



## ICT ACT AMENDMENT

# Draft proposes banning political parties up to 10yrs

### Ministry seeks opinions from stakeholders

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The interim government has prepared a draft to amend the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, which introduces a provision that allows the banning of a political party for up to 10 years for committing crimes against humanity and genocide.

According to the draft, prepared by the law ministry, the amendment would allow the trial of leaders of any organisation for command responsibility, the appointment of foreign lawyers, and the recording and broadcast of trial proceedings.

The move to amend the act comes at a time when the government is seeking to try those responsible for the crimes committed to suppress the July uprising that culminated in the toppling of the Hasina-led government.

According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), more than 600 people were killed between July 16 and August 11.

More than 30 complaints have been filed with the investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal against Hasina and her party colleagues for alleged crimes against humanity and genocide.

The government has reconstituted the prosecution and investigation agency, and the probe agency has started field-level investigation into the alleged crimes.

- Party leaders can be tried
- Evidence from CCTV, phone, drone can be used
- Enforced disappearance, gender violence can be tried



The restoration work of this old Buriganga channel along the Babubazar-Gabtolli Beribadh road, initiated by the Dhaka South City Corporation in June 2022, has seen little progress. In the meantime, land grabbers have encroached upon the river, enabling traders to set up makeshift structures for their businesses. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## BIDEN, YUNUS TALKS

# Govt looks to strengthen trade, ties

PORIMOL PALMA



The bilateral meeting between Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus and US President Joe Biden due today provides a rare opportunity for Dhaka to push for improving trade and boost the economy, say analysts.

Biden agreeing to meet with Yunus on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York signals Washington's eagerness to support Bangladesh's interim government.

Diplomatic sources said the US president usually goes to the UNGA for a short time and holding any bilateral meetings with the head of the Bangladesh government is rare.

"This signals that Washington wants to seriously engage with Dhaka because

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## Israeli airstrikes kill 356 in Lebanon

1,246 wounded; tens of thousands fleeing for safety

REUTERS, Jerusalem/Beirut

Israel launched airstrikes against hundreds of Hezbollah targets yesterday, killing 356 people and sending tens of thousands fleeing for safety on Lebanon's deadliest day in decades, according to authorities.

After some of the heaviest cross-border exchanges of fire since the hostilities flared last October, Israel warned people in Lebanon to evacuate areas where it said the armed movement was storing weapons.

Nasser Yassin, the Lebanese minister coordinating the crisis response, told Reuters 89 temporary shelters in schools and the like had been activated, with capacity for more than 26,000 people as civilians fled "Israeli atrocities".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent a short video statement addressed to the Lebanese people.

"Israel's war is not with you; it's with Hezbollah. For too long, Hezbollah has been using you as human shields," he said.

After almost a year of war against Hamas in Gaza on its southern border, Israel is shifting

its focus to the northern frontier, where Iran-backed Hezbollah has been firing rockets into Israel in support of Hamas, also supported by Iran.

Israel's military said it had struck Hezbollah in Lebanon's south, east and north.

Lebanon's health ministry said 356 people had been killed, including 24 children and 42 women, and 1,246 wounded. One Lebanese official said it was Lebanon's highest daily death toll from violence since the 1975-1990 civil war.

The Israeli air force said on X it had carried out about 650 strike missions in the past 24 hours, attacking more than 1,100 targets using more than 1,400 munitions, and other places hitting buildings, vehicles and other places where it said weapons were stored.

Hezbollah has not commented on Israeli claims that it hid weapons in houses, which Reuters could not independently verify, but it has said it does not place military infrastructure near civilians.

In response to the strikes, Hezbollah said it had launched dozens of missiles at a military base in northern Israel.

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- Israel targets over 800 'Hezbollah sites'
- Hezbollah retaliates by firing rockets at Israeli base

## Dhaka protests Amit Shah's comment on Bangladeshis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday lodged a "strong" protest against "highly deplorable" remarks of Indian Home Minister Amit Shah about Bangladeshi nationals during his recent visit to Jharkhand.

Through a protest note handed over to the deputy high commissioner of India in Dhaka, the foreign ministry conveyed its "serious reservation, deep sense of hurt and extreme displeasure", according to a ministry statement published on its Facebook page.

It called upon the Indian government to advise the political leaders to refrain from making such "objectionable and unacceptable" remarks.

The ministry also emphasised that such remarks, coming from responsible positions against the nationals of

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## Media reforms commission likely next week

### Hopes information adviser

BSS, Dhaka

A mass media reforms commission could be announced next week, Information and Broadcasting Adviser Md Nahid Islam hoped yesterday.

"The announcement is expected to come after the chief adviser's return from the UN General Assembly in New York," he said.

The adviser was addressing a views-exchange meeting with publishers, editors, and other stakeholders of newspapers at the Tathya Bhaban. The Department of Films and Publications (DFP) organised the event.

Additional Information Secretary (in-charge) Md Nazrul Islam addressed the meeting as the special guest with DFP Director General Abul Kalam Mohammad Shamsuddin in the chair.

Nahid said everyone wants freedom of mass media. "But I want to leave you with the question... is there a limit to press freedom? Can freedom of the press be used for publicity of the fascists?"

The adviser thanked newspaper publishers, editors, and reporters for properly highlighting the incidents during the July uprising.

The people, he said, became dependent on newspapers to get correct information during the uprising. "So, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to them."



Md Nahid Islam

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## RMG worker unrest spirals in Ashulia

### Now 52 factories shut

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ashulia industrial belt saw an increased number of garment factories shut yesterday amid a fresh wave of protests by workers of dozens of units over several demands, including pay hike.

Meanwhile, factory owners reiterated their call to ensure safety for the smooth operation of the industry as 52 factories, mostly apparel units, have been shuttered in the latest round of unrest. Of them, 19 were shut yesterday.

Md Sarwar Alam, superintendent of police at Ashulia Industrial Police-1, said 43 factories have been shut under the "no work, no pay" provision of the labour law.

Of the closed factories, 39 are members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

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Smoke billows over southern Lebanon following Israeli strikes amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, as seen from Tyre in south Lebanon yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Released top criminals at it again

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Nasir Biswas, a 26-year-old mason, was walking close to the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital's Mohammadpur on the evening of September 20.

Criminals attacked and stabbed him multiple times around 6:30pm. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead around 8:45pm.

Nasir's brother, Sumon Biswas, yesterday said his brother was murdered by some associates of Imamul Hasan Helal alias Pichchi Helal over a previous enmity.

"Multiple eyewitnesses informed me that Helal was at the scene during the stabbing," he told The Daily Star.

Sumon, however, could not confirm the specifics of the previous enmity.

He lodged a murder case at Mohammadpur Police Station on September 21, naming six suspects, including Helal.

Ittekkhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said the complainant in the FIR mentioned that Helal was present at the crime scene.

"We have launched an investigation and are already collecting footage to determine Helal's involvement in the murder. He has since gone into hiding," he told The Daily Star.

Helal was listed as one of the top 23 criminals by police in 2001.

Then a Chhatra Dal leader, Helal was arrested on January 12, 2000. He was released on bail on August 16 this year.

Several residents of Mohammadpur have alleged that Helal's associates have been intimidating local business owners to assert dominance in the area since his release.

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