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## OPERATION DEVIL HUNT

# It will go on until all 'devils' rooted out

Says home adviser; 1,308 held on first day; central command centre set up to bring all forces together

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces detained 1,308 people across the country between Saturday evening, when Operation Devil Hunt began, and yesterday afternoon.

The interim government launched the operation on Saturday to restore law and order following Friday night's attack on

destabilise the country, break the law, and engage in criminal activities."

During a briefing on the operation yesterday afternoon, Nasimul Ghani, senior secretary at the home ministry, said, "This is a police-led operation, with the army and other forces providing assistance."

"They [the joint forces] will have the same authority as the police and

**The operation will target those who attempt to destabilise the country, break the law, and engage in criminal activities.**

Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Home Adviser

"students and people" in Gazipur.

The operation will continue until all the "devils are rooted out", said Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

When asked about the objective of the operation, Jahangir said, "What does 'devil' mean? It refers to evil forces. The operation will target those who attempt to

magistrates within the legal framework. The operation began yesterday [Saturday] and will continue for as long as necessary," he said.

The government yesterday evening launched a central command centre for the operation, said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, adding that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Police disperse demonstrating students of Medical Assistant Training School near Shikha Bhaban yesterday afternoon. Several protesters were injured. Under the banner "General MATS Students' Unity Council", they were going towards the Secretariat from Shahbagh with a four-point demand, including recruitment to vacant positions. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Economic growth lowest in 4 years

GDP grew 4.22% in fiscal 2023-24

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's economy grew by 4.22 percent in fiscal 2023-24 fiscal year, the lowest in four years, marking the second consecutive year of deceleration due to weak consumption and exports.

The final growth estimate by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics is 1.6 percentage points lower than the provisional estimate, which was 5.82 percent.

According to the final growth figures, the size of the GDP stood at \$450 billion in FY24, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said at a press briefing yesterday. It was \$459 billion as per the provisional estimate.

In FY24, people saw their purchasing power erode amid persistent inflation and sluggish merchandise exports and imports.

Because of the revision and devaluation of Bangladesh's taka against the dollar, per capita income fell to \$2,738 last fiscal year, the lowest in three years, from \$2,749 in the previous year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BNP to resist proposal that may hinder fair election

Says BNP leader Nazrul Islam Khan after talks with EC

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will oppose any proposal of the Election Reform Commission if it believes the proposal would obstruct the holding of a fair election.

**BNP** Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said that they, after discussions with the Election Commission yesterday, have understood that the EC would be ready by May or June this year to hold the polls.

A three-member BNP delegation met the chief election commissioner and four other commissioners.

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## Star INTERVIEW

With the interim government having completed six months in office, the calls for a national election have intensified. Meanwhile, several reform commissions have submitted reports to the government. Regarding these developments and more, **Akhter Hossen**, member secretary of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, a civic platform formed in the aftermath of the uprising, recently spoke to **Star's Ashik Abdullah Apu** and **Sirajul Islam Rubel**.



## Students' party by end of Feb

Says Akhter of Nagorik Committee

**TDS:** When the Jatiya Nagorik Committee was formed, you described it as a pressure group against the government. How would you evaluate the past six months since the government took office?

**Akhter:** Six months in, there's been no significant improvement in the law-and-order situation. However, the government appears committed to reforms across various sectors, aligning with public expectations.

The investigation and prosecution of those responsible for the numerous killings by Awami terrorist forces have yet to make substantial progress. Many perpetrators remain unaccountable, highlighting a major failure of the government.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## 66% people think civil servants behave like rulers

Shows reform commission's online survey covering over 1 lakh people

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An overwhelming 80 percent of the people think the administration is not friendly to the general public, finds a survey by the Public Administration Reform Commission.

Besides, 66 percent of people feel that civil servants behave like they are the rulers, according to the survey of over 1 lakh people.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents say they have experienced discourteous behaviours from government employees, 42 percent believe receiving services is impossible without paying bribes, and 46 percent report facing harassment while seeking services.

The reform commission led by Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury conducted the survey on 105,000 people online to gather opinions on various issues related to public administration reforms.

The survey questionnaire also featured a section for open comments.

The reform commission submitted

**52%** believe it's impossible to get services without paying bribes

**46%** report that they faced harassment while seeking services

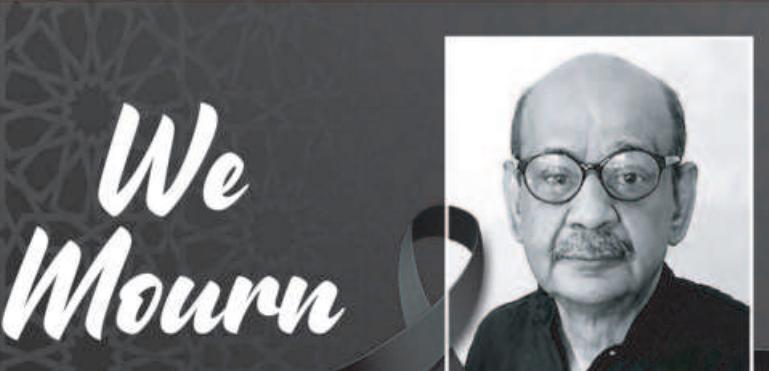
**69%** say there was a lack of neutrality in admin in last 15 years

its report with around 200 recommendations to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on Wednesday.

The full report of the commission along with other reports were uploaded on the Cabinet Division website on Saturday.

According to the commission's survey, 56 percent of the respondents consider

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**Syed Ali Haider Rizvi (Maharaj)**  
(1944 - 2025)

With profound sorrow, we share the passing of **Syed Ali Haider Rizvi (Maharaj)** on the morning of February 9, 2025, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Alehey Rajeun...

A renowned film director and producer, he was a visionary in the industry, leaving behind a legacy of cinematic excellence in Poland and Bangladesh. Haider Rizvi was also a popular former Adjunct Faculty at Dhaka University and IUB.

Beyond his artistic and academic contributions, Haider Rizvi was a generous philanthropist whose kindness and support touched countless lives. He was a loving father, a devoted brother, and a compassionate soul, always uplifting those around him with warmth and care.

He is survived by his beloved son, Nasir Rizvi. His absence leaves an irreplaceable void, but his spirit, generosity, and passion for storytelling will continue to live with us.

We seek your prayers that Allah SWT may grant him the highest place in Jannah (Ameen).

Mob beats mentally challenged man to death  
He was caught on suspicion of theft

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A mentally challenged man was beaten to death on suspicion of committing theft in Kabirhat upazila of Noakhali early Friday.

The victim, Zahir Uddin Bechu, 40, was reportedly apprehended by a group of people and attacked near DhumcharChhamirpaik Government Primary School around 4:00am.

His mother filed a case with Kabirhat Police Station yesterday against eight named individuals and 20-25 unidentified persons.

Police have arrested three suspects: Habib Ullah, 45, and his

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Warning: Beware of Online Scams!

We want to inform everyone that fraudsters have created a fake Facebook page named Square International to solicit funds by falsely using the name of Square Group. We want to clarify that Square Group has no connection to this page or any fraudulent activities. We urge all our stakeholders, shareholders, and well-wishers to stay vigilant and not engage with such misleading information. Please do not fall victim to these scams.

Please be aware that Square Group will not be held responsible for any harm, loss, or inconvenience caused by interactions with the aforementioned fake page.



# THE DECLINE OF TOMTOMS

## Old Dhaka's historic carriages fade into history

MD TAREK

The centuries-old charm of Old Dhaka's horse-drawn carriages, locally known as "tomtoms", is gradually disappearing. These carriages have been part of the city's streets for nearly 200 years, but are slowly fading away with time.

At one point, there were 35 to 40 horse-drawn carriages operating in areas such as Bangabazar, Fire Service Hospital, Balsibazar, Narinda, Siddiqi Bazar, and Keraniganj. On the Sadarghat to Gulistan route alone, 33 carriages were in operation. However, with the advent of modern vehicles such as buses, microbuses, and rickshaws, these iconic carriages are on the brink of extinction.

Babu, the owner of a horse-drawn carriage in Bangabazar, said, "A few years ago, we had 40 carriages, but due to the rising costs of kheil [bran], gram [chickpeas], and grains, we have been forced to reduce the number of carriages. We are struggling to pay the salaries of the operators and employees."



He explained that many owners have had to abandon the trade because it is no longer financially viable.

In the past, locals used horse-drawn carriages for various grand events -- including weddings, ghe holud ceremonies, religious processions, movie shoots, and election campaigns. Brides would often travel in these carriages to the

groom's house instead of using a palanquin.

Today, however, the demand for tomtoms has significantly declined, although they are still sought after for special occasions like weddings during the Boishakh season and other festive events.

Horse-drawn carriages were first popularised in our city by an Armenian businessman named Shircore. His company, G M Shircore and Sons, commercialised horse-drawn carriages as a mode of transportation around the mid-nineteenth century.

changes or restructuring?

**Akhter:** After the formation of the interim government, there were some internal changes, with new advisers added. However, considering the scale of the government's responsibilities, I believe additional advisers are needed.

**TDS:** Do you think this government is struggling to connect with rural people?

**Akhter:** The advisory council is relatively small, which presents challenges. Like previous administrations, this government is entangled in bureaucratic constraints. To truly connect with the people, the interim government must overcome these barriers and engage more effectively with the public.

**TDS:** How far along is the formation of your political party? What will be its core principles and ideology?

**Akhter:** Since the uprising, we've been discussing the formation of a new political party. We're hopeful of officially launching it by the end of February.

We've already consulted with people across the country regarding the party's name, symbol, ideology, and manifesto.

Over 100,000 people have shared their opinions online. We're now working on drafting the party's constitution,

declaration, and agenda, while also consulting with experts and seasoned political observers.

**TDS:** Reports suggest your party aims to contest the next national election.

Which voter groups are you targeting, and what's your approach towards Awami League supporters who weren't involved in crimes?

**Akhter:** Our primary focus is Bangladesh's youth. We also aim to attract voters who've been dissatisfied with the bipolar politics of Awami League and BNP, and are seeking a new alternative.

We also want the support of senior citizens and long-time political observers who've witnessed the country's political trajectory.

Regarding traditional Awami League supporters, there are two groups: one has supporters who've been involved in corruption, vote-rigging, extortion, and even violent crimes, and another has those who've historically voted for Awami League but weren't involved in criminal activity.

For those in the first group, justice is

non-negotiable -- they must face trial. For those in the latter, if they acknowledge the crimes committed by Awami League, the public might forgive them.

**TDS:** There's mounting pressure from political parties for the government to hold an election. Meanwhile, the government has initiated several reforms. What should its priority be?

**Akhter:** While most parties are focusing on polls, those who actively participated in the uprising want systemic reforms.

The interim government must present a clear roadmap for reforms and begin implementing them before an election, and the next elected government should continue these reforms.

**TDS:** In the past, numerous reform initiatives were undertaken but never fully implemented. What do you think is the future of the current initiatives?

**Akhter:** Past failures have raised concerns. This is why we strongly demand that the implementation of reforms begin under this government,

ensuring the next one cannot deviate from this responsibility. We urge all

parties to align with the people's aspirations and avoid disappointing them. As a pressure group, we'll remain active on the streets and, if necessary, take tougher steps to translate these aspirations into reality.

**TDS:** You had initiated the announcement of the July uprising proclamation. Why couldn't you announce it?

**Akhter:** We wanted the proclamation to be based on a consensus among all political parties, which is why Students Against Discrimination chose to step back to avoid division. The government has taken up the responsibility to announce the proclamation with consensus among all parties, and we're hopeful of fulfilling this responsibility.

**TDS:** Attacks on shrines and places of worship of religious minorities have been reported. The government claims these reports are exaggerated by the Indian media. How does your platform respond to such incidents?

**Akhter:** The Jatiya Nogorik Committee has expressed concern over the attacks.

While some arrests have been made,

the threat of further incidents remains.

However, certain reports by the Indian media about attacks on minorities are not only exaggerated but outright false.

