Activist Rakhil Raha suggested that the interim government should reflect the true aspirations of the students and people who brought about the mass upsurge.

He emphasised the need for a counter-narrative to challenge the narratives propagated by Awami League-affiliated cultural groups.

Poet and journalist

Mahbub Morshed urged students to remain vigilant and active on the streets to ensure the movement's outcomes benefit those who initiated it.

He also advocated for student union elections in educational institutions, especially universities, and proposed the formation of a Sangram Parishad to coordinate leadership across universities.

Prof Moshrekha Aditi Huq of Chittagong University highlighted the psychological, economic, and political challenges that lie ahead, emphasising the need to ensure law and order.

She called for amending the flaws in the current constitution and repealing repressive laws, including the Cyber Security Act.

Other notable participants included Chittagong University's Kh Ar Raji, Dhaka University's Prof Mohammad Azam, and journalist Faruk Wasif.

Four more injured

FROM PAGE 3

Shilu Akter, wife of the deceased Ujjal Hossain, said they live in Muktarpur village of Damurhuda upazila in Chuadanga.

Ujjal, a mason by profession, returned home from work on August 5 and went to Mollah Bazar in Muktarpur in the evening for tea. Protesters set fire to a hardware store in the market that day. Ujjal, along with several others, was inside the store. A gas cylinder in the shop exploded, leaving Ujjal and others severely burned.

They were admitted to the burn unit at DMCH. Ujjal had suffered 66 percent burns on his body. He died around 6:30am yesterday.

Jamal Uddin, a neighbour of the deceased Md Asif, said Asif's home was in Miralipur village in Noakhali's Begumganj upazila. Asif had recently started working at a shop. He attended a rally in Sonaimuri on August 5, where he was shot.

SI Faruk Ahmed of Shabbagh Police Station, who prepared Asif's autopsy report, said a bullet-hit Asif was admitted to the Sadar Hospital. He was later transferred to DMCH on August 7, where he passed away at 10:30pm on Thursday.

India needs to move

FROM PAGE 3

"India's other concerns are security and investment in Bangladesh. The interim government needs to reassure India regarding both of these aspects," the analyst said.

Dhaka and Delhi have settled some of the major bilateral disputes, including land and maritime boundaries, and improved connectivity. Also, there was a deal on rail transit through Bangladesh.

Regarding these, Kabir said investors will keep watching what comes next. But the concerns of human rights and media freedom will be important areas that need to be upheld, he added.

"The international community wants to know when the election will be held. The interim government needs to have a tentative timeframe for the election and communicate this when it engages with foreign governments," he said.

Ensuring justice for the violence during the students' protest will be another major task and engaging independent UN investigators would be a good idea for increasing credibility, Kabir added.

Nasir Uddin Nasir, general secretary of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal, said Asif was a JCD activist. Alongside Asif, at least 32 JCD leaders and activists died so far following the clashes, he said.

Russell Hossain, the younger brother of the deceased Al Amin Hossain, said they hail from Afra village of Jashore's Chowgachha. Al Amin worked as a salesman for a pharmaceutical company in Amtali of Barguna, where he had also lived.

After work on August 5, he was sleeping on the second floor of his residence when protesters set fire to the ground floor. The fire spread to the second floor, and Al Amin, along with several coworkers, was engulfed in flames.

Locals rescued and took them to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barishal. The next day, he was transferred to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in Dhaka, where he died at 5:30am yesterday.

Over 500 people—mostly students—were killed during the mass protests, which eventually forced Sheikh Hasina to resign and flee the country on August 5.

from LDC by 2026.

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Out goes AL, in comes

FROM PAGE 3

Md Momin, who claims to be the president of the Jubo Dal Sattola unit, and Saddam Hossain, a member of the Banani thana Jubo Dal unit, were seen inside the AL office in the slum.

Saddam told this correspondent that he was born in the slum but was driven out by pro-AL men in 2014.

"After 10 years, I was able to return, but I no longer found my home. So, I am living here in this office," he said.

Momin said they had expelled the AL members from the slum. He claimed that Billal Chowdhury of the Sattola unit AL used to control some shanties in the area, but they have now informed tenants that they no longer need to pay rent.

In Kalyanpur Pora Bosti, a man named Ripon, brother of a ward-level BNP leader, allegedly seized control of 100 shanties on August 6 and 7.

They also vandalised the AL-affiliated office and shanties controlled by AL men.

Ripon didn't respond to calls.

Contacted, Darussalam Thana BNP convener Syed Abu Bakkar Siddique Sajju said he would take immediate action if such incidents occurred.

Two days later, this correspondent found that the new group returned many of the shanties to the slum dwellers.

In Abul's slum, also known as "Abul's Bosti," in the capital's Bhashantek, a new group has vandalised several shanties and shops that were under the control of AL members.

A slum dweller Rubina Begum, who has been living in the Bhasantek slum for 20 years, said the political leaders use them as pawns.

"If we want to stay here, we have to abide by those who come into power," she said.

SCENES FROM FOOTPATHS
Dhaka's footpaths have experienced mixed changes: in some areas, hawkers are no longer paying any fees,

while in others, extortion continues.

Milon Patwary, general secretary of the Karwan Bazar Pick-up Van Samity, said that they recently handed over three linemen [agents of local politicians] to students when they came asking for fees.

He said previously, they paid Tk 1,200 per month for each vehicle, along with a one-time payment of Tk 10,000-15,000. However, this practice has ceased for a week.

Some traders mentioned that trucks are still paying Tk 200-300 each night for market entry.

A lineman in the CNG Stand area of Karwan Bazar said that they still collect Tk 6,000-7,000 from footpath vendors in the area.

Belal Hossain, a cloth seller in Farmgate, said they had to pay the local councilor's men, but this practice has stopped for a week.

"A few days ago, pro-BNP activists came, distributed leaflets, and instructed us not to pay any fees," he said.

Arif Chowdhury, president of the Jatiya Hawkers' Federation, said they have directed their units not to pay any money to anyone. If anyone attempts to collect fees, they have been instructed to hand them over to students or the army.

Need to be

FROM PAGE 3

think our fight is over, you are mistaken. We are in a very precarious situation now."

Fakhrul alleged that former prime minister Sheikh Hasina is conspiring against Bangladesh from India.

Fakhrul also expressed concern over the low turnout at the event, questioning, "Isn't today madam's [Khaleda Zia's] birthday event? How many have come? Didn't you have a programme yesterday? How many attended? Very few... very few came today as well. Why? Has victory been achieved?"

No parent should bear this loss

FROM PAGE 5

was my lifeline. He was a devoted son. He worked hard to take care of me. How am I going to live without him?" Maya told this correspondent.

Mostak hailed from Gouripur village under Sylhet Sadar upazila.

Salman Ahmed, a student protester who took

Mostak to the hospital, said after Mostak was shot near the Muslim Quarters area, he was taken to Habiganj Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

He succumbed to his injuries there.

Noor Bakhat, a contractor supervisor who had employed Mostak, said he worked with them for

40 days till August 2 in the Bhangapool area.

"My two other sons distanced themselves previously. Now my youngest son is also dead. I have lost everything," Maya Khatun lamented.

"No parent should bear this loss. My son was innocent. Why did they shoot him?" she asked.

Female

FROM PAGE 3

seen even an eight-year-old girl being raped, yet some still blame the victim's attire," said a student from BRAC University.

Anika Arefin, a student of Dhaka University, said, "We have protested multiple times demanding safety for women, but freedom for women remains elusive due to cultural impunity."

Another student added, "We often face harassment on the streets, but there is little we can do due to a lack of proper evidence." "There have been cases where girls were harassed by influential figures, like teachers, but they did not receive justice," she noted.

In addition to this rally, a group of women gathered last night at the base of the Raju memorial sculpture on the Dhaka University campus, demanding justice for the victim and proper investigation into all rape cases since Bangladesh's independence.

PRAYER TIMING
AUGUST 17

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-38 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-41 8-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

OBITUARY

It is with profound sorrow that we announce the passing of former ambassador Mr. M. Sirajul Islam, who left this worldly abode on the night of Sunday, August 11, 2024, while in the care of a US hospital (Innallah wa Inna Ilaihi Raziun). He is survived by his wife, Nasrin Fowzia, daughters Sabrina Islam Rahman and Naureen Islam, sons-in-laws Asif Rahman and Rayan Sharif, and granddaughters Alysha Rahman and Alisha Rahman. We offer our heartfelt prayers for his departed soul and extend our deepest sympathies to his grieving family. The Janaza for the departed will be held on Sunday, August 18, after Asr, at Gulshan Azad Mosque. We kindly request all to join us in offering their prayers and paying their final respects.

In mourning
The family of the deceased

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা এক-ব্লক ১৫০০ বর্গফুটের শতভাগ রেডি ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিমিটেড।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা এক-ব্লক রাসিদা এডভান্সড ১৮০০ বর্গফুটের দক্ষিণমুখী নিম্ননিবান ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিমিটেড।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

লালমাটিয়া বি-ব্লক-এ ১৬০০ বর্গফুটের শতভাগ রেডি ব্র্যান্ড নিউ ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিমিটেড।
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭

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Rabina-01714310084

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Improving Computer and Software Engineering Tertiary Education Project
Project Management Unit (PMU)
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Date: 15-08-2024

Ref. No.: UGC/ICSETEP/Advertisement/2024/111

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)

Improving Computer and Software Engineering Tertiary Education Project (ICSETEP) under Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), Ministry of Education, is to improve Higher Education in CSE/IT Programs of Bangladesh to meet the challenges of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and to lead of the country in IT sectors. Asian Development Bank (ADB) is the Project Aid partner of ICSETEP providing major implementation cost as LOAN; and University Grants Commission of Bangladesh is the executing authority. ICSETEP is seeking specialists through Individual Consultant Selection (National) for its following consulting positions.

Sl.	Name of the Consulting Position	No. of Position
1	Procurement Specialist (PMU/S-2)	1
2	Higher Education Specialist (PMU/S-5)	1
3	Stipend Program Specialist (PMU/S-7)	1
4	Women IT Leadership Program Specialist (PMU/S-8)	1

The last date of application submission is 01 September 2024 through ADB CMS (<https://cms.adb.org>). The detailed of this REOI as well as application procedure is available at ICSETEP website (www.icsetep.ugc.gov.bd).

GD-194

Prof. Dr. Md. Aminul Haque Akhand
Project Director, ICSETEP

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Bandarban Public Work Division.
Date: 15/08/2024

Memo No-25.36.0300.330.10.18.140

e-TENDER NOTICE (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works given Below.

Tender ID No	Package No	Description of Works	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1007939	04/egp/BBan/Dev/G-11/Re-Tender/24-25	Supply of Consumable Commodities for Bandarban Rowangchhari Upazila Model Mosque & Islamic Cultural Center Under the Project of "Establishing 560 Model Mosques and Islamic Cultural Centers (2nd Revised) in Each Zila and Upazila of Bangladesh"	26-Aug-2024 17:00	27-Aug-2024 13:00
1008058	05/egp/BBan/Dev/G-11/23-24	Supply of Consumable Commodities for Bandarban Naikhongchhari Upazila Model Mosque & Islamic Cultural Center Under the Project of "Establishing 560 Model Mosques and Islamic Cultural Centers (2nd Revised) in Each Zila and Upazila of Bangladesh"	26-Aug-2024 17:00	27-Aug-2024 13:00

This is Online Tender. Where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal & no Offline/ Hard copies will be accepted.

(Jobir Rayhan)
Executive Engineer
Bandarban Public Works Division
e-mail: ee_bandr@pwd.gov.bd

GD-195

RANGAMATI, KHAGRACHHARI Students protest removal of graffiti

STAR REPORT

Students in Rangamati and Khagrachhari held rallies yesterday, protesting the removal of graffiti created in support of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

They argued that while discrimination has lessened nationwide, it has yet to reach the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They demanded indigenous rights in Bangladesh.

"We want liberty from militarisation," said Kiko Dewan, a Rangamati Government College student.

Kiko also said conspiracies against indigenous people continue, as their land is being taken in the name of tourism.

He also called for creating voter lists that include only residents of the region.

Hundreds of students from various upazilas participated in the protests.

They criticised law enforcement authorities for obstructing their efforts to repaint the graffiti, which had previously been removed.

Meanwhile, people from the indigenous community brought out a procession in the Dhaka University area yesterday, demanding protection of their land rights and constitutional recognition.

They also sought justice for the killings of indigenous persons.



Protesting the removal of graffiti created in support of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, students in Rangamati hold a rally yesterday. Similar rally was held in Khagrachhari. Students also criticised the law enforcement authorities for obstructing their efforts to repaint the graffiti.

PHOTO: STAR

Inaugurated but inaccessible

Ctg elevated expressway still not open after 8 months

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The first elevated expressway in Chattogram city has yet to open to traffic, even though over eight months have passed since its inauguration in November last year.

The delay has been a disappointment to commuters in the port city, as they keep waiting for a respite from unbearable traffic congestion.

When the expressway was inaugurated, city dwellers hoped that their suffering would finally come to an end. However, the reality has been a far cry.

"We are still suffering from traffic jams and don't know how much longer this will go on," said Abdul

Khalek, a private job holder who commutes regularly from the city's GEC intersection to Customs area.

The Chattogram Development Authority constructed the



16-kilometre-long expressway, from Lalkhan Bazar to Patenga, at a cost of Tk 4,298.95 crore, to smooth communication and boost the economy.

Even though the construction work was incomplete, former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the expressway last year, a decision that drew flak from city planners, who termed it a bid to show off the development achieved by the then-ruling party ahead of the election.

Delwar Hossain Mazumdar, executive member of Forum for Planned Chattogram, earlier said the CDA failed to fulfil people's expectations.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approved the government-funded Chattogram Elevated Expressway project in July 2017, scheduled to be completed by June 2020.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

50 more hospitalised with dengue

UNB, Dhaka

Fifty people were hospitalised with dengue fever in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the new patients, 14 were hospitalised in Dhaka, said DGHS. Some 901 patients are receiving treatment in different hospitals across the country.

A total of 8,980 dengue cases and 74 deaths have been reported since January 1, 2024.

Last year, a total of 1,705 people lost their lives due to dengue, making it the deadliest year on record.

More than just NUMBERS

A 17-year-old student died with bullet wounds in Dhaka. A 38-year-old rickshaw puller fatally shot in Dhaka. A 24-year-old service holder shot dead in Habiganj. At least 400 lives (the actual number could be much higher) were lost when law enforcers opened fire on protesters during the recent unrest. But these victims are not just statistics; they are children, parents, and friends. In this report, we try to know the stories of three such names among these tragic numbers.



'They shot my boy six times'
Says mother of Raihan, 17, who died of bullet wounds

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

"My son did nothing wrong; why was he shot dead? I demand justice for my son's death," said Rehena, mother of Raihan, 17, who died after being shot in Dhaka's Badda on August 5.

Raihan had been visiting his cousin's house in Badda since early July, where he got involved in the quota-reform protests and opted not to return home in Chaulabunia village in Patuakhali Sadar upazila until the students' demands were met.

A candidate for Dakhil examination in 2025 from a madrasa in Patuakhali, Raihan hailed from a poor family. His father Kamal Akon works as a day labourer, while his mother Rehena is a homemaker. His younger sister Jannati is only five years old.

On the morning of August 5, Raihan joined a protest in the Badda area when he was hit by six bullets in his chest and legs during a firing at the student protesters.

