

‘LIVING ROOM SESSION 2’ Pavel aims to go global from London

Musician Pavel Areen has expanded his *Living Room Session* project with a multi-season partnership with Creative Event and Management Ltd, a new production and events company based in London.

The first season, blending local talent with international production values, in a unique 'living room' setting, garnered widespread praise from both industry professionals and the public.

The partnership was formalised at a signing ceremony held at the prestigious restaurant The Ivy Tower Bridge, on January 11, attended by key figures including Pavel Areen, Md Imtiaz Ahmed Zimi, Chairman Mohammad Rahat Amin of Creative Event and Management Ltd, and Shah Mohammad Farhad, the organisation's executive director.

This collaboration marks a significant step towards elevating Bengali music onto the global stage. Md Rahat Amin, who migrated to



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

the UK in 2008 and has successfully established multiple businesses, expressed that this partnership fulfills a long-held vision of supporting the creative industry in Bangladesh.

Pavel Areen echoed this emphasis on the project's ambition, "We aim to take Bengali music to unprecedented heights, uniting people worldwide through the magic of music."

The upcoming season of *Living Room Session* is tentatively scheduled for release during Eid-ul-Azha 2025, and pre-production along with contract signings are already underway. Several prominent artistes have confirmed their participation.

This collaboration aims to rejuvenate Bengali music, captivating local and global audiences. Pavel hopes to attain global recognition from established international platforms with this move.

Indigenous group attacked

FROM PAGE 12

The indigenous group first announced to hold their programme in from of the NCTB office.

In response, the Students for Sovereignty also decided to lay siege to the office at the same time.

HOW IT HAPPENED?

According to witnesses, the indigenous group went to the NCTB office around noon.

Meanwhile, members of the Students for Sovereignty, carrying cricket stumps with national flags tied to them, had already taken position in front of the office. At one point, they swooped on the indigenous group, leaving over a dozen injured.

Rahee Nayab, one of the injured, alleged that the attackers chanted slogans like "Tumi ke, ami ke? Bangalee, Bangalee" (Who are you, who am I? Bangalee, Bangalee) and "Naraye Takbeer, Allahu Akbar" during the assault.

Shaily, another injured, said the attackers particularly targeted women.

Witnesses corroborate these accounts, saying the violence could have been avoided had law enforcers acted decisively.

Alik Mree, one of the organisers of the Aggrieved Indigenous Student-Masses, alleged, "We were leading a peaceful march when the Students for Sovereignty group attacked us in front of the police."

Yaqub Mazumder, joint convener of Students for Sovereignty, denied the allegations. "We were inside the NCTB office when the incident began. When we came out, we found our activists injured. We immediately calmed the situation," he claimed.

However, Shahadat Hossain Kifat, a journalist present at the spot, said, "They put bandages on their bare heads and applied viodin (ointment) over them to make it appear as blood."

When asked, Yaqub denied the allegations.

Md Shahrir Ali, deputy commissioner (Motijheel division) of police, said law enforcers present there intervened when one group suddenly attacked the other.

Sub-inspector Alimul Islam of Motijheel Police Station told The Daily Star last night that two people have been taken into custody for interrogation. They are being questioned now.

No case has been filed as of yet, he said.

Meanwhile, Aggrieved Indigenous Student-Masses announced to lay

siege to the state guest house Jamuna, the residence of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, tomorrow, protesting the attack.

WHO ARE 'STUDENTS FOR SOVEREIGNTY'?

The group was formed on August 28, 2024.

In their Facebook bio, it wrote, "The popular platform for Dhaka University students, 'Students for Sovereignty,' is dedicated to upholding the sovereignty of the nation. InshaAllah!"

On the same day, they organised a protest rally in response to a speech by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, where he used the term "Adivasi" to refer to the indigenous community.

The group claimed that indigenous communities should be referred to as "Upojati" and "Khudro Nrigoshti" (small ethnic communities).

On September 20, they held a rally at Dhaka University, demanding an increase in number of army camps in the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) and the removal of "unconstitutional sections" from the CHT Peace Treaty, among other demands.

During a demonstration on September 24, last year, they called for the removal of the "Upojati quota," a reservation system for indigenous students in university entrance exams.

The group also organised protests on various issues – demanding removal of travel restrictions to St Martin's Island, justice for the killing of a Muslim lawyer at the Chattogram court, the capital punishment and dismissal of a DU teacher over alleged blasphemy, the protection of hijab and veil rights, stop killings of Bangladeshis by BSF forces and against the "live-together culture".