Half the respondents say it is not possible to receive services from police without paying bribes, 42 percent experienced bribery and corruption at the income tax office, and 10 percent faced harassment there, 43 percent had to pay bribe at Tehsildar Office, Assistant Commissioner (Land) Office, Sub Registry Office and Settlement Office.

Making an efficient administration would require training, capacity building, and development of strategic leadership.

The commission recommends that the goals of public administration should be to become people-oriented, transparent and accountable, enhancement of efficiency and capacity, impartial, proficiency in public services, and effective.

Almost 100 percent of the

respondents expressed dissatisfaction with health services with 46 percent terming it substandard.

**WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?**

The reform commission reviewed the findings and analysed various documents and books on the public administration to identify the problems like corruption, political interference, inefficiency, bureaucratic attitudes, lack of transparency, poor accountability, limited public participation, and lack of proper coordination.

"The public administration needs to be restructured to be more people-oriented, accountable, efficient, and impartial, as well as effective," says the commission report.

Making an efficient administration would require training, capacity building, and development of strategic leadership.

The commission recommends that the goals of public administration should be to become people-oriented, transparent and accountable, enhancement of efficiency and capacity, impartial, proficiency in public services, and effective.

Almost 100 percent of the

online shows Zahir tied to a tree, visibly injured in presence of onlookers. He suffered multiple stab wounds, including to his eyes, face, hands, and feet. He was left tied to the tree until 9:00am and died while being transported to the hospital an hour later.

Kabirhat Police Station OC Shahin Mia confirmed the arrests to The Daily Star.

The suspects were presented before the Noakhali Chief Judicial Magistrate Court in the afternoon and subsequently sent to jail, according to Court Police Inspector Shahidul Islam.

The video of the incident circulating

online shows Zahir tied to a tree, visibly injured in presence of onlookers. He suffered multiple stab wounds, including to his eyes, face, hands, and feet. He was left tied to the tree until 9:00am and died while being transported to the hospital an hour later.

Kabirhat Upazila Social Services Officer Hafizur Rahman said that Zahir had been receiving disability allowance since 2020.

According to the forecasts of the two multilateral agencies, Bangladesh's economic growth for FY24 and the current fiscal year would be the lowest since FY20, when the Covid-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on the global economy. In the July-September quarter of the current fiscal year, Bangladesh's economy grew by 1.81 percent, the lowest since the second quarter of FY21, when the ripple effects of the pandemic continued to severely impact the economy.

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চুক্তি এ রিপোর্ট দ্বারা প্রকাশিত  
প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...

যেকোনো সাথা থেকে রোমটিয়াল প্রহর করলেই  
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রোদান  
সাথে আরও আরও নিচে আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার  
\* শৰ্ট প্রয়োজন

অনলাইনের মাধ্যমে পূর্বালী ব্যাংকের সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখা হতে ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদান করা হয় (কেবলমাত্র জমা ও উত্তোলন)

Be cautious  
of 'Hasina's  
traps': Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

B N P  
Secretary  
General  
Mirza  
Fakhrul  
Islam  
Alamgir  
has urged everyone to be  
cautious of what he called  
"Sheikh Hasina's traps,"  
blaming the country's  
instability and unrest on the  
former prime minister's  
"fascist regime".

"We must proceed  
with caution. To sustain  
our achievements, we  
must advance gradually.  
Darkness cannot be  
overcome by more  
darkness; it requires light.  
We must move forward by  
kindling that light," he said.

He made the remarks  
while talking to journalists  
after arriving at Dhaka  
airport from the United  
States yesterday.

He said the students and  
people of Bangladesh had  
SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Some families of July Uprising martyrs met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna yesterday. They discussed the trial of mass killings, the formation of a July Uprising Directorate, state recognition for injured and martyr families, and financial assistance and rehabilitation.

AAA  
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ঘরে বসেই  
ব্যাংক  
অ্যাকাউন্ট  
খুলুন

পাই ব্যাংক (PI Banking) -  
একটি পূর্বালী ব্যাংক অ্যাপস



Female worker  
migration in  
steady decline  
since 2023

Shows BMET data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The migration of Bangladeshi female workers abroad has been declining over the past two years since 2023.

The decline has been caused primarily by reduced recruitment by Saudi Arabia, the largest overseas job market for Bangladeshi migrant workers.

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), 1,05,466 female workers migrated abroad for jobs in 2022, with 70,279 of them going to Saudi Arabia.

In 2023, women's migration dropped by 28 percent to 76,108, including 50,254 to Saudi Arabia. The decline continued last year, falling by another 19.64 percent to 61,158, with 40,315 going to the kingdom.

BMET statistics also revealed that Jordan was the second-highest destination for Bangladeshi female workers last year, receiving 13,772 migrants, followed by Qatar (2,331), the United Kingdom (1,483), and the United Arab Emirates (1,036).

In recent years, Saudi employers have shifted their focus to hiring female foreign workers from other countries, including several African nations, said Ali Haider Chowdhury, secretary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## DHANMONDI-32

Basement space was  
for elevator shaft  
Finds fire service after draining water

STAR REPORT

Fire service officials yesterday drained water from the basement of a building adjacent to the demolished residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi 32, addressing speculation about the existence of secret detention centres, commonly referred to as Aynagar.

They confirmed that the space was intended for an elevator in the basement.

"A fire engine began pumping water from the area around 10:00am, but no items or hidden structures were found after drainage," Mizanur Rahman, station officer of Mohammadpur Fire Station, told The Daily Star.

"The space, about five feet deep, is designated for an elevator in basement-2. It had partially filled with rainwater due to the absence of a roof in that area," he said.

The building's basement layout was

typical of many others.

The site continued to attract large crowds as curious onlookers gathered around the demolished building, eager to glimpse the area speculated to be "Aynagar".



SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

119 'deprived'  
officials  
promoted to  
secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The public administration ministry has issued a gazette granting retrospective promotions to 764 retired officials who were deprived during their tenure between 2009 and August 2024 under the Awami League government.

These promotions cover the ranks of deputy secretary, joint secretary, additional secretary, grade 1 officer (equivalent to that of a secretary), and secretary.

Yesterday, the ministry issued five gazettes formalizing these promotions.

According to the notifications, 119 officials have been promoted to secretary, 41 to grade 1

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
Government mulls  
reducing bachelor's  
course to 3 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is planning to reduce the duration of the four-year bachelor's course under the National University to three years, said Prof M Aminul Islam, special assistant to the education adviser.

Speaking at an event at the International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka yesterday, marking International Education Day, Prof Aminul Islam said the revised three-year bachelor's programme would include an additional year of extensive technical education.

"In the remaining one year, students will receive specialised training in technical subjects. Upon completion, they will be awarded two certificates – one for a bachelor's degree and the other for a widely recognised diploma," he said.

Prof Aminul explained that this initiative would allow students to achieve a bachelor's qualification while enhancing their employment prospects. "This will be an innovative and extraordinary decision," he added.

The professor said there is a stigma surrounding diplomas and technical education, which many view as inferior or embarrassing. "We are planning an initiative in the near future to break this mindset," he said.

He also highlighted significant gaps in resources within the education system.

Only 18 per cent of the required teachers are available, and despite the inclusion of practical and theoretical

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

MATS students  
demonstrate  
at Shahbagh

20 injured as police disperse  
protesters charging batons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Medical Assistant Trainee Students (MATS) staged a sit-in at Shahbagh yesterday for over five hours with four-point demand, including recruitment to vacant 10th grade positions and the creation of more employment opportunities.

Later, around 4:45pm, police dispersed them with baton charges and sound grenades as they reached in front of Shikha Bhaban while attempting to march towards the Secretariat. At least 20 students were injured, eyewitnesses said.

At the time of the incident, a five-member MATS delegation was in a meeting at the Secretariat.

Md Faruk, in charge (inspector) of the police camp at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said several injured students were brought to the hospital and were receiving treatment in the emergency department. So far, 20 have been admitted.

The students' other demands include abolishing the Health Professionals Board and forming a new regulatory body named the Medical Education Board of Bangladesh, ensuring higher education opportunities in clinical subjects aligned with the MATS curriculum, and renaming MATS to Medical Institute.

Earlier in the day, around 11:00am, nearly 300 students gathered in front of the National Museum under the banner of the General MATS Students' Unity Council for a long march towards

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Traditional wooden toys gaining popularity



SUZIT DAS, Faridpur

Abdur Rob is a popular name in Rajbari's Indranarayanpur village, especially among children who eagerly anticipate the arrival of his wooden toys.

At 42, Rob has carved a niche for himself as a craftsman, creating a vibrant array of toys. His home-based toy factory not only supports his family but also provides employment opportunities for four other villagers.

Rob's journey began 15 years ago in Bogura, where he learned the art of crafting toys. Since then, he has developed a repertoire of around 40 different types of wooden toys, including trucks, buses, rickshaws, and cars, all crafted alongside his wife.

After being painted, the toys are dried in the sun in the factory's yard.

Rob said he earns Tk 30,000-35,000 monthly after deducting all expenses.

"I make 5,000-7,000 pieces of wooden toys monthly, depending on the demand. Each toy is sold at Tk 100-300," he added.

Kamal Sheikh, 35, a worker in the factory and a resident of the Kamaldia area, said, "I have been working here for

two years, earning Tk 15,000-17,000 per month."

Another worker, Sima Akter, 22, mentioned that she works in Rob's factory after finishing her household tasks, earning Tk 350 daily for painting the toys.

"There is a good demand for these wooden toys across various districts, including Magura, Kushtia, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Madaripur, and Barishal," said Rob.

Atiar Sheikh, 43, a resident of Atroshi village in Sadarpur upazila in Faridpur, said Rob's wooden toys are in high demand due to their durability and lower cost compared to plastic toys.

Ronjith Sarkar, 42, a resident of Mahespur area in Magura, said he has been buying wooden toys from Rob for two years, appreciating their superior quality.

"Our toys are environmentally friendly and affordable for everyone, and they remain in demand in the market despite the presence of plastic toys. If the government provides us with loans on easy terms, we could expand the factory and create more employment opportunities," Rob added.

## Shah Abdul Karim Loko Utshob held in Sunamganj

STAR REPORT

The two-day Shah Abdul Karim Loko Utshob-2025 recently celebrated the timeless melodies of Baul Samrat Shah Abdul Karim, including Bondhe Maya Lagaise, Gari Chole Na, and Bosonto Batase Soi Go, said a press release.

Held at Ujandhal field in Derai, Sunamganj, the festival was organised by Shah Abdul Karim Parishad with bKash's support for the third consecutive year.

Presided over by Shah Nur Jalal, son of Baul Samrat, the event was inaugurated on Friday by Dr Mohammad Ileas Mia, Deputy Commissioner of Sunamganj, and Maj Gen (retd) Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, Chief External & Corporate Affairs Officer of bKash.

Folk musicians and devotees from across the country performed to honour Karim's legacy, attracting a diverse audience, including locals, fans, and visitors from abroad. The venue buzzed with stalls selling traditional snacks, toys, and household goods.

bKash expressed pride in supporting the festival, while Shah Nur Jalal thanked the organisers and community. The festival has been held on the banks of the Kalni River since 2006.



The two-day Shah Abdul Karim Loko Utshob-2025 recently celebrated the timeless melodies of Baul Samrat Shah Abdul Karim at the Ujandhal field in Derai, Sunamganj. The festival was organised by Shah Abdul Karim Parishad with support from bKash.

PHOTO: COURTESY

## Basement space

FROM PAGE 3

"I took leave from my employers and came here to see Aynagar, but I found nothing," she said.

As in previous days, scrap collectors were seen salvaging materials from the debris. This correspondent visited the site around 3:00pm and observed no police presence.

Kamal Hossain, a middle-aged man, was using a hacksaw to cut rods from chunks of concrete. He and three others from Mohammadpur have been collecting saleable items from the rubble daily since the demolition began on February 5.

"We are collecting rods from the debris as no one stops us," Kamal said, adding that they gather nearly 15kg of rods each day on average.

Several others, mostly low-income individuals, were seen breaking parts of the pillars with hammers to extract bricks and rods, which they sell to recyclers.

The protest and

subsequent demolition of the Dhamondi-32 building began following an announcement that Sheikh Hasina would deliver a speech online on February 5.