He was taken to DMCH, where the on-duty doctor declared him dead.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Had to beg for money to take his body home'
Says son of Goni Miah, a rickshaw-puller who was shot dead

NILIMA JAHAN

Six months ago, 38-year-old Goni Miah left his home in Sreebordi, Sherpur, with hopes of changing his family's fortune.

A former rice mill worker, Goni believed that pulling a rickshaw in Dhaka would provide the financial stability his family desperately needed.

However, instead of returning with the promise of a better future, Goni's lifeless



body returned home in a coffin, plunging his family into deeper despair.

Goni lived in the Nakhhalpara area of Tejgaon. On the evening

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

No parent should bear this loss
Says mother of Mostak, 24, who was fatally shot



MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Maya Khatun, 65, was relieved when her youngest son, Md Mostak Mia, 24, got a job as a lineman under a contractor of

Bangladesh Power Development Board in Habiganj.

After his two elder brothers started living separately following their marriages, Mostak had become her only hope. However, everything changed on August 2 when Mostak, who went outside to buy shoes in the afternoon, got hit by a bullet amid a clash between protesters and law enforcers in Habiganj town.

"My youngest son Mostak

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস অফুরন্ত নয়, এর অপচয় রোধ করুন।		গ্যাসের অবৈধ সংযোগ গ্রহণ ও ব্যবহার শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ।	
Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution PLC Titas Gas Bhaban, 105 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215			
Invitation for Tenders (OTM-NCT)			
1	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/Energy & Mineral Resources Division (EMRD)
2	Agency	:	Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla)
3	Procuring Entity Name	:	Titas Gas Transmission & Distribution Public Limited Company (TGTGPLC)
4	Procuring Entity District	:	Dhaka
5	Invitation for Tenders	:	Procurement of Information Technology Products and Services
6	Invitation Ref. No.	:	TGTGPLC/SMEIIP-ADB/GD-2(SI-02)/2024
7	Date	:	15/08/2024
KEY INFORMATION			
8	Procurement Method	:	Single-Stage Two-Envelope (Open Tendering Method-NCT)
FUNDING INFORMATION			
9	Budget & Source of Fund	:	Development & Asian Development Bank (ADB) [Loan No. 4386-BAN]
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
10	Project Name	:	Smart Metering Energy Efficiency Improvement Project [Installation of Prepaid Gas Meter for TGTGPLC]
11	Tender Package No.	:	GD-2(SI-02)
12	Tender Package Name	:	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Unified Web System and Automated Grievance Redress Center (Hardware & Software)
13	Tender Publication Date	:	15.08.2024
14	Tender Last Selling Date	:	18.09.2024 14:00 (GMT+6) local time
15	Tender Submission Date & Time	:	19.09.2024 14:00 (GMT+6) local time
16	Tender Opening Date & Time	:	19.09.2024 14:30 (GMT+6) local time
17	Name & Address of the Offices:	:	
	• Selling Tender Document	:	Office of Project Director, Smart Metering Energy Efficiency Improvement Project [Installation of Prepaid Gas Meter for TGTGPLC], Titas Gas Bhaban (9 th Floor), 105 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215
	• Receiving Tender Document	:	Same As
	• Opening Tender Document	:	Same As
18	Pre-Tender Meeting Place, Date & Time	:	Office of Project Director, Smart Metering Energy Efficiency Improvement Project [Installation of Prepaid Gas Meter for TGTGPLC], Titas Gas Bhaban (9 th Floor), 105 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215 01/09/2024 & 11:00 AM
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
19	Eligibility of Tenderer	:	1. Successful completion of minimum three (3) contracts as main supplier within the last ten (10) years of which at least one (1) contract valued minimum of BDT37.0 (Thirty-Seven) Crore and two (2) other contracts value of no less than BDT10.0 (Ten) Crore with feature, functions, nature, and complexity as described in Section 6 (Schedule of Requirements) 2. Minimum average of best 3 years over the last five (5) annual turnover of BDT60.0 (Sixty) Crore calculated as total payments received by the Bidder. 3. Details in the Tender Documents
20	Brief Description of Goods	:	Supply of Hardware and Accessories for Unified Web System and Automated Grievance Redress Center. Details in Tender Documents
21	Brief Description of Services	:	Installation and Commissioning of Unified Web System and Automated Grievance Redress Center (Software). Details in Tender Documents
22	Price of the Tender Document	:	BDT10,000.00 (Ten Thousand Bangladeshi Taka)
	Lot No.	Identification of Lot	Location
	1	Single	Southern part of Titas Franchise Area (Dhaka, Narayanganj and so on)
			Tender Security Amount
			BDT90.00 (Ninety) Lac in favor of TGTGPLC
			Completion Time
			38 (Thirty-Eight) months
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			
23	Name of Official Inviting Tender	:	Engr. Muhammad Abul Kawser
24	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	:	Project Director, Smart Metering Energy Efficiency Improvement Project [Installation of Prepaid Gas Meter for TGTGPLC]
25	Address of Official Inviting Tender	:	Planning Department, Titas Gas Bhaban (10 th Floor), 105 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Kawran Bazar C/A, Dhaka-1215
26	Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	:	Cell No.: +8801712816739, E-mail: pd.ipgm.adb@gmail.com
27	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject Tender as well as whole procedure.		
Titas/PR-37/2024-25			
 (Engr. Muhammad Abul Kawser) Project Director			
GD-193			

Safety, equal rights for all

Demands Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The previous government's inaction regarding past incidents of violence against minority communities has encouraged communal extremist groups to continue their attacks and oppression on minorities, said the Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation.

The foundation also demanded the protection and equal rights be ensured for all, regardless of religion or ethnicity. In a press statement, they also condemned the recent violence and oppression against minorities across the country.

The statement said during the anti-discrimination student movement, students and the public spoke for the establishment of a non-communal, democratic state and society by eliminating discrimination.

However, after Sheikh Hasina's resignation, a certain group of people expressed their accumulated anger by attacking, vandalising, and setting fire to government and private establishments, as well as the homes and properties of many leaders of the then ruling party, including ministers and MPs.

Additionally, there were at least 205 incidents of attacks on the homes and religious sites of Hindu minorities in 52 districts, posing a threat to the security of minorities.

The Foundation expressed condemnation and outrage against these incidents, according to the statement.

They said during any political transition, religious and ethnic minorities are often the victims of attacks. Minorities flee their homes in the face of such violence, and some even leave the country.

Although it did not happen this time, many are attempting to label the recent attacks on minorities as politically motivated, which is seen as an effort to sidestep the real situation and create excuses, they said.

The statement said the Foundation believes it is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

KURSK REGION

Russian forces destroy Ukraine unit

Repel 12 missiles targeting Crimea bridge

AGENCIES

Russian forces destroyed a Ukrainian reconnaissance and sabotage unit that was armed with weapons from Nato countries in Russia's western Kursk region, the RIA state-run media agency reported yesterday, citing unidentified security sources.

"Samples of small arms manufactured by the United States and Sweden have been seized at the liquidation site of a Ukrainian sabotage group near the village of



Smoke rises above the burning shopping mall Galaktika hit by shelling, which local Russian-installed authorities called a Ukrainian military strike, in Donetsk, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Kursk attack will force Russia to start 'fair' peace talks, says Zelensky aide

Kremyanoe in the Kursk region," RIA cited a Russian security official as saying.

Russian troops seized a Swedish-made Automatic Carbine 5 assault rifle as well as a US-made M4 carbine assault rifle and M2 Browning machine gun, RIA cited the official as saying.

Russia has been battling Ukrainian forces in Kursk since August 6, when Kyiv launched a lightning incursion in the largest attack on sovereign Russian territory since World War Two, reports Reuters.

A Ukrainian presidential adviser said yesterday that Kyiv's cross-border incursion into Russia's Kursk region was required to convince Moscow to start "fair" peace talks.

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday that it had repelled a night-time attack using 12 US-made missiles on the landmark Crimea bridge built on the orders of President Vladimir Putin after Moscow annexed the peninsula.

ISRAEL'S MONTHS-LONG OFFENSIVE

Gaza's undertakers stack 'graves on top of graves'

AFP, Deir el Balah

Undertakers are working like bricklayers in a Gaza cemetery, piling cinder blocks into tight rectangles, side by side, for freshly dug graves.

More than 10 months into the Gaza offensive, so many bodies are arriving at the cemetery in Deir el Balah that the men, working in the hot sun, hardly have space to bury them.

"The cemetery is so full that we now dig graves on top of other graves, and said these do not go with the "spirit of the mass uprising".

"In a viral video, we saw that a person of my father's age was made to perform squats while holding his ears; a person of my mother's age was stripped; the phones of many people were checked; a woman of my mother's age was beaten up; and we witnessed various incidents of attacks on our journalist brothers and sisters," Sarjis said.

"Our uprising was against corruption and oppression. We want a Bangladesh where everyone will be able to speak, express their opinion, and work according to whatever ideology they believe in.

"We saw several such incidents where the students were involved. We do not know which ideology they hold, nor can we define them," Sarjis said.

Cementing

FROM PAGE 12

who chairs a committee tasked with liaising between the government and social groups such as teachers and activists, said, "Right now we have no interest in forming a political party. Our focus for the time being is solidifying the mass uprising and assisting the government to sustain and consolidate."

Earlier in the afternoon, Reuters, quoting Mahfuj, reported that the student leaders were discussing the formation of a political party to end the duopoly of Hasina's Awami League or the Bangladesh Nationalist Party of her rival Khaleda Zia.

This newspaper also talked to Nasir Abdullah, another member of the liaison committee, who said, "We will reach out to people from all walks of life. If the people of Bangladesh think that something new is required, then it will happen."

He also said there would be propositions from their end to the people, adding, "If we want to end the chaos that had been prevailing post-independence, we have to start afresh and dream of a new Bangladesh."

Hasnat Abdullah, another key coordinator of the platform, told this newspaper that they do not have any plans to form a political party as of now.

"The time for discussing the formation of our own political party has not yet come. We are now busy with those who are now in the hospitals after being injured in the protests," Hasnat told The Daily Star.

Hasina, Quader

FROM PAGE 12

that AL men killed his brother after getting orders from Hasina and Quader.

As of yesterday, Hasina was facing a total of eight cases, including five for murder, one for abduction, and two filed with the International Crimes Tribunal for crimes against humanity and genocide.

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 12

Sweden's Public Health Agency told AFP on Thursday that it had registered a case of the Clade 1b subclade – the same new strain that has surged in the DRC since September 2023, and the first such infection outside the African continent, according to the agency.

The patient was infected during a visit to "the part of Africa where there is a major outbreak of mpox Clade 1", epidemiologist Magnus Gisslen said in a statement from the agency.

The mpox strain that caused the case in Pakistan was not immediately known yesterday, the Ministry of Health said in a statement. "The affected person has come from a Gulf country," the statement said.

It's violation of human rights: Sarjis

FROM PAGE 12

Sarjis termed the incidents in different parts of Dhaka, including Dhanmondi 32, as "unexpected" and said these do not go with the "spirit of the mass uprising".

"In a viral video, we saw that a person of my father's age was made to perform squats while holding his ears; a person of my mother's age was stripped; the phones of many people were checked; a woman of my mother's age was beaten up; and we witnessed various incidents of attacks on our journalist brothers and sisters," Sarjis said.

"Our uprising was against corruption and oppression. We want a Bangladesh where everyone will be able to speak, express their opinion, and work according to whatever ideology they believe in.

"We saw several such incidents where the students were involved. We do not know which ideology they hold, nor can we define them," Sarjis said.

The leaders of the platform sat on Thursday night and took two decisions, according to Sarjis.

The first decision was to expel any coordinator or co-coordinator from their team if they were found to be

involved in Thursday's incidents.

Their second decision was to take whatever step was necessary as a "pressure group" to ensure legal steps against those involved in the incidents. Justice will be ensured through the two coordinators in the interim government.

"Those, who carried out incidents like stripping people or assaulting them, violated human rights. These incidents are not legitimate by any means," Sarjis said.

Speaking of the history of Bangladesh, Sarjis said the contribution of some people is undeniable and each of them should be remembered for their contribution.

"No one can be belittled deliberately for political purposes. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be given the respect he deserves; Similarly, Ziaur Rahman should be given the respect he deserves," he said.

PRESSURE GROUP, NOT AUTHORITY
Sarjis made it clear to the students that the Movement, which led the uprising that replaced the government of Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina with an interim administration headed by Professor Muhammad Yunus, was "not an authority, but a

Sacked army officer Ziaul arrested

FROM PAGE 12

investment adviser to former premier Sheikh Hasina, and ex-law minister Anisul Huq were also placed on a 10-day remand in the same case on Wednesday, a day after they were arrested in Dhaka's Sadarghat area.

Ziaul, former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC), an intelligence agency under the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, was arrested based on secret information, according to a Whatsapp message from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Later in another message, DMP said Ziaul was handed over to police on Thursday night after he went to the army for shelter. He was later arrested.

NTMC is responsible for monitoring, collecting, and recording information and communication data as well as for the interception of electronic communication such as phone calls, emails, and social media accounts.

Ziaul was detained in a dramatic circumstance around midnight on August 7 after the plane on which he was fleeing was brought back from the Dhaka airport runway to the

boarding bridge, sources said earlier.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Arfatul Rakib placed him on remand Anisul Huq were also placed on a 10-day remand in the same case on Wednesday, a day after they were arrested in Dhaka's Sadarghat area.

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COLLEAGUE'S MURDER

Indian doctors step up protests

Call for work stoppage

AFP, Kolkata

Indian doctors stepped up nationwide protests and strikes yesterday after the rape and murder of a colleague, a brutal killing that has focused outrage on the chronic issue of violence against women.

The discovery of the 31-year-old's bloodied body on August 9 at a state-run hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata sparked nationwide protests.

In Kolkata, hundreds of doctors and other healthcare workers gathered demanding action, with protests also held yesterday in the capital New Delhi, and Nangpur in Maharashtra state.

"We want justice", doctors chanted in Kolkata, waving handwritten signs that read: "No safety, no service!" The Indian Medical Association has called for a "nationwide withdrawal of services" for 24 hours starting today, with suspension of all medical procedures at private hospitals.

India's Kashmir to vote in polls from Sept 18

REUTERS, New Delhi

India will hold provincial elections in the Himalayan territory of Jammu and Kashmir from September 18, the Election Commission said yesterday, the first regional polls there in a decade and five years after New Delhi scrapped the region's special autonomy.

India's only Muslim-majority region, Jammu and Kashmir has been at the heart of more than 75 years of animosity with neighbouring Pakistan since the birth of the two nations in 1947 at independence from colonial rule by Britain.

The larger Kashmir region is divided between India, Pakistan and China. The part ruled by India enjoyed a special status that was revoked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government in 2019 and the state was split into two federally-administered territories. The decision to hold fresh elections follows a December order by India's Supreme Court that rejected petitions challenging the revocation of Kashmir's special status and set a deadline of September 30 for holding provincial polls.

Nearly 9 million people are registered to vote for the 90-member legislative assembly, the election panel said. Voting will be staggered over three stages between September 18 and October 1.

Law enforcers used

FROM PAGE 1

further intensifying the violence. In some cases, the security forces were reported to have employed vehicles and helicopters that bore the logo of the UN."

The number of reported killings in revenge attacks since that time still remains to be determined. Those killed include protesters, bystanders, journalists covering the events and a number of members of the security force, the OHCHR said.

