

## Abu Sayeed Chowdhury's birth anniv

CITY DESK



Today is the 104th birth anniversary of late Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, former president of Bangladesh.

To mark the occasion, a memorial meeting has been arranged at Nagbari Hasina Chowdhury High School in Tangail, said a press release.

Chowdhury was born in a respectable Muslim family at Nagbari on January 31, 1921. He was the only son of former speaker of erstwhile provincial assembly late Abdul Hamid Chowdhury.

He resigned from the post of VC of Dhaka University on March 15, 1971, protesting murders of two students by Pakistani occupation forces.

He played a significant role in mobilising the world opinion for the cause of Bangladesh. He also played a leading role in anti-autocracy movement in the eighties.

## Five killed as truck hits auto-rickshaw

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Five people were killed and another was critically injured as a truck hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Abdur Razak, 40, Mohammad Nur Jahangir Alam, 60, Amjad Fokir, 60, and Karim Salal, 40, and Ariful Islam, 40.

Eyewitnesses said an auto rickshaw carrying five passengers was heading towards Madhupur from Jamalpur. When it reached Karogram around 7:00pm, it was hit by a truck.

Confirming the deaths, Chad Miah, officer-in-charge of Sarishabari Police Station, said a police team reached the spot and recovered the bodies.

## Form squad to break up extortion

FROM PAGE 3  
Education and Planning Adviser Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday handed over the report, titled "Re-strategising the Economy and Mobilising Resources for Equitable and Sustainable Development," to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus in Dhaka.

The 12-member team, formed on September 10, was tasked with reframing development strategies, identifying leakages in the financial system, and restoring discipline in project implementation. The team was led by KAS Murshid, former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, and its report serves as the backbone of the administration's policy push, laying out recommendations to curb corruption, improve governance, and overhaul the nation's economic framework.

From roadside markets to major construction sites, extortion in Bangladesh has become institutionalised, according to economists and industry groups. Public transport is one of the hardest-hit sectors, where bus operators and truck drivers routinely pay off syndicates tied to local power brokers. Businesses, too, must factor in informal fees to access electricity, licences, or even basic government services.

The problem, however, is not limited to public-facing services. According to the task force, organised gangs have embedded themselves within public service institutions, acting as brokers between service seekers and service providers - with the help of influential insiders. These middlemen, often protected by association leaders and law enforcement officials, have placed themselves in key institutional tasks - from recruitment and promotion to vendor contracts and procurement.

"Serious attempts to dismantle this onerous system have been scarce - in part because of the close nexus of these middlemen with local political forces and law enforcement."

## REFORMING A SYSTEM OF CRONYISM

The rise of extortion and corruption has been linked to the unchecked influence of politically connected business elite, particularly during the 15-year rule of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted in August 2024 following massive student-led protests. Under her government, a select group of individuals consolidated control over banks, real estate, and major infrastructure projects, diverting resources away from the broader economy.

The task force report paints a grim picture of political capture in the banking sector. It called for an immediate end to politically motivated bank licences and bailouts. It further urged the central bank to be allowed to function independently, citing the Bangladesh Bank Amendment Bill 2003 as a necessary framework for ensuring its autonomy.

Bangladesh's future economic growth must be more resilient and inclusive, according to the task force. The economy cannot remain dependent on narrow sectors or a few powerful actors; instead, it must be broad-based, creating opportunities for all segments of society to participate and benefit.

Achieving this requires a renewed focus on agriculture, small and medium enterprises, and rural development, alongside efforts to modernise the industrial sector and integrate into global value chains.

The vision emerging from the report is of a just, prosperous, and accountable Bangladesh - one that values its people and prioritises their well-being above all else. Achieving this vision

will require a fundamental shift in governance, emphasising meritocracy, rule of law, and respect for democratic principles.

"The task ahead is immense, but the people of Bangladesh have shown time and again their resilience and capacity for innovation," the report said. With the right policies, leadership, and public engagement, the country can overcome its current challenges and emerge stronger, more united, and better prepared to face future uncertainties.

## Casino Brothers

FROM PAGE 3  
The seven other convicts include Enu's three brothers - Shahidul Haque Bhuiyan, Rashidul Haque Bhuiyan and Merajul Haque Bhuiyan; Joy Gopal Sarkar, general secretary of Wanderers Club in Motijheel; and their accomplices Tuhin Munshi, Nabir Hossain Sikder and Saiful Islam.

