



## AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

# Tarique, Babar, all others acquitted

### HC scraps tribunal verdicts that convicted 49

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The High Court yesterday acquitted BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and all the others convicted in two cases over the grizzly August 21, 2004 grenade attack.

The HC also scrapped the lower court verdicts that convicted and sentenced the 49 accused.

The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain delivered the judgment after a hearing on death references (trial court documents for confirmation of capital punishment) and appeals filed by some of the convicts.

Those who could not file appeals will also benefit from the judgment, said Mohammad Shishir Manir, one of the defence lawyers.

The accused currently behind bars will be released after the HC verdict reaches the jail unless they are imprisoned in any other cases, he said.

The BNP expressed satisfaction at the HC verdict. This has proved that there was a politically motivated conspiracy in these cases.

In the verdict, the High Court said the trial court judgments were illegal since they were delivered through unlawful procedures.

It said substantial changes were made in the supplementary charge sheet which was a completely illegal action, and the trial was based on that charge sheet.

The HC said the supplementary charge sheet was supposed to be submitted before the magistrate concerned first for an examination, but it was directly submitted to the trial court.

The trial court had taken cognisance of the charge sheet without lawful authority, the HC said.

The HC mentioned that the supplementary charge sheet was based on the confessional statement of accused Mufti Abdul Hannan, a leader of the banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI).

Hannan was executed in 2017 for another grenade attack targeting the then British high commissioner Anwar Choudhury in Sylhet on May 21, 2004.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Printing press workers hard at work as the free textbook distribution programme for primary and secondary school students for the upcoming academic year is set to begin on January 1. The photo was taken in the capital's Matuail yesterday.

# \$234 BILLION siphoned off during AL rule

### Says white paper team in its report

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

A total of \$234 billion was siphoned off from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023, according to the white paper on the state of the economy.

As per the report, the laundered money was sent to or routed primarily through the UAE, the UK, Canada, the US, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and India as well as a number of tax havens.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus hailed the report as a "historic document. "It will show us the economy we inherited after the July-August mass uprising," he said in a short speech before receiving the white paper yesterday from

RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 12, B1 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

DESTINATIONS OF CAPITAL FLIGHT  
UAE, UK, Canada, USA,  
Hong Kong, Malaysia,  
Singapore, India.

"Our blood curdles to know how they plundered the economy. The sad part is they looted the economy openly."

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus

"The problem is deeper than what we have thought. The white paper will show how crony capitalism gave birth to the oligarchs, who controlled the policy framing."

Debapriya Bhattacharya, head of the white paper team

PROPERTIES IN DUBAI  
532 owners of  
Bangladeshi origin have  
real estate worth \$375  
million in Dubai. They  
own 972 residential  
properties.

SIPHONED  
OFF TO  
CANADA  
\$47-100  
billion  
laundered  
into Canada.

MALAYSIA THE  
SECOND HOME  
Bangladeshi origin  
2nd home owners  
in Malaysia are  
more than 3,600  
till March 2024.

## Come together for the challenging times ahead

### Army chief says at event for recognising freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-uz-Zaman has urged the nation to stand together to face the challenging times that lie ahead.

"The country will have to overcome some difficult times. We will all work together to help the country through this crucial juncture. Please pray so that we can take the country to a safe place."

"The army that stands before you today has always served this country well in times of crisis. Officers in the army are working tirelessly to ensure law and order. In addition, we are involved in many important mechanisms ..."

The army chief made the remarks while addressing a ceremony held yesterday at the Army Multipurpose



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## Structural reforms needed to get rid of crony capitalism

### Says CPD Chairman Rehman Sobhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even all the reform commissions will not be able to rid the country of crony capitalism unless there are wholesale structural reforms, said Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"No one is looking for any sort of structural change - what the reforms might hopefully do is that they may take us away from a non-competitive system of crony capitalism and at least create a more competitive system," he said in an event yesterday to commemorate the CPD's 30-year journey.

Through the reform process, they are aiming to reproduce a reformed system of politics, governance and political system, he said at the event held at the Brac Centre Inn.

Regarding the self-censorship of civil society in expressing their views, he said: "Once upon a time I could write an article within three to four hours for The Daily Star. But in the last 10 to 15 years, it has sometimes taken me 10 days."

He recommended obtaining consent from the political parties to ensure that civil society organisations can actually function without constantly looking over their shoulders.

"This is our great expectation." Sobhan said his colleagues became depressed when they found out that ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina spoke harshly about the CPD after it arranged a dialogue on the 2014 election.

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## Unite against politics of vengeance

### Says Tarique after acquittal; BNP satisfied, AL protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has called for national unity to end the practice of political vengeance and pave the way for a new chapter in Bangladesh's history.

"Let us unite to end political vengeance and open a new chapter in history, where no one's life or family will be destroyed because of political

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## Govt must act as guardian of the injured

### Say volunteers working for victims of July uprising at Star discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The measures taken by the interim government for the treatment of those injured in the July uprising are uncoordinated and they lack proper monitoring, said volunteers working for the injured and families of martyred protesters.

They also said the government needs to act as a guardian of the injured.

The volunteers made the remarks at a discussion titled, "Courage amidst crisis: stories from volunteers of the July uprising" organised by The Daily Star.

This was the first storytelling session of a weeklong programme called "36 Days of July - Saluting the Bravehearts", held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Speaking at the event, Farhana Sharmin Emu, organiser of Visionary Voyage, said the interim government does not lack willingness, but they lack coordination among stakeholders.

"The government is taking many steps, but these are fragmented and not interconnected. Initially, a sub-committee under the health ministry was formed and tasked with preparing a list of the injured, deceased and missing. However, no funds were allocated for this committee."

She said three ministries -- health, social welfare, and labour -- need to

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নোটিশ

সম্প্রতি লক্ষ করা যাচ্ছে যে, দেশের বিভিন্ন জেলা, উপজেলার নির্বাচন অফিসে রোহিঙ্গারা এনআইডি সংগ্রহের অপতৎপরতায় লিপ্ত রয়েছেন। কিন্তু ভোটার তালিকা আইন ২০০৯ এর ৭ (১) (ক) অনুযায়ী কোন ব্যক্তি বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক না হলে তাকে ভোটার তালিকায় অন্তর্ভুক্তির কোন সুযোগ নেই।

এতদসত্ত্বেও বাংলাদেশের কিছু অসাধু ব্যক্তি/দালালচক্র রোহিঙ্গাদের ভোটার বানানোর কাজে সহায়তা করছেন যা ভোটার তালিকা আইন, ২০০৯ এবং জাতীয় পরিচয় নিবন্ধন আইন, ২০১০ অনুযায়ী দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

এমতাবস্থায়, বাংলাদেশের যেকোন স্থানে/জেলা, উপজেলার নির্বাচন অফিসসমূহে কোন রোহিঙ্গা বা অন্য কোন বিদেশী নাগরিক কর্তৃক জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (এনআইডি) সংগ্রহের অপচেষ্টা করার তথ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনের স্থানীয় উপজেলা, জেলা নির্বাচন অফিস, আঞ্চলিক নির্বাচন অফিস, নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়ের টেলিফোনে ০২-৫৫০০৭৬০০; ই-মেইল: secretary@ecs.gov.bd অথবা কল সেন্টার ১০৫ এ (টোল ফ্রি) অথবা ডাকযোগে-বরাবর সচিব, নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়, নির্বাচন ভবন, প্লট নং ই-১৪/জেড, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭ এ জানানো/ পাঠানোর জন্য সর্বসাধারণের প্রতি অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।