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## 7 arrested over Ctg lawyer's killing

3 cases filed; 21 rounded up over Tuesday's chaos at court; lawyers to continue strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Joint forces yesterday arrested seven men on charges of involvement in the killing of lawyer Saiful Islam, who was fatally hacked in the Chattogram Court Building area on Tuesday.

Law enforcers also arrested at least 21 others on suspicion of attack on police, damage to property, and battery on the court premises.

In the afternoon, hundreds of people gathered at Tigerpass intersection of the port city and demanded justice for assistant public prosecutor Saiful, who was killed during clashes between police, lawyers, and followers of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari.

The men arrested over the murder are Rumit Das, Sonu Mathor, Aman Das, Sumit Das, Gogon Das, Nayon Das and Bishal Das, said Assistant Deputy Commissioner Tarek Aziz of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

The joint forces arrested the suspects, aged between 20

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The body of lawyer Saiful Islam is being moved on to a vehicle on the premises of Jamiatul Falah Mosque in Chattogram city's Wasa intersection area yesterday after his second namaz-e-janaza was held there. Saiful was killed during a clash between the followers of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, police, and lawyers in the Chattogram Court Building area on Tuesday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## Forge national unity, prevent division among the people

**BNP urges govt; Yunus reiterates call for calm**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday shared its concerns over recent violence in Dhaka and Chattogram with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, calling for national unity to tackle such challenges.

The party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said they urged the government to hold discussions with all political parties to build unity and prevent division among the people.

"We hope the chief adviser will promptly arrange a peaceful solution. The country should not reach a point that leads to division," he told reporters outside State Guest House Jamuna, where the meeting took place in the evening.

"At this moment, what is most needed is national unity, which we have conveyed to him," he said after leading a five-member BNP delegation in the hour-long meeting.

"We are facing significant challenges.

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## 'Ambitious' reforms may take 4-5yrs

**Prof Rehman Sobhan says party to assume power next will have to be sincere in implementing reforms**

**"Successive parliaments degenerated into a chamber of commerce for 'crony' capitalists...who used their power to advance their business fortunes."**

PROF REHMAN SOBHAN



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan yesterday said the interim government will face challenges in implementing most of the reforms, as it promises to transfer power to an elected government within a reasonable time, possibly in 18 months to two years.

"To implement such a highly ambitious agenda would demand that the government continue in office for a sufficient length of time, perhaps four or five years. Given the interim government's commitment to hand over power to an elected government within a reasonable period of time, perhaps 18 months or two years, the scope for implementing most of the reforms will be challenging," he said.

Even the reforms initiated by the interim government will require the support of the party that is elected to office, he added.

"The commitment and capacity of such a party will have to be assessed in relation to its social and political support and its past record, if it has previously held office," he said.

Prof Sobhan was delivering a lecture on "Constructing a more just society in Bangladesh", organised in memory of late Nahreen Khan, a

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EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Faisal Hossain is one of the thousands of people injured during the July mass uprising. The 28-year-old was shot in the waist while pulling his rickshaw at Baipail in Dhaka's Ashulia around 11:00am on August 5, just a few hours before Sheikh Hasina fled to India.

Badly injured, Faisal was rushed to Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar, where he was treated for about 45 days. He is still unable to work.

On October 15, his wife, Tania Khatun, filed a case for attempted murder with Dhaka's chief judicial magistrate's court, which directed the Ashulia police to register the complaint as a First Information Report (FIR).

The FIR named 203 suspects, including Hasina, several top Awami League leaders and senior police officials.

Just four days later on October 19, Tania changed her minds about some suspects, and filed a petition with a Dhaka court to drop 13 people previously named in the case. Their political identity is not clear from the petition.

"The accused were not present at the scene," says the petition, seen by The Daily Star, adding

CASES OVER JULY UPRISING

## Petitions pile up to drop names

that she initially named them "wrongfully and being aggrieved" by her husband's injuries. "These individuals would be most grievously harmed if they are not excluded from the case."

**"I don't know the updates of the case. My brother knows about it," Tania said, indicating the complaint was drafted by her brother, which she only signed.**

But Tania did not know then – and does not know now – any of these 13 people personally, or any of the suspects named in the case.

"I don't know the updates of the case. My brother knows about it," she said, indicating the complaint was drafted by her brother.

She hung up the phone when asked about the case details, and did not receive our calls since. The Daily Star could not contact her brother

as she did not give his name.

Tania's case is not isolated. This newspaper has so far found plaintiffs in 55 cases have submitted petitions to exclude at least 195 people they had initially named as suspects in cases for murder or attempted murder since the first week of August.

Of them, six are law enforcement officers, including Additional IGP Selim Md Jahangir and Bangladesh Border Guard Director General Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui; two teachers of a public university; two officials of the environment department and former cabinet secretary Mahbub Hossain.

This newspaper could not establish any clear political connection of 75 people. The remaining are Awami League leaders and activists.

TWO BIZARRE CASES

Court records show at least 550 cases, mostly for murder, were filed with various courts and police stations in Dhaka till November 25 since August 5.

At least seven plaintiffs, including Tania, told The Daily Star that they were not involved in the drafting of the FIRs. They only signed the complaints drafted by others.

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## 'What kind of Bangladesh is this?'

**Questions Fakhrul, slams intimidation of newspapers**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing grave concern over the country's law and order situation, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said violence broke out on streets within about three months after the people's victory on August 5.

"People are spilling each other's blood. Now, newspaper offices are being set on fire, and attacked... Is this the outcome of the sacrifice people made?" he said at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club.

The Doctors Association of Bangladesh organised the event marking the death anniversary of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, a martyr of the 1990 anti autocracy movement.

Fakhrul said, "What kind of Bangladesh is this?... Why is such terrifying violence happening? Why is there instability? What are the problems? I raise these questions to all of you."

The July uprising gave the people the opportunity to get united and bring about a meaningful change, he said.

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## Govt for trying Hasina, allies at ICC

**Says CA's press wing; ICC prosecutor ready to help ICT**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government intends to pursue charges of crimes against humanity against the Sheikh Hasina regime at the International Criminal Court for the massacre during the July uprising and the enforced disappearances during her 16-year rule, the chief adviser's press wing said in a statement.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus discussed the issue yesterday when ICC prosecutor Karim A Khan visited him at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka, the statement read.

Khan said the ICC would like to cooperate with Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), which is dealing with the cases related to crimes committed during the mass uprising, according to the statement.

The ICT has already issued an arrest warrant against Hasina and members of her political party.

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With a moving train just a few metres away, pedestrians rush to cross the level crossing in the capital's Ashkona, putting themselves in harm's way. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Ban ISKCON, give it no quarter

**Student coordinators urge government**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Demanding an immediate ban on the ISKCON, leaders of the Anti-discrimination Students' Movement yesterday warned they would not allow the religious platform to implement "Delhi's agenda in Bangladesh".

They also said a conspiracy is being hatched to destabilise the country, but the "minority theory" will not be allowed to divide the country.

The student leaders made the remarks at two separate events in Chattogram and Dhaka.

"ISKCON is acting as an agent of Awami League and attempting to destabilise the country. This extremist group is behind the brutal killing of Saiful Islam," Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti-discrimination Students' Movement, said at a rally held at the Tiger Pass intersection in Chattogram.

He said Bangladesh is a land of coexistence, and extremists of any kind have no place here.

"We'll work to protect everyone's rights. However, no room will be given if anyone tries to operate an extremist organisation under the guise of religion. My brother Saiful was brutally murdered. ISKCON must be banned as a terrorist organisation."

The rally also sought justice for the murder of lawyer

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