Recently, the term "Adivasi" was removed from the covers of textbooks for classes 9 and 10 after the group demonstrated in front of NCTB.

Md Ziaul Haque, a former student of DU, is known to lead the group. At least two leaders of Jatiya Nagorik Committee and several others alleged that he has family ties with a leader of the Shariatpur unit of Awami League.

Meanwhile, names of two other DU-based organisations – "Parbatya Chattogram Chhatra Sangsad" and "Parbatya Chattogram Chhatra Parishad" – came to the fore following yesterday's attack.

These correspondents have obtained screenshots showing the "Parbatya Chattogram Chhatra Sangsad" page promoting the "Students for Sovereignty" siege of the

NCTB office.

An hour before the attack, the group shared a Facebook live stream showing several individuals with cricket stumps and national flag taking positions in front of the NCTB office.

All these posts were deleted following the attack.

In previous posts, PCCS claimed that recognising the ethnic communities in the CHT as "indigenous" would lead to the separation of the CHT from Bangladesh.

Notably, Md Abu Shadik, the former president of the Chhatra Shibir's DU wing, was also a former president of "Parbatya Chattogram Chhatra Sangsad" before revealing his affiliation with Shibir.

Similarly, SM Farhad, the current president of the DU Shibir wing, previously held a leadership role in "Parbatya Chattogram Chhatra Sangsad".

These associations have led many to allege that Shibir activists are running both the organisations.

Armanul Hoque, president of the Chhatra Federation's DU wing, said after the attack, "Shibir, under the guise of 'Students for Sovereignty,' attacked the students today."

In a Facebook post, Shadik denied the allegations against Shibir.

"We demand immediate punishment for the attackers," he added.

On the other hand, Shahadat Farazi Sakib, a leader of Nagorik Committee's Dhanmondi wing, is the founding president of Parbatya Chattogram Chhatra Parishad.


On Tuesday, he shared the NCTB siege programme of 'Students' For Sovereignty' on his Facebook wall, and urged his followers to join.

Many of the victims have said that he was present at the time of the attack.

The Daily Star could not reach him as his phone was switched off.

However, he posted on Facebook, "At least 14 general students were injured when Upojati miscreants and leftists attacked us when we were protesting inclusion of the controversial and anti-national word 'Adivasi' on textbooks. Some of them have been admitted to Pan Pacific Hospital in critical conditions."

Contacted, Samanta Shermeen, spokesperson of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said, "We have received allegations against Sakib. We would form a probe body. If allegations are true, we will take necessary actions as per protocol."



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Joler Gaan Live

Musical platform Dhaka Sessions' **Sheeter Adda** (Winter Conversations) is all set to present captivating performances by the renowned band Joler Gaan – known for their storytelling prowess with the use of music.

The event will be held at Raaga Art Cafe, Uttara, offering an evening of enchanting music followed by an exquisite buffet dinner.

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 25
TIME: 7:30PM-10PM
VENUE: RAAGA ART CAFE

Apex court clears Khaleda, Tarique

FROM PAGE 12

"Accordingly, the judgements of both the High Court Division and the trial court are, hereby, set aside. Consequently, all the appellants having not been found guilty of the charges levelled against them, stand fully acquitted".

"The proceedings constituting the subject matter of these appeals are found to manifest contrived misapplication of the law as tantamount to malicious prosecution," a five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed observed.

The verdict, read out by the chief justice, added, "This judgement shall also extend to other convicted persons who, however, did not prefer any appeal. This decision shall, resultantly restore the appellants' and all other convicts' dignity, reaffirm their innocence, and thereby, put an

end to the unwarranted proceedings initiated against them".

"All appellants on bail shall necessarily stand discharged from their respective bail bonds," the apex court said, ordering authorities concerned to communicate and send down the records immediately.

Detailed observations will be available when the complete verdict is released.

The top court delivered the judgement after holding hearings on two appeals filed by Khaleda and one each by Saleemul Huq alias Kazi Kamal and businessman Sharafuddin Ahmed challenging the HC verdict.

"There was no merit in the case. Sadly, the High Court Division had extended Khaleda Zia's five-year jail sentence to 10 years. ... The High Court verdict was given on the fascist government's instructions," Khaleda and Tarique's lawyer Zainul Abedin

told reporters after the Appellate Division's verdict.

"However, things are different now. It seems that the judiciary works independently. Those who could not appeal, including Tarique Rahman, have been acquitted," he said.