Protesters had created a Facebook event titled "Bulldozer March," calling for people to assemble at Dhamondi-32 at 7:30pm that day.

Large crowds gathered, and by 9:30pm, the building was set ablaze. Shortly before midnight, a crane and an excavator arrived at the scene.

Over the next few hours, parts of the building were razed to the ground. By 11:00am the following day, the heavy equipment had left the site.

**PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 10**  
Fazr Zohr Asr Magrib Esha  
AZAN 5:25 12:45 4:30 5:57 7:15  
JAMAT 6:00 1:15 4:45 6:01 7:45  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Government mulls reducing

FROM PAGE 3

lessons in the curriculum, most students are only exposed to theoretical knowledge due to the lack of laboratories, trainers, and practical facilities.

"Currently, students are taught theoretical lessons, followed by viva exams, and then awarded certificates without any practical knowledge. This system will

be completely reformed," he added.

Prof Aminul emphasised the need to ensure proper education, laboratory facilities, and qualified trainers. "Students will be trained to secure good jobs even while they are still studying," he said.

The event was also attended by Bidhan Ranjan Roy Poddar, adviser

on primary and mass education; Prof Saidur Rahman, a member of the University Grants Commission (UGC); and Kabirul Islam, secretary of the Technical and Madrasah Education Division. Siddique Zobair, secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division, presided over the programme.

on crimes against humanity at Dhaka's Chankhanapur, on one-day remand.

Mentioning that the ICT's prosecution and investigation agency are working round the clock, Tamim said, "We are hopeful that within this month the investigators will be able to submit several probe reports to the chief prosecutor's office."

The tribunal also placed Sujon Hossain, a police constable arrested in a case filed over committing

crimes against humanity at Dhaka's Chankhanapur, on one-day remand.

Moreover, it sent Muzibor Rahman, former officer-in-charge of Uttara East Police Station, to jail after he was produced before it shown arrested in a case on charge of mass killing in Uttara area during July-August mass uprising.

Muzibor was arrested from Dhaka University campus earlier in the day.

**ICT issues arrest warrants**

with reporters after court proceedings.

The prosecution also expressed hope that the investigation agency of ICT will complete ongoing investigations several cases related to crimes against humanity committed during the July-August uprising by the end of February.

ICT's prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim shared the information

that the items were stored claimed that Helen had forced him to keep the items. Legal proceedings are underway, and a regular case is being filed against Helen on charges of misappropriating government relief materials," he added.

Efforts to reach former lawmaker Kazi Kaniz Sultan Helen for a comment were unsuccessful as she has been in hiding since the fall of the AI government.

**Looted relief blankets**

FROM PAGE 5

Babu, however, denied the allegations, saying, "I did not go there, but I have heard about an incident involving the blankets."

Chandan Kor, assistant commissioner (land) and executive magistrate in Sadar upazila, said, "Based on a tip-off, we conducted a raid on February 8 at a house near the former lawmaker's residence, suspecting the presence of government relief items."

While the allegations were verified, the items were not found there. Later that night, we recovered 25 government relief blankets and discarded

sports equipment -- 6 cricket pads and 2 helmets -- from the Bakulbari canal."

"The owner of the house where the items were stored claimed that Helen had forced him to keep the items. Legal proceedings are underway, and a regular case is being filed against Helen on charges of misappropriating government relief materials," he added.

Efforts to reach former lawmaker Kazi Kaniz Sultan Helen for a comment were unsuccessful as she has been in hiding since the fall of the AI government.

**119 'deprived'**

FROM PAGE 3

officer, 528 to additional secretary, 72 to joint secretary, and four to deputy secretary.

Earlier, a review committee examined the applications of the retired officials who had claimed deprivation and recommended their promotion.

However, female workers are not favourably placed for market expansion due to their low skill set and lack of access to multidimensional skills training programmes.

Jasiya Khatoon, director of the Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants Development Foundation, said the absence of new and

## Female worker

FROM PAGE 3

general of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies.

As a result, their interest in recruiting female workers from Bangladesh has waned. This has impacted Bangladesh significantly, as there are few alternative overseas job markets for female workers, drivers, or even construction workers," she said.

Jasiya also said female workers are often deprived of fair wages abroad, which could discourage potential migrants.

"Many women still want to go abroad for jobs, but they don't know the proper channels," she said, urging the government to address this gap.

## Be cautious

FROM PAGE 3

successfully ousted the fascist Hasina through an uprising, urging everyone to be cautious of "Hasina's trap."

"We must continue our efforts to protect the independence, sovereignty, and stability of the country and to establish democracy against the fascists in a united manner," he said.

When asked about "Operation Devil Hunt," Fakhrul expressed his gratitude.

"Seems like they (the government) have finally awakened, and for that, I express my thanks," said the BNP leader.

Badiul Alam's anniversary of death today

STAR REPORT

Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Badiul Alam, a freedom fighter, lawyer, politician, and social activist, said a press release.

On the occasion, Advocate Badiul Alam Memorial Foundation will organise a doa mahfil in Chandanai.

Born in 1926 in Fatchnagar village, Chandanai, Chattogram, Badiul Alam completed his undergraduate degree from Calcutta University in 1946 and later earned an LLB from Dhaka University.

During the Liberation War, he served as the Awami League's regional president in Chattogram. Later, he took on the role of president of the Socialist Party's Chittagong South Division.

In 1972, he was elected vice president of the Lawyers' Association and later became its president in 1981. Throughout his life, he was actively involved in various organisations, including the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, National Cancer Prevention Society, Muslim Education Society, Chittagong Society, and Patiya College Organising Society.

**Alauddin Bhuiyan passes away**

STAR REPORT

Alauddin Bhuiyan, former bill collector at the accounts section of The Daily Star, passed away on February 8. He was 70.

He left behind his wife, a son, and two daughters to mourn his death.

Alauddin worked for the newspaper from 1999 to 2016. His family requested all to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

## Reform

FROM PAGE 3

were also highlighted as ways to balance rural healthcare demand and service delivery.

Tackling Middlemen and Ensuring Transparency

To eliminate the influence of middlemen in hospitals, the commission recommended full automation of services. It also urged displaying daily patient numbers on digital dashboards for transparency in both government and private hospitals.

Besides, the commission encouraged pharmaceutical companies to contribute to government hospitals by providing free medicines as part of their CSR initiatives.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer  
Education Engineering Department  
Madaripur

Website: eed.madaripur.gov.bd

Date: 09/02/2025

### Re-Tender Notice No: 09/2024-25 Open Tendering Method

This is to notify all concerned that e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works. Details are given below:

SL No	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of Work	Document Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)
01	1073323	WD-26	Construction of 6-Storyed Administrative Building With 6-Storyed Foundation including Sanitary and Water Supply Works Along with Electrification and Other Works (Pile Foundation) at Madaripur Polytechnic Institute.	24-Feb-2025 16:00	25-Feb-2025 13:00

The interested persons/firms may visit website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) to get the details of the tender. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no Offline/Hard copies will be accepted. To Submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Helpdesk; ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Date: 09/02/2025

Time: 13:00

Location: Madaripur

Address: Madaripur Polytechnic Institute

Contact: Md. Tanvir Islam

Email: [mad@eedmoe.gov.bd](mailto:mad@eedmoe.gov.bd)

**NOTICE**  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
Company Matter No. 1518 of 2024

**IN THE MATTER OF:**  
Anirban Yasin Aftab

**Versus**  
The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms and others  
.....Respondents.

Notice is hereby given that the petitioner filed and moved an application in the High Court Division under section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994 for protection of interest of minority shareholders of Shamsuddin Mia & Associates Ltd, whereupon the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division was pleased to admit the same on 01.12.2024. If anybody is interested to oppose the said application, he may do so by an Advocate or in person. Copy of the application may be obtained from the Office of the undersigned upon payment of prescribed fees.

**Shafiqul Kabir Khan (Taposh)**  
Advocate  
Bangladesh Supreme Court  
Room No.4053, Hossain Shahid Sohrawardy Bhavan, Dhaka-1000  
Cell no: +880 1715004173, +880 1601499201



## Siam turns heads with striking new 'JONGLI' look

Siam Ahmed has unveiled a fresh more refined look for his upcoming film *Jongli*, sparking excitement among fans. Previously, his rugged appearance with long, unkempt hair and a beard gave the film a vastly different vibe.

Yesterday, Siam introduced his new look on his official Facebook page, writing, "I'm with Joni. You've met Jongli, now it's time to meet Joni. Joni is coming with *Jongli* this Eid-ul-Fitr." His announcement quickly gained attention, with fans expressing eagerness to see his transformation in the film.

This M Raahim directorial features an ensemble cast, including Bubly, Dighi, Dilara Zaman, Shahiduzzaman Selim, Rashed Mamun Apu, Sohel Khan, and Arfan Mredha Shiblu.

*Jongli*'s soundtrack is composed by Prince Mahmud, with singer Tahsan Khan lending his voice to one of the tracks.



### WHAT'S THE HAPS?

## Amar Bhashar Chalachitra

As February arrives with its crimson-hued *palash* blossoms, the spirit of resistance and remembrance will take centre stage at the 23rd edition of *Amar Bhashar Chalachitra*. The event, set against the symbolic redness of *palash* flower, commemorates the Bengali people's historic resistance and sacrifices, honouring their struggle for language, autonomy, and freedom from oppressive forces.

Date: Saturday-Wednesday | February 15-19

Time: 10am-10pm

Venue: TSC, Dhaka University



মাসার আবার চলচ্চিত্র ১৪০৩

## Habib Wahid and wife reunite on-screen for 'Pagol Hawa'



Habib Wahid is set to surprise fans this Valentine's Day with *Pagol Hawa*, a romantic music video featuring his wife, Afsana Chowdhury Shifa. This marks their on-screen reunion after nearly four years.

The song, written by Sabon and composed by Habib himself, is poised to be a melodious experience, with visuals shot in stunning locations across Bangladesh and beyond. The cherished singer and his wife last appeared together in *Romantic Lage* (2021).

The music video of *Pagol Hawa*, which has been produced under HW Production House, will premiere on Habib's YouTube channel during Valentine's Day.

## Warner Bros releases 31 full-length movies on YouTube for free

Warner Bros Entertainment has taken a new, more accessible approach to monetising its extensive film catalogue by offering 31 full-length movies to stream for free on its YouTube channels, marking a departure from its previous attempts to drive revenue through subscription services.

The collection, which spans various genres and decades, includes classics such as *Mutiny on the Bounty*, Jackie Chan's *Mr Nice Guy*, and *The Mission* featuring Robert De Niro. YouTube Premium subscribers can enjoy an ad-free experience.

This move reflects Warner Bros' broader experiment with digital ad revenue and increasing visibility of its content. Additionally, the company has expanded its partnerships with platforms such as Roku and Tubi, providing free, ad-supported streaming access to its films.



## Jay-Z and Eminem's 'Renegade' contract put on the market

The original 2001 contract between Jay-Z and Eminem for their iconic collab, *Renegade*, is now up for grabs. Collectibles company Moments In Time is offering the 14-page document, featuring both artists' real names—Shawn Carter and Marshall Mathers—for \$35,000.

*Renegade*, the sole song including a guest on Jay-Z's album *The Blueprint*, was released on September 11, 2001.

Initially recorded by Eminem and Royce da 5'9", the track was reworked for Jay-Z's album. The contract is considered a rare piece of hip-hop history, now sought after by collectors and enthusiasts alike.

## Pritom Hasan, Tanjin Tisha pair up for Valentine's Day special release

Pritom Hasan and Tanjin Tisha are set to star together in *Ghumpori*, a new web film directed by Jahid Preetom.

While widely recognised for his music, Pritom Hasan has also showcased his acting talent in several web productions. Meanwhile, popular small-screen actress Tisha has made her mark through a few web projects.

Now, the duo is coming together for *Ghumpori*, adding to their growing list of on-screen ventures.

Chorki recently unveiled the film's official poster on its Facebook page, announcing that the project will be released on Valentine's Day.

The Chorki Original also features Parsha Mahjabeen Purnee in a pivotal role.



