

# BNP, Jamaat on collision course

Polls timing, proportional representation divide the longtime allies

RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami now seem to be poles apart over when the local and parliamentary elections should be held and the proportional representation system in the House.

The fact that their relationship is strained became clear as day last week when the parties took opposing stances on the timing of the polls and on proportional representation.

Yesterday, both parties made statements that hint at new political dynamics ahead of the 13th national polls.

After a Jamaat delegation called on Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the Nirbachon Bhaban yesterday morning, its Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told reporters that the party demanded that the national election be held after completing reforms to the state institutions relevant to the electoral process.

**"We are against proportional representation. We will not support proportional representation in any way because people of the country are not accustomed to it."**

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir



He claimed the people want local government polls before the national election and that his party is with the people. He said they also demanded proportional representation in the House.

An hour later, asked about the Jamaat's stance, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We are against proportional representation. We will not support proportional representation in any way because people are not accustomed to it."

Proportional representation is an electoral system in which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party. For example, if a party gets 40 percent of the total votes, the system will allow it to get 40 percent of the seats in parliament.

In Bangladesh, the first past the post (FPTP) system is practised, in which the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in a constituency wins a seat in parliament.

The Electoral Reform Commission has proposed having an upper and a lower house. It recommended a proportional representation system for the upper house.

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Police using force to disperse protesting students in front of the Secretariat in the capital yesterday. The students of Narsingdi Textile Engineering College had gathered to protest the sudden closure of their institution, as they have long been advocating for the college to be transferred from under the control of the Handloom Board to the Ministry of Textiles.

PHOTO: STAR

## Complaint filed with ICT over 'killings of 848 BNP activists'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday lodged a complaint with the chief prosecutor's office of the International Crimes Tribunal over what the party claimed were the killings of its 848 leaders, activists, and supporters during the July mass uprising.

A team led by Salauddin Khan, leader of pro-BNP organisation Krishak Dal, and several others handed over the application.

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## JULY UPRISING ATROCITIES Hasina bore command responsibility

Says UN rights office spokesperson

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina held command responsibility over the military, police and paramilitary forces and is therefore directly responsible for their actions during the July uprising, according to a report, unveiled on Wednesday, by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Asked whether Hasina is directly culpable, Rory Mungoven, chief of the Asia-Pacific region for OHCHR, pointed out that all the forces answered to her.

There could have been as many as 1,400 protest-related deaths and

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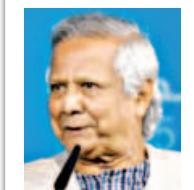
Rory Mungoven

National polls probably this December

Says Yunus at World Govts Summit in Dubai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said that the national election could be held in December.



At an interactive plenary session at the World Government Summit 2025 in Dubai, Yunus suggested that the election would take place as early as possible, "probably in December this year".

The session was moderated by Becky Anderson of CNN at the WGS

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Shab-e-Barat tonight

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Shab-e-Barat will be observed throughout the country tonight with due religious fervour and devotion.

The occasion is usually observed two weeks before the start of

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### HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat. Therefore, the newspaper will not be published tomorrow. Our website will keep you updated 24/7.

যথন খুশি  
যথানে খুশি



Farm Fresh





PROXY EATERIES OF OFFICE CANTEENS

# The pulse of Dhaka's CORPORATE LUNCHTIME

JANNATUL BUSHRA

If you ever happen to walk past any busy corporate neighbourhood in Dhaka during lunchtime, you are in for quite a sight!

Suited up CEOs and managers, standing on the sidewalk, casually sipping tea with their executives. Why? Because nothing unites the ranks like the desperate need to escape the monotony of office canteen food.

From steaming plates of tehari to comforting khichuri, they're all on a mission to find something—anything—that doesn't taste like yesterday's reheated regret.

Whether it's the cosy tea stalls of Motijheel, the biryani houses in Karwan Bazar, or the budget-friendly spots in Mohakhali, these proxy canteens serve as unofficial extensions of Dhaka's workplaces.

"For me, it's not just about food; it's about escaping the office walls. Our entire team comes here almost every day to catch up over a quick meal," says Ahsan Kabir, a mid-level executive working in a financial firm in Banani, while pointing at Star Kabab.

"Our office canteen food is like a broken record of blandness," quips Tanisha Rahman, an HR professional in Tejgaon, adding, "But on this corner of the road, we get to try something new almost every day, and the prices don't burn a hole in our pockets!"

While many offices have in-house

canteens, a significant number of employees prefer the bustling roadside eateries, small cafes, and budget-friendly restaurants nearby, which we are referring to as "proxy eateries". For many, these humble eateries are the Goldilocks zone between outrageously pricey fine dining and the endlessly repetitive office meals.

However, lunchtime at these eateries isn't just about eating; it's a daily ritual where colleagues catch up, teams brainstorm, and unexpected connections are made over plates of khichuri and chicken curry.