Kayser Kamal, another lawyer for Khaleda and Tarique, said his clients and all the other accused have been served justice by the Appellate Division verdict.

"The verdict has proven that Sheikh Hasina implicated Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman and other accused in the case to achieve her political ambitions and establish fascism. Everything was part of a political scheme," the lawyer added.

When contacted, the Anti-Corruption Commission's lawyer Ashif Hassan said he would convey the SC verdict to the commission.

The commission will take its decision accordingly, he said.

Deaths on July 19 three times

FROM PAGE 12

and Uttara. The rest died in other areas.

Among the deceased, 42 were students and 99 were from varying professions, found the report.

At the programme, two documentaries were screened "Jatrabari: Evidence of Atrocities" and "Riddoy: Evidence of A Murder".

The documentaries were based on the mobile phone videos captured by eyewitnesses on August 5 last year after months of detailed forensic investigation.

The first one is a 15-minute film that showed how police brutally shot unarmed people in front of Jatrabari police station from close range between 1.56pm and 3.30pm on August 5 last year.

The second one is about the cold-blooded killing of a college student named Mohammad Riddoy by police officials in Gazipur's Konabari area. A police official shot him from behind with a very close range while a couple of other officials held him tight.

The investigative team collected several mobile phone footage from locals, but the family is yet to find the body of Riddoy, an intermediate student of Hemnagar Degree College in Tangail's Gopalpur.

His sister Jesmin Akter appealed for his mortal remains at the programme. The family wanted to find at least a bone of Riddoy to bury in front of their eyes.

Riddoy, the lone earner of the family of three, was in Konabari with

his brother-in-law that day.

"My brother joined the victory rally at noon. But in the afternoon, police opened fire and he hid behind a wall. Police took my brother from there and shot at him. My husband was there – he followed the body, which was taken towards the police station."

Later, the body was not found.

"Five months have already gone, but we still didn't get justice. We received no government aid – nobody even enquired how our parents are," she added.

The prosecutor team is working very hard and is optimistic that the trial process will likely commence within weeks, said Asif Nazrul, the law adviser to the interim government.

"Our first responsibility is to ensure justice. But we need to maintain the due process of the judiciary procedure. We need to ensure that our justice is different from the justice of Sheikh Hasina. Our justice will be according to all the international standards," he said.

Chief Prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal Muhammad Tajul Islam thanked the team who investigated the two incidents.

"The way the investigation is done, our team still doesn't have that much technical knowledge and capacity."

The investigation of only two incidents took five months, so the ICT team would need more time to complete the procedures.

"We are trying our best to ensure

justice," he added.

There is no doubt that the targeted use of force by the police was unlawful and constitutes gross violations of human rights, said Yasmin Sooka, executive director of ITJP.

If proven in a court of law, it amounts to crimes against humanity, she added.

It is shameful that the government is yet to create a complete list of the deceased and injured even after five months of the protest, said Shahidul Alam, a photographer and activist.

"There is no doubt about the earnest efforts of those who are working on it, but there are doubts on their competence," he said.

Sabhanaz Rashid Diya, executive director of TGI, moderated the event. Journalists David Bergman and Frances Harrison of ITJP, and Syed Gazir Rahman, father of Syed Muntasir Rahman, the victim of the Jatrabari incident, also spoke.

Task force

FROM PAGE 12

laundered money, dodged taxes and invested money abroad without approval, according to BFIU officials.

The other businesses involved in such crimes will also be investigated in phases, they said.

A government-commissioned white paper committee on the economy estimated that \$234 billion was siphoned off from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023.

Ex-NBR member Matiur

FROM PAGE 12

National Board of Revenue (NBR) told the court that he was a victim of the Awami League government, which harassed him with different excuses.

He claimed the gun for which this case was filed was licensed. He appealed to the court to grant him bail and reject the remand prayer. The judge rejected his bail plea and granted the police three days to grill him in custody.

His wife Laila was sent to jail by the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Md Zakir Hossain in a graft case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The court fixed January 19 for a hearing on a seven-day remand prayer sought for questioning Laila. ACC Assistant Director Md Ismail, the investigation officer of the case, produced Laila before the court.

The case was filed against Laila, former chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura Upazila Parishad, on January 12 on charges of acquiring illegal wealth of over Tk 13 crore and concealing information about her assets worth over Tk 1.53 crore to the ACC.

Four other graft cases were filed

against Matiur, Laila, their son Ahmed Taufiqur Rahman, daughter Farzana Rahman Ipshtia, and Matiur's second wife Shammii Akhter Shewly.

