



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus visits the Army Headquarters in Dhaka for the first time yesterday. Upon his arrival, he was welcomed by Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman.

PHOTO: PID

Stay in power as long as it takes

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The BIGD also did a similar survey last year and found 41 percent were of the opinion that the country was on the right course.

Mirza M Hasan, senior research fellow at the BIGD, presented the findings.

Mamun Abdullah Hil, a member of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said people's expectations and opinions change.

"If we fail to translate the reform proposals into actions, then people's trust would erode," he said.

Of the respondents, 40 percent identified economic issues as the main challenges facing the country, 13 percent political unrest and intolerance, and seven percent deterioration of law and order.

Sixty percent of the participants said Bangladesh's economy was in the right direction, up from last year's 32

percent.

Regarding this, Bhuiyan Asaduzzaman, member of the liaison committee of Students Against Discrimination, said, "We need to work continuously to resolve the economic crises, and our first priority should be to stabilise the market."

According to the survey, 72.2 percent respondents said compared to other times, the rate of crimes has not increased in August; 25 percent said crime increased; 75 percent said violence did not increase in August; while 23 percent said it did.

Dhaka University's sociology teacher Samina Luthfa said the findings regarding crimes could either mean crimes had not increased or the respondents did not view certain acts as unlawful crimes.

Regarding educational institutions, around 80 percent said partisan student politics should be banned

and 84 percent said partisan teachers' politics should be banned.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, head of the Election System Reform Commission, said that the Election Commission must be non-partisan.

As per the 2022 election commission law, the government can make anyone an election commissioner.

The reform commission has not been officially formed yet and the process of appointing the election commissioner should be done through a search committee which "may include the prime minister and representatives of the opposition parties, civil society, youth, and women."

Samina Luthfa added the students against discrimination talk about building an inclusive Bangladesh by eliminating discrimination. But it is not clear to the people what their definitions of discrimination and inclusive Bangladesh are.

Miladunnabi

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President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser to the interim government Prof Muhammad Yunus issued separate messages greeting the people of Bangladesh and the Muslims across the world on the eve of the day.

In his message, President Mohammed Shahabuddin said the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi is a sacred and glorious day for the Muslims of the whole world. Allah had sent Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) to this world as 'Rahmatullil Alamin', a blessing for the entire universe, he added.

He (Muhammad) had emerged as 'Sirajam Monira', the enlightened light in the world, said the President , adding, "He showed the path of light in the era of sinful acts, injustice, falsehood and darkness and established a society based on truth, beauty and justice."

The speeches of the Prophet (PBUH) in his last Hajj will remain as the pathfinder for mankind forever, he added.

"May the Almighty Allah grant us to work for the welfare of the country, nation and humanity by following the noble ideals of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Ameen," he added.

Chief Adviser Prof Yunus in his message, said Allah had sent Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) as 'Rahmatullil Alamin' for peace, emancipation, progress and overall welfare of the whole world.

The Prophet (PBUH) came to the world with the messages of emancipating mankind from all sorts of prejudices, sinful acts, injustices, and slavery, he said, adding he had called the people across the world towards emancipation and peace and torched the light of truth by shunning the era of darkness.

The Prophet had blown the wind of peace throughout the world by engaging him in establishing brotherhood, justice, and equity-based society and ensuring welfare for mankind, he added.

The CA said peace, justice, and welfare of the world can be ensured only through following the unique lifestyle of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), his universal teachings, and Sunnah in today's conflict-ridden world.

"It is my firm belief that the noble ideals and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in religious and mortal life are best and emulated for the people of the world, and therein lies the infinite welfare, success, and peace of Muslims," the chief adviser said.

Marking the day, Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast special programmes, and different national dailies will publish supplements highlighting the importance of the day.

'Never knew I own shares in bus company'

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chairman and their eldest son Asif Shahadat is a director, has 140 buses.

"By God, I know nothing about Moumita Paribahen, let alone holding its share. I do not have any land in Gazipur either. I also never filed tax returns," he told The Daily Star at his village home on August 30.

Nur Alam is Afroza's brother, and investigators currently looking into the Asaduzzaman family's wealth are trying to track down the source of Nur Alam's wealth.

