



PHOTO: SHADAB SHAHROKH HAI

Budget-friendly escapes near SANGSAD BHABAN

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If you are a resident of Dhaka, it is unlikely that you haven't heard of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. But did you know the area surrounding the Sangsad Bhaban is a thriving recreational hub for all walks of life?

From students and couples seeking an Instagrammable spot to families looking for an affordable day out, this iconic site offers many activities against stunning architecture and lush landscapes.

Affordable delights for every palate

A family of four was seen enjoying a good time near a fuchka cart. When approached, the father, Noyon Roy, detailed, "We bring the children here to run around and enjoy the open spaces. It's so refreshing to find a place in the city where you don't have to spend much but still can enjoy a day full of fun."

One of the key attractions around the Sangsad Bhaban is the array of

food carts lining the nearby streets, especially on Manik Mia Avenue. These carts serve up some of our most beloved snacks at pocket-friendly prices.

From the tangy burst of a fuchka to the spicy mix of jhal muri (spiced puffed rice), these snacks are perfect for anyone looking to savour local flavours without spending a lot. You can enjoy these street food classics by spending only Tk 60 to Tk 120.

Ice cream vendors, with their carts chiming melodiously, offer a sweet respite from the scorching heat. These treats not only cater to the gastronomic delights of visitors but also ensure that a day out here doesn't have to be an expensive affair.

Scenic Chandrima Udyan

Adjacent to the Sangsad Bhaban, Chandrima Udyan offers a beautifully maintained green space, ideal for those looking to capture memories. With its landscaped gardens and sprawling lawns, the park provides a scenic backdrop that appeals particularly to



both students and couples.

Moreover, the park is a favourite among the elderly, who are looking for a place to jog. Morshed Hossain, a retired banker who lives in Shyamoli, says, "I come here every afternoon to jog and meet friends who've also retired, particularly during the weekends. It's our little community within the park. The pathways are perfect for a gentle jog, and the fresh air does wonders for my health."

So, if you are confused about where to spend the weekend in solitude or

with friends, why not head towards Chandrima Udyan? A perfect place for relaxation, recreation, and photos!

A recreational space for all

For the more active visitors, cycling is an option, engaging in physical exercise while enjoying the views.

"Riding my bike along Manik Mia Avenue is the highlight of my weekend," says Janifar Rahman, who lives in Adabor. "Due to office, I don't get to cycle on weekdays. However, on weekends, cycling is the best way I recharge though."

In addition, you may encounter horse-drawn carriages available for rides.

All in all, the area around Jatiya Sangsad Bhabanis a place where the old and young, students and professionals, couples and families can find something to enjoy. The affordability of the activities here ensures that everyone, regardless of budget, can partake in the joys around one of Dhaka's most iconic landmarks.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY UN chief condemns 'get out of jail free' card on wars

REUTERS, United Nations

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday denounced a growing number of governments and other groups who feel they are "entitled to a get out of jail free card," citing wars in Ukraine, the Gaza Strip and Sudan.

"They can trample international law. They can violate the United Nations Charter," Guterres told world leaders at the UN General Assembly. "They can invade another country, lay waste to whole societies, or utterly disregard the welfare of their own people. And nothing will happen."

"The level of impunity in the world is politically indefensible and morally intolerable," he said.

With the nearly year-long Israeli offensive in the besieged Gaza threatening to now engulf Lebanon - where Israel targeted more than a thousand Hezbollah targets on Monday - Guterres made an impassioned plea.

"Lebanon is at the brink," he said. "The people of Lebanon - the people of Israel - and the people of the world - cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza."

Russia invaded neighbouring Ukraine in February 2022 and the conflict has recently escalated with Kyiv rapidly seizing land in a high-risk August 6 incursion into Russia's Kursk region and Russia ramping up drone and missile attacks.

"Citizens are paying the price - in rising death tolls and shattered lives and communities," Guterres said, adding that it was time for a just peace based on the UN Charter, international law and UN resolutions.