## COUNTRYWIDE

### LATE BLIGHT DISEASE

## Potato farmers struggle to save crops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Potato growers in Thakurgaon and Panchagarh are struggling to protect their crops as cold weather and dense fog have triggered an outbreak of late blight disease this year.

The fungal disease, locally known as Patamora rog, is spreading very fast, causing deep concern among local farmers about possible financial losses.

High price of fungicides, needed to control the outbreak, is further increasing the production cost.

Thakurgaon Department of

expected to improve with better weather conditions, Sirajul said.

During visits to different villages in Thakurgaon Sadar and Panchagarh's Boda upazila, farmers were seen spraying pesticides to save their crops, but frequent usage of medicines is raising the production costs.

Farmer Shariful Islam of Barunagaon village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila cultivated potatoes on one acre of land, spending about Tk 1 lakh.

Shariful said he is trying to save his crops, already affected by late blight, by frequently spraying medicine as per



**Farmers spray pesticide at a potato field in an attempt to save the remaining plants from late blight disease. The photo was taken from Barunagaon village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.**

Agricultural Extension (DAE) Deputy Director Sirajul Islam said if not controlled immediately, the disease causes leaves to turn brown to blackish and eventually die.

The ongoing cold, fog and fluctuating temperatures have made the plants vulnerable to fungal attacks that starts at the leaf margins and spreads inward, with white fungal growth visible under leaves in the morning.

Dry conditions cause the leaves to shrink, while humid conditions accelerate its decay, he said, adding that if left untreated, the disease spreads to the entire plant, leading to its death.

DAE officials recommend spraying two grammes of Mencozeb or Metalexyl, mixed with one litre of water, once a week to control the fungal disease.

The situation is still manageable and

experts' advice.

Jahangir Hossain of Sahapara village, who spent Tk 2.5 lakh on five bighas land, said about one-fourth of his crop is already infected.

He is spraying medicine to save the rest of his plants, following directives from the agriculture officials.

Farmers said spraying costs about Tk 1,800 per acre each time and is necessary every five to six days during cold and foggy weather.

Many farmers are struggling to bear the expenses of protecting their crops during the current adverse weather.

According to the DAE, potatoes have been cultivated on 34,725 hectares of land in Thakurgaon this season, up from 27,100 hectares last year.

In Panchagarh, 14,870 hectares have been brought under potato cultivation, compared to 9,857 hectares last year.

## M'singh resists Urdu no more

FROM PAGE 12

of the Muslim League, a student rally presided over by Rafiquddin Bhuiyan was held at Bipin Park in Mymensingh city in favour of Bangla as a state language in December 1947.

In February 1948, when the proposal for Bangla as a state language was opposed by the Muslim League in the Constituent Assembly, students and people launched protests in Mymensingh, just like the demonstrations in Dhaka and other parts of the country.

According to the book *Bhasha Andolon Teknaf Theke Tetulia* by Ahmed Rafiq, a campaign was held in Mymensingh ahead of a general strike slated for March 11. Funds were raised from public donations to meet the expenses of the movement.

On March 11, an all-out strike was observed in Mymensingh, with students marching around the city in procession and chanting the slogan "Rashtrobhasha Bangla Chai (We want Bangla as a state language)". Student leaders later spoke at a rally organised by the local Renaissance Society at Bipin Park.

After Muhammad Ali Jinnah spoke in favour of Urdu as the sole state language of Pakistan in March, the Language Movement gained pace in Mymensingh like Dhaka and other parts of the country.

Police baton charged protesters during a student rally at Bipin Park on March 23.

On January 27, 1952, when the government declared Urdu as the state language of Pakistan, the students and public of Mymensingh took to the streets.

According to the book *Bhasha Andolon Kosh Part 1* by M Abdul Alim, a Sarbodolio Rashtrobhasha Sangram Parishad (All-Party Language Struggle Council) was formed with Ananda Mohan College teacher Syed Badruddin Hossain as president. Rafiquddin Bhuiyan became the general

secretary of the Parishad.

A massive campaign was carried out ahead of February 21, the main day of the movement, as part of centrally announced programmes from Dhaka. Besides pasting posters on walls, the protesters in Mymensingh distributed leaflets.

On February 21, a general strike was observed, with a shutdown of businesses and a boycott of classes. Students, led by Syed Badruddin, brought out a procession from Ananda Mohan College and joined a rally at Bipin Park in violation of Section 144. The speakers demanded that Bangla be given the status of a state language immediately.

As soon as the news of deadly police firing on student protesters in Dhaka reached Mymensingh, the entire city erupted in protests. People gathered in front of Rafiquddin Bhuiyan's residence to know the next course of the movement. On February 22, people from all walks of life took to the streets.

A condolence meeting chaired by Rafiquddin was held on the Town Hall premises, demanding Bangla as a state language, a fair investigation into the killings of protesters in Dhaka and the punishment of the perpetrators. A huge procession of students led by Ananda Mohan College's Tahmid Saida joined the rally.

During a general strike at the college on February 23, a decision was taken to form Rashtrobhasha Sangram Committees in every subdivision of greater Mymensingh.

According to the book *Bhasha Andolon Teknaf Theke Tetulia*, on February 24, the city was entirely covered with posters and black flags. Protesters wore black badges and carried black flags during processions.

On the other hand, the Muslim League organised a grand rally at the Town Hall to show that the situation in the city was normal. The angry crowd of protesters later chased them away.

Magura by-election in 1994 during the BNP's regime.

Chief Adviser Prof

Muhammad Yunus has

expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Justice Rouf.

He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family, the CA's press wing said in a statement.

Recalling Justice Rouf's contribution to the restoration of democracy after the fall of autocrat HM Ershad in December 1990, the chief adviser said, "Justice Rouf will always remain a symbol of Bangladesh's democratic movement."

While he was praised for overseeing the much-anticipated 1991 general election, his tenure drew controversy due to the

status of a Baraka Foundation.

While he was praised for overseeing the much-anticipated 1991 general election, his tenure drew controversy due to the

status of a Baraka Foundation.

Prof Yunus further remarked, "Justice Rouf was a towering figure in civil society. He worked tirelessly

for voting rights, reforms, and democracy, and the nation will always remember him with respect."

Officials and staffers of the Election Commission also expressed deep condolence over the death of Justice Rouf.

**SC JUDICIAL FUNCTIONS SUSPENDED**

Judicial functions of the Appellate Division and High Court Division of the Supreme Court were suspended for the last half of yesterday in honour of Justice Rouf.

The judicial functions of the Appellate Division ran until 11:00am and the High Court Division proceedings continued until 2:00pm.

The SC administration issued two separate notifications to this effect.

## Teenager shot

FROM PAGE 2

left the factory with police assistance.

"As the jhut truck reached Sharif Chowdhury's house, his men started shooting from the roof of the house and at one point set the truck on fire. Two of our people, including a labourer named Manju, were shot."

Rakibul, deputy general manager of Preeti Composite Textile Limited, said there was no trouble in their factory premises. "I heard that there was trouble outside the factory."

"A person named Bakul Bhuiyan has a contract with us," he added.

Md Nur Alam Siddiquee, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said police are trying to identify those involved in the incident.

"We have received video footage of the incident," he added.



## A show of force is not enough to curb crime

Joint operation must be part of a broader strategy to restore order

Given the turbulent events of the past week—marked by renewed anti-fascist protests, disruptions, and unanticipated pushback at times—the Operation Devil Hunt, launched nationwide on Saturday night, can be seen as mostly a step in the right direction. We say “mostly” because of its limited operational scope and overreliance on a law enforcement approach to an issue that extends far beyond policing. While announcing the drive, the home ministry stated that law enforcement forces would target “saboteurs who attacked students, individuals with warrants, and troublemakers” to curb mob violence and restore law and order. The decision follows an attack at the residence of former Awami League minister AKM Mozammel Haque in Gazipur, where a false alarm of robbery led to 15 people, including student leaders of the July uprising, being assaulted.

After launching the drive, joint forces arrested 40 people overnight in Gazipur, all allegedly linked to the ousted Awami League regime. It can be recalled that the joint forces, comprising the army, police, RAB, BGB, Coast Guard, and Ansar, have been active nationwide since September 4 to recover looted firearms and maintain law and order. Later, the government granted magistracy power to army officers so that they can intervene more decisively. That security issues have still persisted—as evidenced by the events on Wednesday and Thursday that led to the demolition of Mujib's Dhanmondi 32 residence, along with attacks, vandalism, and arson targeting Awami League-linked houses and establishments in 35 districts, and eventually to attacks on students—raises questions about how effective the latest operation will be, even within its stated goal of combating the remnants of Awami fascism.

The fact is, the security situation is too fluid at the moment to pin responsibility on any single entity. While some of the events of the past week can be traced to Awami League or Sheikh Hasina, some factions within the anti-fascist movement also bear responsibility for escalating tensions. The polarisation festering within different factions of the movement as well as rising extremism risk undermining the very ideals that fuelled the July uprising. The resulting chaos—readily exploited by criminal elements—cannot be neutralised by force alone. As an analysis of law and order under the interim government shows, criminals perceive the current environment as favourable for carrying out illicit activities, with a still weak and demoralised police force struggling to contain them.

Therefore, for Operation Devil Hunt to be effective, it cannot be just another show of force—it must be part of a broader strategy involving political parties and other stakeholders to restore order and stability in the country. That means targeting not only remnants of Awami League's fascist apparatus but also those who are exploiting the current instability for personal or political gains. The authorities must also use the operation to tackle rising crime including mugging, extortion, and other public safety threats. They must send a strong message that no one involved in jeopardising public safety and law and order will be spared.

## Ensure rights of women prisoners

Address overcrowding in country's lone specialised women's prison

A report by *Banik Barta* paints a grim picture of the environment inside Kashimpur Central Jail's women's section, the country's lone specialised prison for female inmates. Originally intended as a modern facility, the prison now faces severe overcrowding and substandard living conditions. According to the Department of Prisons, it has a capacity of 200 inmates but currently houses 450—more than twice its intended limit. This is posing serious health and security risks to the prisoners.

According to an inmate who was recently released from the prison, five to six prisoners are crammed into spaces meant for two. As a result, many inmates suffer from contagious diseases, including skin infections and fungal and bacterial outbreaks, due to prolonged exposure to unhygienic conditions. The sanitation system is subpar, and despite an approved position for a doctor at the prison, no physician is available to provide necessary medical care. This is unacceptable, demanding immediate action.

Reportedly, the overcrowding problem extends beyond Kashimpur. The total capacity of women's cells in district prisons across the country is 1,929, but they currently hold 2,981 women prisoners. When Kashimpur becomes too overcrowded, prisoners are temporarily transferred to these district jails—only to be brought back when space allows. This cycle of displacement raises the question: should this happen in a modern prison system?

Overcrowding has been a longstanding issue in Bangladesh's prisons leading to deplorable living conditions and security risks. The trend of mixing hardened criminals with general inmates also increases the risk of violence and exploitation. Besides, there are many kinds of irregularities that often take place in the prisons, as a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit report found in 2023. We need a modern prison system that upholds basic human rights for inmates, focusing more on their rehabilitation rather than punishment.

A partial solution already exists for women prisoners: Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj has a modern facility for women prisoners, including a separate building for adolescent inmates, dedicated wards for the mentally ill, and a daycare centre for inmates with children. But this facility reportedly remains unused. Why hasn't it been inaugurated? If properly opened and operated, it could significantly reduce pressure on Kashimpur and improve living conditions for female prisoners. We urge the government to take this issue seriously and take all necessary steps to improve the living conditions of our prisoners.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Galileo flew past Venus

On this day in 1990, the spacecraft Galileo flew past Venus on its way to Jupiter. It became the first spacecraft to orbit an outer planet.

# EDITORIAL

## Not at the cost of Mukti Juddho, no way

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MD ABBAS and TANIM AHMED

The December 2024 edition of Chhatria Shibir's mouthpiece, the monthly *Chhatria Sangbad* (meaning student news) was themed after the mass uprising that loosely translates to “the bloody chapter of victory” (*bijoy er roktakto oddhyay*). One article in that magazine, discussing the downfall of tyrants through the ages (*juge juge shoira char o tader korun porinoti*), states at one point, “Some Muslims participated in the Liberation War without fully comprehending the consequences. It was their failure and lack of foresight. May the Almighty forgive them.”