An ordinary man, Nur Alam lives with his family in his ancestral home in Kamargram. His eldest son is a migrant worker in Malaysia. Nur Alam himself was a migrant worker in Bahrain from 1997 to 2008.

"I struggle to support my family with the little income from the lease money against my ancestral land and the rent from a shop in local Gopalpur Bazar," he said.

But a 2022-23 tax return filed in his name shows he has wealth worth over Tk 1.77 crore. The signature used in his tax file does not match with his bank account signature, seen by The Daily Star.

"Someone else may have used my name. I don't know who," he said, looking clueless.

His tax return was filed in Khulna, where Nur Alam says he never lived and where Asaduzzaman was deputy inspector general of police in 2007-2009.

Multiple police sources speaking on condition of anonymity said Asaduzzaman Mia is behind it all. According to them, the former cop bought various properties in the name of his family members and relatives to keep his hands clean.

For example, his brother-in-law Harichur Rahman Shohan and nephew Ibrahim Sheikh now have properties and businesses worth at least Tk 14 crore, according to documents and relevant sources.

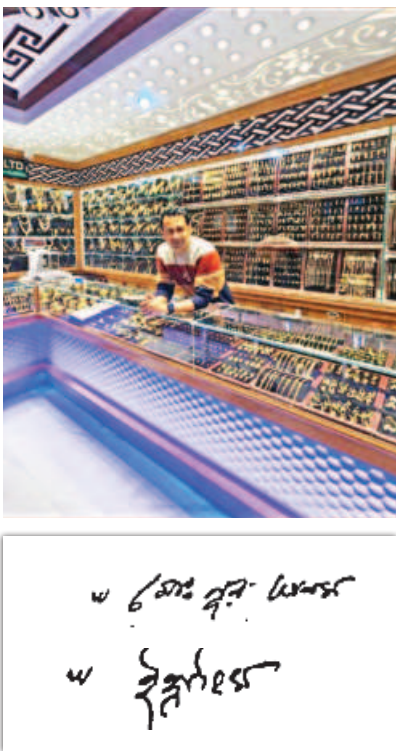
Like Nur Alam's, Ibrahim's tax return was filed from Khulna although he was a union parishad member in Faridpur from 2005-2021. According to his 2022-23 tax return, he has wealth worth Tk 1.17 crore. But again, the signature in his tax file does not match with the signature he officially used during a meeting when he was a union parishad member.

Ibrahim, who is also under the ACC scanner, runs a multipurpose cooperative called 'Sahuj Chhaya' at Gopalpur Bazar in Alfadanga. The investment for the high-interest rate microcredit business came from Asaduzzaman – a subject of an ongoing ACC investigation.

A source who has direct knowledge of the ongoing ACC investigation into Asaduzzaman family's "illegal wealth" said Ibrahim was likely involved in collecting money, on Asaduzzaman's behalf, from local people in return for jobs in police force and elsewhere.

He did not respond to our calls and text messages over the last two weeks.

Harichur Rahman Shohan, Asaduzzaman's brother-in-law, used to look after the former DMP chief's



Top left, Harichur Rahman Shohan in his Pure Gold shop in New Market. Top right, the cover page of collection book of a microcredit organisation run by Asaduzzaman Mia's relatives in Faridpur. Bottom left, signatures of Nur Alam and Ibrahim Sheikh used in the tax returns filed in their names. Bottom right, their official signatures collected by The Daily Star.

interest in Dhaka, according to sources in police and transport sector, where Asaduzzaman's family has investment.

Shohan had gone to Saudi Arabia as a migrant worker in 2010, returning home in just two years almost empty-handed, at least 10 villagers told The Daily Star.

The man now owns gold business, transport business, 43 decimals of land in Faridpur's Alphasdanga municipality and at least one flat in Dhaka's Shantibagh.

Their combined estimated value would be around Tk 10 crore, according to gold and transport business insiders and co-flat owners.

A former business partner of Shohan said most of Shohan's investment comes from the Mia family and he only looks after their business interest.