On Sudan, Guterres called out the "brutal power struggle" between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces that erupted into war in mid-April last year ahead of a planned transition to civilian rule.

"A humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding as famine spreads. Yet outside powers continue to interfere with no unified approach to finding peace," he said.

Guterres' speech summed up the state of the world as unsustainable, but said the challenges faced could be solved.

"Geo-political divisions keep deepening. The planet keeps heating. Wars rage with no clue how they will end. And nuclear posturing and new weapons cast a dark shadow," he said. "We are edging towards the unimaginable - a powder keg that risks engulfing the world," he added.



Biden offers full US support

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Prof Yunus handed a copy of "The Art of Triumph", a book on graffiti drawn by the student protesters and young pupils during the mass uprising, to President Biden.

"This is a rare meeting at the UNGA. It's good news that the US stands beside Bangladesh in this period of transition," Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told UNB.

He said Bangladesh maintains fine relations with the US, and this meeting will take the ties to a new level.

Diplomatic sources told The Daily Star the US president usually goes to the UNGA for a short time and holding any bilateral meetings with the head of Bangladesh government in New York is rare. This meeting signals Washington's deep interest in engaging with Dhaka.

In fact, they said, the US has been trying to deepen the engagement with Bangladesh over the last few years, but it was not going very well.

The US suspended the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) facility for Bangladesh in the aftermath of the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse, citing poor labour conditions.

In 2021, it imposed sanctions on Rab and seven of its top officials over human rights violations and in May last year announced visa restrictions for those undermining democratic elections.

After the January elections, Washington said the polls were neither free, fair or participatory.

Under the current interim administration, a six-member US delegation, led by Treasury Department's Assistant Secretary Brent Nieman, visited Dhaka mid-September. It expressed the US's commitment to support Prof Yunus' reform agenda, and eagerness to offer technical and financial assistance for reforms.

When the interim government has taken up major reform initiatives in the changed political landscape, Washington is showing increasing interest in Bangladesh.

Analysts said Bangladesh's main challenge now is boosting trade and economy, and Washington has the capacity to support Dhaka to that end.

For example, US can provide GSP facility through a presidential decree, which can help increase Bangladesh's export to the US by \$4-\$5 billion.

Bangladesh's export to the US now is nearly \$8 billion a year.

M Humayun Kabir, a former Bangladesh ambassador to the US, said the US can make investment through the US International Development Finance Corporation, support the reform process, bring back laundered money etc.

Mohammad Sufiur Rahman, a senior research fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance at North South University, said the US can also help security reforms that can eventually lead to withdrawal of sanctions against Rab.

Besides, with better political understanding, Bangladesh may reap

greater economic benefits and have access to new avenues for much-needed external funds through multilateral lenders like the World Bank, the IMF or the ADB.

YUNUS MEETS TRUDEAU

Yunus also met Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in New York and discussed ways to cement the Bangladesh-Canada relationship, deepen freedom, build institutions, and support the youth of Bangladesh.

During the brief meeting, he handed "The Art of Triumph" to the Canadian prime minister.

Trudeau appreciated Yunus for assuming the responsibility and expressed Canada's readiness to support institution-building in Bangladesh, according to a statement from the Chief Adviser's Office.

Yunus appreciated Canada for its friendship with Bangladesh and the Canadian government's support for the interim government.

He requested Canada to grant more visas to Bangladeshi students.

Yunus reached New York on Monday night and started his UNGA visit with a reception hosted by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

He met prominent world leaders at the reception. He also joined the inaugural session of the UNGA.

This is Prof Yunus' first foreign visit as head of the interim government to attend the 79th UNGA.

The chief adviser will address the General Debate of the UNGA on September 27.

No cops to be arrested

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or shooting at people. We are also recording the statements of officers who were responsible for ensuring law and order," the official said, requesting anonymity.

The official said they want to identify those who used lethal weapons and ordered cops to use those.

"Plainclothes men, particularly those from the Awami League, were also seen using firearms. We are trying to identify them and ascertain how they got the firearms."