"Thousands of protesters and bystanders have been injured, with hospitals overwhelmed by the influx of patients."

The majority of deaths and injuries have been attributed to the security forces and the student wing affiliated with the Awami League, it says.

"These casualties resulted from the use of live ammunition and other force against protesters who while acting violently reportedly were not armed, or only lightly armed, as well as from instances of security forces unlawfully using lethal force against protesters posing no apparent threat, unarmed protesters, and bystanders, including at least 4 journalists and at least 32 children, with many more injured and detained – a number of whom were seemingly deliberately targeted."

"From July 12 to August 3, at least 450,000 unknown persons and 2000 identified persons were reportedly registered for offences in at least 286 criminal cases in Dhaka alone, including a combination of named and unnamed individuals – many members of the opposition reportedly among them."

Suing hundreds of individuals as "unnamed" increases the risk of widespread arbitrary arrest and detention, it observes.

"Block raids were conducted in various locations of Dhaka city and near other university and college campuses. During these operations, large numbers of law enforcement personnel surrounded the area in question, prevented anyone from leaving, and conducted house searches based on intelligence information and, in several cases, without presenting judicial search warrants. Law enforcement agencies claimed that they were arresting individuals involved in violence and property destruction, based on analysis of their social media activity."

"Reports indicate that a number of those arrested were subjected to ill-treatment and even torture while in police custody."

The authorities also enforced widespread restrictions on communication, including internet, between July 18 and July 23 and again on August 4 and 5, severely affecting the rights to freedom of expression, and to peaceful assembly, and other fundamental rights.

The government had claimed the internet shutdown was due to the destruction of key infrastructure by protesters, but information the OHCHR received indicates the government did it deliberately.

Also, the prolonged countrywide curfew and restrictions on communications disproportionately restricted freedom of movement.

The UN body suggested that the political actors prioritise de-escalation and prevention of any further loss of life or injury and refrain from reprisals. They also need to uphold the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, protect minority communities, advocate for accountability and prevent further rights violations.

The UN also suggested that the transition process is transparent, accountable, inclusive and open to the meaningful participation of all Bangladeshis.

The interim government should take steps to restore democratic order and rule of law through an inclusive and participatory process guided by human rights, develop a systematic approach to vetting for any appointments to and dismissals from the judiciary, security sector and other institutions.

The recommendation to the interim government mentions, "Provide law enforcement agencies with clear instructions limiting the use of force, and especially firearms, in line with international human rights standards, ceasing any use of pellet guns, and, when use of force is absolutely necessary and proportionate, prioritising instead restrained use of less-lethal weapons; emphasise a de-escalation approach to all public order management."

"Refrain from deploying Border Guards and Rapid Action Battalions to any protest or other public order management tasks and initiate a comprehensive review of these forces, their functions, command, control and accountability mechanisms and operational doctrines."

It recommended providing reparations and effective remedies to victims and protecting all related evidence, including CCTV footage and other recordings.

It suggests establishing broader truth and accountability measures beyond investigation of the most recent events, while facilitating open dialogue to address social, economic, and political grievances.

The UN also recommends allowing media to operate freely and safely.

It urges the international community to support Bangladesh to ensure a transition in which human rights are fundamental and to support fact-finding and accountability efforts.

The full UN report can be found on OHCHR website.

My movement is rooted in oneness: NAWSHABA

A 2018 nightmare—that often haunts Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed—was to some extent brought to ease on August 5. On the path to creating a discrimination-free nation, Nawshaba believes that the state is now prepared to hear the uncensored story of her journey that completely reformed her into a new person.

SHARMIN JOYA

On August 4, 2018, Nawshaba was detained by RAB from a shooting spot in Uttara. Under Section 57 of the ICT Act, she was charged with spreading rumours on social media about the student protest for the demand for road safety. It is to be noted that she was not the only one who was charged under that act. Photographer Shahidul Alam, lawyer Imtiaz Mahmood, journalist Kajol, and many other activists were charged under this act for speaking against the former AL-led government.

After being sent to the lockup, Nawshaba was denied bail and granted several days of remands as well. She was released from Kashimpur Central Jail on August 21, 2018, considering her health condition. Her case is still active.

We talk to this forgotten hero, arguably one of the first celebrities to speak out against the former regime.

What instigated you to speak out on this uprising, having been persecuted in 2018?

The first time I discovered

My 11-year-old daughter, who is aware of the situation, was looking up to me. How could I not be alert to what was happening? Though I wasn't in the front row during the protests, I still showed up most days, quietly blending into the back, hiding my identity.

Could you please open up about what you went through since August 4, 2018?

I was actively participating in the peaceful protests, because I believed the students' demands were justified. Even the day before, I joined them on the streets. On August 4, while I was at the shooting location, a few protesters called me with alarming news—students were being brutally attacked. They sent me photos and video clips of the attacks and repeatedly sought my help. In a state of panic, I reached out to a police officer several times to confirm; but when I couldn't get any clear answer, my anxiety grew, and I thought of asking for help.

I never imagined that my message would mark me as a traitor. I had no idea it would brand me as a war criminal.

My Facebook account was hacked within 13 minutes following the live broadcast and I had no clue what was going on with my account. I was flooded with calls—hundreds, mostly threats. Many urged me to delete the video. My father was the sole voice of support, calling to say, 'I'm proud of you'. He also foresaw the trouble I might face soon, warning, 'You will be in danger,' and asked if I wanted to leave the shooting

they blindfolded me, and throughout the entire ordeal, I was kept in the dark about my surroundings. I also want to set the record straight: since that interview, many news outlets have reported on my situation without reaching out to me first. This is completely unethical, and the information they've shared is inaccurate. I have not disclosed any personal details on record yet.

After you were released on bail, your life became more challenging. Could you elaborate on that?

My father was my steadfast support, and with his passing, my daughter has taken on that role. When I returned, my parents faced the harsh criticism that I had tarnished our family's reputation. They heard that, despite my father's background as an army officer, I had failed entirely and brought shame upon us.

During that period, I was so traumatised that I couldn't understand how I could be accused of such things. I've always strived to serve my country to the best of my ability. My father's stories about 1952, 1969, 1971, and Bangabandhu inspired me deeply throughout my life.

I was ousted from the roles I had been promised and blacklisted by many. It's a harsh reality that only a few, including some journalists, stood by me during that crisis. Their reports were pivotal in helping me secure bail quickly—at least, that's how I see it. I don't need to attend the court hearings now as my lawyer handles it.

Now that many stories are coming to light and you're willing to open up, how do you feel?

Given the many lives lost in the recent mass uprising, let us honour their sacrifices by



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

I was ousted from the roles I had been promised and blacklisted by many. It's a harsh reality that only a few, including some journalists, stood by me during that crisis. Their reports were pivotal in helping me secure bail quickly—at least, that's how I see it.

how deeply students were hurt by being called 'Razakars' (war criminals), it struck me to the core. It brought back the pain I felt in 2018 when I was constantly branded a traitor, a 'Razakar'.

It took me nearly a year to recover from the trauma and the relentless self-doubt, haunted by the belief that I had made a costly mistake. However, in that one reaction from the students, I found validation—confirmation that I wasn't wrong, just as my father had reassured me until his passing.

location. I told him I couldn't abandon my work until it was done. He respected my decision and waited until I finished. By then, a group of officers in plainclothes arrived and forcibly took me away.

Recently, in an interview, you mentioned being taken to Aynaghor (The Mirror House), where the disappeared were kept during the former government's regime. I have never mentioned this to any media! When I was taken from the shooting location,

steadfastly pursuing the vision of building a new and better country.

At the same time, seeing people vandalise Bangabandhu's statue, set fire to his house, and destroy monuments broke my heart. My movement is rooted in oneness, love, and peace. The profound transformation I've undergone over the past six years drives me to pursue peace in the face of any form of anarchy. While many may mock me, my vision remains resolute and undeterred.

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



1-MINUTE REVIEW
From barbers to trash cans: 'Maharaja's' fresh take on classic themes

The Tamil action thriller *Maharaja*, featuring Vijay Sethupathi, Anurag Kashyap, Mamta Mohandas, and Sachana Namidass, demonstrates director Nithilan Swaminathan's filmmaking skills and how a skilled writer can turn an old concept into a captivating film.

The film begins with a barber seeking revenge after his home is robbed. He tells the police that his "Lakshmi" was stolen, leaving them confused about whether it's a person or an object, and his quest to recover it begins.

Nithilan revisits his signature themes and filmmaking style in his second film, using life's unpredictability to link plot elements—like a falling fan or a sudden crash. By juxtaposing timelines and central motifs, he engages the audience's imagination.

For example, while a monkey-faced bag was key in his first film, *Maharaja* features a trash can that prompts viewers to question if something loses its value simply because it's deemed useless.

What truly elevates the film is Vijay Sethupathi's performance. In his 50th role, the actor immerses himself effortlessly into this intriguing character, delivering several memorable scenes that stand out and are sure to be appreciated.



কাটুনে বিদ্রোহ
দুক গ্যালারি ১৭-২৩ আগস্ট, ২০২৪
প্রতিদিন বিকেল ৩টা-৯টা ৮টা
উদ্বোধন: বিকেল ৫টা, শুক্রবার ১৬ আগস্ট, ২০২৪
দুকপাঠ ভবন, লেডেল ৮ ১৬ সুরজবান, পাহাঘাট, ঢাকা

Resistance through Cartoons
August 17-23 | 3pm-8pm
DrikPath Bhubon



Comedy Insurgency
August 24 | 6pm-8pm
The Attention Network, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue



Ki'ori pekarā u (Dear Mother)
August 17 | 7pm
Central Shaheed Minar

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Emily in Paris



Prime Video
Fear the Walking Dead



Disney plus
Are You Sure?!



HBO Max
Rick and Morty: The Anime



Apple TV+
Bad Monkey



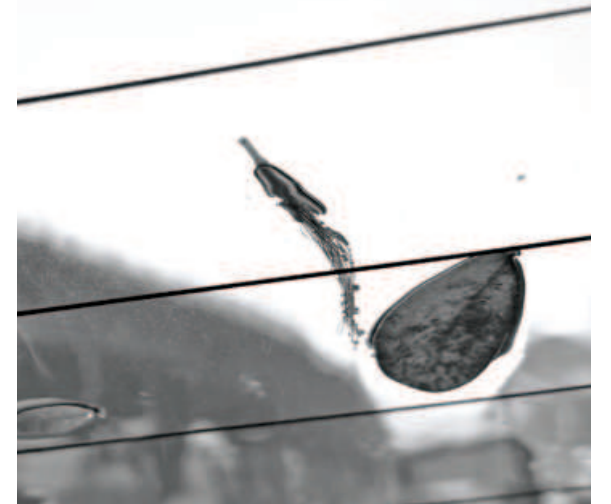
WHAT'S PLAYING

ADHAR

Adhar, the debut single from Azwaad Rajarshi's EP *Bhul Ronger Phul*, is a haunting exploration of darkness and light, both lyrically and visually.

Produced by Sinjan Saadat of the Mothership Records, the track is a melancholic, soothing blend of indie sensibilities and raw emotion. The lyrics, rich with imagery, paint a vivid picture of despair and longing, while the accompanying video, shot on a rainy day in Dhaka, complements the song's moody atmosphere.

Azwaad's voice, paired with the minimalistic production, creates an intimate experience that resonates with listeners, making *Adhar* a strong and memorable introduction to his craft.



Freedom of the press must be protected

Recent events show past excesses may recur if we are not careful

It is a testament to our unique times that journalists are having to fight against the same abuse and harassment that they did when an authoritarian government was in power. But it does hurt more now because of the expectations created by the student-led mass uprising that overthrew the Awami League government. We understand that the interim government that replaced it requires time to establish full control and effect change, but the responsibility to ensure a safe environment for journalists primarily falls on them, as well as the political and pressure groups active on the ground.

That it would not be smooth sailing for journalists after Sheikh Hasina's fall became clear on the very day, when at least eight TV channels and three newspaper offices in Dhaka were attacked. While many assumed these were spur-of-the-moment reactions and would not be repeated, subsequent events, especially on August 14-15, have upset the calculation. On August 14, as many as 20 journalists were injured when the Chattogram Press Club was attacked and ransacked. The same day, a journalist was hacked in Pirojpur. And on August 15, a number of journalists were assaulted and even made to delete photographs they had taken in Dhaka's Dhanmondi Road 32 on the occasion of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's death anniversary.

In fact, the scenes unfolding in Dhanmondi were quite disturbing, as young men interrogated pedestrians, checked their identity cards and phones, and also manhandled visitors who came to pay respects to Bangabandhu. They also prevented any documentation, with announcements being made over loudspeakers instructing journalists and spectators to refrain from filming. Many of these young men were armed with iron rods, plastic pipes, bamboo, and wooden sticks. These harsh measures were apparently part of efforts to prevent a so-called counter-coup by Awami League and allies, with BNP and its student wing staging sit-ins at various locations in Dhaka and the Students against Discrimination movement holding a "resistance week" programme. While none of them acknowledged responsibility for the harassment, it just goes to show how chaotic the situation is at the moment.

Clearly, it is not just media freedom that is at stake in such a situation; human rights in general are being violated, too. This is painful to see in the wake of an uprising that wanted to break people free from these very shackles of oppression and subjugation. It's apparent that fascism has not left the building even if the fascists have. The rights to publish, speak, organise or mourn are all inviolable ones. It was, however, heartening to see the student leaders vowing to protect these rights. At least four key coordinators of the students' movement have strongly condemned the excesses that occurred in Dhanmondi and elsewhere. They cautioned against "fake platforms" pretending to represent students and also pledged to expel anyone from their platform if found guilty of human rights violations.

We appreciate the swift and unequivocal condemnation. But it is important to remind the student leaders that they must be more cautious going forward. Other political forces that are now active and pushing their own agenda must also answer for any crimes committed in their names. Most importantly, the interim government must take stern actions to prevent such crimes, especially against journalists. Together, they must prevent a return to the same excesses that the past regime made a habit of committing.

Make city corps fully operational

Public services severely disrupted in the absence of mayors, councillors

We are quite concerned about the mounting suffering of people across the country due to the disruptions in services provided by city corporations and municipalities in the absence of their top functionaries. Reportedly, nine city mayors out of 12 are in hiding, while 205 municipal mayors out of 330 are also on the run. The situation is the same down the ladder, with 44 zila parishad chairmen out of 64 and 319 upazila parishad chairmen out of 495 also in hiding. In Dhaka, among the 129 councillors spread across both wings of the city, a staggering 118 are missing. Similar absences have also been noted in other cities as well.

These public representatives have gone into hiding after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5 in the face of a mass uprising led by students. Their escape, out of security concerns, is understandable since all of them were Awami League leaders, but it also shows how disastrously imbalanced the power structure was with an overwhelming majority of these important positions filled by one party, leaving little space for rival parties who could have served under the present circumstances. The mass escape has not only created a sudden power vacuum, but key services are also being disrupted, especially in city corporations and municipalities.

Among the services that residents get from city corporations are street lighting, waste management, mosquito control, birth and death registration, trade licensing, etc. In Dhaka, the responsibility of sewage management was also handed over to the city corporations. Many city roads still remain broken and unclean since August 5. Then there is the challenge of fighting dengue, which needs exemplary leadership given the debacle of last year's dengue season. There are many such issues and grievances that public representatives are expected to engage on and address.

