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We need accurate info for taking prompt action

Says Yunus about attack on minorities while meeting religious leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday sought religious leaders' assistance in getting information about attacks on minorities so that the government could take prompt action.

There are discrepancies between the facts and what the foreign media are reporting, he said.

"We want accurate information and want to establish a process of getting the information," he said in his opening remarks at a dialogue with religious leaders at the Foreign Service Academy.

"We are talking about communal harmony. We all agree that we have harmony... Along with harmony, we have fear in our minds too."

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus



In case of an attack on minorities, information must be collected immediately to catch the perpetrators, he said.

"We are talking about communal harmony. We all agree that we have harmony... Along with harmony, we have fear in our minds too," he said.

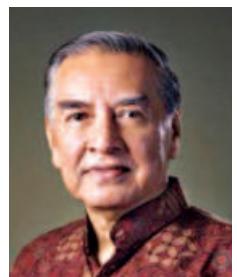
Leaders of Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian and several other religions joined the dialogue. They said they would remain united against any propaganda, and pledged their support for the government and religious harmony.

Amid demonstrations in the capital and different districts over the attack on the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala, Prof Yunus on Tuesday began a series of dialogues.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

What is Indian media's gain in branding us as a Hindu-hating country?

THE THIRD VIEW



MAHFUZ ANAM

The only conclusion that can be drawn from much of the Indian media's recent coverage of Bangladesh is that it is a Hindu-hating country. The venom that is being spewed, the language that is being used, the hatred that is being spread, and the demeaning stereotype that is being portrayed about us seem geared towards generating a hatred for Bangladeshis among the Indian people. The long-term impact of this, along with its backlash here, will be very difficult to neutralise.

SEE PAGE 8

Inflation hits 4-month high despite govt steps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inflation hit a four-month high of 11.38 percent in November, despite the tightening monetary policy and easing of import tax on essential items.

Food inflation soared to 13.80 percent from 12.66 percent in October, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. It stood at 14.63 percent in urban areas and 13.41 percent in rural areas.

Non-food prices edged up to 9.39 percent in November from 9.34 percent a month earlier.

The stubbornly high inflation comes despite hawkish monetary policy under the new central bank governor Ahsan H Mansur, who took charge in August, and the National Board of Revenue reducing or exempting the tariffs in recent months on many essential commodities including sugar, potato, onion, dates, eggs etc.

The Bangladesh Bank raised the key policy rate thrice to 10 percent since Mansur took charge. As a result, the interest rate of loans has also soared.

During a meeting with the BB on Tuesday, the visiting mission of the International Monetary Fund said the policy rate could be increased further if inflation does not come under control.

Economists, however, said inflation would not ease through only tightening the policy rate if the central bank printed the high-powered money.

"Only monetary policy cannot tame the elevated inflation – it has become a structural problem," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Providing liquidity support to distressed banks to protect their depositors is causing money creation. If it cannot be sterilised, the contractionary stance will be diluted.

Food inflation (in %) SOURCE: BBS

	14.01
Jul	14.01
Aug	11.36
Sep	10.40
Oct	12.66
Nov	13.80

The BB has recently given Tk 22,500 crore in new money as liquidity support to six crisis-hit banks.

However, abandoning the contractionary monetary policy would not be wise either, Hussain said.

"If the fire brigade is unable to extinguish the fire, you don't let it burn, remove the brigade and pour more oil into the fire. The sensible thing to do is to complement the firefighters with all other fire extinguishing tools."

In the context of food inflation, those other tools are different approaches to market management: policing extortion in supply chains, ensuring competition and preventing collusion in wholesale markets, Hussain added.

Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, echoed the same.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

No arrests sans proper probe Says IGP; apologises for the deaths during uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam has said arrests will not be made indiscriminately or without proper investigations into cases filed over killings during the July uprising.

"The law does not permit arbitrary arrests, and neither do we," the IGP said at a press conference at the Police Headquarters yesterday.

He was responding to a question regarding the cases filed against a large number of people over the killings during the uprising.

The IGP said efforts are underway to identify and arrest some senior police officials over their involvement in ordering fatal shootings during the uprising.

"Those officials, who were in command, cannot evade their responsibilities."

Paying tributes to the students, children, ordinary citizens and police personnel who lost their lives during the uprising, Baharul said every killing is condemnable.

He apologised to the families of all the victims and expressed regret.

Emphasising the need for a depoliticised police force, Baharul said all the force members wish to carry out duties free from political influence.

"Police must be depoliticised. This is my demand as well that of every member of the force."



Baharul Alam

REGIONAL RESISTANCE

During the 1971 Liberation War, dozens of regional forces emerged across Bangladesh. Just as the freedom fighters trained under the sub-sectors and the Bengal Regiment fought valiantly, these regional forces also put up tough resistance against the Pakistan army. In the month of victory, we bring you the stories of some of these heroic forces.

Baten Bahini of Tangail

AHMAD ISTIAK

During the Liberation War, two powerful regional forces challenged the Pakistani army in Tangail.

One was the renowned Kaderia Bahini, led by Bangabir Abdul Kader Siddique, and the other was the lesser-known but formidable Baten Bahini.

The latter was led by Khandaker Abdul Baten, then vice president of the Student Union's Tangail Saadat College unit.

Originating in Konra village of Tangail's Nagarpur upazila, the Baten Bahini eventually grew to over 3,500 members and went on to spread across the surrounding districts of Manikganj, Sirajganj, and Pabna.

In February this year, The Daily Star spoke to about 40 freedom fighters of Baten Bahini during a visit to Tangail, Sirajganj, and Manikganj.

From the book "Mohan Swadhinota Juddho - 1971 Baten Bahini" by Mir Shamsul Alam Shahzada and interviews with Baten Bahini members, it was learnt that a 10-member resistance committee was formed in Konra village on April 2 under the leadership of Mir Shamsul Alam Shahzada following the March 25 massacre. The next day, Abdul Baten arrived in Konra and began mobilising

residents of Konra and nearby villages for war.

FORMATION

Mir Shamsul, also a Baten Bahini member, told this newspaper that two rifles and 45 rounds of ammo handed over to the force by the then Lahuti union chairman, who got them from two soldiers of the East Pakistan Rifles, were the first weapons acquired by the force. A week later, freedom fighters discovered eight rifles dumped in a ditch in Tarutia village. These weapons were used to start training.

On April 20, a locally organised group of fighters led by Siddique Hossain joined Baten Bahini, significantly strengthening the force's ranks.

Siddique told this newspaper, "Immediately after Bangabandhu's speech, we started mobilising the local people of Shahjani village in Bharra union under Nagarpur upazila.

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Return to Dhaka for consultation Govt asks Agartala, Kolkata mission chiefs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

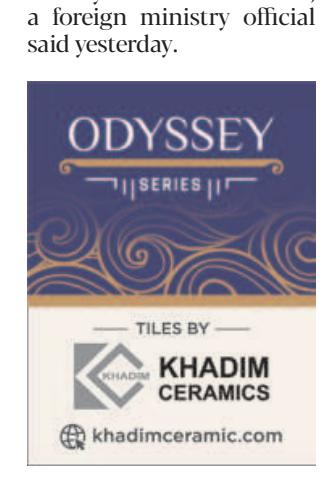
Dhaka has asked chiefs of two of its missions in India to return home for consultation after violent protests in Kolkata and Agartala against alleged attacks on minorities in Bangladesh.

Acting Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata Shikder Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman has already returned to Dhaka, a foreign ministry official said yesterday.

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SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Assistant High Commissioner Arif Mohammad in Agartala was also scheduled to return, the official said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



7 NEW LOCATIONS COMING SOON

Jamuna Future Park Menswear Flagship Store Jamuna Future Park Womenswear Flagship Store

Gulshan Avenue Multi-Brand Store Sylhet, Kumarpara Flagship Store

Bailey Road Multi-Brand Store Chattogram, Halishahar Flagship Store

Mirpur 12 Flagship Store Follow Us: [@ILYNLifeStyle](#) [@ILYNLifeStyle](#)

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SALUTING THE BRAVEHEARTS
36 days of JULY

PHOTO EXHIBITION
DECEMBER 1-7, 2024
Time: 10:00 AM-8:00 PM
Venue: The Daily Star Centre

STORYTELLING WEEK
Time: 3:00 PM-4:30 PM

WRITE TO PROTEST
Writers and poets on their
experience
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7



Workers erased from July mass uprising narrative

FROM PAGE 12

pullers, and homeless individuals. Despite their sacrifices, these communities are being erased from the narrative.

"If we fail to include them as stakeholders in building a new Bangladesh, we are not heading towards true democracy," said Mahfuzur Rahman Shamim, convener of Bangladesh Janatara Sangsads.

He criticised the tendency to label protesting marginalised groups, like battery rickshaw-pullers, as accomplices of fascists. He also said the government, like its predecessor, sided with RMG owners rather than the workers when discussing wages.

Asadul Islam, central office secretary of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati, criticised the lack of recognition of RMG workers who played a key role in the uprising, many of whom were injured or killed.

"Their sacrifices remain unacknowledged, except for a few cases highlighted in the media," he said, calling the Tk 1 lakh compensation for injured families "alms, not compensation".

Prabir Saha, assistant general



Rubi, a domestic worker, breaks down as she speaks about her son Rana Talukder, who was shot dead by police in the capital's Uttara on August 5. She was speaking at the fifth storytelling session, "Marginalised voices of the July Revolution", of The Daily Star's storytelling week titled "36 days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts".

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

secretary of the same platform, stressed the need to honour RMG workers and implement the 18-point demands submitted to the interim government.

"The demands include attendance

bonuses, minimum wage reform, an eight-hour workday, labour law reforms, and constitutional changes to ensure workers' dignity."

Rickshaw puller Noor Muhammad recalled being forced

by police to take martyred Golam Nafiz's injured body on his rickshaw on August 4.

After being turned away from hospitals, Noor eventually arranged for an autorickshaw to take Nafiz to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital.

Noor cried, "No mother should lose her child this way."

Pria Khan, a member of the Hijra community, shared how she and her peers tirelessly served at DMCH from July 17, witnessing a relentless wave of death bodies, particularly on July 19.

"There were bodies arriving on stretchers, in ambulances, and even on rickshaws. There was no one to carry them inside... I remember a BRAC University student being brought in by ambulance. I tried to carry him inside but couldn't do it alone. I begged for help, but he died before we could take him inside."

Pria revealed the contributions of her community. "Our group of five Hijras collected 730 bags of blood, and our Guru Ma raised Tk 3 lakh in just two days for the treatment of the injured.

"Three morgues were overflowing, with bodies lying out

in the open. By July 24, the stench of decay filled the air, and there wasn't even space to stand or sit. Ambulances charged Tk 10,000-15,000 to transport bodies, turning the crisis into a business. I saw more than 1,000-1,500 people die at DMCH alone, yet we still don't have an accurate death toll."

Pria also shared how her phone was snatched, videos deleted, and threats issued to silence her for documenting the atrocities.

Rubi, the mother of martyred Rana Talukder, recounted the devastating loss of her 32-year-old son, a driver by profession, who was shot dead near Uttara East Police Station on August 5.

Rana had left home that afternoon with his elder brother, Roni, to celebrate the fall of Sheikh Hasina.

"Hearing gunshots, I went out to bring them back. Rana said he'd find Roni, and they'd return home together," Rubi said, her voice breaking.

Roni later found Rana shot near the police station. He was rushed to Uttara Modern Medical College Hospital, where he was declared dead at 8:10pm.

Baten Bahini of Tangail

FROM PAGE 1

"As the war began, we managed to get our hands on some weapons from EPR soldiers and local firearm owners and soon began training. Later, we joined forces with Baten Bahini, bringing with us 30-35 rifles and one LMG."

Towards the end of April, another group of 35 freedom fighters led by Fazlul Haque Mallick joined Baten Bahini, also bringing with them arms and ammunition, Fazlul told The Daily Star.

Abdul Malek, a Baten Bahini member, said, "Our training initially took place in Lauthati. Later, we opened training camps in Tangail's Shahjani village and Manikganj's Tilli village."

According to Mir Shamsul's book, Baten Bahini initially consisted of locals. However, over time, it expanded to include civilians, as well as members of the East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles, police, and Ansar who had abandoned their duties or were on leave.

Mir Shamsul said the force comprised 41 companies, 123 platoons, and 370 sections. The freedom fighters of this force fought in over 50 battles during the war. These battles resulted in heavy casualties for the Pakistani army, with over a thousand Pakistani soldiers killed.

OPERATIONS

The first successful operation of Baten Bahini was the attack on Singair Police Station in Manikganj on the night of May 4.

Fazlul Haque Mallick, a freedom fighter who participated in the operation, said, "We attacked the police station at 11 o'clock in the night, amidst drizzling rain. Initially, we caught the Pakistani soldiers off guard. However, they eventually managed to mount a resistance. After two hours of fighting, they were forced to flee, leaving a large arsenal of arms and ammunition."

According to Mir Shamsul's book, on May 5, another group led by Lance Naib Mokhlesur Rahman attacked the Saturia Police Station in Manikganj and looted a number of arms and ammunition.

On May 17, Baten Bahini attacked the Daulatpur Police Station. After three hours of fighting, they emerged victorious, capturing the police station and raising the flag of Bangladesh there.

In the early hours of May 20, four Baten Bahini freedom fighters snuck into the Chauhali Police Station in Sirajganj. Taking advantage of the sleeping Pakistani soldiers, they made away with around two dozen G3 and .303 rifles, along with a large cache of ammunition.

At the end of May, Baten Bahini fighters, disguised as traders, got into the Ghior Police Station and occupied it.

On the same day, another group carried out an operation at Dhalla Bridge, detaining 20 Razakars and seizing their arms and ammunition.

IMPROVISED ATTACK

Mir Shamsul said as a result of continuous attacks, the Baten Bahini was running out of ammunition. At that time, they were tipped off about the location of some ammunition abandoned at a village near Jabra Bridge in Manikganj. Later, two Baten Bahini companies went there and got their hands on 17 boxes of rifle rounds.

On their way back, locals urged Khandaker Baten to attack the gunboat that Pakistani soldiers were using to loot and burn down villages every week.

Pakistanis retaliated from inside the police station. After several hours of fighting, as dawn broke, local villagers joined the battle, armed with whatever they could find.

"As their ammunition was dwindling following eight hours of continuous fighting, the Pakistani soldiers fled, leaving behind a number of casualties and their firearms."

On December 7, Baten Bahini attacked a large jute-laden boat carrying Pakistani soldiers in Dhalla union under Manikganj's Singair upazila, resulting in the deaths of 33 Pakistani soldiers.