Chhatria Shibir, which is the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, has expressed its regrets and withdrew the article and recalled the magazine. It is not available online or offline anymore. The fundamentalist students' organisation went on to say in a note of apology that the article had been published “inadvertently” and further that the views expressed in the article were the writer's own.

The explanation and apology might have been acceptable if it were any other organisation. But Shibir, and its parent organisation Jamaat, had violently and actively opposed the 1971 Liberation War. Shibir used to be called Islami Chhatri Sangha in 1971 and resurfaced in 1977 under this current name. Jamaat and its student wing are held responsible for a large number of atrocities committed by the notorious vigilante militia groups like Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams, which consisted of members and activists of Jamaat and its student wing.

Neither Jamaat, nor its student wing has ever come clean regarding its role in 1971. Still deeply revered within the party, several Jamaat leaders have been tried, convicted and executed for their crimes against humanity. But the party and its student wing have never come forward to apologise for their role or admit to the atrocities their predecessors had committed out of their supposed conviction for a united Pakistan. Instead, both the party and its student wing continue to attempt to justify and vindicate their roles during the Liberation War.

And sometimes, they test the waters to see how far they can go in public. This recent publication was one such instance.

The implicit suggestion of Shibir's response to the widespread criticism of the article is that the editorial board of the magazine had not vetted each article carefully before they were approved. This is not at all expected from an outfit as disciplined as Shibir. The insincere apology, because it does not own up to its misdeed (which is befitting its historical trend), only came about once the lines went viral on social media and Jamaat's student cadres realised they were fast losing



ARTWORK: ZAINUL ABEDIN

support among the public. Almost as if they were dangling their feet to test the waters and pulled out sensing that the time was not yet ripe.

Just like in 1971, the article in question conflates religion with the inspiration for freedom. In fact, the writer is apologetic for even having waged war and begs forgiveness of the Almighty.

It is also important to take note of other omens. Take the Constitution Reform Commission's proposal for instance. It proposes the following two paragraphs in the preamble, “We,

and through a historic struggle for national liberation, established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh.”

The proposed draft states “*jonojuddho*” (people's war) which is not the same as Liberation War or *muktijuddho*. The language recognises the mass uprising of 2024 and the war of independence of 1971 in the same breath! One was a full-blown war which gave birth to a new country. The other was a people's uprising of a kind that Bangladesh had not seen before and must be given their due

## Tea garden workers warrant the same support as other industry labourers

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RAFAD ASGAR and SAMIRA TASNIM

In the tapestry of Bangladesh's socio-economic landscape, tea gardens and industrial parks stand as silent pillars that uphold the lives of millions, weaving together tradition and modernity. A morning that begins with a cup of tea mirrors the soul of every Bangladeshi heart. Alongside, the sprawling Beximco Industrial Park symbolises industrial ambition and global competitiveness. Yet, these two worlds converge in the shared plight of labourers whose sweat fuels our economy. As we savour the warmth of tea or don garments stitched with care, do we pause to acknowledge the unseen hands shaping these moments? This is not just a narrative of labour; it is the story of Bangladesh where every worker's life is intricately woven into the fabric of national progress.

While the media's spotlight shines on the recent turmoil surrounding Beximco Industrial Park, the plight of tea garden workers of the tea estates owned and operated by National Tea Company remains woefully underreported. These crises reveal deeper structural and political issues that threaten the livelihoods of thousands and ultimately, the economic resilience of Bangladesh.

The closure of the National Tea Company due to political instability

exemplifies the precarious position of marginalised workers. The sudden shutdown of Madhabpur Tea Estate in Moulvibazar has left families stranded without income or alternative employment opportunities. Sanu, a worker at the estate, paints a grim picture of this reality. With five family members, including a sick mother, he struggles to provide even the most basic meals, resorting to *muri* (puffed rice) and *cha pata bhorta* (mashed tea leaves) for sustenance. Occasionally, a tourist's tip is all that stands between his family and hunger. This tragic narrative is emblematic of countless others, yet it garners little attention because tea workers lack the platforms or influence to amplify their voices.

Meanwhile the crisis at Beximco Industrial Park dominates the headlines, as workers demand their rightful wages and reinstatement. While both cases highlight the vulnerability of workers, they also expose an unequal distribution of concern and urgency. The media's focus on high-profile industrial hubs often eclipses the struggles of those in remote areas, perpetuating a cycle of neglect for sectors like the tea industry.

Both situations underscore the need for immediate and comprehensive

government intervention. The current approach of relocating displaced workers to other factories or gardens is short-sighted and counterproductive. Such measures ignore the broader implications: abandoned infrastructure, loss of industry-specific expertise, and a diminishing industrial base. The parallels with the

**The stories of Madhabpur's tea workers and Beximco's factory labourers are not isolated, and they remind us of the delicate balance between progress and humanity. Their struggles are a clarion call for a nation striving to achieve middle-income status while ensuring that nobody is left behind.**

decline of Bangladesh's sugar and jute mills are stark and cautionary. These once thriving industries now stand as relics of mismanagement and neglect, offering lessons that must not be ignored.

Bangladesh's status as a growing economy demands prudent and proactive policies to safeguard its industries. Political instability and labour exploitation cannot become recurring narratives. The government must prioritise the reopening and stabilisation of the tea estates under

the National Tea Company and Beximco Industrial Park. This involves ensuring fair wages, addressing worker grievances, and fostering an environment conducive to sustainable operations.

For tea workers, the solution lies in comprehensive industry reform. The systemic exploitation that keeps wages at starvation levels must end. The government, alongside industry stakeholders, should implement wage standardisation, social security measures, and skill development programmes. For larger industrial hubs like Beximco, the focus should be on transparent conflict resolution mechanisms, timely payment of dues, and robust labour policies that prevent future disruptions.

It is time for Bangladesh to heed the silent cries of its labour force and walk resolutely towards reform and equity. The stories of Madhabpur's tea workers and Beximco's factory labourers are not isolated, and they remind us of the delicate balance between progress and humanity. Their struggles are a clarion call for a nation striving to achieve middle-income status while ensuring that nobody is left behind. Let us not allow these crises to become forgotten tragedies; instead, let them fuel a collective resolve to create a future where every sip of tea and every stitch of cloth represents not just an industry but the dignity of those who make it possible. Advocacy groups, unions, and policymakers must work together to amplify the voices of the voiceless, ensuring that every worker, regardless of their location or industry, is afforded dignity and justice.

# Chaos is a ladder



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H. M. NAZMUL ALAM

In the chaos that has engulfed Bangladesh, the events of the past few days resemble the grim narratives of political intrigue and moral decay found in the most captivating of fictional tales. In *Game of Thrones*, Petyr Baelish, known as Littlefinger, proclaimed: "Chaos isn't a pit. Chaos is a ladder. Many who try to climb it fail and never get to try again. The fall breaks them. And some are given a chance to climb, but they refuse. They cling to the realm, or the gods, or love... illusions. Only the ladder is real. The climb is all there is." This philosophy—where disorder serves as an opportunity rather than an obstacle—is chillingly relevant to what is unfolding in Bangladesh today.

A nation that once stood on the pillars of its hard-fought independence now finds itself in a whirlpool of anarchy. The recent wave of protests, vandalism, and arson directed at establishments linked to the ousted Awami League reflects more than just frustration—it signifies a power vacuum, an opportunity for new players to rise. Like in Littlefinger's philosophy, the opportunists of our time are not looking to stabilise the chaos but to exploit it, to climb to positions of power and influence, while the common people bear the brunt of instability.

From history to fiction, power vacuums have always been exploited by those who see chaos as a means rather than a tragedy. In *Batman Begins*, Ra's al Ghul aims to destroy

the question arises: what is the endgame? Is this an organic outburst against oppression, or is it the strategic dismantling of an old order to make way for a new one? This is where Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* trilogy offers a poignant analogy.

In *The Dark Knight Rises*, Bane, the revolutionary anarchist, speaks of giving power back to the people. Yet, his ultimate goal is the total destruction of Gotham. His brand of chaos is one that seduces the desperate and downtrodden into believing in justice while, in reality, it serves his own thirst for vengeance and control. Similarly, in Bangladesh, we must ask: who benefits from this upheaval? The students and common people leading the charge may believe they are fighting for justice, but history teaches us that revolutions often create vacuums that are quickly filled by new oppressors.

Littlefinger's philosophy suggests that the chaos itself is a mechanism to enable those with ambition to rise. It is a ruthless reality where idealists are crushed beneath the weight of calculated opportunism. When disorder reigns, it is not necessarily the just who prevail, but rather the cunning.

As students and citizens take to the streets, setting ablaze structures symbolic of political dominance,

Gotham because he believes it has become corrupt beyond redemption. Yet, it is Bruce Wayne, as Batman, who realises that true justice is not about annihilation but restoration. Today, Bangladesh stands at a crossroads. Will this turmoil lead to true reform, or will it merely replace one form of tyranny with another?

Historically, those who claim

power dynamics—these are not just spontaneous acts of rebellion; they appear to be calculated moves in a larger game.

Consider the ousted ruling party: once powerful, now embattled. Its fall is reminiscent of those who cling to the illusions Littlefinger described—whether it be the illusion of control, of loyalty, or of

their rule be any different? History warns us that those who seize power in moments of chaos rarely return it to the people. The Taliban in Afghanistan, the Jacobins in revolutionary France, the Bolsheviks in Russia—all rose from disorder promising justice, only to impose regimes as brutal as the ones they replaced.

crush them. The anger of students, the frustration of workers, and the disillusionment of common citizens are all being manipulated by unseen hands. The same masses who set fire to the halls of power may later find themselves trapped in the flames of a new tyranny.

Even in fictional Gotham, Bruce Wayne realised that fighting crime with crime, or injustice with more injustice, was a self-defeating cycle. The real solution was to offer a vision beyond the flames. Bangladesh today needs that vision. It needs leadership that does not see the chaos as a ladder but as a warning—a reminder that if the root causes of unrest are not addressed, the country will remain in a perpetual cycle of destruction and exploitation.

What is most concerning is the absence of a coherent alternative. If the current establishment fails, what replaces it? The opportunists will surely rise, but will they govern justly? Without a clear plan, without a commitment to actual reform, the fires burning across the country will not mark the end of oppression but merely the start of another chapter of turmoil.

We must ask ourselves: Who are the Littlefingers of Bangladesh? Who is manipulating the chaos for personal gain? And who, if anyone, is truly fighting for justice rather than just another throne? If Bangladesh does not answer these questions soon, it risks plunging into a deeper abyss—one where the cycle of power-hungry opportunists never ends.

Chaos is not inherently liberating. It is merely a tool—one that, if left unchecked, benefits only those who know how to wield it. As Bangladesh stands on the brink, its people must decide: will they build a future from the ashes, or will they merely provide the stepping stones for another generation of rulers who see only the ladder?



Bangladesh needs leadership that does not see chaos as a ladder to climb to power.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

to fight against dictatorship often use the disorder to build their own thrones. Already, we see actors in Bangladesh manoeuvring to position themselves advantageously amid the chaos. The burning of houses and murals, the tearing down of symbols, the aggressive restructuring of

permanence in power. But if the fall of one regime is inevitable, who is climbing in its place?

Oppositions, long silenced, see this as their moment to step forward. Various factions—some with new system, some fundamentalist—are poised to fill the gap. But will

In *The Dark Knight*, the Joker thrives on chaos, exposing how easily people abandon morality when faced with fear. The greatest tragedy in Bangladesh's current predicament is that the very people who demand justice may unwittingly be fuelling a machine that will later

## Is there an economic roadmap of the interim government?



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SELM JAHAN

The interim government of Bangladesh has recently completed its six months in office. Because of certain measures it took at the outset of its tenure, people became somewhat hopeful about the government's good intentions. But as days passed, certain things became clearer. First, it became apparent that the government was not able to solve the problems disrupting the lives of the people. In fact, it was apparent that the government was severely struggling to cope with those challenges. The prime example is economy's persistent high inflation. Second, the mismanagement that characterised the past economy was not over. Thus, an even economic discipline is yet to return, not to speak of economic acceleration. Third, the interim government does not have a clear road map to put the economy on a solid foundation and to steer it forward.