Enu, Rupon, their three brothers, and Nabir, now in jail, and Joy Gopal, Saiful and Tuhin, now on bail, were produced before the court yesterday.

## Ensure reforms

FROM PAGE 3  
He also stressed the need for a National Minority Commission.

BNP leader Zahir Uddin Swapan questioned whether the interim government could implement democratic reconstruction.

"Without a clear framework and stakeholder consensus, discussions may not yield concrete results," he added.

Badil Alam Majumdar, chief of the Election Reform Commission, proposed reserving 100 parliamentary seats for women to reduce discrimination.

"A flawed appointment system has weakened constitutional institutions. The Election Commission should be independent but follows executive directives," he said.

To ensure democratic reconstruction, he stressed the need for transparent appointments, legal updates, and accountability for past wrongdoings.

Former NBR chairman Mohammad Abdul Mazid stressed transparency in constitutional appointments.

Retired diplomat M Shafiqullah said, "If the people elect the president, the position will be free from political control. No political party currently holds a strong mandate. Credible elections are necessary for Bangladesh's global reputation."

CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun said, "The recent protests were about economic issues and employment. Immediate actions are needed to provide relief to the people. Reforms alone cannot

## People

FROM PAGE 3

BNP's Kushtia, Magura, Chuadanga and Meherpur district units organised the programme separately to train the party leaders and workers on the party's 31-point state overhauling proposal.

"We'll be able to resolve people's problems if we give power to those who are truly responsible and accountable. The individuals who will be elected by the people through a proper election process will be accountable to them. So, we're expecting an election that will determine who will take care of the people," Tarique said.

He also said the election should be held in a free, fair and credible manner.

Tarique said they have various plans and programmes, and will implement the state reform proposals as per their commitment to the people.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
JANUARY 31  
Faz Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:35 12:30 4:15 5:46 7:15  
JAMAAT 6:10 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Remove policies

FROM PAGE 3

"Crimes against women should be treated as seriously as any other crimes," she said.

She called for implementing a uniform family code and removing reservations on CEDAW to advance women's rights.

She also urged recognition for women's contributions to fisheries and requested gender-segregated data on landlessness to address inequalities.

Chief guest Shireen Parveen Huq, head of the Women's Affairs Commission, said the commission is working to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

"We are identifying women's positions in policies and recommending special provisions in line with the constitution and CEDAW guidelines," she said.

ALR Executive Director Shamsul Huda emphasised addressing the rights of indigenous women, female tea workers, and women with disabilities.

He also called for a shift in society's dismissive attitude towards crimes

against women.

Rowshan Jahan Moni, deputy director of ALRD, and Women's Affairs Commission members Ferdousi Sultana and Sumaiya Islam also spoke.

The event was moderated by Tanzim Ferdous, in charge of NGOs and Foreign Missions at The Daily Star.

## School event

FROM PAGE 5

The headteacher speculated that the attack was made as no local political figure was invited to the programme.

"We invited the UNO, education officer and OC of local police station as guests, avoiding political leaders since that might anger someone. Some of the attackers are involved with BNP's politics locally," he claimed.

Contacted, Sheikh Abdur Rouf, member secretary of Sujanagar upazila unit BNP, claimed it was not a political incident.

Md Solaiman Hossain, secondary education officer, said steps will be taken if the school authorities inform the matter officially.

## Appeal for help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Shuvendu Kumar Deb, 53, known as Apu in Dinajpur's Chhoto Gurgaon, is suffering from blood cancer and requires a bone marrow transplant.

However, the procedure is expensive, and Apu's family has already exhausted all their savings as well as funds raised through local donations.

As such, Apu, father of a seventh grader, is now in need of financial support.

He runs a small grocery shop in Barabandar.

After a diagnosis last year, Apu and his wife, Anjana Karmaker, went to India for treatment, where doctors advised for an urgent bone marrow transplant.

The family has sought aid from the well-off.

Alidcan besent to Anjana, A/C 012320900004809, United Commercial Bank, Malda Potti Branch, Dinajpur; bKash-01854166201.

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অবস্থান: বেলি, মারিয়াল, ঢাকা

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