Upendranath Sarker, chief of the intelligence wing, told The Daily Star that this was the last major battle fought by the Baten Bahini in the war.

CIVILIAN WING

Upendranath said, "In addition to our military wing, we also had a well-organised civilian wing, which



SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

- Area: Tangail, Manikganj, Sirajganj, and Pabna
- Command structure: 41 companies, 123 platoons, and 370 sections
- Civilian wing: Ran a hospital, published a magazine
- Timeframe: May 4-Dec 7
- Operations: At least 50
- Members: At least 3,500



File photo of Baten Bahini during an operation in 1971.



Recent photo of the Saturia Police Station in Manikganj. The Baten Bahini attacked this station a total of three times during the course of the war.

efforts prevented the force from collapsing, Mir Shamsul writes in his book.

In the early hours of August 14, the Baten Bahini conducted a notable operation when the fighters attacked the Saturia Police Station for the second time, capturing it and raising the flag of Bangladesh in the morning, according to the book.

However, the Pakistani forces eventually recaptured the establishment after the freedom fighters had withdrawn.

On November 21, the Baten Bahini attacked the Saturia Police Station for a third time. In this battle, alongside 500 freedom fighters, local villagers in Saturia participated. Ziarat Hossain, a Baten Bahini member, was martyred.

Abdus Sattar, a freedom fighter who participated in the battle, said, "As planned, we attacked the police station around 3:00am. The

focused on security, food, finance and justice, public relations, and leadership training."

Baten Bahini had also set up a mobile hospital to provide medical care to injured freedom fighters. A newspaper was also published to keep people informed about the war.

Narendra Kumar Poddar, a Baten Bahini freedom fighter, said that the hospital was run by Bengal Regiment doctor Jahirul Islam and Mymensingh Medical College doctor Basanta Kumar Saha. "Furthermore, we published a magazine called 'Agnishikha,' edited by Ali Akbar Khan Dollar."

Baten Bahini freedom fighters received a fixed allowance. Mir Shamsul explained, "The freedom fighters in the force used to receive a monthly allowance, the fund for which came from donations made by generous, well-off members of society."

MY DHAKA

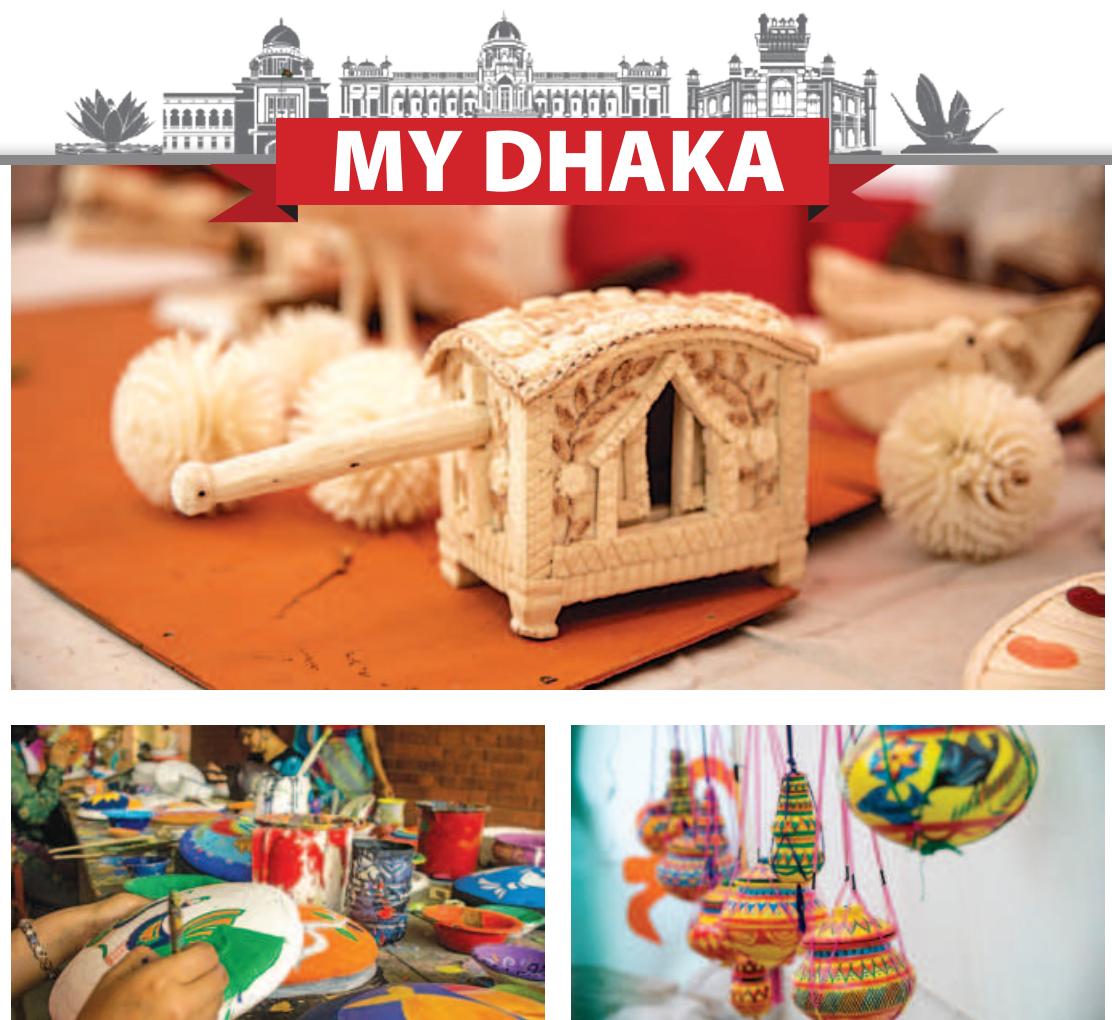


PHOTO: STAR LIFESTYLE ARCHIVE

Dhaka's must-visit festivals and fairs this December

RBR

December is a month of festivity in Dhaka. Besides the mild chill in the air, the wafts of jaggery-filled rice cakes steaming by the roadside stalls, or enjoying a sip from a cup of strong milk tea, the month is dotted with fairs, exhibitions, yoga festivals, marathons etc.

In fact, so much is happening this month, that I am finding it difficult to keep tabs on all the events. So, bring out your diary and mark the fun days ahead to plan your December well.

First and foremost, with great pleasure, I want to invite My Dhaka readers to The Daily Star premises and enjoy our remarkable exhibition, titled "36 Days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts", where we are celebrating journalism. We are exhibiting our in-depth coverage of the July Uprising through our reporting, photojournalism, and multimedia videos. The Daily Star's unique exhibition pays tribute to the spirit of resilience, courage, and sacrifice displayed by students and ordinary Bangladeshis during the historic July Uprising. Our exhibition will remain open to all till December 7 (tomorrow) between 10:00am and 8:00pm.

My recent favourite event of the year is the "Paara Utshob" by Heroes for All Inc. in collaboration with Baridhara Society and DNCC at Baridhara Diplomatic Zone. The open for all Paara Utshob will step into its fourth year of successful consecutive shows this year, and is set to happen today (December 6) from 9:00am to 9:00pm.

What I love about this event is the relaxed mood and joyful atmosphere that prevails throughout the day. You can casually stroll through the streets with a popsicle or coffee in your hand and with your pet tagging along. Pet lovers can bring their pets to the event dressed in their finery for a pet fashion or stage show. This is indeed a unique concept in Dhaka.

The streets are decorated in a fair-like manner with set-ups of craft shops and cafes. Activity zones have desi street games, open-mike sessions, bioscope, an art wall for all, storytelling corners, and health and well-being info stalls. There are



Friday is set to be the most happening day of the month because there is also a 21.1km and 7.5km marathon today at the capital's

Hatirjheel, titled "Run for the Earth 2024", with the slogan "Run for Health, Run for Unity".

Besides these carnivals, there will be scores of Christmas bazaars and trade shows throughout the month, which are the perfect places to go for your Christmas shopping. Later in the month there is a jazz night at Spaghetti Jazz. Then a trendy K-pop Fancy Fest Dhaka 2024, featuring an electrifying K-pop dancing and singing competition, will be held on December 20 at Tokyo Square Convention Centre in Mohammadpur (Level 8).

But the much-awaited funfair of the month will be the three-day-long "Zainul Utsab" and "Zainul Mela," to be held at Charukola (Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University). This is a perfect way to end your year; explore the fairgrounds for artworks from faculty departments and handmade heritage crafts from local artisans.

DHAKA

'Our sovereignty not under threat' says home adviser

UNB, Dhaka



Bangladesh's sovereignty is not under any threat, said Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

The adviser made this remark while briefing the media after inaugurating an event organised by the Fire Service and Civil Defense on the occasion of International Volunteer Day 2024 at the Fire Service and Civil Defense Multipurpose Training Ground.

"But the Indian media has been spreading misinformation about Bangladesh. Indian media is an example of how a country can spread false information about another country," he said.

He also urged the country's media outlets to counter this misinformation.

In response to the recent comments by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee about Bangladesh, the adviser said United Nations peacekeepers should be deployed in her country instead due to the persecution of minorities there.

In his keynote address, Jahangir said the Fire Service and Civil Defense is working towards the goal of training 62,000 volunteers across the country.

He inspired critical thinking, intellectual growth Say speakers on Prof Abdur Razzaq marking his 25th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor Abdur Razzaq inspired inquisitiveness, intellectual growth, and critical thinking among his students and those around him, said speakers at an event.

Despite having immense knowledge, Prof Razzaq did not write much, which is a loss for the nation, they added.

They made the remarks at a two-day event, marking the 25th death anniversary of Professor Razzaq, on November 28 and 29, organised by Abdur Razzaq Foundation.

The first day's event was held at the Abdul Karim Sahityabisharad Auditorium of Bangla Academy.



Delivering the keynote speech, Prof Abul Kasem Fazlul Haq, president of Bangla Academy, said, "The ability to create civilisation sets humans apart from all other creatures. Humans possess an inherent power that enables them to achieve their goals."

"While individual efforts often fall short, collective efforts succeed. Many achievements are not realised within a single generation but through the sustained efforts of successive generations," he added.

Dr Shafiqat Hossain Khondaker, a trustee of Abdur Razzaq Foundation, said, "He [Razzaq] was a guide and an active presence among the generation that led

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

IRRATIONAL ENERGY DEALS 2009–2024

CAB seeks trial of those responsible

UNB, Dhaka

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) yesterday urged the interim government to prosecute "energy criminals" for looting state wealth from 2009 to 2024 through various irrational deals with local and international companies.

Dr M Shamsul Alam, adviser to CAB, made this demand during a "Dialogue with Media on Reforms in the Energy Sector: Perspectives of CAB-Proposed Bangladesh Energy Transformation Policy 2024" held at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in Dhaka.

He said the trial of these criminals should be conducted under the Consumers Protection Act and BERC Act 2003.

The interim government must investigate and determine the extent of wealth looted from different segments of the power sector, including imports, generation, transmission, and distribution, he added.

"CAB wants to establish the consumers' right to access energy and ensure energy security," he said, adding that the energy sector should be viewed as a service sector rather than a commercial one.

The CAB advisor suggested that the

prices of all energy products should be set through public hearings, as stipulated in the BERC Act.

CAB specifically named former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ex State Minister Nasrul Hamid, ex-Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, and former Power Secretaries Abul Kalam Azad, Monwar Islam, and Dr Ahmed Kaikaus as the main energy criminals.

CAB General Secretary Advocate Humayun Kabir Bhuiya, Organising Secretary Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman Razu, and Research Coordinator Subho Kibria also addressed the event.

During the discussion, reporters in the energy sector emphasised that the interim government should focus on reforms in the energy sector to prevent vested interest groups from exploiting political influence.

Although the government is prioritising renewable energy, there is no specific, time-bound plan or roadmap to implement such projects, they said.

They also advised CAB to engage with political parties to understand their plans and encourage them to include energy-related issues, especially energy transition, in their election manifestos.

The CAB advisor suggested that the



Dust clouds are a common sight on Dhaka's streets during winter. According to the Air Quality Index, Dhaka's air ranked as the most polluted in the world with a score of 392 yesterday morning. The photo was taken in the Kamalapur area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Low wages, external interference hinder investigative journalism

Senior journos tell TIB discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of editorial policies, political interference, low wages, and the growing influence of advertising agencies are some of the key obstacles to investigative journalism in Bangladesh, said speakers at a panel discussion yesterday.

Senior journalists, media trainers, and academics took part in the event organised by Transparency International Bangladesh on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the TIB Investigative Journalism Award.

The discussion, titled "New Bangladesh: What Kind of Media Do We Want?" highlighted the major challenges facing the media industry.

Senior journalist Kamal Ahmed, also head of the Media Reform Commission, pointed out that over 540 newspapers are currently published from Dhaka, but questioned how many of them genuinely serve the public.

"There should be an assessment to check whether the media is serving public interest," he said.

He also criticised the previous Awami League government for neglecting editorial policies and allowing political influence to seep into the media landscape.

"It was the previous government's strategy to create barriers between news outlets practising objective

journalism and those spreading misinformation. There were no measures to assess how many media outlets were needed or what their capacities were," he added.

Kamal also highlighted the increasing lack of distinction between editors, owners, and management, including advertising

It was the previous government's strategy to create barriers between news outlets practising objective journalism and those spreading misinformation. There was no measure to assess how much media was needed or its capacity.

KAMAL AHMED
Head of the Media Reform Commission

staff, which he argued is eroding the independence of journalism. "When this distinction is blurred, independent journalism no longer exists," he said.

Nurul Kabir, editor of New Age, emphasised the close link between good journalism and the understanding of political, social, and environmental issues.

He also insisted that journalism

is inherently political, not bipartisan, and cannot thrive with low pay.

When a proposal was made to implement the ninth wage board, Kabir said that the proposed wage board is insufficient to meet journalists' needs. He stressed the importance of introducing a new wage board that accounts for current inflation and economic conditions.

He further stressed the need for journalists to have a deep understanding of political, economic, cultural, and historical contexts. "If journalists lack this knowledge, they are easily misled or confused," he said.

Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to the chief adviser, called for clearer ethical boundaries for journalists.

He argued that there should be a system of redress when media harms individuals, such as when someone is wrongfully labelled as a terrorist.