Against this backdrop, we welcome the interim government's decision to give full mayoral responsibility to the chief executive officers of the city corporations, which will take care of the operational side of these institutions. We think the authorities should also make a decision about the municipalities and local parishads soon. Having administrative officers at the helm of these bodies comes with the expectation that they will perform better and more honestly than political recruits, who have repeatedly failed to address public grievances. That said, the need for having public representatives directly connected with the grassroots levels cannot be overemphasised, despite their questionable track records. Whatever the administration now does to weather these challenging times, it must ensure good governance.

How to ensure justice for the atrocities committed in the past

Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist. His X handle is @ahmedkam.



KAMAL AHMED

The Awami League regime, which sought global recognition as a model of governance, has ironically left behind a legacy marred by unprecedented brutality against its own citizens. The scale of state-sponsored violence and repression under Sheikh Hasina's rule rivals some of the worst autocracies in the world, like Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. Bangladesh is also a unique example where a military dictator, Gen HM Ershad, succeeded in resettling in a democratic political framework but a popular leader, who jointly led a movement for restoration of democracy, degraded herself by turning into a worse dictator.

The recent student-led uprising, evolving into a broader civilian insurrection, has been dubbed by some as the "Gen Z Revolution." However, lacking a coherent revolutionary agenda or a well-defined path for enacting fundamental change, this movement remains more of a chaotic and prolonged transition towards democracy than a fully fledged revolution. Consequently, the pursuit of justice for the regime's atrocities faces significant challenges.

In a true revolution, justice would be swift and uncompromising. Special tribunals or summary trials might have been established to address the crimes committed under Hasina's rule, and eventually under the rule of her predecessors. However, in a society aspiring to democracy and the rule of law, the process of ensuring justice becomes more complex. Fairness—both real and perceived—is paramount, and justice must not only be done but also be seen to be done.

At present, there is widespread anger as well as a clamour for accountability, particularly for those responsible for the deaths of at least 440 people, maiming of thousands, and false imprisonment of countless others in politically motivated cases. The challenge for the transitional government is immense, as it inherits a nation teetering on the brink of chaos and division. The economy has been devastated with billions of dollars

syphoned abroad by the deposed regime's cronies, while the civil service is riddled with corruption. Inflation is soaring, and unemployment is rampant. The security apparatus, weakened by the violent fallout of crackdowns on dissent, is struggling to maintain law and order.

Rebuilding the capacity of the police and other law enforcement forces to pre-regime levels could take years. In this context, conducting thorough investigations, preserving crucial evidence, and prosecuting powerful figures with significant followings will require not only strong political will, but substantial support from both domestic and international communities as well.

Before moving forward with prosecuting the crimes of the previous regime, several critical issues must be addressed. The public's demand for justice focuses on two key periods: the atrocities committed between July 15 and the establishment of the interim government, and the systemic repression that began when the former government dismantled democratic safeguards by abolishing the 13th Amendment of the constitution and suppressing the opposition. The violations during the former prime minister's rule—enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and custodial torture—constitute crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute.

Ensuring justice for these crimes will require bringing all responsible parties to account, from top political leaders to the enforcers on the ground. However, there is growing impatience among the victims' families, students, and human rights activists who are eager to see prosecutions initiated. While some individuals have already initiated legal action, these hasty private efforts risk failure due to insufficient evidence or lack of corroborating witnesses, which will politically benefit the perpetrators. The interim government must take decisive actions to develop a realistic prosecution strategy that can secure

convictions, particularly against the former prime minister and her top associates. Eventually, the same must be done to address crimes committed by the past regimes as well.

There are also discussions about potential prosecutions at the International Criminal Court (ICC) under the Rome Statute. Several human rights groups are preparing submissions to the ICC's chief prosecutor. As Bangladesh is a signatory to the Rome Statute, the ICC has jurisdiction over crimes committed within the country. However, international prosecutions are notoriously complex and require significant global support, which may not be forthcoming until all national legal avenues have been exhausted.

tradition of a hereditary leadership of the party.

The failure to bring Ershad to justice serves as a stark reminder of the challenges facing the country's judicial system. Prosecuting Sheikh Hasina, arguably the worst dictator in the nation's history, will be even more challenging and must be pursued before public memory fades. A promising development is the offer of assistance from UN human rights chief Volker Türk, who has proposed helping investigate the alleged crimes. The UN's expertise in evidence collection, preserving them, and prosecution support could prove invaluable, whether the trials occur at the ICC or in domestic courts.

Another possibility is the



The pursuit of justice for the regime's atrocities against students and citizens during the quota reform protests and the subsequent mass uprising faces significant challenges.

FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Law adviser Prof Asif Nazrul has suggested that Sheikh Hasina could be tried at the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for her role in the killings between July 1 and August 5 during the student-led movement. However, concerns remain about the ICT's reputation, given its past weaknesses during trials for crimes committed during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Additionally, remnants of the old regime and their sympathisers may attempt to undermine any legal proceedings. The biggest impediment, however, would be the revival of Awami League, unless it decides to break away from the

application of universal jurisdiction, which allows courts in any country to prosecute those responsible for atrocities, regardless of where the crimes were committed. This was the legal principle that led to the detention of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in the UK and subsequent return to his homeland, where he was convicted and eventually died in prison. While it is unlikely, even India could theoretically prosecute Hasina under universal jurisdiction, according to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984.

Mob justice goes against the spirit of the student movement

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MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

In recent weeks, our country has echoed with the triumphant cries of a movement sparked by students demanding the end of a repressive regime. As someone who stood shoulder to shoulder with these courageous individuals, I have felt the euphoria of our shared victory and the weight of our collective responsibility. The triumph was not just a political victory; it was a testament to the power of unity and the enduring spirit of resistance. But as we bask in its aftermath, a disturbing reality is surfacing: the rise of mob justice. Instead of celebrating our newfound freedom with dignity and respect, we are witnessing a troubling shift towards a new form of oppression, one that mirrors the injustices we once fought to eradicate.

I want to be clear: I am not here to belittle anyone or question their commitment to the cause. But as we stand on the threshold of a new era, it is imperative that we address the ways in which our movement's ideals are being compromised. If anything, history has taught us that the most dangerous threat to freedom is not always an external oppressor, but the internal corruption of the very ideals we fought to protect. In the wake of our triumph, some disturbing reports have surfaced—of so-called "representatives" of the movement seizing rooms once occupied by

oppressive leaders, of individuals being harassed and assaulted for their attire or political affiliations, of phones being checked and hotels being raided. This behaviour, cloaked in the guise of justice, is nothing more than a new form of oppression.

The essence of our movement

Instead of fostering a culture of tolerance, some of us have chosen to perpetuate a different kind of oppression, casting aside the very principles that fuelled our fight. It is crucial to recognise that true freedom is not merely the absence of tyranny, but the presence of equity and respect for all. The shift from people championing the anti-discrimination movement to some of them engaging in acts of mob justice represents a perilous deviation from our original mission.

was never solely about toppling a tyrannical regime, but about ushering in a new era of inclusivity and respect. Our cause was built on the promise of a society where discrimination would find no refuge and where every voice could be heard without fear. Yet, instead of fostering a culture of tolerance, some of us have chosen to perpetuate a different kind of oppression, casting aside the very principles that fuelled our fight. It is

crucial to recognise that true freedom is not merely the absence of tyranny, but the presence of equity and respect for all. The shift from people championing the anti-discrimination movement to some of them engaging in acts of mob justice represents a perilous deviation from our original mission. We must confront this shift head-on and reaffirm our commitment to the values that inspired us. I appreciate that the leaders of the anti-discrimination student movement addressed the recent incidents and made it known that these are reprehensible, unacceptable acts.

In a true democracy, criticism should not be equated with betrayal, but embraced as a necessary part of the

a pivotal moment. The decisions made now will shape the future of our society and determine whether we won't become the very power we sought to overthrow. It is time for courageous leadership that embraces the full spectrum of democratic principles, including the protection of individual rights and the encouragement of open discourse. The challenge before us is not just to avoid the pitfalls of authoritarianism, but to actively build a society that reflects the highest ideals of justice and equality. This requires more than just symbolic gestures; it demands substantive actions and a commitment to creating systems that promote transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. The revolution was not an end but a beginning—a chance to forge a new path and to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. True freedom is not a privilege for the few, but a right for all. Power must be used to uplift, not to oppress.

To the student leaders and coordinators who guided us through this historic struggle, I urge you to recognise the immense responsibility that comes with the power we have gained. You have the ability to set an example, to lead with integrity and ensure that the ideals we fought for are not lost in the process of rebuilding. When you first called for action, you sparked a fire within countless students who stood with you, ready to support the cause in any capacity. Now as you reform the political infrastructure, please remember the power and influence you hold over these students, and guide them so they can lead from the front to uphold the rule of law and ensure equity and justice for all. As we navigate this new era, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to the values that united us.

REVOLUTION AND EDUCATION

Some thoughts on the 'political' in universities

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SAMIA HUQ and SHAFIUL AZIZ

Much has changed since the all-out protests began in mid-July, galvanising an entire nation, from aggrieved mothers to despondent rickshaw pullers, to bring down a 15-year-old authoritarian regime. It was indeed people's power and it was infectious. The movement mobilised not only street agitation and online activism—forms of protest we are already familiar with—but also an unprecedented array of civic actions. While in the fervour of the moment when old binaries of young and old, right and left, and secularists and religionists converged, it seems urgent to consider how these convergences may play out in the transformation that is being called for.

At this moment, all eyes are on the interim government. The need to restore law and order, stabilise and grow the economy, and institute a robust political system and culture that do not fail again makes the tasks complex and onerous for the new government. How will the country recoup, regroup and rebuild? Eventually, when the country emerges from the transitory interim phase to a democratically elected one, will all that the revolution called for in spirit prevail in structures? How will inclusion be defined and what kinds of processes will ensure it? Experts will need to work out how the current phase and its policies are emboldened to achieve this desirable end.

Many are already talking about constitutional changes and mechanisms such as truth and reconciliation that might provide a means to political rectification. We may also look at the Arab Spring which sociology professor Asef Bayat refers to as "refolution"—a term referring to a phenomenon which resulted in neither revolution, nor reform—to draw lessons from and work towards the required redistributive justice to make the transformation meaningful. While experts work on the state apparatus, economy and political mechanisms, society also has a role to play. As a part of civil society, universities may play their part in this transition as universities

are the very sites where it all began.

Universities have long provided fertile grounds for student protests that have also taken on autocratic regimes in the past. However, public universities carry deep political fractures polarising both student and faculty bodies. They are now confronted with reform within and between students, faculty, and overall institutional governance. Private universities have been relatively free of

were a decade ago. The trickle-down effect of the neoliberal economy has enabled a broader class to invest in better education. Additionally, there is a generational shift towards prioritising higher spending on education. This diversity in class composition is equally reflected in differing opinions and stances on a variety of issues ranging from gender, religion, history and national identity. The fact that distinct groups have not yet

Universities that thrived on factional student politics need to ensure that the capital and collective energy do not fall into old structures and patterns of behaviour.

Whether public universities will ban politics altogether and how this will affect any possibility of its return later require careful thought and execution. Private universities, where national politics through student groups was not allowed,

collaborative action in many spheres of life, including engaging higher authorities with reason and purpose. It is this form of engagement that paves the way for societal changes. Universities that have responded appropriately to students' justified demands and universities that have formal or informal mechanisms of standing by students' rights to protest, are well placed to deepen their channels of student engagement in order to cultivate their collective and creative energy.

Last but not least, the classroom is of essence. Paolo Freire in *Pedagogies of the Oppressed* spoke of education as the seed for societal change, highlighting pedagogies in classrooms as the place to start. Freire argues that education must be redone to move away from a banking mode, where wisdom is deposited from teacher to student, to one where learning is born out of students being allowed to think outside the box. In this framework, the classroom is a place where "wisdom" is co-created and both teacher and student learn and teach each other new things. Enlivening a classroom with present-day realities, engaging students to think about them collectively, and allowing them the space to express their aspirations while guiding them through the ethical import of their thinking are how we retain the relevance of Freire today. As educators, we firmly believe that when such approaches to education are pursued, they provide the basis for healthy, inclusive societal change, and many students in this movement are surely richer for having received such an education.

As the country emerges from the revolution to rebuild, universities must deepen some of the good work they have done and rethink what has not worked. We have seen that students are capable of teaching themselves many things, including bringing down a regime. They must constantly remember what brought them together across many divides, including the public-private one, in order to arrive at the kernel and essence of this new politics. As the dust settles, universities must come forward with students to enunciate the new political and effective pathways to achieve its objectives. Students need university classrooms as much as classrooms need the students. We must embrace this relationship and do it through mutual respect so that our students remain the life force of the nation. It is urgent that we, as teachers and students, get back to our calling in education as co-learners towards the continued and arduous task of nation-building.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

deep political factionalism, partly by design. In recent years, they have resisted pressures to introduce student politics with the stated intent that students remain focused on academics. While this confirmed for many that private university students are placidly apolitical, their involvement in recent events proved otherwise. In fact, their participation in the July movement—propelled by their participation in earlier movements such as the 2015 No Vat on Education protests and the 2018 road safety movement—allow us to reconsider whether the old binaries of public and private hold anymore.

Private universities are now much more diverse in class composition than they

coalesced around these important issues has been a boon for the movement. The coming together to depose an autocratic regime could, therefore, not be prevented by the strength of or competition between distinct groups.

Such a position that is driven neither by discrete ideology nor through any particular party patronage has lived up to its potential of galvanising a nationwide movement. It is now imperative to wrestle with the challenges posed by the need to enunciate the new "political" in the nation and elsewhere. An important part of this wrestling lies in the recognition of the social capital formed through the coming together of students.

may strengthen some of the ways in which they have already been nurturing students' growth and promoting student-centricity. Students rising to the call of post-revolution clean-up and maintenance demonstrate civic engagement that universities who actively promote it can further harness. Embedding civic engagement into the curriculum and establishing university-wide networks that bring students together for the common good would be an excellent way to protect some of the social capital accrued from this movement.

As students engage societal problems and work collectively to address them, they learn by doing and preparing for

Universities must prepare for the transition of students



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
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SHAMSAD MORTUZA

In a recent circular, the education ministry asked all educational institutions to reopen and resume their activities. It is a curious call, to say the least, as all academic institutions have been technically open following the ISPR statement issued on August 5, the historic day of regime change. The resumption of classes, however, is a different ball game.

The traumatic memories of losing hundreds of lives due to unprecedented police brutality are still fresh in the public imagination. The resignation or forced removal of many institutional heads, including 19 vice-chancellors of public universities, has created a vacuum in academic leadership, further complicating the situation.

The challenges of reopening academic institutions, therefore, extend beyond simply unlocking their doors. While talking to our students, it was obvious that many of them are experiencing severe stress. Their mental state is a mix of grief, pride, and revolutionary zeal, which makes it difficult for them to return to any academic routine. While some are upbeat about the national duty that they have embraced to bring structural change to the system, many others have developed anxiety, depression or PTSD, requiring psychiatric help before they can effectively engage in their studies. Some of them are recovering from their injuries or undergoing medical treatment. There is also a growing tension between revolution supporters and former collaborators or supporters of the old administration, which has created mistrust and conflict among students. For example, the regular students who have returned to the dormitories of the public universities are adamant about resisting any

entry by their opponents.