Documents show that the 43-year-old has shares in two bus companies in Dhaka – Gulshan Chaka (1,000 shares) and Moumita Transport Limited (1,500 shares) – where Asaduzzaman's wife, son and other family members and relatives also have investments.

Shohan also once held 25 percent shares in the now-defunct Modhumoti Paribahen Limited, according to a former business partner, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Each of these company was set up and their route permit obtained when Asaduzzaman, as the DMP commissioner, was the head of Regional Transport Committee (RTC), which is responsible for allowing route permit. Asaduzzaman was DMP chief from January 7, 2015, to September 13, 2019.

In May this year, Shohan bought

US stands ready to help carry out reforms

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Officials concerned said the visit is a reflection of a fresh start of the relationship as US-Bangladesh ties were strained during the Awami League regime.

Over the last few years, the US imposed sanctions on Rab and implemented a policy under which Bangladeshis who would undermine democracy would be denied US visas.

Donald Lu, US assistant secretary of state for South Asia; Brendan Lynch, assistant US trade representative; Anjali Kaur, deputy assistant administrator; and Jerrod Mason, a director of the US Treasury Department, were in the delegation.

The delegation on Saturday met business leaders.

Yesterday, it called on Yunus, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

It also had a meeting with Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin at the state guesthouse Padma, where secretaries of the Economic Relations Division, ministries of commerce, labour, home, Bangladesh Bank representatives, and the chairman of the NBR were present.

Yunus, during the meeting, said his administration has moved quickly to "reset, reform, and restart" the economy, initiate reforms to the financial sectors, and fix institutions, according to a statement of the Chief Adviser's Office.

He said six commissions have been formed in an effort to prevent vote rigging, reform the judiciary, the police, civil administration, the anti-graft agency, and amend the constitution.

Prof Yunus said the government is committed to getting back the stolen assets siphoned off by corrupt individuals. "We were in an ocean of corruption," he said.

Prof Yunus said the student-led revolution has ushered in a new era of hope in Bangladesh. "It is a very important time for us and a

significant moment in our history."

During the hour-long meeting, financial and economic reforms, investment, labour issues, and the Rohingya crisis were discussed.

Prof Yunus presented a book on the graffiti of Bangladesh to the US delegation. The book has photos of some of the finest work done during the student-led uprising in July-August on the walls of Dhaka and other cities and towns.

FINANCIAL, REVENUE SECTOR REFORMS

After the meeting, Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin told the media that the US delegation prioritised reforms to financial and revenue sectors during the discussion.

He said Dhaka would take expert help from the US as Bangladesh Bank was discussing specific measures to bring back laundered money.

The two sides also discussed trade facilitation, GSP facility, and US International Development Corporation.

"We have informed them of the reforms made to the labour sector. They took note of those and appreciated the progress made. They will continue the discussion on labour reforms."

The US suspended GSP facility following the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013.

It did not grant financing under the DFC facility, which mandates improvement of labour conditions.

However, there was no specific discussion on GSP or DFC finance yesterday.

Asked about withdrawal of sanctions against Rab, Jashim said they updated the delegation on Rab reforms and that Dhaka would continue to discuss the matter.

The US side brought up the recent developments in Myanmar and the humanitarian assistance for the Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

In the last few months, about 15,000 Rohingyas have entered Bangladesh, creating new concerns for Dhaka.

"We spoke about eliminating the root causes of the Rohingya crisis ...," he said.

Prof Yunus will be attending the UN General Assembly for five days from September 22.

Asked if there would be any bilateral meeting between US President Joe Biden and Prof Yunus on the sidelines, Jashim said if the schedule is adjusted, there may be such a meeting.

He said they presented the plans for reforms and discussed how the US can help in the process.

"The US side got an idea of these and eventually, the two countries will advance cooperation in various stages."

The US is Bangladesh's largest foreign direct investor (FDI) and the largest export country destination.

In 2022-23, US FDI in Bangladesh was \$261 million. Last year, Bangladesh's export to the US was \$7.72 billion and imports were worth \$2.04 billion.

Analysts said the US can support Bangladesh in various ways, like giving privileges for Bangladesh's export to the US market, funding reforms, and investing in Bangladesh.