"There should be penalties for such instances, and the victim should be compensated and have their dignity restored," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of strong copyright laws to protect investigative journalism. "Without protection, the media's economic model has collapsed," he said. He added that copyright protection could attract more investment into the industry.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Prevent communal division, ensure harmony in country Chief justice urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed yesterday urged the country's people to make utmost efforts to prevent communal splits and to establish Bangladesh as a country of communal harmony.

"I would request all of you, as responsible citizens of the state, to do your best from respective positions to prevent communal frictions and to present the Supreme Court Bar Association as an example of communal harmony through our collective efforts before the countrymen," he said.

The chief justice was speaking as chief guest at a programme organised by the SCBA at its auditorium on the SC premises. The event was arranged on the occasion of "Bijaya Punarmilan", a reunion after Durga Puja celebrations.

Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed said, "Religion teaches us generosity, humanity, secularism, and tolerance. At the same time, misinterpretation of religion often creates conflicts among people. So, we have to take humanitarian lessons from religion to build Bangladesh as a country of communal harmony, for which the martyrs of our July Uprising sacrificed their lives."

He said various communal conflicts of the past century have taught us that communal harmony and coexistence are two of the cornerstones of our national progress.



EXTORTION, LAUNDERING Aman, Gias Uddin acquitted by HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The High Court yesterday acquitted BNP leader Aman Ullah Aman and businessman Gias Uddin Al Mamun from two separate criminal cases.

The HC also scrapped the trial courts' verdicts that convicted Aman and Gias Uddin, sentencing them to seven years imprisonment each in an extortion case and money laundering case, respectively.

The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain delivered the verdicts after holding hearings on two separate appeals filed by Aman and Gias.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

28 EU envoys to hold talks with Yunus

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Diplomats from 28 European countries, including 20 stationed in New Delhi and the rest in Dhaka, will meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on December 9 to explore new areas of cooperation with Bangladesh.

This is the first time ever that 28 ambassadors from the EU will come together to discuss bilateral issues with Bangladesh.

"Both sides will explore new areas of cooperation – how to address the Rohingya crisis, climate change, GSP+ facilities in the post-LDC era and how to take forward the comprehensive partnership with Bangladesh," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson and Director General (Public Diplomacy Wing) Md Rafiqul Alam said at the weekly briefing at the ministry yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A line of illegally parked motorcycles takes up all of the footpath in front of this commercial building, leaving little space for pedestrians. Besides, employees who work in these offices usually park their two-wheelers on this footpath in the morning and then leave after work. The photo was taken in the Gulshan-2 area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Ex-MP Kamran Hossain passes away

UNB, Dhaka
Former member of parliament K. M. R. Hossain Chowdhury passed away on Wednesday, aged 72. He was suffering from heart ailment.

He left behind his two sons. His janaza was held after Maghrib prayers at Gulshan Azad Mosque on Wednesday, followed by burial at Banani Graveyard alongside his late wife.

Chowdhury was a member of the 4th Jatiya Sangsads from Faridpur-3 constituency during the Ershad regime.

His qulukhwanai will be held on Saturday after Asr prayers at the Azad Masjid in Gulshan.

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 6
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:15 12:30 3:45 5:19 7:00
JAMAAT 5:50 1:15 4:00 5:22 7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Female Shadow Teacher Needed
Qualification : Graduation in Special education or relevant work experience, fluent in English.
Salary : Competitive
Term : Upon successful completion of 2 weeks trial minimum 1 year.
Contact: +880 17 0651 3858 D-38

Low wages, external interference

FROM PAGE 3
He cited examples of mainstream media outlets spending months on detailed investigative stories, only to have multiple online platforms reproduce them without proper credit. He emphasised the need for robust copyright laws to prevent such practices.

TIB's Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said that media organisations must prioritise public interest and welfare for change to happen.

He emphasised the importance of editorial

independence and expressed optimism about the future of journalism in a "New Bangladesh".

Dr Saiful Alam Chowdhury, associate professor at Dhaka University's Mass Communication and Journalism department, pointed to the overwhelming influence of advertising agencies on the media.

"They can control everything, from what content is published to how it is presented," he said.

Masum Billah, TIB's deputy coordinator, while presenting his keynote

speech, proposed several reforms, including halting the practice of awarding media licences to politically affiliated individuals, establishing an independent media commission, amending advertising policies, and ensuring the autonomy of state-owned television channels.

He also called for the announcement of a unified pay scale for all media workers.

Faruk Wasif, director general of the Press Institute of Bangladesh, also participated in the discussion.

In a separate session, Golam Mortoza, press minister at the Bangladesh mission in Washington, journalism trainer Qurratul Ain-Tahmina, and Badruddoza Babu shared their insights on the future of Bangladesh's media.

28 EU envoys
FROM PAGE 3
Rafiqul Alam also said that the foreign office consultation (FOC), the secretary-level meeting between Bangladesh and India, will take place in Dhaka on December 9.

Asked if the bilateral deals signed so far with India will be reviewed, as was said by Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Rafiqul said those will be considered but will take time.

According to the case statement, miscreants on instructions from Aman demanded Tk 25 lakh as extortion from businessman Rabiu Alam in 2004. They also threatened to kill him and demolish the boundary

Aman, Gias Uddin

FROM PAGE 3
Aman's lawyer AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon told The Daily Star that the HC acquitted his client on the grounds that the extortion case was filed against him in 2007, though the alleged incident took place in 2004.

He was convicted due to political motives, he claimed, saying there was no specific allegation against him in the money laundering case.

The ACC filed the case with the Cantonment Police Station in 2011.

In 2012, the commission submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka, alleging that Gias Uddin siphoned off around 4,18,853 British pounds to the United Kingdom.

Walls of his residence at Dakkhin Keraniganj if he refused to pay the amount.

Fearing for his life, the victim paid Tk 10 lakh to Aman's wife, the complainant added.

Contacted, Gias Uddin's lawyer Advocate Sabir Hamza Chowdhury said there was no specific allegation against him in the money laundering case.

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Barishal's 'chyapa shutki' becoming popular

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Dried fish produced in Barishal district is gaining popularity across the country.

Mostly, local fish varieties such as pool barb (locally known as punti maachh), that are harvested from the hundreds of ponds and streams and other waterbodies across the district, are being turned to dried fish for consumption in different districts.

Around 3,000 tonnes of dried fish worth around Tk 5-6 crore are produced in Agailjhara and Ujirpur upazilas of Barishal district and sent to different regions across Dhaka, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions.

At least 200 people are involved in the fish drying process in the district, which takes place for five months starting in winter.

Subhash Haldar, a wholesale fish trader of Harta wholesale fish market in Ujirpur upazila, the biggest market for local fish varieties in the country's southern region, said around 10 tonnes of pool barb are available in the market daily, which are preserved locally, dried in the sun, before being supplied across the country.

Dilip Majumdar, a local who is involved in fish drying process, said it is his ancestral profession.

"We collect these pool barbs from local markets at Tk 2,000-4,000 per tonne, and dry those in the sun without using any chemicals, before those are ready for sale. Wholesale traders from Madaripur, Sylhet, Nilphamari, among other areas, come to buy the dried fish for Tk 8,000-18,000 per tonne," he said.



"Those engaged in this profession from the area sell around 40 tonnes of dry fish made from pool barb daily, locally known as 'chyapa shutki'. Around 200 tonnes of pool barb are needed to produce this quantity of dried fish," he added.

Subhash Haldar, another dried fish producer in Harta area, said they usually dry the fish in the sun for four days, then package those to be sent to different places.

"Only 25 tonnes of dried fish can be produced from 100 tonnes of fish. Usually, the drying process continues from October till

February. After that, it is no longer possible due to bad weather," he added.

Russell Molla, a wholesale dried fish trader from Bhanga area of Madaripur, said the dried fish from Barishal has become popular because it is free from chemicals.

Prosen Majumder, upazila fisheries officer in Ujirpur, said, "A diverse array of local fish varieties are available in this region. Of those, some are kept for producing dried fish in winter, through which many locals are earning a living while the product continues to gain popularity across the country."

Dengue claims five more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least five dengue patients died, and 570 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With these latest numbers, the total death toll has risen to 514 this year, while the number of dengue cases has reached 94,884, including 57,016 cases reported from outside Dhaka.

Currently, 2,369 dengue patients are undergoing treatment across the country. Of them, 1,411 are from outside Dhaka.

A total of 92,001 patients have recovered and been discharged from hospitals so far, with 55,417 recoveries reported from outside Dhaka.

DHAKA FRIDAY DECEMBER 6, 2024
AGRAHAYAN 21, 1431 BS

The Daily Star

5

Rizvi burns his wife's saree Calls for boycott of Indian products

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday called for the boycott of Indian products and encouraged the use of local goods as he burnt an Indian saree.

The incident occurred around 11:30am at a campaign, titled "Buy Local Products, Be Proud and Prosperous," organised by the General Doctors' Society in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Expressing anger over the attack on Bangladesh's Assistant High Commission in Agartala, Rizvi displayed a red saree and said, "This is an Indian saree. It belonged to my wife, and she herself gave it to me. Today, I am throwing this saree in front of you."

He then threw down the saree and instructed party activists to set it on fire, which they promptly did.

In his speech, Rizvi accused India of disrespecting Bangladesh's flag, stating, "Although they have disrespected our flag, we will just boycott their products. We will respect their independence and flag, even though they have disrespected ours."

INVITATION OF TENDER 901 CENTRAL WORKSHOP EME DHAKA CANTONMENT

1. Fin year 2024-2025 sealed quotations are invited from bonafide reputed and enlisted firms of Logistics Area/DGDP/Bangladesh Army who all are renewed (2024-2025) of local purchase equipment as below:

Ser	Tender No. & Date	Name of item/equipment	Date of selling tender schedule	Opening date of tender
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	Tender No-01 dt: 24 Nov 2024	(a) Portable data detection equipment (OBD-2 Scanner Pad-VII) (b) Brake drum lathe machine vertical (c) Variable speed radial drill machine (d) Auto Starter 12/24 volt.	According to PPR 2008 rule 61(4) the schedule will be sold up to 14 days from the date of publication at the newspaper.	Tender will be opened on the 15th day of the schedule sale.

2. The terms & conditions with technical specification are available in A-in-U office of 901 Central Workshop EME, Dhaka Cantonment during office time. Two percent (2%) earnest money of the total tendered amount have to be deposited in the form of Bank Pay Order alongwith the tender in favour of Commandant, 901 Central Workshop EME, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka. Separate schedule to be purchased for each lot/work. Interested firms has to purchase tender schedule from A-in-U office of 901 Central Workshop EME upto 1400 hrs in every working day till last date of selling as mentioned in column 4. On the opening date (mentioned in column 5) at 1230 hours tender box will be opened in presence of intending bidders or their representatives (if any).

3. Participating firms must have previous experience in doing the similar nature of work and experience certificate to be attached in tender.

4. In the current financial year, if authority decides to purchase same item again, the supplying firm will be bound to sup with same price.

5. Authority reserves all the rights to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason thereof.

আই-এস-পিআর/সেনা/৭১

০৫/১২/২৪

Commandant
901 Central Workshop EME
Dhaka Cantonment

GD-1122

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
অধিবাসকের কার্যালয়
১২ আর্মড পুলিশ বাটালিয়ন
উত্তরা, ঢাকা
(অঙ্গীয় সরকার সভা, সেক্রেটারি-এল, পুরী)

তারিখ: ১০. অক্টোবর, ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
৫, ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৪ খ্রি

গুরুবৰ্ষ মুদ্রণের উভয় পুরুষ পুরুষ

তারিখ: ০৫/১২/২৪

Govt to sell or lease some Beximco units

FROM PAGE 12
Shafiquzzaman told this newspaper over the phone.

The secretary said that currently more than 70,000 employees are employed in different companies of the group. They include more than 40,000 in the group's textile and garment section.

The Beximco Group has a lot of loans with the banks, including Tk 23,000 crore with Janata Bank, Shafiquzzaman said. He could not immediately specify the amount of Beximco's defaulted loans with the banks and other financial institutions.

The advisory committee on Beximco will hold its second meeting on December 11. Government agencies like BIDA and BSEC will present the current situation and possible ways out there, he said.

The first meeting of the

committee headed by Labour and Employment Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain was held on November 11. Several other advisers of the interim government also attended the meeting.

Among the 169 companies of the troubled conglomerate, Beximco Pharmaceuticals, which falls under category A, is a profitable unit. The handover of the shares of the company can be postponed in case of legal challenges, according to the minutes of the first meeting of the committee.

As many as 32 Beximco companies, half of them mainly textile and garment units currently in operation, are of category B. The rest of the group's companies fall under category C.

The committee suggested that the ownership of the B category companies of the group can be

sold out to international standard operators to pay the loans of Janata Bank and IFIC Bank, according to the meeting minutes.

The companies under C category can be closed down after paying the due salaries and allowances, the advisory committee suggested in the meeting.

The meeting also decided that the Janata Bank will arrange three months' salaries for the workers of the companies housed inside Beximco Industrial Park, the meeting document shows.

Earlier, the government committed to lending Tk 60 crore to Beximco from the national budget in a bid to help it clear wages for the month of October.

The labour and employment ministry will provide Tk 10 crore while the finance ministry will fund the rest.

Return to Dhaka

FROM PAGE 1
"They were asked to return to Dhaka for consultations on the recent attacks and demonstrations in India," he added.

Protesters burnt Bangladesh's national flag during a demonstration outside the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata on November 28, drawing condemnation from the interim government.

After the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala came under attack by members of a Hindu group on December 2, the Bangladesh foreign ministry summoned Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Pranay Verma to hand a protest note. The Agartala mission also suspended visa and consular services after the attack.

The developments come ahead of the Bangladesh-India Foreign Office Consultation which is expected to start in Dhaka on December 9 or 10. This will be the first high level meeting between the two countries since the fall of the Awami League regime in August.

He alleged that some officials from the civil administration and security agencies engaged in corrupt practices, including taking bribes and influencing the selection of candidates.

"I may not have concrete proof, but I will share all my experiences with the reform commission," he added.

Inflation hits

FROM PAGE 1
The injection of the huge volume of high powered money into the economy may fuel inflation.

"The BB is taking a one-sided approach to handling inflation -- we need a multi-pronged approach."

He suggested taking fiscal measures and managing the domestic market alongside tightening the monetary policy.

Raihan suggested forming a common platform including policymakers like the BB, NBR, commerce ministry and the Bangladesh Competition Commission to handle the issue.

"All of them should work in a coordinated way where they can easily share their information," he added.

2 key accused

FROM PAGE 12
profession, was taken to Kotwali Police Station in Chattogram yesterday evening.