All these phenomena have created a shaky confidence and a sense of despair in people's minds, which now have taken the form of discontent. People are at a loss and cannot fathom that in spite of the presence of so many notable, efficient and experienced luminaries in the government, it is not able to tackle economic challenges. People surely do not expect that all the economic problems will be solved overnight, but they can hope for some improvements and reliefs—at least by the end of six months. Instead, the efficacy of various policy measures undertaken by the government has been questioned. For example, what is the rationale of imposing value-added taxes and supplementary duties on more than 100 items (some essentials were later removed from the list after much criticism), when there has already been a double-digit inflation and sluggish growth in the economy? In fact, at various points in time, people quite clearly expressed that economic issues are the topmost concerns on their minds. Not only people on the street, but also those closely associated with the government have started raising their voices about the government's

indifference and ineffective actions on economic issues. People involved with the White Paper have also expressed their despair. Furthermore, the main political parties of the country have also expressed some

Second, in addressing and finding solutions for the economic problems, the government must strongly express its commitment to economic concerns. But unfortunately, the actions undertaken so far by the interim government are not creating that kind of a sense. Till now, the government's economic acts give a sense of "some measures here, some reforms there" sort of disparate attempts, and the government must move away from such ad hoc approach. In fact, ad hoc measures provide no relief to the problems, not to speak of solutions. The current high inflation of the country is a prime

would have to be left for an elected government, as those reforms would have constitutional implications. The economic reforms that the interim government wants to pursue must be brought to the attention of the people with necessary transparency. This is critically important, since no reform can be sustainable without the ownership of the people.

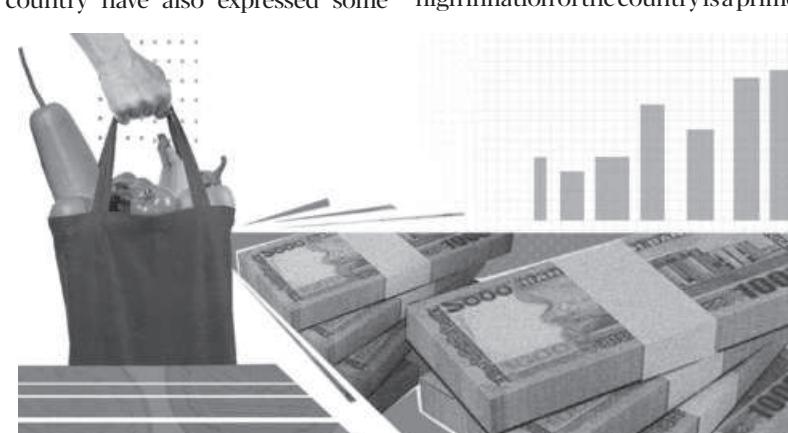
Four, the interim government should present a well-thought blueprint of its economic plan with a spelled-out timeframe. In the pursuit of establishing a society, based on human rights and equality, the major milestones of such a blueprint must

also be identified. One important aspect of the blueprint would be an implementation plan with a definite monitoring and evaluation framework. For that, a necessary, robust and credible data set must be mobilised and constructed; so that a good baseline is created for credible monitoring and evaluation outcomes.

Five, it should be realised that having eminent, knowledgeable and experienced people at the top economic leadership of the interim government may be a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one for solving economic woes. A personality-based structure, irrespective of how talented these

people are in it, will not produce the desired results. Only if such eminent personalities are surrounded by skilled professionals and experts of economic discipline, the desired good outcomes would be achieved. Only a well-knit and coherent team can collectively tackle the economic problems of the country.

A clearly defined economic roadmap with a timeframe can strengthen the trust and confidence of the people in the interim government. And at the same time, this will enhance people's ownership of the proposed development trajectory of the country and in the ultimate analysis, there is no alternative to such ownership.



FILE VISUAL: REHNUMA PROSHOON

dissatisfaction by the shortcomings of the government. Given all these, certain issues need to be clarified in the context of economic programmes of the interim government.

First, there is no doubt that Bangladesh has been passing through a transition and as a nation, we have been facing multidimensional challenges—some political, some are related to public administration, some are economic.

While the interim government is obliged to give attention to all these concerns, a balance must be maintained in approaching them.

But from what is happening, it seems that the government is not as interested in economic matters as it is in political issues. As a result, it is not spending much time on economic issues, compared to the time it devotes to political concerns.

The perception seems to be that reforming the economy is the sole

responsibility of the talented and widely experienced economists at the top of the government. This is, to be honest, a wrong and not so well-thought approach. If the entire administration of the interim government is not collectively engaged in economic management, the economy will not be fixed.

example of such a phenomenon. In fact, a well-coordinated approach is required to overcome economic woes. At the same time, the interim government must refrain from undertaking inadequate measures, which in fact, may deepen the crises, making them more complex. Such acts by the government make its good intentions, commitments and good considerations irrelevant.

Third, in the economic arena, the government should concentrate on two specific issues—economic management and economic reforms. Both of these dimensions will help the Bangladesh economy to accelerate. In economic management, it is essential to re-establish economic discipline, the checks and balances of the economic structure, and the culture of transparency and accountability. During its tenure, the interim government is neither expected nor supposed to complete all kinds of economic reforms. In that context, the government has to make a conscious decision as to which reforms it would prioritise, what would be the context and the content of those reforms, and also what would be the time frames for those reforms. Many structural reforms, particularly the long-term economic ones,

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

District Primary Education Office

Patuakhali

[www.dpe.patuakhali.gov.bd](http://www.dpe.patuakhali.gov.bd)

Date: 09/02/2025

### e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-25

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works:

SL No	Name of Scheme	Tender ID NO	Package No	Tender/ Proposal Document Last selling/ downloading Date & Time	Tender/ Proposal Closing & Opening Date & Time	Tender Method	Remarks
1.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for 19 Nos Class Room of selected 05 Nos of Newly Nationalized Govt. Primary School Constructed under NBIDNNGPSP- 1 Project at Different location (Bauphal- 01, Mirzagong-02 & Patuakhali Sadar- 02) in Patuakhali District FY: 2024-2025	1070134	e-Tender NBIDNNGPSP1/ PAT/2024-25G1.14	26 February 2025, 17.00	27 February 2025, 14.00	OTM	

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for tender / proposal document to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

09/02/2025

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# The Forgotten Revolutionary

## In Search of Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani

**On 17 September 1938, Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani was executed by firing squad at Kommunarka, near Moscow, on Stalin's orders. However, in 1957, the Military Collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court declared his trial a miscarriage of justice and posthumously exonerated him.**

KHALILULLAH

All the colonies around the world had to pay the highest price for liberating themselves from the shackles of colonisation. However, not all colonies fared the same as India. Revolutionary activities for India's independence movement took place on a vast canvas that extended across many parts of the world.

We usually discuss the sacrifices of anti-British revolutionaries who were active within the Indian subcontinent. However, there were also individuals who made immense sacrifices abroad, engaging in a myriad of activities to liberate India from the yoke of British rule. Narratives of their sacrifices are seldom explored in academic discourse or popular literature such as prose, poetry, or novels in Bangladesh.

Nevertheless, there exists a grand and glorified tale of these heroes that deserves to be told not only to the people of the Indian subcontinent but also to the world—one that will surely inspire future generations. Imagine a revolutionary swimming off the coast of Singapore to escape the police and reaching the islands of Sumatra in Indonesia with the help of fishing boats. Consider another who crossed the Suez Canal in Egypt to evade the surveillance of British agents. These are just a few examples of how revolutionaries outside India became unstoppable in their quest to free their motherland.

Subhas Chandra Bose is renowned for his revolutionary activities abroad. However, long before him, a group of individuals were engaged in diverse efforts across Europe to accelerate India's freedom movement. Initially, they sought assistance from Germany and later from the erstwhile Soviet Union. One such

of his family life. He includes letters written by Luhani from Paris to his mother in Sirajganj, correspondence from Luhani's wife Gabrielle to his mother, and exchanges between Luhani's family members and a British officer, as well as a shipping agency in Kolkata, in their attempt to bring him back home.

The depth of Rahman's dedication to this book is evident from an incident in the mid-1980s when he met Russian historian and India expert Leonid Mitrokhin in Moscow. In 1991, Mitrokhin published an article in *Soviet Land* magazine, printed in Delhi, where he was the first to reveal the tragic fates of the three Bengali revolutionaries—Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Abani Mukherji, and Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani—all of whom had roots in present-day Bangladesh. At the end of the article, Mitrokhin expressed hope that Matiur Rahman was planning to write a book on Luhani, believing it could offer new insights into the life and work of this revolutionary. Decades later, in October 2024, this long-awaited book finally came to light.

The book reveals that after passing his Entrance Examination (equivalent to today's secondary school exam), Luhani studied at Aligarh Muslim University in India before enrolling at the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1914. He was the maternal uncle of prominent Bangladeshi media and film personalities Fateh Lohani and Fazle Lohani, as well as their sister, the distinguished singer and professor Husna Banu Khanam. Through Fazle Lohani, Matiur Rahman was able to connect



This signed photograph was presented by Luhani to his friend and former classmate, Khan Bahadur Aminul Haq, from their days at Aligarh Muslim University. Aminul Haq was the father of journalist and writer Laila Samad.

records marriages from 1837 to 2005), provides official evidence of Luhani and Gabrielle's marriage ceremony, which took place in Pancras, London, in 1919.

### Tracing Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani

Various documents from Matiur Rahman's collection reveal that Luhani was engaged in the labour movement and supported the Soviet Revolution in London without being affiliated with any particular political group. He worked as a journalist and teacher for his livelihood. From 1920 to 1925, he lived in France, Germany, and Switzerland, writing for newspapers in those countries on India's political and labour movements. Besides English, he was proficient in French, Persian, German, and Hindi.

Luhani first visited Moscow in 1921 as part of an expatriate Indian revolutionary group led by Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. Although the group returned after failing to secure support from the Comintern, Luhani stayed behind for a while and worked in its publicity department, known as Agitprop. While in Paris, he served as editor of *The Masses of India*, the official

and became a Soviet citizen in 1933. During this period, he undertook various roles within the Communist International (Comintern), the global centre of the communist movement.

This book on Luhani vividly portrays his flamboyant life. He worked as a journalist, translator, researcher, and teacher in various organisations, including the Comintern. He was involved with Peasant's International and MOPR (the international organisation for aiding revolutionaries). Additionally, he worked in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Naranmanov Institute, Institute of Oriental Studies, and the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. He also lectured at the University of Moscow on Indian affairs.

Luhani represented India at the Sixth Comintern Congress in Moscow, where he openly expressed his differences with M.N. Roy. On 30 August 1964, Link's Moscow correspondent, P. Unnikrishnan, wrote an article stating that Luhani served as a consultant to the Comintern on national and colonial issues. Through this book, Matiur Rahman reconstructs Luhani's extraordinary life and multifaceted contributions,

reports included in this book. The eminent revolutionaries M.N. Roy and Saumyendranath Tagore praised his sharp intellect and theoretical insight. Saumyendranath was the grandson of Dwijendranath Tagore, the elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore, and the son of Sudhindranath Tagore.

