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## All killings, rights abuses must be probed

Volker Turk says about crimes committed before, after Aug 5

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk yesterday said perpetrators of all human rights violations before and after August 5 must be tried.

"It is not acceptable to have mob justice of any kind and that's why you need the rule of law. Because otherwise, violence begets violence as we see in so many situations around the world," he told reporters at a city hotel at the end of his two-day visit to Bangladesh.

He was referring to the people killed before and after the fall of the Awami League government in early August.

Hundreds of people were killed during the mass uprising that led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina. But after she fled to India, many people, including police and Awami League activists, were killed by mobs. Besides, there were attacks on minority communities.

A UN fact-finding mission is currently investigating the human rights violations that took place between July 1 and August 15.

During his visit, Turk held meetings with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad

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Bangladesh players celebrate with the SAFF Women's Championship trophy after retaining the title with a 2-1 win in an enthralling final against hosts Nepal at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu yesterday. Two second-half goals from Monika Chakma and Ritu Porna Chakma, either side of Amisha Kari's equaliser for Nepal, saw Bangladesh defend the title after winning it for the first time against the same opposition at the same venue in the last edition.

PHOTO: SAFF

## Bangladesh women cement SAFF supremacy

Beat Nepal 2-1 in final

ATIQUE ANAM

Monika Chakma and Ritu Porna Chakma scored a goal apiece as Bangladesh silenced a capacity crowd at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu yesterday with a 2-1 win against Nepal in the final of the SAFF Women's Championship, retaining the title they had first won two years ago at the same venue.

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## Shift focus to elections from other issues

Fakhrul urges govt

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday called upon the interim government to shift its focus to holding a participatory and credible national election from any other issue.

Speaking at a discussion, he also urged Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus to remain alert so that people's affection and respect for him are not diminished.

"We need to give the government time and hope they will use it wisely. Focus on the election without paying attention to other issues," the BNP leader said addressing the government.

Fakhrul sees no alternative to holding a fair, neutral, inclusive and acceptable election to ensure the country's survival and progress because establishing a democratic state is the "greatest" challenge facing the people.

He expressed hope that the government would arrange for the election within a reasonable timeframe, allowing the people to establish their parliament through their votes. "This is what the people want," he said.

The National People's Party organised the programme at Dhaka Reporters' Unity to mark its 17th founding anniversary.

Fakhrul said the interim government formed a search

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## Stray bullet kills woman as criminals open fire

Man beaten to death by mob the same day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed after a stray bullet hit her when criminals opened fire in Dhaka's Mirpur Bauniabandh area yesterday afternoon.

Deceased Ayesha Begum was shot in the chest around 2:15pm and died on the spot, Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Pallabi Police Station, told The Daily Star.

He said the shooting occurred over a drug-related dispute. "Ayesha was not involved. She was merely an onlooker..."

Speaking to The Daily Star, a witness, preferring anonymity, said several criminals, including one Momin, arrived at the scene and began firing.

When Ayesha went in front of her house to see what was going on, she got

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## Cops grapple with rising crimes in city

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Around Tuesday noon, lawyer Nagen Mitra withdrew Tk 50,000 from a Sonali Bank branch in Dhanmondi 27.

Soon after he stepped out of the bank, three youths surrounded him and one of them pressed a knife hard against his abdomen. As he froze out of fear, they snatched the cash from his pocket, crossed the road and vanished into the crowd before anyone could react.

Dev Dulal Mitra, the victim's son and a senior reporter for the daily Bhorer Kagoj, told this newspaper, "The incident happened in broad daylight on a crowded road, yet the muggers showed no trace of fear."

He added they refrained from filing a complaint with police as they felt there was no point doing so.

Mitra's comments reflect a disturbing reality: incidents of mugging and snatching have been taking place almost every day, often in broad daylight, and little is being done to arrest the trend.

This is something that has been stoking serious concern among the people.

Additionally, incidents of gunfights and

killings have also seen a rise.

Just yesterday afternoon, a woman named Ayesha Begum died on the spot after being hit by a stray bullet when criminals opened fire in Dhaka's Mirpur Bauniabandh area.

According to police, the shooting took place over a drug-related fight. Ayesha was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

After the fall of the Hasina-led government on August 5, police stations barely functioned for several weeks, leaving numerous incidents unreported.

Whatever data is available at Dhaka Metropolitan Police headquarters reveals a rise in criminal activities in September compared to the month before.

According to it, 119 murder cases were filed in August, and it rose to 148 in September. The count has already exceeded 100 in the first three weeks of this month.

DMP officials, however, said the recent number of murder cases might not fully reflect the current trend, as several incidents, which occurred in July and August, were reported late.

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"...The police force faced a lot of challenges after August 5. We're now working in full swing and trying our best."

- Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general of Police Headquarters.

## 'No place for Hasina, AL in politics now'

Yunus tells Financial Times

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has accused the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League of exhibiting "all the characteristics of fascism" and said it has "no place" in the country's politics for now.

In an interview with the Financial Times, he also said his interim government would not immediately seek Hasina's extradition from India.

His comments "make clear the 84-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate favours taking a hard line" on the AL after Hasina was toppled by a student-led revolt in August, the British newspaper wrote.

It also said his approach on seeking Hasina's return "may avoid for the moment fuelling diplomatic tensions between Bangladesh and its giant neighbour".

"In the short run, definitely she has no place — the Awami League doesn't have a place — in Bangladesh," Prof Yunus said.

"They controlled the [political] machinery, they



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Police using water cannon and hitting protesters with sticks in front of the capital's Shikha Bhaban yesterday to disperse them and stop them from going to the Secretariat to press home their demand for raising the age limit for government recruitment to 35 years. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Star INTERVIEW

## Map out economic priorities

DCCI chief Ashraf Ahmed says a roadmap will help businesses set the direction of their action plans

JAGARAN CHAKMA

The head of DCCI has urged the government to map out its economic priorities once the committee to prepare a white paper on the economy, and other task forces on various reform agendas finish their jobs.

"Such a roadmap will set the direction of economic action plans [for businesses]," Ashraf Ahmed, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), said in an interview with The Daily Star last week.

"For example," he added, "We already know the government is emphasising investments in education and healthcare instead of large infrastructure projects."

"This can generally indicate slower growth in the building material industry, but higher growth in education- and healthcare-related businesses," the DCCI chief said.

He talked about the importance of creating a friendly environment for business, the missing link between employment and education, challenges facing businesses, and other aspects of the economy.

He said building confidence among entrepreneurs by restoring law and order and lowering the cost of financing is a must to bring fresh investments to the economy.



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