In the afternoon, police in Anwara upazila of Chattogram arrested another suspect named Riton Das, said Shakila Solana, deputy commissioner (south) at Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Riton was also seen in the video, wearing a red helmet, blue T-shirt and carrying a sharp weapon.

He is a resident of the port city's Harish Chandra Lane, she said.

So far, 11 suspects have been arrested over the murder.

On November 26, a Chattogram court sent former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmacari to jail. His followers then engaged in a clash with police and lawyers. Saiful was hacked to death at the time.

Chinmoy, also spokesperson of the Sammilito Sanatoni Jagor Joni, faces charges of sedition.

Chennai cops

FROM PAGE 12
In Dibrugarh, Hindu Kranti Dal members on Wednesday protested against the alleged atrocities on the Hindus and the arrest of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das.

Prakash Rai, state president of Hindu Kranti Dal, urged the Indian government to intervene and protect the Hindu community in Bangladesh.

Demonstrations were also reported in Agartala and Hyderabad.

Over 3,000 protesters took to the streets of Jharsuguda in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday. The Jharsuguda Hindu Suraksha Samiti led the protest.

Addressing a rally in Kolkata, senior West Bengal BJP leader Suvenu Adhikari yesterday said there should be a trade embargo on Bangladesh if the attacks on Hindus did not cease there.

The Indian economy does not depend on Bangladesh, he said. "We export onions, potatoes, vegetables and eggs to you. India also supplies machinery for ships, boats and ferries."

So far, 88 journalists have been given this award and of them, seven were women.

Talaash, a programme of

We need accurate info

FROM PAGE 1
He met student leaders on Tuesday evening and spoke to major political parties on Wednesday.

After yesterday's dialogue, Monk Sunanda Priyo, general secretary of Bangladesh Buddhist Federation, said, "We are living well in Bangladesh and have no problems. We highlighted the issues we face. What the [Indian] media says or does is their problem, not ours. What we broadcast is more important. We should highlight the positive aspects of our country."

Prof Sukomal Barua, chief adviser to the Bangladesh Buddhist Federation, proposed holding an international conference where people of all religions, ethnicities, and communities will participate.

"Diplomatic missions in Dhaka should witness our commitment to peace and harmony. Let the world know that Bangladesh is a nation of unity and harmony," he said.

Abinash Mitra, assistant secretary (religion) at Ramna Harichand Temple, said the chief adviser listened to the grievances of his people.

He said those creating divisions are using the propaganda from India. The priest urged the media to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

If there is repression anywhere in the country, it needs to be brought forth to prevent chaos, he said.

Father Albert Rosario of St Mary's Cathedral said if there were any legal avenues, the bail of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das may be considered. "Obtaining bail is the right of all individuals."

There has been provocation by the Indian media after the murder of a lawyer in Chattogram, he said.

"But we have shown patience and upheld harmony. We have all expressed solidarity with political leaders during this difficult time, and we must remain united. Hindus are in pain and agony after the arrest of the ISKCON leader. We told the chief adviser that the grievances of the Hindus must be addressed. We also

suggested that the chief adviser meet the aggrieved Hindus who were not present [at the meeting], as they are in distress," he said.

He proposed organising a dialogue to show the world that Bangladesh is a country of religious harmony.

Sajedur Rahman, general secretary of Hefajat-e-Islam, said, "Several non-Muslim brothers have said that there is no persecution of minorities in Bangladesh. The country enjoys communal harmony, unlike neighbouring countries. Even after the killing of Muslims in Chittagong and Faridpur, there have been no riots or unrest. We are united in the country's interest. We will stand firmly against anyone conspiring against the country."

Sheikh Ahmadullah, chairman of the As-Sunnah Foundation, said the country's ulema and religious leaders are responsible individuals.

"Even after the murder of lawyer Saiful, Muslims have shown patience and restraint due to this sense of responsibility ... We [people of all religions] are united, and there is no division among us ... We conveyed this message."

Priest Khamal Johnson Mree of the Garo community said, "We will resist media outlets spreading propaganda. We support this government."

Sister Reva Veronica D'Costa, student counsellor of St Francis Xavier School and College in Old Dhaka's Laxmibazar, said religious leaders are united in their desire for a harmonious country.

"The media must ensure that no false or misleading news is broadcast. The youth should live disciplined and patient lives, ensuring their dignity is not compromised."

Mahfuj Alam, an adviser to the interim government, told reporters that the religious groups had extended unanimous support for the government.

India must recognise that the Hasina-led government has committed mass killings, he said.

"Whenever we get the opportunity,

we tell India that the coordinated misinformation campaign by the Indian media about Bangladesh must be curbed. It poses a threat to the friendly relations between both countries," he said.

At the discussion with the religious groups, he said, "We sought to convey a message to both supporters and detractors of Bangladesh that the people of this country have reached an understanding from a communal standpoint. The government, formed through the July-August uprising, will work proactively to counter any conspiracies."

The government will not tolerate reckless behaviour, and would focus on building a national consensus. "If we can unite -- politically and through communal harmony -- no propaganda from abroad will hinder our progress."

Regarding repression on minorities, he said, "Saying it doesn't exist at all would be untrue. When it happens, the media should report the measures the government takes to address it. For instance, after the Sunamganj incident, we took swift action. These efforts should be publicised to assure minority groups that this country belongs to everyone."

"Prof Yunus emphasised that harmony must go hand-in-hand with a sense of security. Citizens should feel free and fearless, and harmony should come naturally, not as a reaction to crises. It shouldn't seem like we only engage with Hindu and Buddhist communities during difficult times."

The interim government urged the religious groups to stand as a unified political community. "This unity will demonstrate our strength to the world and uphold the spirit of the July uprising."

He urged the media to ensure accurate, fact-checked reporting on incidents, so that the government could take necessary action.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam also spoke.

No arrests sans proper probe

FROM PAGE 1
He expressed confidence that the Police Reform Commission will make firm recommendations to ensure "political authorities" do not misuse the police for their own agendas.

The IGP also pointed out that certain groups were exploiting the situation to make profits, and deceive and extort money from innocent people.

Barahul urged all not to fall for such deceit. He assured that the innocents will not be named in the charge sheets of the cases.

He acknowledged misconduct by some police officers during the July uprising, saying they had acted unlawfully under orders from the previous authoritarian regime.

ICT slaps ban

FROM PAGE 12
speeches and leaked phone conversations of Hasina that were published on social and electronic media, he said the victims and witnesses were threatened with some of the words used in these speeches and conversations.

"If speeches like these are published and broadcast, we won't be able to bring witnesses to the tribunal at the time of trials," the prosecutor added.

The prosecution submitted the plea to stop the publication of such hate speeches that may be made in the future, and to remove those already on our social and electronic media, he said.

Speaking to reporters outside the tribunal, the prosecutor said that the ICT heard the petition and relevant international and local laws on the matter before accepting it.

The ICT thereafter ordered relevant

authorities of the government to remove the hate speeches that have already been broadcast, and to make sure no such speech is broadcast in the future, said Prosecutor Tamim.

Prosecutor Abdullah Al Noman said, "We will ensure that the tribunal's order is communicated in writing to the relevant authorities of international platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube."

Noman clarified that speeches made by Hasina that are circulating on social media now fall under the purview of the Rabat Plan of Action of the United Nations.

Any speech outside of that made by Hasina will not have any broadcasting restrictions.

The Rabat Plan of Action is a United Nations document that suggests a high threshold for defining restrictions on freedom of expression and incitement to hatred.

In Dibrugarh, Hindu Kranti Dal members on Wednesday protested against the alleged atrocities on the Hindus and the arrest of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das.

Prakash Rai, state president of Hindu Kranti Dal, urged the Indian government to intervene and protect the Hindu community in Bangladesh.

Demonstrations were also reported in Agartala and Hyderabad.

Over 3,000 protesters took to the streets of Jharsuguda in Chhattisgarh on Wednesday. The Jharsuguda Hindu Suraksha Samiti led the protest.

Addressing a rally in Kolkata, senior West Bengal BJP leader Suvenu Adhikari yesterday said there should be a trade embargo on Bangladesh if the attacks on Hindus did not cease there.

The Indian economy does not depend on Bangladesh, he said. "We export onions, potatoes, vegetables and eggs to you. India also supplies machinery for ships, boats and ferries."

So far, 88 journalists have been given this award and of them, seven were women.

Talaash, a programme of

Star journo wins TIB award

FROM PAGE 12
empire in Singapore worth at least about USD 1 billion without permission from Bangladesh Bank to invest or transfer any funds abroad.

Shariful Islam, chief reporter at Chattogram's Ekhusho Patrika, won in the local media category for the second consecutive time. This time he was awarded for his series on the health sector, which highlighted patients falling victim to the greed of medical professionals. Al-Amin Haque Ahon of Jamuna Television won the award in the television category for his report on irregularities in the Income Generating Activities programme for women.

Talaash, a programme of

of consulting student leaders, only engaged with a few coordinators."

"As a result, the promise of an inclusive national unity made in the wake of the July-August mass uprising has now been confined to the narrow boundaries of one faction. Given the current situation, we are compelled to rethink the issue of national unity among students."

The meeting participants contacted by this newspaper said they discussed the treatment of those injured during the July uprising and criticised the role of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement for the current condition of student unity after the fall of the Awami League regime.

One of them said, "The national unity that emerged from the blood of hundreds during the uprising is now on the verge of collapse due to its exploitation for factional interests. We believe that if this national unity begins to fracture, the leadership of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement cannot evade responsibility in any way."

which is still ongoing.

But Israeli officials have repeatedly and forcefully denied all such allegations, accusing Hamas of using civilians as human shields.

"The deplorable and fanatical organisation Amnesty International has once again produced a fabricated report that is entirely false and based on lies," Israel's foreign ministry said.

They said the students of Bangladesh stand united to protect the country's independence and sovereignty. Any attack on the nation's independence and sovereignty will be confronted by the students and people of this country, even at the cost of their lives, they said.

The student leaders condemned the attack on the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala, India. They said India has made every effort to politically sustain the fascist Sheikh Hasina regime.

However, failing in that endeavour, India has resorted to provocations, the student leaders said.

The student leaders also said the government must ensure justice for the victims of the massacre during the July uprising, proper treatment for the injured, and rehabilitation of the families of the deceased.

They also discussed contemporary issues, including the current political situation, the country's independence and sovereignty, the democratic environment and student union elections in educational institutions.

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The student leaders

Islamist-led Syria rebels capture Hama

AFP, Beirut

Islamist-led rebels captured the central Syrian city of Hama yesterday, days after seizing the country's commercial hub Aleppo in a lightning offensive against President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

The rebels led by Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) launched their offensive little more than a week ago, just as a ceasefire took hold between Israel and Assad's ally Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Following overnight clashes, the rebels stormed Hama "from several sides" and engaged in street battles with Assad's forces, Britain-based war monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said.

The rebels said they seized Hama's prison and released its inmates. By the afternoon, Syria's army admitted losing control of the city, strategically located between Aleppo and Assad's seat of power in the capital Damascus.

The rapid fall of the city came despite shelling and strikes by the Syrian and Russian air forces, as reported by state media late Wednesday.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria, says 727 people, mostly combatants but also including 111 civilians, have been killed in Syria since the violence erupted last week.

It marks the most intense fighting since 2020 in the civil war sparked by the repression of pro-democracy protests in 2011.

The rebels launched their offensive in northern Syria on November 27, the same day a ceasefire took effect in the war between Israel and Hezbollah in neighbouring Lebanon.

Until last week, the war in Syria had been mostly dormant for years, but analysts have said violence was bound to flare up as it was never truly resolved.

Shepherding the rebel alliance is HTS, which is rooted in Syria's Al-Qaeda branch.

The group has sought to moderate its image in recent years, but experts say it faces a challenge convincing Western governments it has fully renounced hardline jihadism.

The United States maintains hundreds of troops in eastern Syria as part of a coalition formed against Islamic State group jihadists.



Protesters wear ponchos in the rain as they take part in a candlelight rally calling for the ouster of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on the steps of the National Assembly in Seoul yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'Cold War' can turn 'hot'

Warns Lavrov, accuses West of destabilising the 'Eurasian continent'

AFP, Ta'Qali

Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov yesterday accused the West of destabilising the "entire Eurasian continent" and warned that the Cold War that the west is waging can turn "hot".



"reincarnation of the Cold War, only now with a much greater risk of a transition to a hot one", according to a transcript of his remarks from RIA Novosti.

He also accused Washington of military exercises in the Asia-Pacific region that sought to "destabilise the entire Eurasian continent".

Sybiga accused Moscow of being "the biggest threat to our common security" as the two foreign ministers sat on the same huge table at a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was also in Ta'Qali, near Valletta, for the talks, though officials said he had no plans to meet Lavrov.

"Russia is not a partner; it is the

biggest threat to our common security. Russia's participation in the OSCE is a threat to cooperation in Europe," Sybiga told ministers from the 57-member body.

"When Russians say they want peace they lie," he said, adding: "Ukraine continues to fight for its right to exist."

"And the Russian war criminal at this table must know: Ukraine will win this right and justice will prevail."

Lavrov, who has been sanctioned by the European Union, had not visited an EU country since a December 2021 trip to Stockholm, again for an OSCE meeting, Russian media reported.

The OSCE was founded in 1975 to ease tensions between the East and the West during the Cold War, and now counts 57 members from Turkey to Mongolia, including Britain and Canada as well as the United States.

Brain stimulation can help injured people walk: study

AFP, Paris

Scientists said that electrically stimulating a particular region in the brain could help people with injured spinal cords walk more easily, with one patient describing how the technique allowed him to conquer his fear of stairs.

The new technique is intended for people with spinal cord injuries where the connection between their brain and spinal cord has not been totally severed, and who still have some movement in their legs.

Wolfgang Jaeger, one of two patients who took part in an early trial, said that it immediately made a "big difference" to his mobility.

"Now when I see a staircase with just a few steps, I know I can handle it on my own," the 54-year-old said in a video released alongside a new study in the journal *Nature Medicine*.

The research was conducted by a Swiss team that has pioneered

several recent advances, including using electrical stimulation of the spinal cord to let several paralysed patients walk again.



the brain region they were looking for was in the lateral hypothalamus, which is otherwise known as a regulator for arousal, feeding and motivation.

A particular group of neurons in this region "appears to be involved in the recovery of walking after spinal cord injury," neuroscientist Gregoire Courtine at Switzerland's Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne told AFP.

Next, the team sought to amplify the signal from these neurons using a procedure called deep brain stimulation.