The lack of leadership and the ongoing purges among staff and students are also not helpful in restoring normalcy. The makeshift administration can bring necessary modifications to academic schedules and lesson plans, but these could have long-term repercussions on students' academic and professional futures. No one knows how to undertake essential activities such as exam administration, curriculum



The students who led the charge for change have made an extraordinary contribution to our nation.

FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

planning, and the maintenance of academic standards, creating an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability. Private university students in a strict semester-based paid system may now face a graduation delay. The economic disruption may handicap many of the students from paying their fees and living expenses. It is possible that many public universities will see the return of session jams.

Those preparing for critical public or international exams such as HSC, O Levels and A Levels face additional pressure to meet deadlines.

The primary challenge lies in a mindset shift, however. Students seem unwilling to withdraw from public service or associated visibility. Their revolutionary achievements, such as graffiti, traffic control, and street-cleaning, are garnering significant media attention. Their resistance to the resumption of classes may stem from a supposed compromise with their revolutionary drive. Perhaps they fear that their withdrawal at this stage may leave their calls for change incomplete, and some old politicians could return with vengeance. The environment is polarising. Reopening educational services will require a sophisticated strategy that prioritises rebuilding leadership, providing psychological

can regain a sense of normalcy, purpose, and direction. Students can critically reflect on their actions and activism during these counselling sessions to renew their sense of purpose.

It will require a lot of tact for us to deal with the students, who were previously known to be generally apolitical but are now politically charged. Their desire for "cleansing" operations targeting peers and faculty members believed to be complicit with the previous regime will require deft and professional handling. This is a delicate topic, and institutions must inform their staff to deal with the atmosphere of distrust and retribution. If needed, the University Grants Commission (UGC) or other teachers' associations can organise workshops on creating a congenial educational environment where unity and mutual respect are essential. Faculty members, too, must approach students with understanding and patience, recognising the immense stress and trauma they have experienced. Faculties should adjust academic expectations to accommodate the students' current emotional state, and provide guidance and mentorship to help them navigate this challenging transition.

To support students effectively, educational institutions must implement trauma-informed teaching practices and provide resources to help students heal and succeed. Creating safe spaces on campus for open dialogue and fostering understanding among students is crucial. If needed, universities should also establish partnerships with their alumni bodies and social organisations to provide additional support services, such as housing, food security, and legal assistance. Some of the universities have already named some of their installations after the martyred students or held memorial services to begin the healing process.

Students have done their part in bringing a positive change. The onus is now on us to channel the revolutionary zeal that fuelled the protests into constructive efforts to build a more inclusive and tolerant

academic community. The students' ability to foster reconciliation and solidarity in the aftermath of removing a tyrant will measure the true victory of their movement. This is the time to set aside differences and work together to ensure that institutions can resume their vital role in shaping the future leaders of our nation.

Reopening universities is not just about resuming academic activities, but about rebuilding them as centres of learning, healing, and unity. As members of the

academic community, we must rise to the challenge of rebuilding our institutions with the same courage and determination that fuelled the revolution. The students who led the charge for change have already made an extraordinary contribution to our nation. They must now return to classroom to continue their activism, not retreat from it. By resuming their studies, students will equip themselves with the knowledge and skills necessary to guide our country into a new era of justice and prosperity.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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DOWN

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AUGUST 3 ANSWERS



Write for us. Send your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

JULY 36

A win for the youth

AZRA HUMAYRA

On a Wednesday that history will not soon forget, the High Court rendered its verdict: the October 4, 2018, notification, which had hastily terminated the Freedom Fighter quota in first and second-class government employment, was declared illegal. It was June 5, a day that will be remembered throughout history—the kind of occasion that future generations will point to as the spark that set off the events that occurred just two months later. A day that will leave an indelible impression on us, compelling us to read the pages of history books to comprehend the chain reaction of events that it triggered.

When I joined the protest on July 7, a familiar surge of purpose welled up within me. It was a flashback to 2018 when I stood shoulder to shoulder with thousands, demanding safer roads, a movement that felt like a moral imperative. This time, the stakes were different, but no less important. We were battling for fair representation, insisting on a redistribution of power that did not leave the majority in the dark. What we wanted was reformation, a restructure that would finally allow our voices to be heard in the halls of power rather than drowned out by the noise of the status quo.

After the verdict was handed down on June 5, the students began their protests the following day, though it

our collective memory as a day of profound horror. On that day, the goons of the Bangladesh Chhatra League descended upon the protesting students with a fury that was as brutal as it was unprovoked. I was at the Dhaka University campus that day, and the scenes I witnessed are not ones that will fade from my mind anytime soon. This wasn't just the reality for the students of Dhaka University; it was the reality for students across the nation. The tragic death of Abu Sayed marked one of the first martyrdoms of the protest, and from July 16 onwards, the bloodshed spread throughout Bangladesh. The very soil of the nation was painted red.

By July 19, we were entirely cut off from the outside world, as the government imposed a curfew and shut down internet services. Life carried on in an eerie semblance of normalcy, even as the media spun a narrative that now seems almost laughable in hindsight. For the first time in recent years, I found myself grateful for my newspaper subscription, as it offered a sliver of the truth amidst the boom of state propaganda. On July 21, the Supreme Court dramatically reduced the number of government positions reserved for war veterans and their descendants, and the authorities, in their arrogance, believed that the students' demands had been met. They expected the protesters to go home without ever acknowledging the lives

of people poured out to celebrate a hard-fought victory, marking the end of an era that had come at an unspeakable cost.

From the battle for quota reforms to the toppling of a government, July was a month marked by both triumph and tragedy. Unsurprisingly, August 5 is called July 36. Never before has an uprising in Bangladesh witnessed such a staggering loss of life in such a short span of time—a fact that renders this victory all the more torturous and historic.

It was the demise of a regime that failed to heed the voices of its youth, a regime brought to its knees by a

When I joined the protest on July 7, a familiar surge of purpose welled up within me. It was a flashback to 2018 when I stood shoulder to shoulder with thousands, demanding safer roads, a movement that felt like a moral imperative. This time, the stakes were different, but no less important.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

wasn't until July 1 that they truly took to the streets. The movement gained momentum as other universities joined the cause on July 3. When their demands continued to fall on deaf ears, the students called for the 'Bangla Blockade,' a move that effectively brought the country to a standstill. Yet even this drastic measure failed to compel the authorities to take them seriously. July 14 marked the beginning of the end when former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a press conference, ignited a firestorm with her words: "If the grandchildren of the freedom fighters don't get quota benefits, should the grandchildren of Razakars get the benefit?" This incendiary remark set the nation ablaze, and the students, wounded and indignant, began to cry out, "Chaito gelam odhikar, hoye gelam razakar"—we demanded our rights, and now we're branded traitors.

July 15 will forever be etched in

lost in their quest to be heard.

When the internet finally flickered back to life on July 23, I was confronted with the full scale of the atrocities that had been unfolding while I had been fed the state's narrative. The true horrors—deaths, injuries, police brutality, block raids, mass arrests, and the so-called 'protection' offered to coordinators by the police—became impossible to ignore. What had started as a protest had evolved into a full-blown uprising.

The success of the 'Drahajatra' on August 2 united the masses with the students, and suddenly, the entire nation had coalesced around a single demand: the resignation of the Prime Minister. August 4 saw the deaths of another 114 people, yet even this arbitrary use of force could not quell the spirit of the people. On August 5, the day we had reserved for the 'Long March,' Sheikh Hasina finally stepped down, bringing an end to her over 15-year reign. The streets erupted as waves

movement that began with students but swiftly evolved into a nationwide outcry. The popular outrage was fuelled by a litany of grievances: rampant corruption, grotesque economic disparity, soaring commodity prices, mass disenfranchisement, and the erosion of democratic institutions. Yet, despite the overwhelming force wielded against them, the students' resolve remained unbroken. Their spirit, undeterred by brutality, formed into a vow to combat injustice and ignorance, igniting a movement that would alter the course of the nation's history.

Reading articles, I have seen authors compare the uprising with the 1968 protest that erupted from the Sorbonne in France. Television shows sometimes have gone so far as to label demonstrators as 'French' in their spirit of resistance. But to compare the struggle of Bangladesh's youth to a mere echo of past movements is to overlook the extraordinary passion with which they fought—a passion unparalleled by any previous uprising. One French slogan, *Sois Jeune et Tais Toi*—"Be Young and Shut Up"—became a rallying cry for a generation demanding the right to be heard.

Bangladeshi students had similar objectives; they wanted to live in a country where they could use their rights without fear of retribution. Historians will write about the new Bangladesh, but it is critical to remember that it originated from the dreams and hopes of a generation that refused to be silent.

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PHOTOS: STAR

The streets will remember

Following August 5, as no traffic policemen were found on duty on the roads, students took charge of traffic management in different parts of the capital, as well as various other parts of the country, as volunteers. The country will forever be indebted to its student populace for the role it has played during these trying times.



OPINION

Chaos, uncertainty, and our newfound social awareness



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement has been a resounding success, as evident by the resignation of the Sheikh Hasina-led government. The interim government has been sworn in, and hopes of reformation are running rife throughout the whole country. Of course, the anticipated moment of truth came at a great price with rampant vandalism and looting following suit, and the most shameful of all, attacks on minorities and their properties.

As the lives and properties of religious minorities, especially the Hindu community of Bangladesh, were under threat, the general population wasted no time in coming forward to offer their protection and aid. With the police being on strike, students of Bangladesh took to regulating traffic. Initiatives were also taken and executed for cleaning up different areas, including the parliament building. Last but not the least, this movement has inspired an unprecedented level of social consciousness and made way for open conversations surrounding various pressing matters.

The movement has attempted, from time to time, to make room for the voices of minorities and their sufferings. While activists have been vocal in calling for the demilitarisation of Chittagong Hill Tracts for some time, the issue is finally gaining much needed traction among the youth. The notion "none of us are free until all of us are free" is circulating all over social media, expressing solidarity with the indigenous people of Bangladesh whose rights have been violated for decades now.

The abduction of human rights activist Kalpana Chakma in 1996 was spoken of with reverence, and as a symbol of struggle and resistance. The youth has rightfully adopted the belief that the total reform of Bangladesh we all seek cannot be achieved without protecting the lives and lands of indigenous communities.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement has exposed many underlying issues in the system. The murder of Sagar-Runi; seventeen-year-old Tanvir Mohammad Toki; Avijit Roy, activist and founder of the internet blogging community *Mukto-Mona*; Sohagi Jahan Tonu,

a student who was raped and murdered within the Cumilla Cantonment area—have resurfaced holding the regime accountable for its lack of transparency.

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement has also made space for conversations surrounding class consciousness. Class consciousness refers to the subjective awareness of a social class, typically the working class, of their shared interests, and the need for collective action to achieve change. It helps us understand how to fight back against exploitation and put aside differences to protect our rights.

This movement has shown us a picture of unity within the social classes that we've only read about in the history of the Liberation War. People from the working class, such as rickshaw pullers,

As the lives and properties of religious minorities, especially the Hindu community of Bangladesh, were under threat, the general population wasted no time in coming forward to offer their protection and aid. With the police being on strike, students of Bangladesh took to regulating traffic.

shopkeepers, electricians and construction workers came forward in helping the protesters. In turn, donation links and crowdfunding were arranged for martyred or injured members of the working class. Not to mention, people engaged in constructive conversations about the unjust treatment suffered by the working class and the need for their voices to have a platform.

This movement has not only caused us, the youth of Bangladesh, to be more socially and politically aware, it has also helped us understand how important it is for representatives of all communities to have a voice. Amidst the chaos and uncertainty that seems to have taken over the country, our newfound social awareness remains a sliver of hope for a better future.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Nazmul 'wants to resign', but what's next for BCB?

SPORTS REPORTER

Word around the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is that Nazmul Hassan Papon has informed one of the directors that he is in favour of resigning as board president. Many other directors, however, claimed to have no knowledge of the president's wish.

It is understood that the BCB president is currently in London. Many of the board directors are untraceable since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, and those that are there, are facing a crisis.

BCB sources told The Daily Star on Thursday that one of the board directors got in touch with Nazmul and has been told that the board president is ready to cooperate.

"I have heard that Papon bhai told one of our directors that he wants to cooperate. I have not talked to the BCB president directly. I have only heard that he is ready to cooperate but haven't heard of resigning," a BCB director told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury could not be reached over phone at the time of filing this report.

A few BCB directors who are still present, have informed this newspaper that they have asked for a guideline on how to go on about their proceedings from relevant authorities. "What would be best is that if a guideline comes from the interim government that's in our constitution and within ICC's legal framework, it would be good for us," one BCB director said on condition of anonymity yesterday.

"We are still waiting for that guideline," another director said.

According to the BCB constitution, only the BCB president or a vice president can call for a board meeting. Despite there being provision for two vice-presidents in the current constitution, the BCB did not appoint any. Thus under the current circumstances, a board meeting cannot be called unless the BCB president himself communicates to the BCB CEO that he wants to resign and calls for a meeting



even if he is absent from the meeting. He can also appoint a board director as vice-president in his absence and then the vice-president can call a meeting.

The resignation will then have to be approved or rejected by the board.

If a resignation comes from the president, elections are the likely due

process and will have to be called since there is nothing in the BCB constitution regarding an interim body.

The BCB president can also communicate and call for a board meeting to appoint two vice-presidents through elections among the 25 directors.

The other way to resolve the current scenario in absence of key figureheads is through the National Sports Council, who can appoint two new directors in place of the ones currently in place. The two new NSC directors can then be appointed as vice-presidents through a meeting to resolve the crisis at the board.

Along with the present scenario in the board, the fate of the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup, originally scheduled to be played in Bangladesh, hangs in the balance. Following an initial August 15 deadline, there is not much time left for ICC to make a decision. For the board, the guideline it seeks would clarify what moves it can make to resurrect Bangladesh's chances of hosting the tournament.

Inter's bid to maintain Serie A status quo starts

REUTERS

Inter Milan begin their Serie A title defence this weekend with a trip to Genoa, looking to get off to another bright start as they bid to become the first team to retain the Scudetto since Juventus in 2020.

That was Juve's ninth consecutive league title but since then the Italian top flight has become a lot less predictable with Inter (twice), AC Milan and Napoli all tasting success. Now, Inter hope to carve out their own period of domination.

In order to do that, Inter will want to make a similar start to last season, where they began with five consecutive wins to hit the top of the table early on, and they have the advantage of continuity on their side.

Simone Inzaghi is still at the helm, whereas their likely rivals all have a new man on the bench. AC Milan brought in Paulo Fonseca and Juventus have Thiago Motta in charge, while Antonio Conte is the man looking to take Napoli back to the top.



Inter have been relatively quiet so far in the transfer market and their main business has been bringing in Polish midfielder Piotr Zielinski and Iranian forward Mehdi Taremi on free transfers.

Zielinski will not be available for Inter's opening games because of injury but Taremi should be on the bench for the trip to Genoa on Saturday and ready to give Lautaro Martinez a chance to rest after his Copa America exploits with winners Argentina last month.

Last season, Inter were held to a 1-1 draw at Genoa at the end of December and Alberto Gilardino is another manager hoping for a repeat of his side's previous campaign.

Genoa were a newly promoted side last time out and more than held their own as they finished the season in a respectable 11th place, but they are expected to find it tougher going this season and avoiding relegation will be the target.

Against Inter, Genoa could struggle for goals with many of their forwards unavailable, and they have also lost striker Mateo Retegui to Atalanta.

