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Dhanmondi 32 remnants being torn down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of protesters were holding a feast at Dhanmondi 32 as remains of the demolished house of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were being taken away last night.

As of 11:45pm, around 500-600 people were seen around the house. Many were curious onlookers; some of them went looking into the underground of the building.

At least 100 people were on the premises. Some were manually dismantling the structure, taking apart bricks and rods using sledgehammers.

A fire was seen on the top floor of an adjacent building around 10:30pm.

In the afternoon, the protesters slaughtered a cow and the preparations for a feast began by the night.

Using loudspeakers, the protesters demanded justice for all the wrongs done by the Awami League during its 15-year rule, including the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leaders on war crimes charges.

No law enforcers were seen around the spot.

The protest was sparked by an announcement of an online programme where deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was slated to speak.

The protesters launched a Facebook event titled "Bulldozer March", which brought crowds to Dhanmondi 32 at 7:30pm on Wednesday. By 9:30pm, the building was set ablaze.

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Crowds gather at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum lying in ruins in Dhanmondi 32 yesterday. The demolition of the building by protesters began on Wednesday night and continued till late last night.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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Vandalism, arson spread

Protesters torch AL leaders' houses, destroy murals, busts of Bangabandhu in over 20 dists

STAR REPORT

Houses of Awami League leaders were attacked and torched, and murals and busts of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were demolished and defaced in nearly two dozen districts yesterday.

A day after the Dhanmondi 32 residence of Sheikh Mujib was torched and torn down, protesters attacked, ransacked, and set fire to the house of Obaidul Quader, general secretary of AL and former road, transport and bridges minister, in Noakhali's Companiganj.

During the attack on the house in Bora Rajapur Mohalla area around 1:00pm, the two-storey building and tin-roofed rooms of Quader's younger brother Abdul Quader Mirza, president of Companiganj AL, and Shahadat Mirza, former mayor of Basurhat municipality, were also ransacked.

A car parked in front of the house was also torched.

No one was home then.

In Rajshahi, a group of protesters set fire to the three-storey house of Shahriar Alam, former state minister for foreign affairs, in Chaksingha Mohalla in Bagha upazila, reports UNB.

Witnesses said over 100 people from Bagha and Charchhat upazilas went there on motorbikes and set the house on fire around noon.

Firefighters doused the flames around 2:00pm.

Protesters also attacked and torched the house of AL leader Abu Sayeed in Shalgaria village of Pabna yesterday.

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DUBAI PROPERTIES 2 rejoinders, our reply

Mohammad Mosaddak Ali, chairman of ntv, and Mohammad Obaidul Karim, chairman of Orion Group, have sent two separate rejoinders to our story titled "Parking wealth under the Dubai sun" published on January 7, 2025. Both rejoinders essentially confirm our findings and we stand by our report. However, we are still publishing their rejoinders in full, followed by our response to the points they raised in their rejoinders.

Mosaddak Ali's Rejoinder
Mosaddak Ali's rejoinder, signed by an unnamed individual on behalf of the ntv chairman, is in Bangladesh. Below is a rough translation:

"In your widely circulated newspaper, The Daily Star, a false and misleading report titled "Parking wealth under the Dubai Sun" was published involving me. I strongly condemn and protest the publication of this report without any verification.

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BTRC's bid to regain independence

Draft ordinance aimed at rolling back AL's drastic changes to telecom law

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission has come up with a draft ordinance that would bring sweeping changes to the law, paving the way for the telecom regulator to win back its independence taken away by the previous regime through amendments.

The original Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulation Act, 2001 gave the BTRC several powers, including granting licences, managing the radio spectrum, setting tariffs, regulating telecom services and resolving disputes.

In 2010, the Awami League government amended the law in a way that necessitated prior government approval for issuing licences, spectrum allocation and tariff approval.

The ministry was given sole authority over licensing, tariffs, services and spectrum approvals for all operators, effectively reducing the BTRC to what its current chairman Md Emdad ul Bari termed a "rubber stamp".

The regulator needs a certain level of freedom as it acts as a referee, he said.

In Bangladesh, there is a deep conflict of interest as the ministry holds authority over the commission, as the secretary of

"The regulator needs a certain level of freedom as it acts as a referee. So, if the ministry becomes the regulator of the regulator, how will the commission ensure fair competition?"

Md Emdad ul Bari BTRC Chairman

the telecom ministry is the chairman of the board of directors of six state-owned companies.

"So, if the ministry becomes the regulator of the regulator, how will the commission ensure fair competition? A backdoor was created when pre-approval from the government was added to the law."

This led to anarchy in the licensing regime – where a single company holds licences at multiple layers, and numerous unnecessary licences have been created in the telecom sector through this backdoor.

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Prof Yunus to visit Aynaghars at the soonest
Says CA's press wing; local, foreign press to accompany

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will soon visit the secret detention centres, commonly known as Aynaghars, where victims of enforced disappearance were held in inhuman conditions during Sheikh Hasina's rule, the advisory council decided yesterday.

"Both local and foreign media will accompany him," said a statement from the chief adviser's press wing, issued after a meeting of the advisory council at the Chief Adviser's Office.

Earlier on January 19, the chief adviser's press wing in a statement said Prof Yunus will soon visit the secret detention facilities.

"The incidents uncovered by your [the Commission of Enquiry on Enforced Disappearance] investigation are chilling. I will soon visit Aynaghars," the statement quoted Prof Yunus as telling the Commission members.

That visit was later slated for February 3.

However, in a letter to chief adviser's principal secretary on January 29, the Commission expressed its "inability" to take part in the visit if victims of enforced disappearance were not allowed to join in.

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The father of Jihad Hossain, a student who was shot dead in the capital's Jatrabari area on August 5 last year, holds aloft a photo of his son. Families of the July uprising martyrs yesterday blocked the Shahbagh intersection, demanding justice and state recognition for the sacrifices their loved ones made.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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Stop Hasina from making false remarks

Dhaka tells Delhi, summons Indian envoy to lodge protest

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has lodged a strong protest against the "false and fabricated statements" made by deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, saying that those statements have been instigating instability in Bangladesh.

The foreign ministry yesterday summoned acting high commissioner of India in Dhaka, Pawan Badhe, and handed over a protest note, conveying deep concern, disappointment, and serious reservation. "Such statements are hurting the sentiments of the people in Bangladesh," it said.

It also emphasised that such activities by her are considered a hostile act towards Bangladesh and are not conducive to the efforts at establishing a healthy relationship between the two countries.

"She has been continuously provoking the students... If she restrained herself from making such remarks, these incidents might not have taken place," Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain told a press briefing at his ministry yesterday.

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EKUSHEY PADAK 14 individuals, nat'l women's football team get the award

UNB, Dhaka

The government has announced the names of 14 eminent citizens and the Bangladesh women's national football team for the Ekushey Padak 2025 in recognition of their contributions to their respective fields.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs revealed the names in a press release yesterday.

The women's football team was selected for the prestigious prize in recognition of their contribution to the country's sports sector.

Eminent poet Helal Hafiz (posthumous) and Shahidul Zahir (Md. Shahidul Haque) (posthumous) will receive the award for their contributions to language and literature.

In the field of arts and culture, the awardees include Azizur Rahman (posthumous) for film, Ustad Nirad Baran Barua (posthumous) for music, Ferdous Ara for music, Nasir Ali Mamun for photography, and Rokeya Sultana for painting.

Mahfuz Ullah (posthumous) and

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