It involves a surgeon implanting electrodes in the brain region, which are connected to a device implanted in the patient's chest. When switched on, the device sends electrical pulses up to the brain.

First, the team tested their theory on rats and mice, finding that it "immediately" improved walking, the study said.

They were surprised to find that

This time around, the researchers wanted to figure out which region of the brain was most responsible for people recovering from spinal cord injuries.

Using 3D imaging techniques to map out the brain activity of mice with these injuries, the team created what they called a "brain-wide atlas".

They were surprised to find that

QUALITY
COMES
FIRST,
PROFIT
IS ITS
LOGIC,
SEQUENCE
YEARS OF
HERITAGE

In this long journey, all our achievements belong to distinguished Landowners, Customers, Suppliers, Contractors and every individual of SEL family. On this auspicious day of ours, we express heartiest gratitude, warm felicitation and best wishes to all involved in our mission.

SEL



Dhaka South City Corporation
Zone-5 (Sayedabad)
www.dhakasouthcity.gov.bd

Ref no: 46.207.000.21.16.0070. 2024

Dated: 04/12/2024

e-Tender Notice (Re -Tender)

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP portal ([Http://www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) by Executive Engineer, Zone-5, Dhaka South City Corporation For the procurement of following package, which will be available at e-GP website from 03/12/2024 at 22.00 PM.

SI No.	Tender ID, Ref No & package No	Name of works	Last Selling date and Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	Tender ID- 1043975 egp/dscc/Z-05/23-24/P-55-Re	Construction Work of Dhalpur Tinsheed Cleaner Worker Residence Under Ward No-49 at Dhaka South City Corporation (Group-Ga)	18-Dec-2024 13:30	18-Dec-2024 15:30

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

DSCC/PRD/151/2024-2025

Macron seeks new PM after Barnier resigns

AFP, Paris

President Emmanuel Macron yesterday sought a new prime minister to prevent France from sliding deeper into political turmoil after Michel Barnier's government was ousted in a historic no-confidence vote in parliament.

Contemporary France's shortest-serving premier, Barnier met Macron at the Elysee Palace to submit his resignation after Wednesday's parliamentary defeat forced his government to step down.

The vote was the first successful no-confidence action since a defeat for Georges Pompidou's government in 1962.

"The prime minister today submitted the resignation of his government" to Macron, who has "taken note" of the resignation, the Elysee said.

Barnier and his ministers remain "in charge of daily business until the appointment of a new government", it added.

It remains unclear when the new prime minister will be appointed.

But, unlike on previous occasions, the president appears in a hurry to appoint the new premier to avoid a vacuum, according to multiple sources who spoke to AFP.

N Korea, Russia defence treaty comes into force

AFP, Seoul

A landmark defence pact between North Korea and Russia, signed by its leaders in June, has gone into effect after the two sides exchanged ratification documents, North Korea's official KCNA news agency said yesterday.

The formalisation of the treaty comes as the United States and South Korea have accused the nuclear-armed North of sending more than 10,000 soldiers to help Russia fight Ukraine.

Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the strategic partnership deal during the Kremlin chief's visit to Pyongyang.

It obligates both states to provide military assistance "without delay" in the case of an attack on the other. It came into effect from Wednesday when the ratification documents were exchanged in Moscow by the countries' vice foreign ministers Kim Jong Gyu and Andrei Rudenko, KCNA reported.

Hasina's claims are a distortion of facts

India's failure to prevent such false narratives won't help bilateral relations

We strongly oppose the false narrative propagated by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her first public appearance—a virtual address at an event in New York—since fleeing Bangladesh following the July mass uprising. Her accusation that Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is involved in perpetrating “genocide” clearly demonstrates that she is speaking from a total of vengeance, in total disregard for facts. In reality, it is Hasina who stands accused of being involved in mass murder during the uprising, along with numerous other grievous human rights violations committed during her 15 years of fascistic rule, for which there is substantial evidence. In her pursuit of vengeance against Prof Yunus, she has not only vilified him but also tarnished Bangladesh's image.

For instance, in her virtual address, she falsely claimed that Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians have been persecuted in large numbers in Bangladesh since her government was ousted. This blatant lie, initially spread on social media, is now being amplified in a coordinated effort by certain sections of the Indian media and political class. Echoing the narrative of those who have been systematically demonising Bangladesh recently, Hasina falsely claimed that Chinmoy Krishna Das, the former ISKCON leader, was arrested in response to Hindus protesting their persecution in the country. Ironically, many communal incidents occurred during her own rule which she failed to prevent or acknowledge.

Furthermore, Hasina stated that she had left the country to prevent further bloodshed when protesters were heading towards Ganabhaban. However, as this and other media outlets then reported, until her final moments in office, she made every effort to cling to power through the use of even more force, at the cost of spilling more blood. This was only prevented when the army refused to fire on the citizens.

Given the seriousness of the crimes she is accused of committing, we are disappointed that the Indian government, which gave her shelter, did not do more to prevent her from propagating such false narratives against Bangladesh's current government that emerged from a popular uprising. Moreover, the fact that her campaign to demonise Bangladesh is increasingly aligning with right-wing Indian media raises questions about whether India truly seeks “stable and constructive relations” with Bangladesh, as the Indian high commissioner recently asserted. This is particularly concerning given the ample evidence—such as leaked recordings of her phone calls—suggesting that Hasina has been trying to instigate and destabilise Bangladesh from New Delhi. In response, the Bangladeshi government—including its chief adviser—requested that its Indian counterpart prevent Hasina from carrying out such disruptive activities.

Yet, ignoring Bangladesh's request, the Indian government has not taken any substantial steps to dissuade the deposed former prime minister from spewing hateful rhetoric against Bangladesh. By doing so, how is India helping our bilateral relations? India should carefully consider how such decisions will affect its relationship with Bangladesh. We also hope the Indian media, instead of repeating Hasina's lies, portrays Bangladesh accurately in order to prevent harm to the relations between the two countries.

Save street children from sexual abuse

Existing legal, institutional frameworks should be overhauled

Only the other day, we wrote an editorial expressing our concern about the plight of street children who continue to live in a state of deprivation, humiliation, and abuse. However, one particular issue that is not discussed or studied enough is the sexual abuse these children, especially girls, face. There could be as many as 34 lakh street children living without parental care in Bangladesh, as per a UNICEF study, but even those having parents are equally vulnerable to such abuse due to the lack of legal and institutional safeguards. In Dhaka, where the majority of them live, the situation is particularly concerning.

A correspondent of this daily recently spoke to 15 such children, mostly adolescent girls, whose experiences highlight the urgent need to ensure the safety of street children. Among them is Amina, a 14-year-old girl who spends her days selling flowers. She tells us of the constant fear she faces as she navigates her daily routine: “Sometimes men touch my hands and shoulders when I sell them flowers. Sometimes, they even offer to take me elsewhere.” At night, when Amina seeks refuge in Suhrawardy Uyan, the fear of assault overwhelms her: “Night is a horrible time for me. I always have to be cautious, worrying what if someone does anything bad to me.”

Sadly, Amina is not alone. The UNICEF study says that many street children sleep alone or in groups for safety, and one-third experience violence during sleep. A study by the Ministry of Social Welfare sheds further light on this, stating that 46 percent of female children experience sexual abuse. This abuse takes many forms. Girls who change clothes in public spaces often face harassment from male pedestrians. They also frequently encounter unwanted physical contact and threats of sexual assault at night. Without parental guidance, some children also begin to engage in unsafe sexual activities, often due to early exposure to abuse. Some are exploited by promises of marriage or a better life, sometimes in exchange for as little as Tk 10. Drug addicts, policemen, rickshaw pullers, bus drivers—the list of abusers is long.

Against this backdrop, it is imperative that the authorities take decisive measures to ensure the safety, dignity and wellbeing of children living on streets. While the government has shelters and other services to protect them, the reality is that these are not effectively reaching most children. The lack of a comprehensive legal framework surrounding child protection further exacerbates the problem. We, therefore, must prioritise addressing sexual abuse among street children and overhaul the existing support system to make it truly effective.

EDITORIAL



FILE VISUAL: FATEMA JAHANENA

What is Indian media's gain in branding us as a Hindu-hating country?



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

The only conclusion that can be drawn from much of the Indian media's recent coverage of Bangladesh is that it is a Hindu-hating country. The venom that is being spewed, the language that is being used, the hatred that is being spread, and the demeaning stereotype that is being portrayed about us seem geared towards generating a hatred for Bangladeshis among the Indian people. The long-term impact of this, along with its backlash here, will be very difficult to neutralise.

What is India's gain from such stigmatisation of its neighbour? Isn't it harming both our countries? It is harming us because it demonises Bangladesh. It is harming India because it proves once again that India wants to dominate its neighbours and will not allow any of them to choose their own policies. These policies are not inherently against India, per se, but are merely expressions of each nation's own way of moving forward.

My Nepali journalist friends tell a story of Indian attitude and behaviour that are far from flattering, to say the least. Public perception in Bhutan is not favourable towards India either. The Maldives' insistence that India's meagre military presence must end is as clear a message as it can get. Doesn't the election of the new leadership in Sri Lanka also carry a special message for our big neighbour? Together, do these not form a common view of how India's neighbours perceive it? Should this not compel India's policymakers to spend more time understanding their neighbours, rather than dismissing contrarian sentiments as inconsequential, baseless or rooted in jealousy—or, in Bangladesh's case, ingratitude?

Until August 4, 2024, Bangladesh was considered, according to Indian leaders and media, a very good neighbour, with bilateral relations and our friendship reaching new heights. What changed to reduce Bangladesh from a good neighbour to a most vilified one?

It is obviously due to the regime change that happened in Bangladesh on August 5. However, it was not a conspiratorial change of power, despite what India and its media believe. They are convinced that Pakistan, China or the US orchestrated it, not the people of Bangladesh. The fact that ours was a stronger demonstration of public will than the People Power Revolution that overthrew Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines many years ago, or the Arab Spring that toppled Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, did not find any receptive heart or mind in our neighbour. Our people did something in weeks that others took months if not years to accomplish. That was the power of July.

India does not understand the power of our students because it overlooks the history of our student movements. Our students defied

We all know Sheikh Hasina fled and her government collapsed on August 5. Prof Muhammad Yunus took over on August 8. The three

day gap in forming the interim government created a law and order vacuum during which several Awami League leaders, including members of minority communities, were attacked, and their properties vandalised. While this is true, it is also true that many of those targeted and attacked were Awami League activists, and some were also special beneficiaries of the discredited regime (this, however, does

of the Ahmadiyya sect). This daily's own correspondents personally visited 546 sites (51 percent) and covered the rest through reliable sources. There were two deaths: one was of a retired school teacher in Bagerhat, Mirnal Kanti Chatterjee, and the other was of Swapan Kumar Biswas of Paikgachha, Khulna.

All attacks on minorities are totally unacceptable. While Bangladesh must work to ensure security for all, does this justify the Indian media's portrayal of Bangladesh? Are attacks on minorities not a reality in India too? Consider the Godhra train burning incident and the riots that followed, which alone killed 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus—rendering tens of thousands of people homeless. According to conservative figures by India's National Human Rights Commission, from 2002 to 2024, as many as 31 riots occurred in India, of which 20 were between Hindus and Muslims. Did the Bangladeshi media respond to that the way the Indian media is responding now?

The recent events that led to the desecration of Bangladeshi flag by demonstrators in India, and of Indian flag by some students in our university campuses, the killing of a Muslim lawyer in Chattogram and a Hindu doctor in Dhaka, were triggered by the arrest of a former ISKCON leader. The attack on the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala is condemnable and could and should have been prevented. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's suggestion to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ask for UN peacekeepers to intervene in Bangladesh is an insult that has further worsened the situation.

The chief adviser's call for national unity and the consensus of all political parties to unite to protect our sovereignty is a clear indication of how seriously we consider the situation. It is also an indication of how things may take a seriously wrong turn.

Irrespective of what they may have been, the incidents—even though they shouldn't have happened at all in the first place—were made far worse by a belligerent Indian media. What has shocked me is their refusal to fact-check what they are writing, broadcasting or televising—a basic duty of any journalist. In many interviews or talk shows, certain incidents were discussed with loaded questions, where footage was shown of unrelated events to make Bangladesh look communal. Recently, on RT India's website, footage of an idol of Shiva being broken into pieces was shown, claiming it was from a Hindu temple in Bangladesh. The truth is, it was footage from a ritual being performed at another temple in Sultanpur, Bardhaman, India. We debunked the story on our website, but no action, let alone regret, came from RT India.

The incidents will no doubt subside. The rhetoric will also, perhaps, acquire a more sobering hue. The media, hopefully, will return to its ethical values. However, the attitudinal, psychological, and most importantly emotional impact of the contrived narrative of the Indian media will leave a long and sad impression here. Being power-drunk and click-driven, the Indian media may not think much about it, but the professional diplomats hopefully will.

What is India's gain from such stigmatisation of its neighbour? Isn't it harming both our countries? It is harming us because it demonises Bangladesh. It is harming India because it proves once again that India wants to dominate its neighbours and will not allow any of them to choose their own policies.

uniqueness.

What India is doing is refusing to acknowledge that we have the right to change our government democratically. While the regime change may not have followed the usual electoral route—which the former prime minister herself prevented (ironically, if she had allowed for the holding of free elections and lost, she might have at least remained in the country instead of facing the humiliation of fleeing)—it was an expression of public will that elections typically reflect. It was democracy in full play.

From the outset, India did not accept this. Instead, it embraced conspiracy theories, which continue to dominate its thinking.

We all know Sheikh Hasina fled and her government collapsed on August 5. Prof Muhammad Yunus took over on August 8. The three

days of August 4-20. This was the period during which the interim administration was just organising itself, and was at its weakest. The council's report said that a total of 2,010 communal incidents occurred in which nine people were killed, four women were raped, 69 places of worship were attacked, 915 homes were vandalised, 953 business establishment were attacked, 38 cases of physical attack occurred, and 21 properties were occupied.

Prothom Alo, Bangladesh's most respected Bangla daily, conducted its own investigation—using 64 of its own correspondents in 64 districts and 69 upazilas (sub-districts)—covering the same period (August 5-20) and found evidence of attacks on 1,068 homes and businesses. In addition, there were 22 attacks on places of worship (temples, churches, and prayer places

BEYOND THE WAR OF IDEALS

Bangladesh must be governed with pragmatism



Zillur Rahman
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Governance Studies (CGS) and a television talk
show host. His X handle is @zillur.