Sources in police said at least 278 cases have been filed with different police stations accusing 94 cops after the fall of the AI government.

More than 50 cases have been lodged with Ashulia and Savar police stations over the violence in July-August. Police members are among the accused in those cases.

Nine police officials, including two former inspectors general of police and a former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner, have so far been arrested in different cases.

On September 20, Mashiur Rahman, an additional deputy inspector general (DIG) of police and also a former deputy commissioner of the Lalbagh Division (DB) of DMP, was arrested in a murder case filed with New Market Police Station.

A large number of cops went into hiding after the filing of cases and arrests of police officials. Some of them even left the country, said sources in the force.

Many officials are now hesitant about carrying out their duties for fear of being accused in fresh cases and facing departmental action after the change of government, the sources added.

At least 187 cops have been absent from work till date since the fall of the Hasina-led government, officials in PHQ said.

Mostofa Kamal, deputy inspector general of the PBI, said it is the duty of the investigators to drop the names of innocent people from cases and not to harass them.

"We remind the investigators about this policy from time to time. In the charge sheets, the investigators will not name those suspects found not to be involved in crimes," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Regarding the PHQ directives, Julfiqar Ali Hayder, commissioner of the KMP, said they were trying to collect footage and specific evidence before arresting any suspect.

Ahsan Habib Palash, DIG of Chattogram Range Police, echoed the views of Julfiqar.

Despite repeated attempts by the

interim government to fully activate the police force, it is still carrying out duties on a limited scale, said sources in the force.

Before and immediately after the ouster of Hasina, police faced unprecedented public fury as mobs set fire to their vehicles and police stations in reprisal for the law enforcers' use of excessive force on demonstrators.

According to government statistics, at least 44 cops and 708 people were killed during the quota reform protests in July-August.

Many police officials, especially junior cops, now refuse to use force against demonstrators for fear of attacks or being accused in cases, according to sources.

On September 22, junior police officials were seen refusing to follow orders to clear a road block by some protesters in the capital's Kakrali.

Many junior cops said they should not be pit against the people.

'COPS ACCUSED INTENTIONALLY'

There are allegations that police officials have been named intentionally in some complaints with Dhaka courts. But some of those names were dropped when the first information reports (FIRs) were filed with police stations.

This newspaper has obtained at least four such FIRs.

Family loses beloved son

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the loss of her son, as relatives and neighbours tried in vain to console an inconsolable mother.

"I've made many sacrifices in life to send my son to school so that he could have a good education. He made us proud by becoming an army officer," said Nazma, her voice choked in disbelief.

"Why did he have to be killed like this? How will we live without him now?"

Nirjon's father Sarwar Jahan said he moved to Argentina in 2012 in search of a livelihood and eventually became a citizen there. Later, when he wanted to take his wife and children there, they expressed their wishes to stay in the country. His son Nirjon went on to pass SSC and HSC with merit from Pabna Cadet College and later joined the army.

When Sarwar returned to the country two and a half years ago, he came with the intention of spending the rest of his life with his wife and children.

"Fifteen days ago, Nirjon came home on his day off and then returned to his post. This morning, the army called me and informed me that Nirjon was ill, later they informed me that he had died.

"I didn't know what to think. It's like I was having a nightmare. How can I bear the pain of losing my beloved child?" said Sarwar, overcome with grief.

Lt Iftekhar, a batchmate of Nirjon, said, "Nirjon was not only a brilliant cadet in class, but he became an exceptional officer later on in his career. "By his death, a family has been stricken by an irreparable loss, and the country has lost a patriotic soldier."

Nirjon's family members, relatives, and neighbours broke down in tears when his body was brought to his Tangail home on a helicopter yesterday afternoon.

After his namaz-e-janaza at a local madrasa ground after Asr prayers, Nirjon was laid to rest in the local graveyard.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in a message said, "My sincere condolences to his family members. At the same time, I express my condolences to all my colleagues in the Bangladesh Army." This young and talented officer has sacrificed his life to protect the lives and property of the people. The nation will forever remember his sacrifice as an example of the ideal of patriotism.