Vitinha will likely start, as Gilardino will be without Caleb Ekuban and David Ankeye, and their top scorer from last season, Albert Gudmundsson, could also be an absentee. He is heavily linked with a move away before the transfer window closes.

Milan begin life under Fonseca with a home game against Torino on Saturday and new signing Alvaro Morata, fresh from captaining Spain to Euro 2024 success, will lead the attack.

Motta impressed at Bologna last season, leading them to a top-five finish and Champions League football, but the pressure will be much greater at Juventus.

It should be an interesting start for the new man as his side host newly promoted Como on Monday, a team managed by Cesc Fabregas.

Como have been busy in the transfer market bringing in Spanish keeper Pepe Reina and his compatriot, defender Alberto Moreno, along with striker Andrea Belotti.

Napoli will look to bounce back from their dismal attempt to defend their title last season, when they finished 10th, and life under Conte begins at Hellas Verona on Sunday.

BPL in limbo as Sk Jamal, Sk Russel set to miss out



ANISUR RAHMAN

Troubles for the forthcoming season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) have deepened further as two top clubs - three-time BPL champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and treble winners Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra - are seemingly set to miss the upcoming edition.

It has been learnt that Bashundhara Group, which used to sponsor both clubs, has backed out as financiers, leaving the sides without a sponsor with just three days left in the transfer window.

Players and coaches of Sheikh Russel KC and Sheikh Jamal DC have confirmed that the clubs will not compete in the forthcoming season, however, no officials from Bashundhara nor from the two clubs could be reached for confirmation.

"The officials who usually handle the forming of the squad for Sheikh Russel, told us about a week ago that they won't form a squad," said a coach who was supposed to be part of Sheikh Russel's coaching staff, seeking anonymity.

National team defender Rahmat Mia, who was supposed to join Sheikh Russel from Abahani, said, "The day after the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, some 20-25 players were kicked out of a Whatsapp group which was the main medium of communication among players, officials and coaches.

"Since then, we have no idea whether Sheikh Russel are going to play or not. No one from the club has officially communicated with us though some 20 to 25 players have signed contracts and have received token money ranging between Tk 5-10 lakh from the club," he said.

It has been learned that Sheikh Russel director-in-charge Ismat Jamil Akhond has been trying to form the squad after Bashundhara pulled out as sponsor but the information could not be verified as he did not respond to repeated calls and text messages from The Daily Star.

Alamgir Mollah, another defender who was supposed to join Sheikh Russel from Abahani, said, "I'm really confused. They once said they will not play, but then they said they will play but haven't taken

any visible steps. They are not acting professionally."

Sheikh Jamal midfielder Atiqur Rahman Fahad, who was set to continue with the club this season, said, "Yesterday [Thursday], the club informed us that they won't form a squad."

Both clubs have a regular feature in the BPL, with Sheikh Russel breaking into top-flight football in the 2003-04 season and Sheikh Jamal returning to the top tier in 2010 and remaining there ever since.

According to BPL regulations, both Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal would get demoted to the Bangladesh Championship League next season if they don't compete in this year's BPL.

Both clubs are named after sons of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and brothers of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled the country on August 5 in the face of a massive uprising.

It has also been learned that Sheikh Jamal officials want to revert the club to its previous name, Dhanmondi Club, but could not do so this season as the club is

already registered as Sheikh Jamal DC. It had adopted its current name in 2010.

Chittagong Abahani are also at risk of missing the next season as team manager Arman Aziz has failed to communicate with club high-ups since the ouster of the Awami League government.

"I will again try to communicate with them [high-ups] tonight [Friday] and if I can't, I will inform the players that Chittagong Abahani will not form a squad," said the former national footballer.

The remaining nine BPL clubs are trying to complete the players' registration formalities before the deadline though most clubs are struggling to manage the funds.

The players of Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal are searching for new teams and many of them have reached out to Brothers Union manager Amer Khan.

"How many players can we sign? I think all clubs should play this season without foreign players and accommodate those 50-60 players," said Amer, who is also BFF executive committee member.

Will Arteta's unique methods do the trick this time?

AFP, London

Arsenal will begin their Premier League campaign at home against Wolves on Saturday, hoping for their manager Mikel Arteta's unique methods - which involved hiring a group of pickpockets to teach his players a valuable lesson - to stay with the troops for the entirety of the season.

Arteta's side suffered an agonising end to last season as City pipped them to the trophy by just two points on the final day.

That painful near miss came 12 months after the Gunners allowed City to snatch the 2022/23 title from their grasp after squandering an eight-point lead.

Rather than dull his appetite for success, those blows inspired Arteta to take his already obsessive attention to detail to new heights as he chases Arsenal's first league title in 21 years.

With that in mind, Arteta secretly tasked a team of professional pickpockets with taking phones and wallets during a dinner with his players.

At the end of the meal, he asked the squad to empty their pockets and they immediately realised they were missing valuable items.

The exercise was done to teach them of the importance of being alert at all times, on and off the pitch.

Arteta, who is no stranger to using creative ideas in a bid to motivate his players, brought an olive tree into a team meeting last season, describing the players as the branches and the staff as the roots.

But the 42-year-old's admirable ability to think outside the box has yet to deliver a prize that is beyond the reach of even his pickpockets.


And for the likes of Martin Odegaard, Bukayo Saka, Declan Rice, and William Saliba to earn themselves a place in the club's hall of fame alongside the "Invincibles" of Arsene Wenger who brought the club's last title in an unbeaten 2003-04 season, they would need to acquire the abilities of being so aware that no one would be able to steal anything from them - be it from their pockets or from their grasps.




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STUDENT PROTESTS

Hasina, Quader sued over killing of schoolteacher

99 AL leaders and activists also made accused in the case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Another murder case was filed against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina in Bogura yesterday. With this, she has been sued in a total of five murder cases.

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader was also among the 100 other AL leaders and activists sued in the case filed with Bogura Sadar Police Station.

The case was filed over the killing of Selim Hossain, a 35-year-old school teacher and a resident of Palikanda village in Shibganj upazila, on August 4.

Selim was an assistant teacher at Muril Light High School in Kahaloo upazila.

Sikandar Hossain, the victim's father, filed the case around 2:00am, the police station's Officer-in-Charge Saihan Oliullah told The Daily Star.

On August 4, the day before Hasina resigned and fled the country in the face of a student-led mass uprising, Selim joined the student protest in Bogura's Satmatha area.

At that time, AL leaders and activists swooped on the protesters and hacked Selim to death with sharp weapons, according to the case statement.

Selim's brother, Uzzal Hossain, told The Daily Star

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A portion of Hatkhola road in Old Dhaka's Tikatuli is in a bad state. Underground utility lines were installed around three months ago, but the road was not restored properly, causing problems for the users. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Sacked army officer Ziaul arrested

Court places him on 8-day remand

STAR REPORT

Controversial army officer Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, who was sacked from the service a day after the fall of the Hasina-led government amid an uprising, was arrested on Thursday night from the capital's Khilkhet area.



Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed him on an eight-day remand in a case filed over the death of Shahjahan, a shopkeeper, in the New Market area during the quota reform protest on July 16.

The next day, Ayesha Begum, the mother of the victim, lodged a murder case against some unnamed assailants.

Salman F Rahman, private industry and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

HARASSMENT ON AUGUST 15

It's violation of human rights: Sarjis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sarjis Alam, a key organiser of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, has condemned the attacks and harassment during the observance of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's death anniversary as violations of human rights.



Hundreds of people, many armed with sticks, obstructed people from going to the historic Dhanmondi 32 residence of Bangabandhu to pay their respects on the 49th anniversary of the independence hero and the massacre of his family.

Journalists, along with citizens, were barred from filming or taking photos of the incidents.

Speaking to the media at Dhaka University's Amar Ekushey Hall yesterday,

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'Cementing the revolution main focus'

Student protesters say they are not considering floating political party right now

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement is currently focussing on solidifying the revolution earned through a mass uprising rather than floating their own political party.

Nahid Islam, a key coordinator of the platform, which spearheaded the movement that ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, said in a Facebook post yesterday that the purpose of the mass uprising was not to form a political party.

"Right now, we need to support the families of the wounded and martyred and preserve the spirit of reform, nation-building, and national unity. The students and the interim government will work towards that goal."

He added that the abolition of the fascist system and a new political order were part of the one-point demand, and that requires significant effort and political initiative.

"We want to shape the future of Bangladesh through discussions and dialogue with the people...The students will act as a socio-political force to preserve the spirit of the revolution and the government will work towards restructuring the state in accordance to the people's aspirations."

The issue of the formation of a political party by the students came to the fore after Reuters yesterday reported that they were considering creating their own party to cement in place reforms.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Mahfuj Alam,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israel orders fresh evacuations in Gaza

Drops warning flyers in Khan Younis; ceasefire talks paused with resumption planned next week

AGENCIES

The Israeli army ordered a fresh evacuation of areas in southern and central Gaza previously designated as a humanitarian safe zone yesterday, saying the areas had been used by Hamas as a base for firing mortars and rockets towards Israel.

It said warning flyers and text messages had been sent out in the area north of the southern city of Khan Younis and in the eastern part of Deir Al-Balah, where tens of thousands of people have sought shelter from fighting in other parts of Gaza.

"The advance warning to civilians is being issued in order to mitigate harm to the civilian population and to enable civilians to move away from the combat zone," the military said in a statement.

Earlier the military said it had hit an area in Khan Younis from where rockets were fired towards the community of Kissufim on Thursday, finding weapons including shoulder-fired missiles and explosives.

The latest evacuation warnings came as ceasefire talks in Doha were paused yesterday with negotiators set to meet again next week in search of an agreement to end fighting

between Israel and Hamas and free remaining hostages, mediators said.

In a joint statement, the United States, Qatar and Egypt said Washington had presented a new proposal that built on points of agreement over the past week, closing gaps between the sides in a way that could allow rapid implementation of a deal.

- New US proposal builds on previous agreements
- Hamas rejects 'new conditions' in proposed deal
- Death toll in Gaza rises to 40,022

Mediators would continue to work on the proposal in coming days, they said. Hamas will not accept "new conditions" from Israel in a proposal put forward during talks in Doha, officials told AFP.

Israel, meanwhile, pressed its assault on Gaza. The Hamas-run health ministry said the military strikes across the enclave

killed at least 17 Palestinians yesterday. Among them, at least six Palestinians were killed on Thursday night in an Israeli air strike on a house in Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza Strip.

Israeli troops earlier hit targets in the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis. In a statement issued late on Thursday on Telegram, Hamas politburo member Hossam Badran said Israel's continuing operations were an obstacle to progress on a ceasefire, reports Reuters.

Thai MPs elect Shinawatra heiress as PM

AFP, Bangkok

The 37-year-old daughter of billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra became Thailand's prime minister yesterday, the third member of the influential but divisive clan to lead the country.



Paetongtarn Shinawatra — the youngest leader in Thailand's history as a constitutional monarchy and the second woman premier after her aunt Yingluck — assumes office after two court rulings that threw the kingdom's politics into turmoil.

She will hope to avoid the fate of her father and aunt, both of whom were ousted as PM by the army during a two-decade power struggle between Thaksin and the kingdom's conservative pro-military, pro-royalist establishment.

Lawmakers approved Paetongtarn of the Pheu Thai party as premier by 319 votes to 145, House of Representatives Speaker Wan Muhamad Noor Matha said on live TV. Paetongtarn said she was "very honoured and happy".

"I really hope that I can make people feel confident. I hope to improve the quality of lives and empower all Thais," she told reporters.

"I decided that it's about time to do something for the country and the party. I hope that I can do my best to make the country go forward."

Pakistan logs first mpox case

China takes precautions as fears of global spread grow

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan said yesterday it had confirmed a case of mpox, a day after Sweden recorded the first infection outside of Africa involving a new, more dangerous strain of the virus that has killed hundreds in the DR Congo.

China said yesterday it will begin screening people and goods entering the country for mpox over the next six months.

The mpox surge in Africa — which has also affected Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda — prompted the World Health Organization on Wednesday to declare a public health emergency of international concern, the highest alarm it can sound.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Palestinians flee with their belongings from Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip to a safer place yesterday after Israel issued a new evacuation order.

PHOTO: AFP

Archaeologists find 'hidden empire' in long-lost Roman city

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Archaeologists in Spain have uncovered a trove of ancient Roman settlements that could point to the existence of a "hidden empire" previously unknown to historians.



When researchers from University of Cadiz embarked on their exploration in the Guadalete area in 2023, they only expected to find a few remnants of Roman influence.

Instead, they unearthed 57 sites revealing a complex interconnected web of settlements that may reshape the understanding of Roman history in the area.

The sites were scattered across the Spanish regions of Arcos de la Frontera, Bornos Villamartin and Puerto Serrano and were originally linked by trade and communication routes along the Guadalete river.

Experts believe the sheer number of settlements and their strategic locations suggest the area was far more significant during the Roman era than previously thought.

As part of the ambitious project, the team employed cutting-edge technology, including ground-penetrating radar to detect structures buried beneath the surface.



PHOTO: STAR



FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

Women's role in TOPPLING THE GOVT

MASHFIQ MIZAN

A female student, her face streaked with blood, pleads with Chhatra League activists to stop the relentless beatings.

Another lies alone on the ground, surrounded by the taunting faces of Awami League supporters. Two others, sprinting for their lives as BCL members chase them, brandishing rods and sticks.

These were some of the many scenes that emerged from Dhaka University on July 15, when AL and BCL activists attacked quota reform protesters.

Sanjana Afifa, a resident student of Shamsunnahar Hall at DU, said, "Once they [BCL members] spotted us, they lunged towards us and threw brick chunks. We tried to hide, but they hunted us down... At one point, I hid inside a bus and heard the attackers screaming, 'You are razakar (collaborators of the Pakistani army)'. Many of those hiding with me were dragged out and beaten."

The attackers, nearly 500 BCL activists, targeted female students. Their main goal was to prevent the participation of women in the quota reform protest.

But the strategy backfired. The country was outraged, and instead of retreating, the female students rose stronger.

They returned to the protests the next day with a newfound determination.

The movement, which began as a protest against an unfair quota system, evolved into something much greater eventually.

From the beginning of the protests on July 5 to the day Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign and flee on August 5, female students were at the forefront of the movement.

Some scenes from the protests have become emblematic of the resistance. In front of the Supreme Court, a lone female student stood defiantly before a prison van, using her bare hands to stop it from driving away with her detained friends.

Tangila Tasnim, a resident of Ruqayyah Hall at DU, joined the protests on July 5 not because she aimed to secure a government job, but to ensure fairness for those who did.

"It was all peaceful until Sheikh Hasina called us razakars. We could not accept it," she said.

The female dormitories of DU generally get locked within 10:00pm.

But on July 14, after Hasina's controversial press conference, at least 700 Ruqayyah Hall students broke the gates of the dorm at 11:30pm and took to the streets. Students from all the female dormitories then joined in at midnight.

But on July 15, Tangila and her friends were

targeted and assaulted by BCL members.

They returned the next day armed with pepper spray and sticks.

On July 16 night, Ruqayyah Hall became the first to chase away BCL leaders, rest of the female dorms followed, eventually setting off a wave of similar actions across all male halls.

"Dhaka University dormitories were bastions of BCL for 15 long years. What the female students started [chasing BCL away] was unthinkable even a few hours before it actually happened," Tangila said.

The next day, the campus was besieged by police, BGB, and Rab. A sudden directive ordered the evacuation of all dorms.