ZILLUR RAHMAN

With the recent victory of Donald Trump in the US presidential election, the term "culture war" has gained unprecedented prominence. In the West, the culture war refers to the ideological conflict between the liberal and progressive left and the conservative and traditional right on the political spectrum. A key trend in Western politics is the increasing reliance of politicians on culture war issues to appeal to their increasingly polarised voter bases. Naturally, the more polarised a society becomes, the more intense its culture wars grow.

Bangladesh, too, is experiencing its own culture war. Voices from the conservative right, long suppressed under the previous regime, have found space to manoeuvre and grow in influence. Bolstered by support from popular right wing social media influencers and unprecedented access to the highest levels of government, some of these groups have rallied together and gained significant traction.

In this context, the worst thing Dr Muhammad Yunus's interim government can do is appear sympathetic to any side of this ongoing culture war. There is no possible way the government can gain anything from such pandering, as they are not bound to the demands of any voting blocks. The mandate for this government comes solely from the desire of the Bangladeshi people to bring an end to fascism and pave the way to true democracy and a just society.

Right now, a narrative is emerging that portrays the cultural left of Bangladesh—often depicted as the elite liberals of society—not only as complicit in tolerating and enabling the previous regime's brutal authoritarianism and kleptocracy, but also as active defenders of it at various points. Despite the regime's downfall, this so-called elite liberal class continues to wield

considerable influence in major cultural institutions. For this reason, it is this liberal-elite class, or perhaps a caricature of this class, that is now the declared opponent of a rising political right.

In fact, with the absence of the largest centre-left political force in Bangladesh, it has become increasingly convenient to label the entire cultural left as Awami sympathisers and the "enemy of the people." This could not be further from the truth, and there were also countless independent left-leaning voices, progressive teachers and youth activists, as well as the small left-wing political entities, who were present and active on the front lines during the July uprising.

This phenomenon is not uncommon in history. The failures of centrist and leftist political coalitions, which often lead to widespread disenchantment with democracy, mirror what we witnessed during the early Bolshevik rule in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and Germany's Weimar Republic in the 1930s.

It is easy to blame an ideology or school of thought as the root cause of all evil. However, time and time again, history has shown that this is never the whole truth. The ultimate responsibility for political failings lies with the individuals in power. Rather than passing judgement solely on those who willingly or unwillingly benefited from tyranny, it is crucial to ensure that the hammer of justice falls first and foremost on the tyrant.

What Bangladesh needs right now is justice and a path to healing. The problem lies herein that justice and revenge are often impossible to distinguish.

The demand to increase military presence in the hill tracts or calls to ban entire political parties or religious institutions due to the actions of bad actors are

overcorrections driven by angry mobs. These reactions, whether blind or deliberate, threaten to tear apart the increasingly fragile social fabric of Bangladesh. It is crucial to recognise that such culture war talking points are fuelled by the most radical segments of society. At present, no one can ignore the rise in vitriolic rhetoric targeting certain

It is, therefore, our collective responsibility to protect the image and historical legacy of Dr Yunus and the interim government. A united effort is needed to keep him above the mudslinging and divisive rhetoric of the culture war. Even after his tenure as chief adviser ends, future political parties must recognise him as a national

already at rock bottom. There is no way journalism in this country will survive if it becomes tainted with the kind of lowbrow culture war pandering that contaminates the 24/7 news cycle of the West.

In this regard, the interim government has an important standard to set.

To succeed, it must remain above

as neutral and fair. In a time of such high polarisation, the government must rise above petty ideological battles and prioritise what truly matters.

The interim government must focus on addressing the country's urgent challenges rather than getting distracted by divisive issues. Creating jobs is vital to restoring public confidence and easing economic anxieties. High unemployment has fuelled frustration, and targeted investment in industries can provide stability and hope. Combating corruption and curbing money laundering are equally critical to restoring economic integrity. Decisive action to recover stolen funds and enforce transparency will bolster public trust.

Economic recovery also depends on stabilising prices. Rising costs of food and essentials have burdened citizens, and immediate policies to curb inflation are essential. Supporting small and medium enterprises will foster sustainable growth, ensuring recovery will benefit all levels of society.

Justice must remain central to the interim government's agenda. Those responsible for mass killings during the uprising must be held accountable through a transparent judicial process. Addressing lawlessness is equally important: criminals exploiting this transitional period must face justice, and law enforcement must restore order while respecting human rights.

Finally, the government's ultimate goal must be to lay a foundation for democracy. Strengthening institutions, ensuring judicial independence, and fostering an active civil society are essential for a sustainable future. Success will hinge on holding free, fair, and inclusive elections within a reasonable time frame, involving all democratic political factions to secure legitimacy.

At this pivotal moment, the interim government has a chance to set a new standard for leadership. The people of Bangladesh have entrusted it with a clear mandate: to end authoritarianism, deliver justice, and pave the way for a just and democratic future. By avoiding the culture war and focusing on these issues, this government can lead the nation towards stability and hope.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

minority groups and Indigenous communities. This escalation has left these groups feeling frustrated and fearful, prompting some to resort to their own brand of vitriolic, populist, and anti-establishment sentiment. What is deeply concerning is that individuals carrying such radical views may now have the ear of some of the advisers.

However, I firmly believe that the majority of Bangladeshis recognise Dr Yunus as the nation's best and only choice to lead the country out of the darkness following the mass killings in July-August. His emergence at such a critical juncture in our history is nothing short of a political miracle, and it underscores the extraordinary capacity of this country to produce leaders of his calibre.

treasure—a figure who continues to represent and promote Bangladesh to the world.

This government simply cannot be allowed to fail. If it does, the forces of fascism will return with a vengeance too catastrophic to comprehend. The stakes are far too high to let that happen.

At the moment, long unresolved divisions in society are catalysing due to the machinations of subversive foreign and domestic factors. This kind of division only worsens due to rampant misinformation pushed on social media without any accountability.

Moreover, well-regarded institutions of journalism are now under flak for their alleged enabling of an authoritarian government. Public trust in mainstream media in Bangladesh is

the fray of the culture war and focus squarely on its mandate. To do this, it is imperative to avoid certain critical missteps. One such misstep would be engaging in or enabling public humiliation of groups or institutions not directly linked to the previous regime. Such actions would alienate important segments of society and deepen existing divisions, creating unnecessary distractions when the focus should remain on healing and rebuilding.

Equally problematic would be to let itself get entangled in any attempt to secure symbolic victories in the culture war. These gestures might briefly appease some factions, but they serve no real purpose in governance. Worse, they risk inflaming tensions and undermining the government's ability to be seen

I continued drawing cartoons and attending protests. Despite the risks, we kept drawing—for justice and our country."

After the government's fall on August 5, the Bangladesh Cartoonist Association, Drik and earki collaborated to organise an exhibition titled "Cartoon Ey Bidroho (Revolution in Cartoons)" at Drik Gallery in Dhaka. The exhibition showcased nearly 175 works by 82 cartoonists.

During the previous government's tenure, the few cartoons that managed to appear in newspapers, despite countless threats, were largely symbolic. They refrained from directly depicting the faces of ruling party leaders or the head of government. The July uprising not only restored freedom for cartoons and cartoonists but also brought political cartoons back to the front pages of newspapers, who are once again boldly publishing cartoons that explicitly portray political figures, including their faces. The hope now is that this resurgence endures, ensuring that political cartoons and freedom of expression can never again be silenced in Bangladesh in the future.

The resurgence of political cartoons



Zareen Tasnim
is sub-editor at The Daily Star.

ZAREEN TASNIM

Political cartoons highlight contemporary events and expose societal anomalies with a sharp focus. These cartoons have played a pivotal role in this region since Pakistani rule. This tradition continued in independent Bangladesh, maintaining its significance over the years.

Even just over a decade ago, political cartoons criticising political parties, leaders or heads of government were a common sight in Bangladeshi newspapers. These front page cartoons both provided comic relief and delivered powerful messages, silently protesting against injustice and corruption.

This is the true strength of cartoons—a single illustration can resonate with the masses more

effectively than a thousand words, rendering this art form timeless. However, this powerful medium of protest has gradually diminished over more than a decade, to the point where it has almost disappeared entirely.

During the era when political cartoons thrived in Bangladesh, icons like Zainul Abedin, Quamrul Hassan, Qayum Chowdhury, and Rafiqun Nabi (Ronobi) used their art to illustrate societal disparities with strong political commentary. Artist Shishir Bhattacharya played a pivotal role in transforming the portrayal of political cartoons in newspapers, receiving much acclaim. Inspired by their predecessors, many young artists took up cartooning, evolving it from a hobby into a profession. These

artists produced impactful political cartoons, some of which appeared as serialised works.

Starting in 2008, the evolving political framework in Bangladesh started to bring about gradual changes to the situation. The country's position on the Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index dropped from 127th in 2010 to 165th in 2024. Just as the practice of independent journalism has faced constraints, the art of creating political cartoons has also been stifled. Fear of lawsuits and harassment has deterred newspapers from publishing cartoons that directly critique the ruling party or its leaders—not just on front pages but on any page at all.

Cartoonists, too, were gripped by the fear of imprisonment under the heavily criticised Digital Security Act (DSA), which was rebranded as the Cyber Security Act in 2023, as well as the threat of defamation cases filed by ruling party members or their loyal lawyers from various corners of the country.

The arrest of cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore and writer Mushtaq Ahmed under the DSA in 2020, followed by Kishore's detention

without bail for 10 months and the subsequent death of Mushtaq in custody in 2021, plunged political cartoonists in Bangladesh into a state of profound fear and anxiety.

On July 16 of this year, Nieman Reports published an article titled "As Press Freedoms Erode in Bangladesh, Political Cartoonists Are Being Targeted by an Increasingly Authoritarian Regime" by Sheikh Sabiha Alam, shedding light on how political cartoonists in Bangladesh, much like the press, had become targets of an increasingly authoritarian regime. Shishir Bhattacharya was quoted in the report saying, "You can't draw with the tension brewing in your head that you may land in jail anytime and spend the rest of your life there."

This was how political cartoonists in Bangladesh remained shackled for years.

However, the July uprising in 2024 marked a turning point. Casting aside years of silence and fear, cartoonists began wielding their art as a tool of protest. During this student-led mass movement, everyone from amateur enthusiasts to professional cartoonists contributed their work.

Braving their fears, millions shared these cartoons on social media, amplifying the strength of the uprising. The works of cartoonists like Debasish Chakrabarty, Morsed Mishu and Mehedi Haque, among others, inspired courage and resilience among the people, giving the protests a newfound vigour. Cartoons drawn on walls under the cloak of night etched themselves deeply into the hearts and minds of the people. According to the Bangladesh Cartoonist Association, more than 500 cartoons were created during the July uprising.

The immense challenges faced by cartoonists during that turbulent period have been shared by many in hindsight. Cartoonist Fahim Anzum Rumman recounted his experience, "I had to remove all of my information from my page. I was bombarded with emails trying to find out my location." Similarly, young cartoonist Natasha Jahan had to go into hiding after drawing cartoons during the movement. Her ordeal was highlighted in a report by The Daily Star on September 3, "Plainclothes police visited my home to gather information. Since then, I've been living elsewhere. From there,

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Letter stroke
- 6 Some files
- 11 Treeless plain
- 12 Perfect
- 13 Barcelona buddy
- 14 Sea ray
- 15 Classic Ford
- 17 Cub's cave
- 18 Mine matter
- 19 Testing the weight of
- 22 Homer's neighbor
- 23 Sprinkle with oil
- 24 Hot crime
- 25 "Water Music" composer
- 27 Buddy
- 30 Roil

DOWN

- 1 Apply with force, as brakes
- 2 Writer Leonard
- 3 Stole from
- 4 "Picnic" playwright
- 5 Reckless
- 6 Brink
- 7 Nabokov novel
- 8 Mail, as payment
- 9 Gizmo protector
- 10 Informal talk
- 11 Get rigid
- 12 Infallible
- 13 Leek's cousin
- 14 Corpulent
- 15 Comfy spots
- 16 Extreme diets
- 17 Church services
- 18 Swear
- 19 Genetic copies
- 20 Honeydew, for one
- 21 Light metal
- 22 What's more
- 23 Kind
- 24 Venus's love
- 25 Exile isle
- 26 Procured
- 27 USN rank
- 28 Swear
- 29 Genetic copies
- 30 Honeydew, for one
- 31
- 32
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SATURDAY'S ANSWERS

E	D	W	I	N	F	A	B	L	E
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Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

WOMEN AND LAW

Custody, Guardianship, and Adoption: Comparing Bangladesh and Malaysia

Custody

Guardianship

Adoption

In their sensitive investigation, Monsoor and Thambapillary ably highlight the intersection of gender, law, and cultural values, which gives a very strong case for legal reform by respecting tradition and furthering the protection of women and children.

TASNUSA ANIKA
The book named *Impact of Gender on Custody, Guardianship, and Adoption* authored by Professor Dr. Taslima Monsoor and Dr. Sridevi Thambapillary is an important cross country study. In this book, the authors undertake a careful comparative study on how gender influences the practice of family law within Bangladesh and Malaysia, under Islamic law, in particular. Chapter one introduces the readers to the historical, legal, and cultural frameworks governing custody, guardianship, and adoption in Bangladesh and Malaysia. Monsoor and Thambapillary present here a foundational description of Islamic family law, its varied interpretations, which introduce the basis for their comparative study. The

chapter provides a good overview of the ways in which gender norms are inscribed in and through legal systems, particularly concerning women's positions and rights within the family structures.

In the second chapter, the authors contextualise custody arrangements and how gender roles influence the decisions in child custody cases. Thus, they show how courts in Bangladesh commonly favor fathers in custody disputes, reflecting traditional notions of paternal authority over the children. The authors go on to point out that Malaysia's stance, in spite of similar patriarchal institutions, offers more protection for mothers under the tenets of Islamic law. Thus, this chapter identifies the call for an articulate approach with regard to custody rights in considering child's welfare over strict

adherence to gender norms.

Chapter three discusses the guardianship laws and the challenges faced by women in assuming the legally defined *gender* roles. It is here that Monsoor and Thambapillary debate how Malaysia enjoys partial flexibility within its Sharia framework in terms of allowing women to assume various guardianship roles compared to Bangladesh's more rigid legal framework. The authors claim that broadening women's roles will on one hand protect children's rights better and on the support women's legal autonomy within the family structure.

The fourth chapter probes into the adoption norms and practices that reflect the deep-seated cultural and legal divides. In Malaysia, the Islamic concept of *kafala* provides a system of adoption that the authors think has the potential to balance adherence to Islamic law with the interests of child welfare.

