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Army chief inducted into BMA 'hall of fame'

UNB, Dhaka

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman was inducted into the "hall of fame" as the 7th Army Chief at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) in Bhatiyar of Chattogram yesterday.

He graduated from BMA on December 20, 1985, completing the 13th BMA Long Course and receiving a commission in the Infantry Corps.

He took command of the army on June 23, 2024, as the 18th chief of army staff.

The event was attended by senior army officials, including the GOC of ARTDOC, commandant of EBRC, GOC of the 24th Infantry Division, the adjutant general, commandant of BMA, the military secretary, other high-ranking officials from Army Headquarters and Chattogram Cantonment.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus exchanges greetings with a group of expatriates after inaugurating the "Probashi Lounge" for Bangladeshi migrant workers at Dhaka Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Give timeline for phasing out fossil fuel

South Asian civil society groups demand at COP29

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

South Asian civil society groups in Baku have called for developed countries to make political declarations for ending fossil fuel use by closing and phasing out all coal and fossil fuel-based power plants by 2040.

They also demanded that the major emitters change their theory of diverting peoples' demand and instead give real commitment in both mitigation and financing for the next 10 years.

The demands were placed at a press conference yesterday in Baku, Azerbaijan that is hosting the Conference of Parties (COP29) - the largest climate conference of the UN - where leaders from some 200 countries will be gathering and discussing the future of the earth, according to a statement of EquityBD.

COP29 arrives at a time when US President-elect Donald Trump is preparing withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, sending widespread concern for countries like Bangladesh that remain in the forefront of climate change.

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Railway cancels lease of 24 privately-run trains

Allegations of misconduct, bidding manipulation run rife against lessee

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

The railways ministry has cancelled the lease of 24 trains, which are currently being operated by private operators, allegedly for violating conditions of the contracts.

The ministry, in a letter on November 3, asked the director general of Bangladesh Railway (BR) to notify the lessees that their contract will be cancelled from December 31 this year.

The ministry also directed him to lease these trains after carrying out fresh bidding as soon as possible, officials said.

These 24 trains are run by different companies owned by Salauddin Ripan and his family members, sources said.

These companies initially won contracts to operate the trains for four years, but they continued to run those for over a decade, as BR extended their contracts without any fresh bidding.

Ripan, who reportedly was affiliated with Awami League and contested the last parliamentary election from

Ripan, who reportedly was affiliated with Awami League and contested the last parliamentary election from Barishal-5 constituency as an independent candidate, managed the facilities, allegedly bribing some ministers of the previous government and unscrupulous officials of the BR.



Barishal-5 constituency as an independent candidate, managed the facilities, allegedly bribing some ministers of the previous government and unscrupulous officials of the BR, they said. Contacted, BR Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali said upon receiving the letter from the ministry, he directed the general managers of both East and West zones to take necessary initiatives in this regard.

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Bangabandhu's photo removed from Darbar Hall at Bangabhaban



PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM MAHFUJ ALAM'S FACEBOOK PROFILE

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A photo of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been removed from the Darbar Hall in Bangabhaban, the official residence of Bangladesh's president.

Adviser Mahfuj Alam, in a Facebook post yesterday, said, "The photo of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a post-71 fascist, is removed from Darbar Hall. It is a shame for us that we couldn't remove his pictures from Bangabhaban after August 5. Apologies. But he won't be seen anywhere till people's July spirit lives on."

Alam further wrote, "Awami League must acknowledge and apologise for what Sheikh Mujib and his daughter have done to the people of Bangladesh, starting from the non-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Judge me by my work: Farooki

STAR REPORT

A day after being sworn in as the cultural affairs adviser, filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki yesterday urged everyone to judge him by his work, not by his role as an anti-fascist.

"I have no need for a ministerial portfolio as a reward for being an 'anti-fascist'. It is important whether I am able to do the duty," he said while talking to reporters at the Secretariat yesterday.

The film maker said he thought he might be able to do the job when the government indicated its confidence. "Then, I agreed to take charge," he said.

"I know the budget of the cultural affair ministry is not too large. So, we have some limitation. But we have a great team," he said, mentioning the names of recently appointed heads of some of the institutions under the ministry.

He said, "We will sit together soon and brainstorm to decide on what we need to do. We will then present it to the chief adviser. We want to be able to say before leaving that we have been able to bring some changes," he added.

"After approval [from chief adviser], we will present it to you. You will also know about our roadmap and what we want to do. On the day we leave, you will judge how successful we have been and where we have failed. For the failures, we will apologise," he added.

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People forced to compromise for inflation: Bashir

STAR REPORT

High inflationary pressure is compelling people to compromise on their priorities, said Sheikh Bashir Uddin, the newly appointed commerce adviser yesterday.

People's income has increased, but their purchasing power did not rise accordingly due to inflation, he said.

Every ordinary worker will be found making compromises in their priorities - including in health, education, and even in terms of food, he added.

The adviser said he cannot perform magic to control commodity prices, but he will work together with everyone to bring prices under control.

He made the comments in response to a journalist's query on how he will control commodity prices, after his first meeting at the secretariat in the capital.

The adviser said he is obligated to the people, noting that everyone, including himself, is a consumer. Making life easier for the people will be the priority, he added.

He suggested the officers of the commerce ministry work extra hours and added that he would also give his full effort.

Meanwhile, speaking at another event, the commerce adviser told businesspersons, "I have disassociated myself from my business

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'Govt's intention doubtful amid slow reform'

Says BNP leader Hafizuddin

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Major (retired) Hafizuddin Ahmed today voiced concern that the interim government may intend to extend its hold on power, citing a lack of visible progress in its reform initiatives.

Speaking at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU), he also alleged that several individuals with pro-Awami League affiliations have been appointed to the advisory council of the interim government.

"The interim government has been put in place under the leadership of Dr Muhammad Yunus. We know that the main function of this government is to hand over power to elected representatives after holding a fair election. But they want to stay in power for 20 years," the BNP leader alleged.

He urged the government to arrange the national election by completing the electoral reforms in a very short period of time.

"The rest of the reforms will be done by the elected government. I don't see any reform happening anywhere. It has already been seen that many pro-Awami League individuals have been included in the advisory council," said Hafiz.

The programme was organised by Jatiyatabadi

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Illegally parked buses take up a portion of this road in the Jurain area of the capital, hampering vehicle movement and causing gridlock. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'No need to change electoral system'

Says former CEC Abu Hena

UNB, Dhaka

Former Chief Election Commissioner Mohammad Abu Hena yesterday said there is no need to change the electoral system.

"My personal opinion is that there is no need to change the electoral process. The current system of our country can be effective. People of our country are familiar with this system," he said.

The former CEC expressed his views in response to a question from journalists after his meeting with the Electoral System Reform Commission at Nirbachan Bhaban in Dhaka's Agargaon area.

He opined that the proportional representation system has not worked well in different countries.

"As a senior citizen of the country, I want the future elections to be fair, peaceful, and bring welfare to the country," said Abu Hena, who conducted the 1996 general election.

About the ongoing reform initiative, he said if the laws are not enforced properly, then they would not bring meaningful results, no matter how many reforms are done.

"The success of elections depends on the enforcement of electoral laws. This is a very important thing," said the country's 7th CEC.

"Competent persons should be appointed as the CEC

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