### Posthumous Redemption

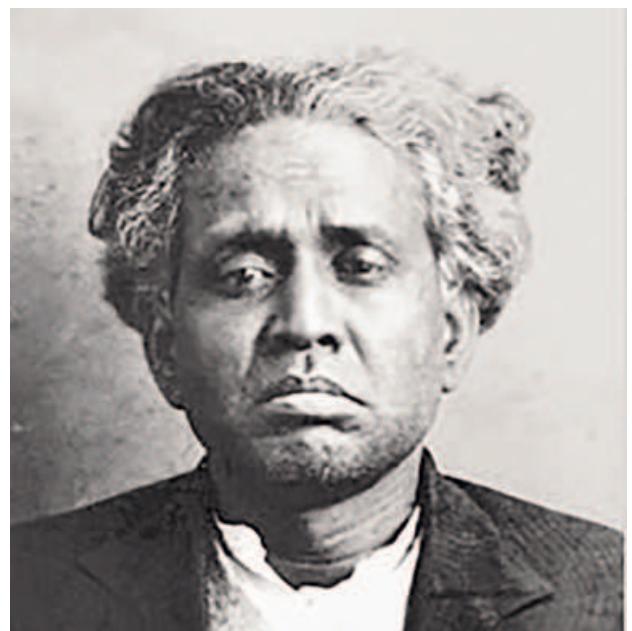
Soviet intelligence documents used in this book reveal that suspicion and distrust surrounded Luhani during Stalin's era, a period when many were executed for alleged dissent. Luhani was not spared from this tragic fate. On 17 September 1938, he was executed by firing squad at Kommunarka, near Moscow, on Stalin's orders. However, in 1957, the Military Collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court declared his trial a miscarriage of justice and posthumously exonerated him.

The same fate befell Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Abani Mukherji. Virendranath, widely known as Chatto, was a prominent revolutionary and early internationalist who worked abroad for India's struggle against British imperialism. He was also closely associated with Jawaharlal Nehru. Chatto spent most of his life in Europe, leading the Berlin-based revolutionary group, where Luhani and Abani were also active. In his later years, he worked as a social scientist and university lecturer in the Soviet Union. Like Luhani, he was executed during Stalin's purges in 1937 and was posthumously rehabilitated with honour in 1956.

Abani Mukherji, another significant revolutionary, was associated with the Berlin group and had been living in the Soviet Union since 1920. He famously escaped from a Singapore prison by swimming and using fishing boats to reach Kolkata via the Indonesian islands while returning from Japan to rally support for India's independence. He later became a professor at the University of Moscow but was executed in 1937 during Stalin's purges. He, too, was posthumously rehabilitated in 1957.

This book includes numerous letters and documents related to Luhani, including the thesis *India and the World Revolution*, along with various articles and reports written by him. The second and third chapters focus on these writings. The final chapter features an article by Dr. Binayak Sen, Director General of BIDS, analysing the ideological backgrounds of the revolutionaries of that period. Additionally, the book includes Leonid Mitrokhin's article *A Triple Trap*, which discusses Luhani, Virendranath, and Abani, as well as a conversation between Matiur Rahman and Dr. Shobhanal Dutt Gupta, a Comintern expert and professor at the University of Kolkata. This discussion sheds light on various topics, including the revolutionaries of that era, the Comintern, and the future of socialism.

The book is further enriched with rare colour photographs of Luhani, drawings and portraits of Gabrielle,



(L) This is the last known photograph of Luhani, taken while he was in the custody of the Soviet State Intelligence Unit, NKVD, shortly before his execution. The image was published in David King's book *Ordinary Citizens* (p. 135). (R) Cover of the book, *Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani: Ek Ojana Biplobir Kahini* published by Prothoma Prokashan.



hero was Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani, who hailed from Sirajganj, Bangladesh. He was not alone—two other Bengali revolutionaries met the same fate in Moscow: Virendranath Chattopadhyaya from the then Bikrampur (now Munshiganj) and Abani Mukherji from Satkhira.

**The Journey of a Book**  
The recently published book *Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani: Ek Ojana Biplobir Kahini* (Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani: The Narrative of an Unknown Revolutionary) offers insight into the colourful life and multifaceted activities of revolutionary Luhani. In the introduction, the book's author, Matiur Rahman—editor of Prothom Alo—narrates his 42-year quest to uncover Luhani's life and work.

Rahman first heard about Luhani in 1981 in Delhi from Dr Gangadhar Adhikari, a scientist and communist leader. Dr Adhikari had come across Luhani's diverse activities while documenting the history of the Communist Party of India in several volumes. He was also known for his arrest in the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929, which led to a notable protest—none other than Albert Einstein himself wrote to the British government, demanding his release. Dr Adhikari had previously worked at Einstein's research institute in Berlin in the 1920s.

Since 1981, Matiur Rahman has been on a relentless quest to gather information about Luhani. He searched archives across Berlin, Moscow, Delhi, and Kolkata. While he may not have uncovered everything, he managed to collect an unprecedented volume of material on this forgotten revolutionary. In the book, Rahman not only captures Luhani's multi-dimensional work but also sheds light on various aspects



(L) British painter Roger Fry created this portrait of Gabrielle Luhani, Luhani's wife, in 1919. The artwork is now preserved at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. (R) Luhani lived in a flat in this building in Moscow during the later years of his life.

with Ghulam Ambia Khan Luhani's nephew, Major General (retd.) Helal Morshed, who had preserved the family's letters for many years.

Just as the book was nearing publication, in May 2024, Julia Boddewyn, an art researcher from New York, contacted Matiur Rahman to inquire about Luhani's wife, Gabrielle Soene. This communication revealed that Gabrielle was a model and fashion designer. The famous Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani had made several drawings of her. Additionally, she had modelled for Roger Fry's paintings, Jacob Epstein's sculptures, and Edward Wolfe's portraits. A key document included in the book, sourced from the England and Wales Marriage Registration Index (which

publication of the Indian Communist Party. He was also involved in an organisation that promoted India's freedom movement. This organisation, named Committee Pro-Hindu [where 'Hindu' denoted 'Indian'], was founded by the French writer, journalist, and political activist Henri Barbusse, whose works profoundly influenced the *Lost Generation* writers, including Ernest Hemingway and Erich Maria Remarque.

During his time in Paris, Luhani was accused of anti-British imperial activities and denied permission to remain in the country. In October 1925, he relocated permanently to Moscow. He joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1928

using documents he has meticulously collected over the past 42 years with great passion and dedication.

Beyond Luhani, this book also explores the activities and initiatives of Indian revolutionaries based in Berlin and Moscow. In 1921, Luhani, along with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya and Pandurang Khanhaje, co-authored a thesis titled *India and the World Revolution* and sent it to Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution. Remarkably, they received a response from Lenin. Notably, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya was the younger brother of renowned political activist and poet Sarojini Naidu, also known as the Nightingale of the East.

Luhani's intellectual and analytical prowess is evident in his articles and

images of their residences in different cities, and significant letters.

Reading this book provides insights into the tragic fate of a Bengali revolutionary and transports us to a historical period that continues to influence various layers of our politics and society. It reveals the extraordinary, adventurous lives of these revolutionaries and the profound sacrifices they made. Moreover, it highlights many crucial yet overlooked events that were pivotal in shaping our history.

Undoubtedly, this book is an essential contribution to the political history of the Indian subcontinent.

**Khalilullah** is the Climate Project Manager at The Daily Prothom Alo.



## Australia send WTC final warning

Australia wrapped up a dominant 2-0 sweep of the Test series against Sri Lanka at Galle on Sunday, romping to a nine-wicket victory before lunch on day four in the second Test. Set a modest target of 75 to win, Australia lost only Travis Head as they stormed to a commanding victory in a ruthless display from the world's top-ranked Test side.

● This is Australia's first series victory in Sri Lanka since 2011, with the Aussies' last success in the country coming under Ricky Ponting's captaincy when they won 1-0.

● The win is a timely boost for Australia, who will be defending their World Test Championship (WTC) title in the final against South Africa on June 11-15 at Lord's. Australia finished on a PCT of 67.54, just behind South Africa (69.44).

● The win in the second Test was Australia's 33rd win in the WTC -- the most by any team. The record was previously held by England who won 32 matches

in 65 games. Australia, on the other hand, won 33 in 53 games.

● Australia stand-in skipper Steve Smith scored his 24th Test hundred in a winning cause, thus becoming the fourth leading batter in the list of most centuries in a winning cause. Only Ponting (30), Joe Root (25) and Steve Waugh (25) are ahead of him.

● Smith also took his 200th catch in the second Test -- the most by any Australian. Smith equalled Jacques Kallis and is only behind Rahul Dravid (210), Joe Root (207), and Mahela Jayawardene (205) on the all-time list for most catches.



## 'Team game is the most important thing'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team are gearing up for the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy with a pre-tournament training camp being held at the National Cricket Academy in Mirpur under head coach Phil Simmons.

The camp will run for three more days before the team leaves for the UAE, leaving very little time for the players to refocus in the 50-over format after playing T20s for over a month in the BPL.

Former selector Habibul Bashar, however, felt that the transition from T20s to the 50-over ICC event would not be difficult.

"Players now don't take much time to adapt while changing formats," the former national captain told the reporters in Dhaka yesterday while attending the inauguration event of former national team opener Javed Omar's social welfare foundation.

In a big tournament, team game is the most important thing. Rather than thinking of who are the x-factors, we need to focus on playing as a team since that's when we do well. Our bowlers are doing well. Taskin has been wonderful, we saw Rana's pace and Tanvir Tamim has done well with the bat. We have performers but in a big tournament the team game is necessary."

The Tigers are set to depart for Dubai on February 14 (Thursday night) and will face India in their opening match on February 20.

## BPL champions' chaotic reception in Barishal

SUSHANTA GHOSH

A little over two years ago, the world witnessed how much the Argentina football team means to the people of that country when their World Cup winning team had to cancel their bus parade through capital Buenos Aires because the entire city was in the streets, busy in raucous revelry, celebrating the historic win.

Yesterday, somewhat similar scenes unfolded in Barishal when around 50 thousand fans congregated to catch a glimpse of their beloved



**"We are overwhelmed and apologetic. Overwhelmed seeing your love and enthusiasm -- we have never witnessed such a wave of millions. However, we are sorry that we were not able to spend more time with you."**

Fortune Barishal skipper Tamim Iqbal's message to Barishal people on Facebook.

Fortune Barishal but ironically, their unfettered love for the team, who have recently won their second consecutive Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), cut the celebrations short.

The Barishal team arrived in the city in the afternoon, ready to parade both of their BPL trophies. The team bus was greeted by fans standing roadside all through the 17-kilometer stretch from

the airport to the Bell Park, where the celebration took place.

At 4:45 pm, around two hours after the scheduled time, the team entered Bell Park led by captain Tamim Iqbal, flashing victory signs amid thunderous applause while the jubilant crowd chanted "Barishal! Barishal".

Team owner Mizanur Rahman, who was present with his family, was

overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and said, "We dedicate this victory to the martyrs of July. This victory is not just ours; it's the victory of the people of Barishal."

However, the celebrations did not last much longer as by 5:00 pm the players were off the rickety and overcrowded stage, boarded their bus and left the venue. There were also plans of a concert, which fell through, much to the dismay of the packed crowd.

Perhaps the management had underestimated the love this city holds for their champions. But now everyone knows, the city of Barishal maybe one-fourth the size of Buenos Aires and one-eighth in population, but they love their beloved team just as much.

## ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

# Hamza, Fahamedul in preliminary squad

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheffield United midfielder Hamza Choudhury has been named alongside Italy-based young midfielder Fahamedul Islam in the 38 member preliminary squad for Bangladesh's first Asian Cup Qualifiers match against India, which will be held in Shilong on March 25.

Head coach Javier Cabrera also picked a few fresh faces, all of whom have impressed in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League while recalling a number of players, who had previously worn the red and green jersey.

While the inclusion of Hamza, who recently moved from English Premier League outfit Leicester City to Championship League side Sheffield United, was expected one, Fahamedul's inclusion was a surprise.

Fahamedul, an 18 year-old who currently plies his trade for Italian Serie D side Olbia Calcio, plays as a left-back and left wing-back. He has previously played for Ligiorna and Livorno after having been in the ranks of the Sampdoria youth team.

Speaking about the youngster, Cabrera said: "He's (Fahamedul) still young but has already been playing at a senior level in Europe. So we believe he might provide a good boost to the team."