Tangila, who was off-campus at the time, managed to sneak back in, pack her belongings, and join a protest near the Mall Chattar.

However, when the procession reached the DU public library, it was met with tear gas and sound grenades from the police.

Tangila first took refuge in Kalabhaban, then at Jashim Uddin Hall.

Then police started firing in front of the dormitories. Tangila narrowly escaped rubber bullets and shotgun pellets.

"I thought I would be killed," she recalled, as she fled her campus under a hail of gunfire.

She sought refuge in houses of two former DU students. She could not leave Dhaka as the country turned into a warzone by then.

On August 3, Tangila left Dhaka for her home in Rajshahi, hiding her student ID card throughout the journey, fearing it had become a mark of criminality.

She believed she might never return to Dhaka, but then, on August 5, Sheikh Hasina resigned. Tangila said, "Sheikh Hasina resigned, and I got my normal life back."

Nourin Sultana Toma, a Dhaka University student, joined the quota reform protests on July 5. After BCL attacked students on July 15, Toma was forced to return home to Savar.

"However, after I saw the video of Abu Sayed being shot dead by police on July 16, I was outraged. I knew the Hasina government must go. I told my parents I had work, left home, and called them from campus, saying I wouldn't return until we got justice for the murder," Toma recalled how she rejoined the

protests.

After the brutal clear-out of the campus, Toma sought refuge in Azimpur Government Colony, in a sublet flat.

On July 18, when law enforcers opened fire on protesters outside the colony, Toma retreated but found her building's gate locked.

She took shelter in another building, where she and others tended to the wounded.

The violence continued the next day.

Sensing the imminent threat of arrest as curfews and internet shutdowns gripped the city, Toma left Azimpur for Savar.

"The night I left, a block raid happened, my room was searched by police. They arrested some of my female friends who stayed back and warned flat owners not to rent to students anymore."

Back in Savar, Toma joined the protests at Jahangirnagar University.

She painted graffiti demanding Hasina's resignation.

On August 4, following a call for a march to Dhaka



as well as students from Jahangirnagar University, private universities, schools, colleges, and even rickshaw pullers, should be recognised and celebrated.

Mifthaul Janat Mithila, a college student, joined the protests after witnessing BCL activists attacking protesters at Dhaka University.

"After finishing our HSC exam on July 15, I saw pictures of our senior sisters being beaten by BCL men. I couldn't just sit back. I joined the protests the very next day," she recalled.

"I saw people being killed, my friends being arrested, police shooting at us. But we did not back down," she said.

Sazzad Hosain, another college student, said he fell unconscious after BCL members attacked him in the Science Lab area.

"When I regained consciousness, I found myself in a city hospital, being cared for by female students. They brought me there, risking their lives. If they hadn't, I would have bled to death."

His friend, Al Fahad, said after being attacked and handed over to the police by BCL, he was saved by female students who intervened.

"The police were trying to take me away, but some apus [sisters] arrived like angels and

held onto me tightly. They didn't let me go."

'MOTHERS OF MARTYRS'

On July 19, as the BGB fired live bullets at protesters in the Bansree and Rampura areas, many women, mostly mothers, acted as human shields to protect the students.

These women provided first aid and water to students, and also took the injured to hospitals. When the student dormitories were cleared and block raids began, they opened their homes to protesters, offering shelter.

Many mothers also lost their children since July 18.

Selina Begum, the mother of 18-year-old son Shawon, who was shot dead by BGB in Rampura, said, "My son died a martyr. I am a proud mother."

Similarly, Yasina Akhter, whose 16-year-old son Ahmed Imran was killed by BGB in Narayanganj, said, "I am proud to be a mother of a martyr."

FACES OF THE REVOLUTION

Nusrat Tabassum is one of the six protest coordinators who was detained by the DB without formal charges and coerced into making a statement to withdraw all protest programmes.

On the night of July 19, DB officers entered her home without a warrant, she said.

They detained her and subjected her to severe physical and mental torture over six days, using intimidation tactics to extract statements.

Eventually, after starting a hunger strike in protest, Nusrat and the others were informed they would be released, she added.

On the protests of July 14 against Hasina's statement, she said, "That night, we didn't expect all the female students to gather in just a few minutes. The consensus among the women was clear: if the male students were barred from coming out of their halls by BCL, we would break the male dormitories locks and get our brothers out."

"When we gathered at Raju Sculpture, there were only a handful of male students present. We marched to the VC's office, and eventually, the male students joined us. We returned to the hall around 2:00am."

On July 16, as police opened fire inside DU, the female students were the last to leave their halls, she said.

Rafia Rehnuma, a female leader of the movement, said they held strong despite facing brutal attacks, and fought till the last day alongside their male counterparts.

Umama Fatema, another female leader of DU, echoed her.

She said they don't want dormitory based student politics, rather she called for student council elections.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON | ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

CREATIVE NONFICTION

Not waiting for answers

Are our bodies an extension of the land we are born into? Do footsteps over our native terrains vibrate in our insides? Do the silences of its hidden silos create pockets of voids in our lungs and minds?

IFFAT NAWAZ

How long does a corpse of a hero take to rot? 50 years or more? What about the corpses of martyrs? One week? 10 days? The 40-day mark to blow the candles of funeral fires? What if these corpses were mummified and inserted into living bodies by some strange mechanism, then does the soul of a bygone hero survive intermingling with the soul of the living? Do we even have souls? Do they also know how to cry? Do the dead leave the world at all? Mixing with the soil beneath and the air above water—do they become dark-skinned fruits, hard-pitted seeds, scentless flowers?

Do the unhealed, vengeful living misconstrue the words of the corpses they carry? Can corpses talk? Can the past's language still be relevant today? Do pasts speak only on repeat, in muted sighs and high volumes on screens to remind us how dead they are? Do these pasts ever beg to be let go? Do these pasts want to swallow whole the living which use them to survive?

What's the meaning of survivor's guilt and how many of us have it? How many times can an event be played on loop for it to lose its power? What are the dilemmas of the ones who hang in the middle? Besides shelter and food? Is it that we always have too much to lose yet not enough to go by? Is it our supposed clear conscience matched with bent spines? Is it fear of deaths and tears shed over recent corpses which have turned our clocks counterwise?

Are we stuck or are we moving forward? Is death yesterday's news or is it tomorrow's?

Can we lend courage from posterity to untie our hands, so we can hold the truth that keeps sliding by?

What's the maximum length of time we are allowed to stay in purgatories? Do limbos run out of space or give up replicating patterns of demise? Does history really repeat itself? Or are we struck by some magician's dark spell, reenacting history—painted on walls, bleeding till we fall, to become corpses in a soulless world—bulldozed, stampeded, wiped clean for a future that resembles old sorrows?

Are our bodies an extension of the land we are born into? Do footsteps over our native terrains vibrate in our insides? Do the silences of its hidden silos create pockets of voids in our lungs and minds?

Do we all carry remains of war-fields in our ribcages? Do we then lie down with the weight of ancient weapons, face up to the sun, and beg for mercy, for Grace to enter, to pardon us for crimes we committed and didn't, for words we spoke and that which remained unspoken, for our breaths which always feel borrowed? Should we cut open our chests, exposing our hearts and its muffled screams? Are there any tears left to shed by the clouds who stare at us cold and distant, can they break open blood-stained skies?

And then when the sky breaks, do we howl from the base of our spines, all of which we had held inside—disguised, disowned? Do we learn how to swim in mud to become lotus buds or do we get stuck between yesterday's wrath and today's shifting power? Who do we trust? Can

we even trust our own impulses, emotions? Can we grow new ears to differentiate truths from half-truths and half-lies? Or do we spend a few days in stillness to stop the earthquake and its aftershocks or have our nerves turned to steel? Is anyone working on calming our insides, banking on the overused but unignorable word—heal?

Did someone tell us that victory can also be vicious? Do we draw boundaries in our celebrations or let our joy run wild while mobs ravage our earth in the name of justice and pent-up scorn? Will we always have scores to settle, is forgiveness just a myth we were told about, are its edges too soft to carry, its voice too bold?

Do all deaths—of children, young ones, mothers, fathers, animals, objects, nations, trees, beliefs, hope, identity and foresight—reincarnate to bring us peace? How long do we have to wait for clarity? How long till the unheard speaks?

Will the world revolve faster tomorrow? Spin us out of our morbid guises and fling us to someplace fresh and high? Do we dare ask the Universe to whimper, do we dare go off orbit searching for a guiltless star's warmth and light?

Iffat Nawaz is a Bangladeshi-American writer based in Pondicherry, India. Her first novel Shurjo's Clan was published by Penguin India (Vintage) in 2022, and was shortlisted for the Best First Book Award by Tata Lit Live/ Mumbai Literature Festival in 2023.

POETRY

The children of the red storm

TAHSEEN NOWER PRACHI

You've ignited a tempest,
a crimson anger,
A defiance burning brighter than the summer's sun.
They'd armored the skies,
and paved the earth with steel,
A chilling sword of blooded power,
raw and cold.
Days bleed into nights,
as wounds begin to heal,
Yet courage persisted,
stories yet untold.
We yearned for triumph,
a rise of liberty's gleam,
But memory's echo whispered
coldly of winter's chill.
Millions of hearts restless,
Dreaming a fervent dream,
Of a nation transformed,
where justice runs its fill.
They fabricated sunshine,
a plastic, hollow sphere,
While outside, Commander Bengal Rain,
too roared in cheer.
Now, victory's dawn has come,
We'll also bring questions anew,
For power once grasped,
is hard to subdue.
Debating with questions to whoever's rule,
with youths' voices now strong,
Demand explanations,
where playing with power goes wrong.
No longer the silenced,
the fearful and meek,
Shape our own destiny,
Your future to seek.

Tahseen Nower Prachi is a writer whose head is a koi pond of micro tales too scattered to come down to her keyboard. For more of her little pieces follow The Minute Chronicles on Facebook.



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

POETRY

The color of courage

MARZIA RAHMAN

Surely, it's madness
it's insanity—that he walked on.
That he stood alone, facing
hundreds of the police with their rifles
pointing at him.
And
he shouted.
And
he showed—what courage looks like.
What youth is made of.
Right then, there, the shot was fired.
Valor lay still on the dusty street, dripping
blood, colouring the earth
with the colour of courage—RED.

RED

1. The colour that screams like police vans, the rifles, pointed at people, point black.
2. The blood stains on the clothes after the bricks are thrown, after the shots are fired.
3. After the bodies are dragged down the roads, leaving marks.
4. How the protesters with posters and banners look like in daylight!
5. How the streets filled with graffiti look like in moonlight!
6. The colour of Facebook screens on a particular day for a particular cause.
7. The colour of rebellion, hundreds of thousands of closed fists, shouting reform.
8. The colour of sky, just after dusk, heralding a new beginning, a new era.
9. The procession, carrying flags, celebrating victory.
10. The colour of freedom.

Marzia Rahman is a flash fiction writer and translator. Author of two books, The Aftermath and Dot and Other Flashes, she has been published widely in both print and online journals.

MEMOIR

Days in the blackout

MALIHA TRIBHU

The silence forced upon the mass came on a sudden Thursday, as all means of communication were shut down abruptly overnight. A sense of terror rising over the nation, mothers wailing for their lost child, fathers running on the streets looking for their sons. Somewhere afar the sounds of gunshots and grenades fade behind the roaring sirens of patrolling police cars. The once scarlet-red streets and alleyways are now enveloped with dust and burnt out garbage from the past week; a rather cunning attempt at damage control, they'd say. The radios only cover their shuffled playlists on repeat, the televisions show their routinized statements and further schedules about the ongoing curfews, and a falsified hope to calm down the distressed, "the situation is under complete control", they said. When an entire nation burns and bleeds at the cost of speaking up for their rights, the general people count their days of survival under repeated internet shutdowns and strict curfews. Although, it doesn't seem to affect them as



PHOTO: MAISHA SYEDA

much. Like a normal Sunday, the vegetables vendors hollers in the alleyways with their freshly brought tomatoes and cucumbers, the neighboring women quarreling with the vendors over the hiking prices of onions and chillies, elderly men idling away their times sitting at the street-side tea stalls, debating over their senseless notions of prejudices and superstitions—war hasn't reached over to these alleyways just yet it seemed.

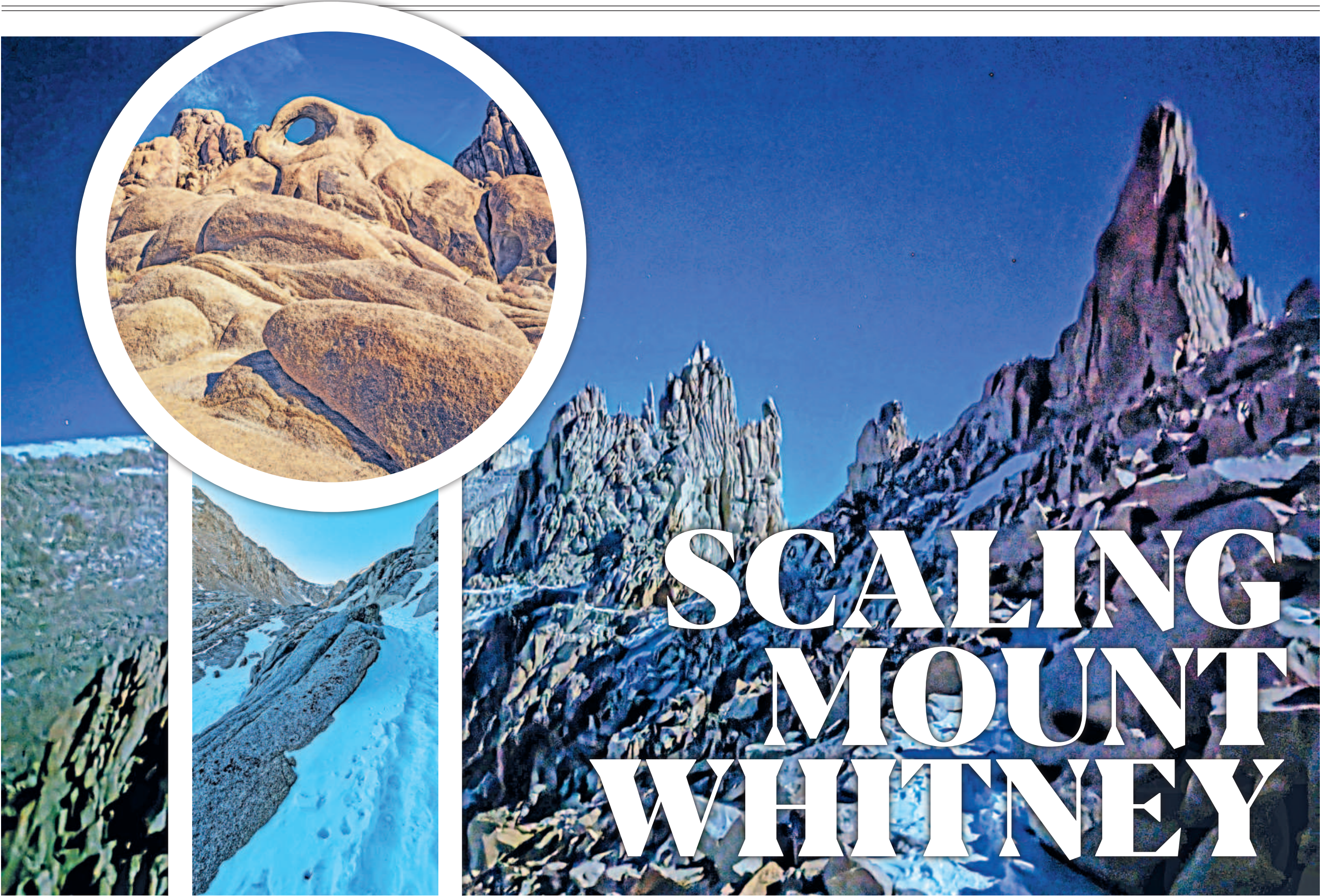
Here, some sleep at night without a single noise coming out of their windows, some sleep in terror as the helicopters continue to fly off of their skylines. One... Two... Three... Ten... The child falls asleep counting the roaring choppers instead of sheeps. The mother weeps silently in a quiet corner upon the prayer mat, asking the Almighty for the impossible. Somewhere far away, far into the future where past is only a falsification deemed to be

the truth accepted by the mass; someone repeats the rhyme as a lullaby to their wailing children, to shut them up from asking too much—

"Here comes a candle to light you to bed

And here comes a chopper to chop off your head!"