In the fifth chapter, the authors provide a comparative review of legal frameworks regulating family law in the two countries. They address how reliance on Islamic jurisprudence in both countries affects judicial decisions concerning custody, guardianship, and adoption, with Bangladesh's being more inflexible and Malaysia's more open to adaptability. They argue for a combination of Sharia principles and modern judicial methods that may serve the needs of gender equity and the welfare of the children more adequately.

The final chapter has clear recommendations for policy legal reform. The authors conclude that both countries will benefit from revisiting family law so that it conforms to both cultural and international standards concerning child welfare and gender equality. They call for reforms that will uphold religious principles but also advance the rights of women and children. This, they think, may be realised by learning from both the systems and replicating what is useful in each.

Impact of Gender on Custody, Guardianship, and Adoption undoubtedly constitutes a welcome addition not only to the corpus of gender studies but also to the studies of family law and Islamic jurisprudence. In their sensitive investigation, Monsoor and Thambapillary ably highlight the intersection of gender, law, and cultural values, which gives a very strong case for legal reform by respecting tradition and furthering the protection of women and children. This volume is a must-read for those who are interested in how Islamic law intersects with modern social challenges, especially regarding family law.

The writer teaches law at the American International University Bangladesh.

LAW AND SOCIETY

A multidimensional analysis of rape

DISHA TANANZE EKRAM

Rape and other sexual crimes are largely misunderstood because people refuse to understand or fail to understand why they are crimes in the first place. From time immemorial, rape is vilified for robbing a woman of her 'honour', 'dignity' or worse 'chastity'. Section 375 of the Penal Code 1860, introduced during British rule, forms the basis of rape laws in Bangladesh. It lacks a clear definition of consent and fails to address the crime's impacts on the victims. Despite four amendments by three different governments, the latest in 2022 added the death penalty for gang rape or rape resulting in the victim's death, alongside life imprisonment or up to 10 years in prison.

According to a report by Oleos Justice, Monash University, Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN) and the SAME Network, *A Deadly Distraction: Why the Death Penalty is Not the Answer to Rape in South Asia*, many rape victims are assaulted by people they know which is why laws that provide for death penalty, discourage victims from reporting the crime (especially in cases where it could result in a family member's execution). Thus, the death penalty for rape risks further decreasing the already low reporting rates of this crime. Furthermore, according to recent studies reveal how death penalty fails to be an effective deterrent. This is because convictions increase when the punishment is of life imprisonment. In fact, death penalty diverts resources from more effective measures that could actually treat the root causes of the crime. Furthermore, a study by Equality Now and Dignity Alliance International in 2021 found that rape survivors value a justice system that includes speedy trials, certain convictions, sensitivity, accountability, and societal change, rather than the death penalty. They seek to reclaim their dignity and honor in a society that otherwise stigmatizes and further victimizes them. It is not harsh penalty (be it death or imprisonment for life) but a fair process that helps the victims feel vindicated, is needed.

The underlying factors driving crimes



against women remain inadequately studied and appreciated due to societal discomfort in discussing gender-based violence, but general crime literature suggests that economic, educational, social factors all play a role in shaping the context within which rape happens.

Although the law imposes a hefty price (punishment) for the rapist, most rape cases are settled out of court upon providing 'compensation' to the complainant. The amount is set by society, based apparently on the socioeconomic background of the victim. The value of harming a woman, or as Simone De'baivo would call the "second sex", is again determined by the men. This is in fact the economic factor that steers the aftermath of the offence of rape and our policy-legal landscape has nothing to offer women so that they feel confident in pursuing the due process of law, instead of out-of-court settlement.

The earliest educational models suggested that crimes and works were substitutes of one another meaning increasing availability of jobs and better wages had a disproportional effect on the occurrence of crime. Lochner argued that higher levels of education reduce crime by increasing earning potential and fostering moral development. Indeed, education has a sort of "civilizational effect" which improves a person's moral stance and thus reducing crime. All our advocacy-activism work in isolation. Our advocacy strategies to curb employment for instance do not really engage with those directed at addressing gender-based violence. Also, our educational system as a whole does not mainstream or institutionalise gender-based violence or sensitivity towards women. Lack of an overarching approach to deal with gender-based violence through education, social attitude towards the women remain the same.

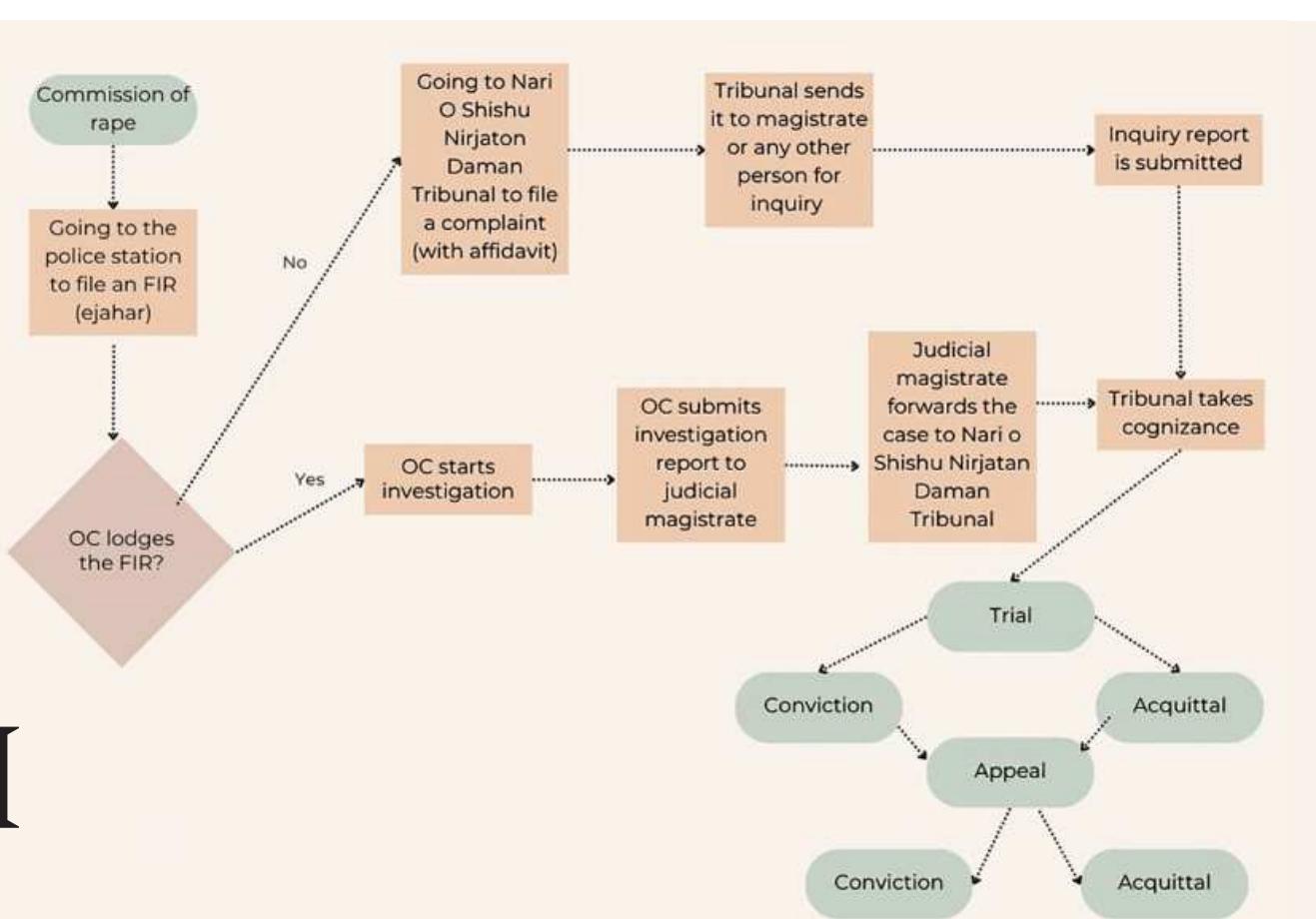
Rape's gravity lies not in the patriarchal notion of a woman losing her chastity but in the severe violation of an individual's bodily and mental autonomy and integrity. Such violations extend beyond forced sexual penetration and represent a broader assault on personal dignity, freedom and identity.

Indeed, justice is not a rapist getting hung by the neck, it is girls going on public transport without having the constant fear that they are going to be harassed, it is women being able to walk alone at night and having liberty. Justice is a mother waiting for her daughter late at night without the worry that her child may get raped. Justice is women walking to the police station without fear and choosing to pursue legal process instead of a compromise.

The writer is student of law, University of London.

PROCEDURAL LAW

LEGAL STEPS FOR A RAPE VICTIM



LAW DESK

A very brief discussion of the possible legal steps to be taken by a rape victim are discussed in this piece. An informer (does not necessarily have to be the victim) needs to first go to a police station to inform the Officer in Charge (OC) about the commission of the rape. The OC is under an obligation to lodge the FIR and start an investigation right away since rape is a cognizable offence. After the completion of the investigation, the OC will submit an investigation report to the nearest judicial magistrate. If the police find evidence against the accused, a charge sheet will be filed, otherwise, there will be a police report explaining the lack of guilt on part of the accused. The magistrate is not bound to follow findings of the police and may forward the accused to the Tribunal. Since there is a special law for rape (i.e., the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain 2010) it is tried by the

Tribunal for speedy and efficacious trials and not by the usual trial courts.

Now, had the OC not lodged the FIR initially, the course of action would have been slightly different. Then the informer could go to the Tribunal directly to file a complaint with an affidavit mentioning that the OC failed to lodge the FIR. Upon receiving the complaint, the Tribunal will send the same to a magistrate or any other person for an inquiry and upon receiving inquiry report, will take cognizance. The accused will be tried in the Tribunal as per the 2010 Ain. After the completion of the trial, an accused may either be convicted or acquitted. Either way, there is the option to appeal the decision. The Appellate Court may either concur with the Tribunal or reverse its judgment.

The Victim should consult a lawyer from the initial stages to ensure that all the steps are complied with properly. Different NGOs provide assistance in such matters.



Wounded Australia seek change of fortune

SPORTS DESK

After getting hammered by India in the opening match, hosts Australia would be hoping that the change of ball will result in a change of fortunes for them as the much-anticipated pink-ball Test between the sides begins at Adelaide Oval today.

These two sides have faced off in a day-night Test only once before, at the same venue back in December 2020, in which Aussies bundled India out for just 36 -- their lowest ever total in Tests -- to set up an eight-wicket win in the series opener.

India, however, recovered from that early set back and won the series 2-1.

This time, it is the hosts who are in need of redemption.

India had to field an understrength eleven in the first game, with regular skipper Rohit Sharma and star batter Shubman Gill missing out. Both are set to play in Adelaide with Devdutt Padikkal and Dhruv Jurel likely to lose their spots.

Rohit is set to demote himself down the order to allow KL Rahul to open the innings, rewarding him for his patient 26 in the first innings then a solid 77 in the second in the Perth Test as an opener.

"KL will open. The way he has batted



Everyone has got a lot of personal pride, professional pride. So there's pressure on you anytime you play, let alone with the scoreboard being down 1-0.

Australia captain Pat Cummins

outside India, he deserves it. I will bat somewhere in the middle," said Rohit.

Meanwhile, Australia captain Pat Cummins admitted the pressure was on.

"Any Test match there is pressure. When you're down there's a little bit more, especially when you are at home. But we

have been in similar situations in World Cups or other series," he said.

Pacer Josh Hazlewood, the chief destroyer in India's 36 run capitulation four years ago with figures of 5-8, has been ruled out this time due to a side strain. Seamer Scott Boland will replace him.

• The Adelaide Test is set to be the second pink-ball Test between Australia and India and will be the 23rd day-night Test overall.

• The first pink-ball Test between the sides had also taken place in Adelaide back in 2020, a match the hosts won by eight wickets after bowling out India for 36 in the second innings -- their lowest ever team total in Tests.

• Australia have played 12 day-night Tests, more than any other team. They have won 11 of those games with their only defeat coming against the West Indies in Brisbane in January this year.

• India have played four pink ball Tests and other than the loss against Australia, they have come out victorious on the other three occasions.

• India have played 13 Tests at the Adelaide Oval and have won two, lost eight and drew three.

'Huge challenge' for Tigers in Champions Trophy build-up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's focus now shifts to the white-ball series on their current tour of the West Indies, starting with the first of three ODIs in St Kitts on Sunday.

The Tigers will be hoping to carry the momentum from their big win in the second Test in Jamaica that helped them bounce back and draw the two-Test series 1-1, but it will be a tricky task given they face the challenge of finding the right balance amid notable absences in a series that is considered as a build-up to the 2025 Champions Trophy.

Bangladesh will be aware that they lost four of the last ODI five series, home and away, in their most favoured format, including a 2-1 defeat against Afghanistan in the UAE in November.

Liton Das, who missed the Afghanistan series due to illness, returns for the Windies white-ball series but the fact that several key players are unavailable for the final ODI series ahead of the Champions Trophy will definitely be a headache for head coach Phil Simmons.



"It's actually a huge challenge, a lot bigger than this [Test series]. Quite a few senior players are missing," Simmons told broadcasters after the Jamaica Test.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto [groin], Mushfiqur Rahim [finger], and Towhid Hridoy [groin] will be sitting the series out due to injuries while Mustafizur Rahman will be unavailable due to family reasons. Shakib Al Hasan, meanwhile, is not in the picture since he was unable to return to the country for his final Test last month due to security concerns.

"For me, it would be nice to see some of the other youngsters around and see what else to work with," Simmons added.

The likes of Jaker Ali and Afif Hossain will look to fill up the void in the middle order but the main concern for the Tigers remains the opening slot. Soumya Sarkar got starts in the Afghanistan series but has not been able to make a big score. It would be a big litmus test for him and opening partner Tanzid Hasan Tamim in the pacy bouncy conditions of the Caribbean.

Parvez Hossain Emon, included in the ODI squad, will likely be considered a back-up for the opening position.

The last time Bangladesh played a ODI series in the West Indies, they won 3-0 in the spinning conditions of Guyana. And, it would be yet another chance for Nasum Ahmed to stake his claim, having impressed with bat and ball in the last series against Afghanistan.

Without Mustafizur, Bangladesh still have a strong pace bowling contingent to test the West Indies on their soil. Tanzim Hasan Sakib returned to the squad after a lay-off due to injury while Hasan Mahmud replaced Mustafizur.

All eyes would be on speedster Nahid Rana, who impressed in the third Afghanistan ODI before he scalped five wickets in the second Windies Test to pave the way for a momentous Test win.