WHAT HAPPENED?

In a statement, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said a team of the Bangladesh Army was responding to a report of robbery going on in Purbha Maizpara village of Dulhazra union in Chakaria upazila.

At around 4:00am yesterday, a group of seven or eight robbers, sensing the presence of the army patrol, tried to escape when Lt Tanzim Sarwar Nirjon gave chase after them.

The robbers attacked Lt Tanzim at this time and stabbed him in the neck, severely injuring him and leading to tremendous blood loss, the statement reads.

He was immediately rescued and taken to Malumghat Memorial Hospital, where the doctor on duty declared him dead, according to ISPR.

Lt Tanzim Sarwar Nirjon was a former student of Pabna Cadet College. He received his commission in the Army Service Corps (ASC) from Bangladesh Military Academy on June 8, 2022, after the completion of the 82nd Long Course.

ISPR also informed that three robbers were arrested from the location, with one locally made firearm, and six rounds of ammunition. Three others were apprehended on suspicion of robbery as well.

'I'll stand beside him, come what may'

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Following the reforms, Waker -- who took over as the army chief only weeks before Hasina's ouster -- said a transition to democracy should be made between a year and a year-and-a-half, but underlined the need for patience.

"If you ask me, then I will say that should be the time frame by which we should enter into a democratic process," he said.

Bangladesh's main two political parties, Hasina's Awami League and its bitter rival BNP, had both previously called for elections to be held within three months of the interim government taking office in August.

Yunus, the interim administration's chief adviser, and the army chief meet every week and have "very good relations", with the military supporting the government's efforts to stabilise the country after a period of turmoil, said Waker.

"I'm sure that if we work together, there is no reason why we should fail," he said.

More than 1,000 people were killed in violent clashes that began as a movement against public sector job quotas in July but escalated into a wider anti-government uprising -- the bloodiest period in the country's independent history.

Calm has returned to the teeming streets of Dhaka, a densely packed metropolis that was at the heart of the

rebellion, but some parts of the civil service are not yet properly functional after the dramatic fall of Hasina's administration.

With much of Bangladesh's police, numbering around 190,000 personnel, still in disarray, the army has stepped up to carry out law and order duties nationwide.

PUNISHMENTS AND REFORMS

Born out of erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971 after a bloody independence war, Bangladesh came under military rule in 1975, following the assassination of its first prime minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father.

In 1990, the country's military ruler Hossain Mohammad Ershad was toppled in a popular uprising, leading to the restoration of democracy.

The military again staged a coup in 2007, backing a caretaker government that ruled until Hasina took power two years later.

A career infantry officer who served through these periods of turmoil, Waker said that the Bangladesh Army that he leads would not intervene politically.

"I will not do anything which is detrimental to my organisation," he said, "I am a professional soldier. I would like to keep my army professional."

In line with sweeping government reforms proposed since Hasina was shunted from power, the army, too, is looking into allegations of wrongdoing by its personnel and has already

punished some soldiers, Waker said, without providing further details.

"If there is any serving member who is found guilty, of course I will take action," he said, adding that some military officials may have acted out of line while working at agencies directly controlled by the former prime minister or interior minister.

The interim government has formed a five-member commission, headed by a former high court judge, to investigate reports of up to 600 people who may have been forcibly "disappeared" by Bangladesh's security forces since 2009.

In the longer-term, however, Waker wanted to distance the political establishment from the army, which has more than 130,000 personnel and is a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping missions.

"It can only happen if there is some balance of power between president and prime minister, where the armed forces can be placed directly under president," he said.

Bangladesh's armed forces currently come under the defence ministry, which is typically controlled by the prime minister, an arrangement that Waker said a constitutional reform process under the interim government could potentially look to amend.

"The military as a whole must not be used for political purpose ever," he said. "A soldier must not indulge in politics."