Maliha Tribhu is a writer, currently an undergraduate majoring in marketing at the University of Dhaka.



SCALING MOUNT WHITNEY

Soon, I realised that the thermal water bottle I had was no match for this extreme cold as the water started to freeze inside the bottle. I looked around; the large lake was completely frozen, and it was certain that no water source would be available throughout the climb to refill my bottle.



while, and I was keen to explore those incredible mountains.

The thought of attempting Mt. Whitney, the highest peak (14,497 feet) in the continental US (excluding Alaska), as my first winter solo, was quite appealing.

Another reason was the beauty of the trail leading to the basecamp and the relatively low technicality of the climb under normal conditions. Though the trail is around 34 kilometres long, the actual climb is non-technical in its normal climbing season until late October.

After that, the snowfall starts and the trail gets buried under tonnes of winter snow, raising the difficulties of the climb significantly. The winter climb requires proper gear and preparation to survive in the extreme cold. Finding a route through the white ice becomes a daunting challenge.

Winter arrives in the Sierra Nevada around mid to late November, so I set my plan in motion following the Thanksgiving holidays. After flying to Nevada, I drove to the Alabama Hills, a picturesque desert nestled in the Sierra foothills. I

planned 3:00 am start, it was now 6:30 am when I finally left my campsite for the summit push with a 10.5-kilometer distance and a 4,500-foot elevation gain ahead.

I took my first break at Consultation Lake after a couple of hours to have my peanut butter-chocolate sandwich. Soon, I realised that the thermal water bottle I had was no match for this extreme cold as the water started to freeze inside the bottle. I looked around; the large lake was completely frozen, and it was certain that no water source would be available throughout the climb to refill my bottle. So, if my water froze, I wouldn't have any other option except to crush that ice with the pointy end of my ice axe and chew on it!

Despite being a bit frustrated, I decided to move forward. After a short while, I reached the notorious "99 switchbacks" section where the trail became extremely dangerous as it steeply traversed the mountain, and there were places where a slip could be fatal. What began as a strenuous uphill snow hike had become a formidable test of endurance and skill amidst frozen landscapes

What would be just boulder-hopping in normal conditions was now under feet of solid, slippery snow. I looked at the slope – it did not look good with its formidable gradient. I was using microspikes, a traction device similar to crampons but not as good as the actual ones, so I could not be very secure about footing on that slippery ice. It would have to be one step – strike the axe into the ice – pull the body up using

With the vast distance ahead, the plan was to cover at least a third of the distance and establish a basecamp for shelter against the biting cold wind. The trail quickly steepened, soon disappearing beneath soft layers of snow that hardened as elevation increased, obscuring any discernible path.



EASHAN HASAN
a graduate teaching assistant at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is an avid trekker and nature lover.

EASHAN HASAN

"My God! How can a mountain change so much in just a month?"

Standing just below the summit of Mt. Whitney in the Sierra, I couldn't help but wonder if this was the mountain I had researched for hours.

It was late, almost evening. The early December sun in the west was setting quickly as if it was in a race. I stood alone halfway up an icy slope, panting heavily. A gust of brutally cold, dry winter air slashed my face like a sharp knife as I looked up. The summit of Mt. Whitney in the great Sierra was just about a hundred feet away, the last pitch before the top. My lips and throat felt as dry as desert sands, desperately craving a sip of water. But alas, all I had in my insulated, thermal bottle were ice clusters – the negative thirty-degree Celsius temperature was too much for the bottle to keep the water in its liquid form.

"Just a little more, just a few minutes to the top," I tried to motivate myself. Alone in that ethereal environment, I couldn't help but remember what brought me there.

For some time, I wanted to add the experience of a winter solo climb to my repertoire, and



the axe – another step – and repeat probably a hundred more times. It was surely going to be a tough, tiring climb!

As every nightmare ended, that pitch was over just a few minutes before sunset. I reached the top, ate a few Oreo cookies I had with me, chewed some of those ice clusters again to keep myself hydrated, and experienced one of the best sunset views of my life. It was a surreal moment – summiting the highest peak of the incredible Sierra in those winter conditions, finding myself way above all the clouds with the grand panoramic view of this marvellous range, and witnessing the last rays of the sun over the region before it set.

But I had to climb down quickly reigning in all emotions as it would be dangerous to climb down that last pitch in the dark.

As expected, the night was even colder, and I had to keep moving constantly because my body started to freeze every time I stopped for a second. But I still couldn't resist stopping to marvel at the epic scenery of the moonlit mountains.

My God! It was undoubtedly the most wonderful moonlit night I have ever witnessed.

Despite the breathtaking beauty, I was climbing down swiftly, almost running, thanks to the slope and gravity. It took just half the time to reach my basecamp compared to the ascent, and "Ah, peace!" I exclaimed loudly, drinking the "liquid" water after almost a day.

So yes, it was a ten-hour long push to reach the summit, and another five to come down. I was exhausted and heavily drained; it felt like every system in my body was frozen, and my lips and face were dried and burning from the extremely cold, biting wind. All twenty fingers felt almost numb all day, even after wearing Gore-Tex gloves, boots, and layering with multiple socks. I was constantly worried about getting frostbite. But still, the wonderful feeling of standing on top of the majestic Sierra Nevada, the mesmerizing beauty of the sunset and moonlit mountains, and the adrenaline rush – nothing could beat that combination.

camped overnight there to acclimate and started my hike from the trailhead the next day around 11:00am. With the vast distance ahead, the plan was to cover at least a third of the distance and establish a basecamp for shelter against the biting cold wind. The trail quickly steepened, soon disappearing beneath soft layers of snow that hardened as elevation increased, obscuring any discernible path. Not many people climb in the Sierra during winter, so there was not much beta data to know what to expect beforehand. As I neared my probable basecamp, the plummeting afternoon temperature, the almost frozen lakes, and the amount of snow on everything made me realize that it was going to be a lot tougher than I thought.

After setting up my campsite at a good spot protected by a big boulder, I cooked, had my meal, and went to sleep early. The wind intensity and the harsh cold increased ferociously with time. Though I had prepared my sleeping system well for the extreme cold at night, it still felt too much at times. The sleep was erratic, and as a result, I woke up about three hours late. Instead of my

and treacherous conditions. Negotiating through snow, rock, and ice demanded expert route-finding and the fortitude to withstand extreme cold and furious wind gusts – a true testament to the resilience required for a winter ascent.

Time was flying by, and in contrast, I was advancing at a sloth-like pace with a constant feeling of dehydration and the fear of altitude sickness that comes with it. It was late afternoon when I got a clear view of the summit, which was still about an hour away by my estimation. Though the weather was pretty good with a blue, clear sky and still some warm sunlight left, I knew the temperature would drop at least ten degrees more just after sunset. I hastily moved forward and soon stumbled upon the last pitch – fifty meters of an icy section just before the summit.



my eyes fixed on Mt. Whitney for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, the magnificent Sierra Nevada – the mountain range home to this peak. "There's nothing like the Sierra," the words from the legendary mountaineer John Muir had been playing in the back of my mind for quite a

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KOREAN EPZ

A modern facility draped in greenery

The KEPZ covers 2,492 acres of land, of which 52 percent is kept green by plantations, water bodies and open areas. It has 33 lakes and waterbodies that attract around 137 species of birds and more than 87 mammals

JAGARAN CHAKMA and SOHEL PARVEZ

Our journey to the Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ), an eco-friendly industrial area in Chattogram, began on a sunny morning.

Upon reaching our destination located in Anowara, about 40 kilometers southeast of Chattogram, we passed through an automated entrance and observed several well-designed, multi-storied buildings.

To the right, a warehouse and a highly sophisticated factory operated by a world-renowned company came into view. On the left, a vast facility to produce much-needed manmade fibre (polyester yarn) caught our attention although it was still under construction.

We then drove past a long stretch of factory units housing padding, printing, and garment-making facilities.

Initially, everything was quiet. Security personnel, on high alert, were the only ones visible outside the large prefabricated structures.

As we continued, we found ourselves surrounded by lush greenery and complete tranquillity. The landscape featured shrubs, trees such as ear leaf acacias, and small lakes

Youngone is recognised as one of the early leaders in setting up garment factories in Bangladesh for overseas exports.

Its EPZ-based factories specialise in producing premium jackets, trousers made from synthetic fibre, sports shoes, leather handbags, backpacks, and travel bags for international retail markets.

Presently, the KEPZ factories collectively export goods worth approximately \$400 million each year.

“Our goal is to increase annual exports to \$1.2 billion from the KEPZ. We are optimistic about reaching this target once the facility is operating at full capacity,” Md Shahjahan, managing director of the Korean EPZ (KEPZ) Corporation (BD) Ltd, shared during our meeting at the dormitory, which provides accommodation for overseas employees and clients.

Since the commencement of the project, the KEPZ has created direct job opportunities for 31,000 individuals, most of whom are female, within the industrial facilities. It has also created over 25,000 indirect jobs outside the zone.

The private industrial enclave commenced operations in 2011 under the Bangladesh Private EPZ Act.

“This area was once an

Bangladesh through a partnership with a local company. Production began in a rented facility in the port city.

In 1987, Youngone set up a factory in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone. The Dhaka EPZ started operations in 1993 with Youngone’s first investment.

Shaikh Shahinur Rahman, managing director of Youngone Group in Bangladesh, explained that all these factories specialised in producing apparel from manmade fibre.

The Korean investor diversified its production to include shoe

Shahjahan stated that they are exploring the idea of creating mixed-use towers in the IT block, which would offer both work and living facilities, in anticipation of generating 20,000 IT-related jobs.

This underlines further diversification.

In addition to garment, textile, and footwear facilities, Youngone has also set up 10 design and development centres (DDC) for global retailers and

receive their meals.

Upon entering the kitchen, Ferdous Al Kowser, the deputy general manager at Youngone Corporation in Dhaka, proudly stated: “We have a nutritionist who oversees the quality of food served to our workers.”

Nearby is a medical facility where we found nearly a dozen of workers waiting to see doctors.

At the end of the workday, the fair price shop at KEPZ is bustling with activity.

Shahjahan stated that a majority of the workforce in the KEPZ are from nearby communities and started earning for the first time after joining the factories.

The employment opportunities have provided economic independence to female workers in the area, he added.

The creation of jobs in this area has led to an improvement in the socioeconomic condition. As a result, the local economy is thriving due to the increased spending by residents. Additionally, over 600 vehicles are utilised daily to transport workers to and from surrounding villages.

Asked about the incentives for investment in KEPZ, he informed that investors get all fiscal and non-fiscal benefits established by the government.

Shahjahan also added that chairman Sung has a vision to uplift the socioeconomic condition of Youngone’s workforce.

He plans to build an international standard medical complex, which will include a general and specialised hospital, medical college, nursing college, and health technology institutes, to provide the best healthcare services to workers and their families.

He also aims to establish a technical institute and general education facilities to improve the skills of employees.

Sung also emphasises health and hygiene of the people of surrounding villages. To achieve this, a massive cleaning and awareness campaign is underway.

As we wrapped up our activities and started heading back in the evening, the main road, which had been quiet all day, suddenly became crowded with male and female workers, eagerly awaiting their rides home.

It was around 7:30pm when we arrived at the main entrance of the KEPZ.

In the distance, the sound of security personnel blowing whistles could be heard, helping workers get on buses and electric three-wheelers in an organised manner.



PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

manufacturing and emphasised expansion in 1997.

As per the authorities, of the 2,492 acres of land, 52 percent (1,296 acres) has been transformed into green areas to comply with the Environment Clearance certificate from the Department of Environment.

The remaining 48 percent (1,196 acres) has been designated for industrial use, including roads, utilities, and other logistical and infrastructural facilities.

Within this 48 percent, 30 percent is allocated to roads, utilities, and infrastructure, leaving 812 acres for

brands to create their products for international markets. These DDCs were designed by leading local architects, and are already operational.

“We do not allow polluting industries in the KEPZ. Any investor looking to set up textile and dyeing factories must establish effluent treatment plants (ETP),” he firmly stated.

KEPZ especially focuses on renewable energy and thereby supports the development of rooftop solar power technology as a way to produce renewable energy and decrease reliance on fossil fuels.

Youngone has established a 40-MW solar rooftop power plant in the KEPZ, which is the biggest in Bangladesh.

The foreign investor has also established dormitories to accommodate 5,400 female workers, alongside a medical centre and daycare facilities for working parents.

An automated kitchen prepares food to serve as lunch to the workers at a nominal price of Tk 2 only. The lunch hour begins at 11:30am and continues until 2:00pm to ensure that workers of all units can have their lunch in batches.

After moving from one production unit to another, we reached the canteen around 1:30 pm. The atmosphere was bustling, with workers chatting and engaging in various activities around the lunch tables.

Men and women, all holding blue tokens, stood in line patiently to



industrial development.

A significant portion of this land has already been allocated to various investors for industrial setup, with 732 acres already developed.

Currently, factories and related facilities have been established on 600 acres while construction is ongoing on the remaining land.

Youngone is planning to construct 16 24-storey buildings in the private EPZ for software and IT development.

nestled between rolling hills.

If fortunate like us, one might catch a glimpse of a wild elephant peacefully grazing on the shoreline opposite one of the lakes, where a dense green forest adds to the sense of seclusion and wilderness.

The KEPZ covers 2,492 acres of land, of which 52 percent is kept green by plantations, water bodies and open areas.

This unique zone is the country’s only private export processing area where humans, machines, flora and fauna peacefully coexist.

Within the industrial enclave, there are 33 lakes and waterbodies, which attract around 137 species of bird and more than 87 mammals.

A subsidiary of the South Korean Youngone Corporation, the KEPZ currently hosts 48 industrial units, largely under the ownership of Youngone.

undulating and sandy hillock, with most of it being ‘khas’ land that was left barren. We developed this area while preserving its natural surroundings,” Shahjahan stated.

Officials reported that they had planted 27 lakh trees to enhance forestry, encompassing over 400 plant species.

A six-kilometre main road has been constructed by the authorities to facilitate the transportation of raw materials and finished goods to and from factories, with a total road network of 40 kilometres within the KEPZ.

The KEPZ is the third major project undertaken by Youngone, following their decision to start manufacturing garments for export markets in 1980.

Youngone Chairman Kihak Sung, a Korean national, chose to invest in Chattogram, leading the way in garment production in



PHOTO: KEPZ