The team management will be well aware of his workload but hope the youngster can leave a mark in the ODIs, with Simmons saying he would like Rana in the T20I squad as well.

HOCKEY JUNIOR WORLD CUP Foreign coach, extended training promised

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has plans to provide "best efforts" to prepare the U-21 team ahead of next year's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup in December, India.

The team returned home yesterday after finishing fifth in the AHF Hockey Junior Asia Cup in Oman, securing their first-ever spot in the Junior World Cup with three wins, two draws, and one loss in six matches.

The BHF organised a reception for the history makers at Falcon Hall in the city, where BHF president and Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan welcomed each player and official with flower garlands before awarding the 21-member youth team contingent -- comprising 18 players, coach, manager and physio -- a cash prize of Tk 5 lakh.

"As we have already secured a ticket for the Junior World Cup, we will do everything necessary for the youth hockey team. We will aim to have a six-month-long camp instead of three months and, if needed, bring in a foreign coach alongside our local coach," Mahmood said during his speech.

He also shared plans to keep the players engaged through domestic competitions.

"We are optimistic about resuming domestic competitions. The Victory Day Hockey Tournament will

take place in late December, followed by the women's hockey league in January and the domestic league for men in March," the BHF president informed.

Congratulating the players, officials, and sponsors for the achievement -- as Bangladesh had never appeared in a hockey World Cup at any level -- Mahmood added, "This is a significant accomplishment in the



month of December. By qualifying for the Junior World Cup, you have created an opportunity to aim for the Senior World Cup in the future. We will provide our best efforts... as you face bigger hurdles in the coming days."

The BHF president acknowledged the challenges of running a three-month training camp for the Junior Asia Cup, especially as most federation officials were absent after August 5. He expressed his commitment to continuing the camp with better facilities, improved diets, and accom-

modation from the Oman tour.

The players and the coach emphasised the need for a comprehensive training camp to prepare for the main event.

Forward Rakibul Hasan Rocky, Bangladesh's top scorer with seven goals, said, "The federation should start the camp as soon as possible as we'll face top opponents like the Netherlands, Germany, England, and

Argentina."

However, head coach Moududur Rahman Shuvo believes keeping players engaged through regular competitions is as important as long-term training.

"Running a year long training camp may not be feasible, but we can keep players engaged through domestic competitions such as the Premier Hockey League and franchise-based hockey, which meet international standards due to the participation of world-class players," Shuvo said.

Tigresses lament poor batting in final stretch

SPORTS REPORTER

Poor batting in the second half of their chase cost Bangladesh women's cricket team the opening WT20I of the three match series against Ireland, as the hosts lost the game by 12 runs in Sylhet yesterday.

Chasing 170, openers Dilara Akter (49 off 41 balls) and Sobhana Mostary (46 off 35 balls) formed a record 103-run partnership.

There was a momentary slump after the partnership ended but Sharmin Akther and Tai Nehar (19 off 14 balls) did well to recover the momentum, leaving 18 runs required off the last two overs for the Tigresses to complete their biggest ever run chase in WT20Is.

But the penultimate over from Orla Prendergast (3-24) ended up being a maiden double wicket over and only five came of the 20th from Arlene Kelly as the match slipped away from Bangladesh.

Set batter Sharmin, who remained not out on 23 off 13, faced only one out of the last 12 deliveries, of which she took a single.

After the match, Mostary lamented about the missed opportunity.

"If the 19th over hadn't been a maiden and if we required 10 to 12 runs in the last over, we could have chased the target," Mostary said.

Earlier, Irish skipper Gaby Lewis (60 off 42) shared a 107-run stand with player of the match Leah Paul (79 off 45) after they won the toss.

The second match will be held on Saturday.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Young Tigers face Pakistan in Asia Cup semi

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team will be looking to reach the final of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup for the second consecutive time when they take on their Pakistani counterparts in the first semifinal at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in the UAE today.

The reigning champions earlier finished as Group B runners-up after losing their third and final group stage match to Sri Lanka by seven runs at the same venue on Tuesday. Before that defeat, they had won against Afghanistan and Nepal by 45 runs and five wickets respectively.

Meanwhile, Pakistan went undefeated in the group stage, winning against India, UAE and Japan in Group A.

In the day's other semifinal, Sri Lanka will take on seven-time champions India at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. Sri Lanka finished as Group B champions with three wins while India finished as Group A runners-up.

Both matches will start at 11:00 am Bangladesh time.

SHORT CORNER

'I have not got all my BPL contract money'

South Africa leg-spinner Imran Tahir accused Rangpur Riders of not paying the cricketer's full payment for his services in the last edition of the Bangladesh Premier League. "I would like to win it for Guyana, and for personal reasons as well. I played for Rangpur Riders in BPL last year and have not got my all contract money," Tahir said before stepping onto the field for Guyana Amazon Warriors in a Global Super League (GSL) game against Rangpur on Wednesday.



Rashid, Nabi decry Taliban's stance on women's education

Afghanistan cricket stars Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi have expressed their disappointment over the Taliban's reported closure of institutes for women training as nurses and midwives. They described the move as "deeply saddening and heartbreaking" and highlighted Islam's emphasis on education for everyone. Both cricketers took to X to urge the Taliban to reconsider their stance and restore Afghan girls' right to education, enabling them to contribute to the nation's development.

Kings, MSC to vie for early BPL advantage

Last season's champions Bashundhara Kings and runners-up Mohammedan Sporting Club are set to face off in Cumilla today (2:30pm, Bangladesh time), marking an early and crucial clash in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) title race.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website.

De Bruyne played 75 fantastic minutes

AGENCIES

Kevin De Bruyne made the most of his first start since September with a goal and an assist in Wednesday's 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest, saying he was happy Manchester City earned three points after four straight losses in the Premier League.

"I think it's just important that we won a game," the 33-year-old midfielder told his club's official website. "We started the game well, created some opportunities, maybe a few mistakes, I think myself as well. But, you know, happy with the way that we performed."

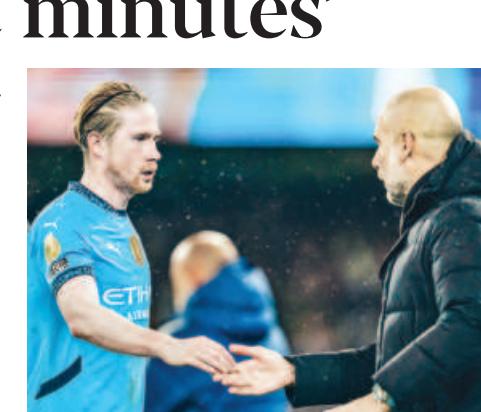
City coach Pep Guardiola dismissed suggestions before the game that there had been a rift with De Bruyne as he has been carefully managed back from injury problems.

"Last season was many months (out injured) and this season as well. I'm so happy he's back," said Guardiola.

"He fought a lot. In respect to his physicality and minutes against Feyenoord was not good and that's why I decided not to play at Anfield (against Liverpool) for the rhythm they play."

"But the minutes he played at Anfield were really good and today he played 75 fantastic minutes."

The Belgian, who has come on as a substitute in recent matches after missing a month with a groin strain, said injuries have



plagued City's bid to secure a fifth league title in a row.

"It's been a tough time but we tried to change it. Unfortunately we've got a few guys who are maybe injured so, it's what is happening this year. But we'll try and recover as quickly as possible."

De Bruyne was also pleased that City, who have lost key defensive midfielder Rodri for the season due to a cruciate ligament tear, kept their first clean sheet in eight matches in all competitions.

City, fourth in the standings with 26 points, visit Crystal Palace on Saturday.

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FINANCIAL STRAINS Govt to sell or lease some Beximco units

Says labour and employment secy

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government has decided either to sell the ownership of a good number of Beximco Group companies or find entrepreneurs to lease these units out.

It is among a number of decisions on Beximco as the group is struggling to pay its employees after the arrest of group Vice Chairman Salman F Rahman, also a former adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

If it is possible, the government may stop the operation of some companies after repaying their loans to the banks and dues to the employees.

Labour and Employment Secretary AHM Shafiquzzaman confirmed the decisions to The Daily Star yesterday.

He said some government authorities, such as the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) were working on all these options.

The workers of Beximco Group companies have been staging street protests frequently demanding back pay and such incidents are creating troubles in the country,

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**REPORT ON GRAFT
Star journo wins TIB award**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday awarded three journalists and a television programme for investigative reporting on corruption.

The 26th edition of the TIB Investigation Awards was held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Among the winners, The Daily Star reporter Zyma Islam has been awarded in the national media category for her report "S Alam's Aladdin's Lamp" published on August 4, 2023.

The story was regarding S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam's offshore assets in Singapore. Zyma investigated how Alam built a business

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Workers erased from July mass uprising narrative

Speakers tell Star discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Long-term rehabilitation and comprehensive support are needed for the families of those killed and injured during the July uprising, speakers said at an event yesterday.

They said many families have lost their sole breadwinners, while injured survivors are unable to return to their previous professions due to their injuries, adding that the financial assistance provided by the July Smriti Foundation is insufficient and demeaning.

They made the remarks at a discussion titled "Marginalised Voices of the July Revolution," organised by The Daily Star at its photo exhibition and storytelling week – "36 Days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts". It focused on the stories of struggle, sacrifice, and resilience of workers affected by the movement.

Md Jobaer Hasan recounted how his 15-year-old brother Julfiqar had been missing for six days before being found in the DMCH Burn Unit.

"His eye was completely damaged, and over 100 shotgun pellets were lodged in his body," Jobaer said.

Julfiqar's mother, who had raised her two sons with support from others, pleaded, "Doctors said his eye cannot be healed, even [if he is taken] abroad. But I want the government to help him regain his sight."

Shariful Islam, a private service holder who sustained bullet wounds on August 5, shared his experience of facing apathy from hospital authorities and the lack of state support.

He said he had to visit the July Smriti Foundation himself to receive financial aid.

Shariful said he dreams of a new Bangladesh that is free of discrimination, where everyone has enough to eat, voting rights are upheld, grassroots voices are heard, and police serve the people.

According to the speakers, 80 percent of those killed during the July uprising were not students but workers, including rickshaw-

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ICT slaps ban on circulation of Hasina's 'hate speech'

Asks govt to take down her statements from electronic, social media

DU CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday banned the dissemination of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's "hate speeches".

The tribunal also ordered the concerned authorities of the government to take immediate steps for the removal of such statements already published on electronic and social media.

The ICT's ban and order came after the hearing of a petition filed by the prosecution yesterday seeking a ban on hate speeches and other statements made by Hasina.

Hasina is an accused in number of cases and her statements may hinder the investigation process, or create fear among witnesses or victims, said ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim.

Referring to some

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'Israel committing genocide in Gaza'

Amnesty Int'l's latest report says Israel treating Palestinians in Gaza 'as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity'

AFP, The Hague

Amnesty International yesterday accused Israel of "committing genocide" against Palestinians in Gaza since the start of the war last year, saying its new report was a "wake-up call" for the world.

The London-based rights organisation said its findings were based on satellite images documenting devastation, fieldwork and ground reports from Gazans as well as "dehumanising and genocidal statements by Israeli government and military officials".

Israel angrily dismissed the findings as "entirely false", denouncing the report as "fabricated" and "based on lies".

Amnesty chief Agnes Callamard accused Israel of treating the Palestinians in Gaza "as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity, demonstrating its intent to physically destroy them".

"Our damning findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide. It must stop now," she said in a statement.

The Palestinian group Hamas launched an unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, triggering a deadly Israeli

Israel is treating the Palestinians in Gaza as a subhuman group unworthy of human rights and dignity, demonstrating its intent to physically destroy them. Our damning findings must serve as a wake-up call to the international community: this is genocide. It must stop now.

Amnesty chief Agnes Callamard

2 key accused in Ctg lawyer murder case arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday arrested two key suspects in the lawyer Saiful Islam murder case.

One of them, Chandan, 35, was arrested at Bhairab railway station in Kishoreganj around 12:15am.

A joint police team from Bhairab and Chattogram arrested him, said Muhammad Shahin, officer-in-charge of Bhairab Police Station.

In a video footage taken when Saiful was killed in the Chattogram Court Building area, a man wearing a helmet, orange T-shirt, and black pants is seen stabbing Saiful multiple times with a machete, said the officer, adding that that man is Chandan.

Abdul Karim, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said Chandan went into hiding after the murder and lived in different places before travelling to Bhairab to go to his father-in-law's house.

Chandan, a cleaner by

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**ELECTORAL REFORM
Commission to sit with ex-polls officials on Monday
Past irregularities to be discussed**

BAHARAM KHAN

The Electoral Reform Commission will hold a meeting on Monday with the government officials concerned to discuss the polling irregularities that took place during the controversial 10th, 11th, and 12th parliamentary polls.

The officials, who served as returning officers and assistant returning officers, have been asked to join the meeting at the parliament building.

The commission chairman, Badiul Alam Majumdar, on Tuesday sent a letter to the senior secretary of the public administration ministry requesting him to take necessary measures for arranging the meeting.

According to sources, the commission will try to know who asked the officials to commit irregularities, and how they implemented the directives of their supervisors.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Badiul said

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BIRDS OF A FEATHER

A flock of little egrets, a small sized species of herons, soaring across the Dhaka sky. Little egrets are aquatic birds that are found in tropical parts of Asia, Africa, Australia and Europe. They stay mostly near waterbodies, where they can feed on fish, amphibians, small reptiles and mammals and even other birds. Their diet also includes crustaceans, molluscs and insects. These elegant birds are known to be sociable and are often seen in small flocks, mostly during the breeding season from October to February, like the one in the photograph. Due to their wide range and growing population, little egrets are categorised as "Least Concern" in the IUCN Red List.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**Chennai cops round up 500 over protests
Demos staged in various parts of India over minority issues in Bangladesh**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Protests against alleged atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh spread to the southern part of India as Chennai police yesterday rounded up about 500 people, including 100 women for taking to the streets without permission from police.

The detainees are supporters of the BJP, RSS and its student front Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad.

There were also protests in Dibrugarh town of Assam.

The protest in Chennai, led by Hindu Munni organiser Raju, saw former senior BJP leader Tamilsai Soundararajan, RSS functionary Kesava Vinayagam, participating in the protest and raising slogans against the Bangladesh government.

When the protesters tried to march towards Anna Salai, police detained them. The police registered a case against the protesters for taking to the streets without permission. A team of 150 police personnel was deployed to prevent any untoward incidents.

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