Matiur's other son, Mushfiqur Rahman Ifat, gained widespread attention last year after a viral video showed him purchasing a goat for Tk 15 lakh, sparking public interest in the family's extravagant lifestyle, including expensive cars, properties, and resorts.

Later on June 23, 2024, the ACC began an investigation against Matiur. A court then issued a travel ban on Matiur and two of his family members. The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit ordered the seizure of bank accounts, mobile financial services (MFS) accounts, and stock market beneficial owners (BO) accounts in the names of Matiur and his family members at that time.

Matiur was also removed from the NBR and added to the Internal Revenue Service. He was removed from the government-nominated director position at state-owned Sonali Bank as well.

On July 11 last year, the court ordered the attachment of all moveable and immovable properties of Matiur and his family members.

Rights bodies, student orgs

FROM PAGE 12

attack left over a dozen people injured.

The indigenous protesters had gathered to demand the reinstatement of the term "adivasi" in textbooks.

The Jatiya Nagorik Committee denounced the violence, describing it as an attack on the right to peaceful assembly.

"This incident reflects tactics reminiscent of a banned fascist organisation. Law enforcers must immediately hold the perpetrators accountable," it stated.

Students Against Discrimination also condemned the violence in a Facebook post, labelling it an "assault by extremists".

Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the group, said, "We demand the immediate arrest and punishment of those responsible, regardless of their affiliations."

In its statement, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) expressed outrage over the assault.

"We support the rightful demands of indigenous communities and strongly urge the interim government to arrest and prosecute those involved in this heinous attack," said MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam.

Protests denouncing the violence were also held across the capital including at the Central Shaheed Minar.

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal also condemned the attack, terming it "deeply alarming".

In a statement, signed by its central committee President Rakibul Islam Rakib and General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir, JCD called for a thorough investigation and arrest of those involved.

The Parbatya Chattagram Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP) questioned how the attack could occur in the presence of police.

"We believe some students from settler communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, supported by radical and fundamentalist groups, orchestrated this attack. We express grave concerns over this incident," said Ankan Chakma and Amal Tripura, PCP president and general secretary, respectively.

The PCP alleged that the attack was premeditated, noting that "Students for Sovereignty" had issued threats on social media before the incident. They also claimed the attackers brought cricket stumps and sticks wrapped with national flags to the site and launched their assault in the presence of police.

The PCP claimed that radical communal groups, including Bangalee settlers from the CHT, were using this issue to spread propaganda suggesting that the hill people sought secession and the creation of an independent state.

"They are attempting to incite ethnic hatred across the country," the leaders added.

The PCP called for immediate legal action against the perpetrators.

Dhaka to urge Beijing

FROM PAGE 2

some Chinese industries, including electronic vehicle and food processing plants.

Bangladesh will also renew a memorandum of understanding on the provision of hydrological information on the Brahmaputra/Yalunzangbu river in flood season by China. The MoU was signed in 2008.

Hossain, however, was elusive when asked if Bangladesh would revisit discussions about the Teesta river development project.

He will also seek Chinese support for creating a conducive environment in Rakhine for Rohingya repatriation.

"China has a strong influence on Myanmar. So, they can help. Given the security situation in Myanmar, repatriation may not start now, but we should continue to work."

On Bangladesh's joining the Chinese Global Development Initiative, he said Dhaka looks at it positively. "This is a continuous process."

On the recent tension over India's border fencing at some points along the border, he said Bangladesh will resolve the issues when there are some problems. "We cannot solve those overnight."

India says it was building barbed wire fencing based on mutual understanding.

Asked about this, Hossain said the general understanding is that no country will do fencing within 150 yards of the international border.

"In some cases, consciously we have made some exceptions where necessary. This is possible. So, when we said the fencing was done beyond our understanding, we are aware of the issue and will talk about it with them."

The US, China and India are very important, so Bangladesh will maintain balanced relations with all of them for national interest, Hossain added.

UK PM grilled

FROM PAGE 2

door remains open for you going forward".

Referring to the controversy surrounding Tulip, Kemi Badenoch questioned PM's handling of the issue.

"At a time when the market is in turmoil, the prime minister has lost focus on the issue because of the crisis surrounding the former city minister," Beidnock said.

"He (prime minister) said yesterday that he is deeply saddened by the resignation of her close friend (Tulip Siddiq). What does this tell us about his decision? And the fact was that the minister in charge of anti-corruption was being investigated for corruption," she said.