### BANGLADESH SQUAD (PRELIMINARY)

**GK:** Mitul Marma, Sujon Hossain, Anisur Rahman, Mehedi Hasan Sharbon, Shakib Al Hasan

**DF:** Murad Hasan, Mehedi Hassan, Shakil Ahad Topu, Rahmat Mia, Sakil Hossain, Isa Faysal, Taj Uddin, Tariq Kazi, Topu Barman, Saad Uddin, Sushanto Tripura, Yeasin Khan, Jahid Hasan Shanto

**MF:** Md Ridoy, Papon Singh, Syed Shah Quazem, Md Sohel Rana, Sohel Rana, Chandan Roy, Mojibur Rahman Jony, Shekh Mursalin, Jamal Bhuyan, Hamza Chowdhury, Fahamedul Islam

**FW:** Faysal Ahmed Fahim, Rakib Hossain, Rabby Hossen Rahul, Rafiqul Islam, Emon Shahrir, Mohammad Ibrahim, Arif Hossain, Al Amin, Piash Ahmed Nova

It is understood that the BFF has been trying to woo foreign based players to the national team for quite some time, a move which gathered pace after Hamza's switch of allegiance from England to Bangladesh in December last year.

"Hamza is now playing for Sheffield United and he has played both of their last games, (and was) in the (starting) line-up. Of course, (I am) expecting a great impact from him," Cabrera said.

Among the others who have been called to the squad for the first time are goalkeeper Shakib Al Hasan, defender Zahid Hossain, forward Arif Hossain – all three from Mohammmedan, alongside and Police FC forward Al Amin, who is currently the top scorer among the locals in the BPL with seven goals.

Anisur Rahman, Tariq Kazi, Shushanto Tripura, Yeasin Khan, Mohammad Sohel Rana and Mohammad Ibrahim have earned recalls for their performances.

Cabrera said he would trim the squad to 28 players before the team's departure for a two week training camp in likely on February 28. The team will then be joined by the two foreign based players and train here four a few more days before leaving for India five or six days prior to the match.

## BFF to 'move on' from rebellious 18?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has apparently decided to move on from the rebellious 18 senior players, focusing on the younger ones for the upcoming UAE tour and central contracts.

BFF president Tabith Awal met with each of the 18 players on Thursday night following his return from the UK and tried to convince them to join training from Saturday. However, the players still demanded removal of head coach Peter Butler, refusing to join the camp till Sunday.

With hope for a resolution fading, BFF is focusing on the 37 current players who are currently in training under Butler and preparing new contracts with a number of them, keeping the 18 out of it.

A total of 30 women footballers were under BFF's central contract, which ran out last October. Out of those 30, only 12 are currently in BFF's training camp while 25 others -- mostly from age-group teams -- are out of contracts.

"The contracts will be finalised within Tuesday. I can't say the exact number of contracts to be offered, but the contracts will be for among those who are currently in training," BFF's vice-president Fahad Karim told The Daily Star, adding the president had asked the board to 'move on' as 'football can't be stopped'.

Another BFF vice president Sabir Ahmed Arif, however, said later in the evening yesterday that the 18 seniors and the coach will "understand their mistakes and reach an agreement", keeping a door open for negotiation. Bangladesh are scheduled to travel to UAE on February 24 to play two international friendly matches on February 26 and March 2. In all likelihood, the 23-member squad will be made out of the current 37 players.



Atletico Madrid players converge to celebrate after Julian Alvarez converted from the spot with a Panenka in the 35th minute as Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham and Federico Valverde express their discontent over a controversial penalty call during the Madrid derby at Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday. Referee Cesar Soto Grado found Aurelien Tchouameni guilty of stepping on Samuel Lino's foot in the box after a VAR review, however, Real players and coach Carlo Ancelotti were convinced the referee had got it wrong. Later, Kylian Mbappe brought Los Blancos back into the game with a second-half strike. The 1-1 draw might have a big role in the title race as Real remained top of LaLiga on 50 points, one ahead of Atletico in second while Barcelona, third on 45 points, visit Sevilla on Sunday with a chance to close the gap to just two with the leaders.

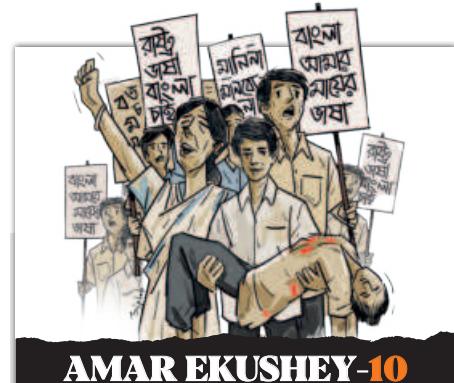
PHOTO: REUTERS

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**AMAR EKUSHEY-10**  
This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the 1952 Language Movement. Drawing on research based on various published books, this 21-part series tells the story of the historic struggle for our mother tongue.

### Mymensingh resists Urdu as state language

AHMAD ISTIAK

The students and people of Mymensingh observed spontaneous general strikes, processions and rallies in 1948 and 1952, resisting the Pakistan government's bid to declare Urdu as the state language by omitting Bangla.

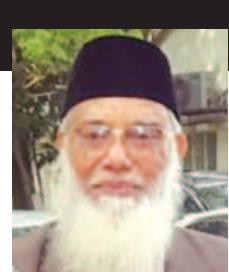
Despite the strong influence

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



A train going past the street stalls lining the Mohakhali level crossing in the capital's Amtoli yesterday. The shops stand dangerously close to the tracks, posing risks to both the shop owners and their customers.

PHOTO: ANTSUR RAHMAN



### Former CEC Abdur Rouf no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief election commissioner Justice Md Abdur Rouf passed away at a Dhaka hospital yesterday at the age of 91.

The former Appellate Division judge died around 10:00am at Insaif Barakah Kidney and General Hospital, according to a press release.

He had been suffering from heart disease, lung complications and kidney ailments, among other illnesses, for a long time.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held after Asr prayers at Gausul Azam Mosque in Mohakhali.

The second janaza will be held after Zohr prayers today at the National

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### India's statement 'unwarranted and unexpected'

Says Dhaka about Delhi's remarks on demolition of Dhanmondi 32

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi's comments on the demolition of Bangabandhu's house on Dhanmondi 32 is uncalled-for and unexpected, said foreign affairs ministry spokesperson Rafiqul Alam yesterday.

The political comments Sheikh Hasina made from her refuge in New Delhi were not taken well by the people of Bangladesh, Rafiqul told reporters.

"On February 5, a situation was created over the statements of the former prime minister. The interim government has already clarified its position," he told reporters.

On February 6, Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said it was regrettable that the historic residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been destroyed.

"All those who value the freedom struggle that nurtured Bangla identity and pride are aware of the importance of this residence for the national consciousness of Bangladesh. This act of vandalism should be strongly condemned," he said.

Rafiqul yesterday said, "We have seen some situations arise in the neighbouring country. But Bangladesh does not comment on the internal affairs of other countries. Bangladesh expects the same from others."

Bangladesh-India relations have been strained since deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina fled to India on August 5 amid a mass uprising.

In December last year, Dhaka requested New Delhi to extradite Hasina, who faces numerous cases of crimes

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### Manipur CM quits after months of ethnic strife

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
New Delhi

The chief minister of BJP-ruled northeastern Indian state of Manipur N Biren Singh yesterday resigned after months of ethnic strife that left more than 250 people dead.

"It has been an honour to serve the people of Manipur so far," Singh said in his resignation letter which he handed over to Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal.

Singh's resignation came after a two-hour-long meeting with Indian Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President JP Nadda in New Delhi yesterday.

On Saturday, Singh had convened a meeting with BJP-led ruling alliance legislators in Imphal in the wake of the opposition Congress seeking to move a no-confidence motion against the government led by Singh during the budget session of the state legislature.



Two workers of a dyeing factory wash chemicals off polythene bags in the Shitalakkhya, further contaminating the severely polluted river. The photo was taken near Narayanganj city's Hajiganj ferry terminal recently.

PHOTO: SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM

### Yunus to attend World Govts Summit in UAE February 11-13

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will attend the World Governments Summit 2025, scheduled to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), from February 11 to 13.

"By participating in the summit, the chief adviser will have the opportunity to present Bangladesh's perspectives on global challenges and international issues," foreign ministry spokesperson Mohammmed Rafiqul Alam said at a media briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday afternoon.



The chief adviser is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with heads of state and government from various countries on the sidelines of the summit. Rafiqul, who is also the Director General of the Public Diplomacy Wing, added.

"During the summit, the chief adviser is likely to hold courtesy meetings with

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

### Israel withdraws from strategic Gaza road

Netanyahu orders negotiators to Doha after fifth hostage-prisoner swap

AFP, Gaza City

A Hamas official said Israeli troops completed their withdrawal yesterday from a strategic road cutting through the Gaza Strip, part of a fragile truce deal that Israel said it was implementing.

But diplomatic tensions were high after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to suggest in an interview that a Palestinian state could be established on Saudi territory, drawing the ire of Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations.

As negotiations are set to begin on the next phase of the Gaza ceasefire, which is intended to pave the way for a permanent end to the war, Palestinians yesterday were able to cross the Netzarim Corridor, where an Israeli checkpoint used to stand.

An official from the Hamas-run interior ministry said "Israeli forces have dismantled their positions.. and completely withdrawn their tanks from the Netzarim Corridor on

Salaheddin Road, allowing vehicles to pass freely in both directions."

AFP journalists saw no troops in the area as cars, buses, pickup trucks and donkey carts travelled along the road from both the north and south.

Gaza resident Mahmoud al-Sarhi told AFP that for him, "arriving at the Netzarim Corridor meant death until this morning."

This is "the first time I saw our destroyed house," he said of his home in the nearby Zeitoun area.

"The entire area is in ruins, I cannot live here."

According to a senior Hamas official, the Israeli withdrawal from Netzarim had been scheduled for yesterday under the terms of a truce that took effect on January 19.

Asked about yesterday's withdrawal, an Israeli security official told AFP on condition of anonymity: "We are preparing to implement the ceasefire agreement according to the guidelines of the political echelon."

### Chance of Earth being hit by asteroid in 2032 grows

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The chances of Earth being hit by an asteroid in 2032 have roughly doubled – though we are almost certainly fine.

On 22 December, 2032, the Earth will be visited by an asteroid discovered last year and named 2024 YR. The rock is up to 90 metres across.

As it does, there is a chance that it will collide with Earth, potentially causing disaster.

That chance has now been revised up by Nasa's Center for Near Earth Object Studies or Cneos. A week ago, predictions had suggested that there was a roughly 1 percent chance we would be hit by the rock – but it now stands at 2.3 percent, or a one-in-43 chance.

Nasa says that it will continue to study the asteroid and that it expects the chance of disaster will be revised down as it learns more about it and its path.

"There have been several objects in the past that have risen on the risk list and eventually dropped off as more data have come in. New observations may result in reassignment of this asteroid to O or as more data come in," the space agency said in a statement last week.

The asteroid known as 2024 YR was first spotted on 27 December last year. It came to the attention of the world a few days later, when it was added to Nasa's list of asteroids that are near-Earth and are in danger of colliding with our planet.

### Indian forces kill 31 Maoists Two commandos also killed

AFP, Raipur

Indian security forces yesterday killed at least 31 Maoist rebels in one of the deadliest clashes since the government ramped up efforts to crush the long-running insurgency.

Two Indian commandos were also killed in the battle, and two other security force members were wounded, police said.

More than 10,000 people have been killed in the decades-long insurgency waged by the rebels, who say they are fighting for the rights of marginalised people in India's resource-rich central regions.

"So far 31 dead bodies of the Maoists have been recovered," senior police officer Sundarraj P told AFP.

"Two security personnel are dead and two other security personnel are injured," he added.

Reinforcements have been sent to the area, he said, warning that the toll could rise as the police carry out search operations.

"Additional forces have been rushed to the encounter site," he said.

Police said they had seized assault rifles and grenade launchers from the bodies of the dead rebels.

The gunfight broke in the forested areas of Bijapur district in the state of Chhattisgarh, considered the heartland of the insurgency.

The rebels, also known as Naxalites after the district where their armed campaign began in 1967, were inspired by the Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong.

"This is a big success in the direction of achieving a Naxal-free India," said Amit Shah, India's interior minister, who last year said the government expected to crush the rebellion by 2026.