MEETING WITH BB GOVERNOR

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur sought financial support from the US for the ongoing reforms to the banking sector when the delegation met him at the central bank.

During the meeting, the US team discussed macroeconomic issues, including inflation and GDP growth, money laundering, bad loans, and reforms.

Bangladesh Bank Spokesperson Husne Ara Shikha shared the meeting details while talking to The Daily Star over phone.

Shikha said the US team wanted to know about the challenges of reforming the banking sector. The governor responded by saying there were no challenges, unless there was an untoward political issue in future.

At least 422 of the dead

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during the Awami League regime until 2023, while 423 had been forcibly disappeared during the period.

"During this time, six lakh BNP leaders and activists were implicated in 1.5 lakh cases. This reflects the party's unwavering struggle and contribution towards the country's second liberation."

BNP sources said the party collected the names, identities, and addresses of the victims, and the list will be published on the party's official website.

Responding to journalists' questions, the BNP secretary general said preparing the report of Electoral System Reform Commission should not take more than two months. "Complete it within two months..."

In his televised address to the nation on Wednesday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus named Badiul Alam Majumdar as the head of the Electoral System Reform Commission, which is expected to finish its work within the next three months.

In this regard, Fakhrul said election-centric reforms should be given the highest priority.

"The reforms work should be completed quickly to move towards an election. The election will be held under a neutral government. The

election will be free and fair. The people will elect their representatives by voting."

Fakhrul also identified the key areas requiring reforms, including the Election Commission, administration, law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary.

Other reforms will be carried out by the government that will come to power through polls, he added.

He said, "This interim government will implement reforms based on the opinions of all and then move forward to hold the election. The election will be free and fair, and power will be handed over to the people."

"We hear many responsible political parties saying things that are not very conducive to overall unity."

"It is important to maintain unity. Be patient. Support all the work of this interim government and try to move forward."

The BNP will tomorrow hold a rally to mark International Democracy Day in front of its Nayapaltan central office at 3:00pm.

Party Standing Committee members Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan, Abdul Moyeen Khan, and Salahuddin Ahmed were also present at the press conference.

No obligation

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Mainul also said cases will be filed over the killings of officers, arson attacks on police stations, and looting of arms in Dhaka during the July-August movement.

Asked why the filing of these cases were delayed, he said, "Criminal events never expire. Cases will be filed in connection with police killing and looting of police stations."

He said some 177 police vehicles were damaged in DMP areas during the student-led protests.

"Many structures were damaged. Work is underway to repair them. Within a week or two, all police stations will return to normal activities," he said.

He said traffic management has improved as traffic police are now working until late at night. "Gradually there will be more improvement," said Mainul.

Unusual traffic jams are created now as people are blocking the streets with different demands, he said.

Police are also working on freeing the roads and footpaths of hawkers and preventing battery-run auto-rickshaws from using the main roads.

"Gradually, the police are returning to their normal activities," he said. "Efforts to boost their morale are underway."

Mainul further said police will be more active in preventing mugging. They have resumed patrolling the streets and operating checkpoints.

Raids are underway to recover illegal weapons and arrest criminals. "Gradually, the drives will be strengthened."

CRAB President Kamruzzaman Khan, General Secretary Sirajul Islam, members of the executive committee, and DMP officials were also present.

Further uncertainty

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water in the Padma, Hossain said.

"Then the protests began and most of the workers and experts, who are all foreign nationals, started fearing for their safety and left the country," he said.

About 150 foreign workers, including 100 Indians and 30 Indonesians, were working in the river crossing lines, according to PGCB.

"Most of them are yet to return, so there is no sign of resuming work. It is hard to give a timeline for when the work would be finished," Hossain said.

Completing the grid line work is

the key priority now, said Rooppur's project director Hasan.

The first unit of Rooppur was supposed to start in 2023 and the second unit by 2024, as per the original schedule.

According to the revised schedule, the unit-1 was supposed to start in December but the abysmal progress of the grid line indicates the deadline will not be met.

The 1,200 megawatt power plant, which is being built with \$11.38 billion soft loan from Russia, is a flagship mega-project of the Awami League government.