Conversations flow as easily as the steaming cups of tea, turning casual chats into fresh ideas, workplace friendships, and even future business ventures.

"I actually met my business partner at one of these spots in Banani," says Shamsul Alam, the founder of a start-up.

"Back then, we worked at different companies, but after enough lunch breaks spent sharing ideas, we decided to start something together," he shared.

Many of these small restaurants operate in tight spaces, with kitchens that might not meet ideal sanitation standards. Still, regular customers seem to turn a blind eye as long as the food remains delicious, affordable and



healthy enough to not call in sick the next day.

"There have been times when we complained about hygiene, but honestly, the food here is too good to resist.

We just make sure to pick places that at least maintain basic cleanliness," says Mehed Hasan, an IT professional.

Meanwhile, these eateries are not just places to eat; they are hubs of corporate gossip. Employees vent their frustrations about difficult bosses, talk about office politics, and share industry rumours over their meals. The restaurant workers, who hear these conversations daily, are often well-

informed about the inner workings of the surrounding offices.

"You'd be surprised how much we know about the managers and executives of these offices," laughs Kamal, a waiter at a popular coffee shop in Gulshan.

"People come here, order their food, and then start complaining about their bosses. The CEOs eat here standing! If we ever wrote a book, it would be a bestseller!"

These eateries do more than serve food. They serve a space where ideas are born, friendships are strengthened, and corporate life finds a moment of solace amidst deadlines and emails.

## Complaint filed

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They also submitted 84 First Information Reports (FIRs) filed over the killings and injuries to "BNP members and supporters" during the mass uprising.

Newspaper clippings, audio and video footage, and list of 848 names were also submitted, Salauddin told reporters.

The complaint mentioned the names of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, ex law minister Anisul Haq, and 500 other named and many other unnamed individuals as accused.

It said the crimes were committed to wipe out the BNP.

Earlier, on January 9, BNP lodged two complaints with the International Crimes Tribunal about the "extrajudicial killings of its 2,276 leaders and activists" and 153 incidents of enforced disappearance from 2008 to August 5, 2024.

## Shab-e-Barat

FROM PAGE 1

Ramadan. It falls on the 15th night of Sha'ban, the eighth month of the Islamic calendar.

The Islamic Foundation (IF) has chalked out programmes at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital, an IF press release said.

The IF will hold waz (religious sermons), doa mahfils, special prayers, recitation from the Holy Quran and Hamid Naat at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque this evening.

Religious Affairs Adviser Dr AFM Khalid Hossain will deliver an Islamic sermon at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque highlighting the significance of Shab-e-Barat around 6:30pm.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus issued a message yesterday greeting all Muslims of the country and elsewhere across the world on the occasion.

On this day, a huge number of devotees visit the nearest graveyards and offer special doa and munajat seeking eternal peace for the departed souls of their near and dear ones.

People also distribute money, food, and sweet among the poor and destitute.

## Modi brings tariff

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administration of Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden.

Before the Trump meeting, Modi said he had first held a "very good" one-on-one meeting with tech billionaire Musk, who has launched an aggressive effort as Trump's right-hand man to overhaul the federal bureaucracy.

The Indian premier posted pictures of himself shaking hands with the beaming SpaceX and Tesla tycoon in front of US and Indian flags, with several children on Musk's side of the room, and Indian officials on the other.

"We discussed various issues, including those I am passionate about such as space, mobility, technology and innovation," Modi said on Musk's X social network, adding that he had spoken about India's efforts towards reform."

Yesterday morning, Modi met with newly elected director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard after landing in Washington, DC.

## BNP, Jamaat on collision course

FROM PAGE 1

It also cited a strong disagreement among political parties regarding the proportional representation system.

Fakhrul yesterday said that holding local polls before the national election would push the country further into instability.

"The sooner the [national] election is held, the easier politics will become. The people will return to a stable situation," he said at a press briefing at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

He said the election is crucial for two reasons. "Firstly, for restoring stability, and secondly, for improving governance in the country, which is currently facing significant challenges."

Fakhrul also expressed concerns over the state of education at universities and colleges, saying, "It is very difficult to address these issues without an elected government."

Yesterday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, now in Dubai, said the national election could be held in December this year.

Late last year, he had hinted the polls could be in late 2025 or mid 2026, after which the crack in BNP-Jamaat relationship started becoming more visible.

The BNP and its allies had been saying they want the national election

with minimal reforms done so that the elected government can carry out all other reforms. They have also been pushing for the polls to be held in the middle of this year.

The Jamaat has been demanding polls after necessary reforms and without any hurry.

When Yunus on January 8 said they were simultaneously preparing for national and local body elections, it pushed the parties even further apart.

After a BNP delegation met Yunus on Monday, Fakhrul told the press that the government assured the party of working to hold the national election by December this year. "We're making it clear, as we did in the past, there will be no election before the national polls."

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman at a rally in Sylhet that day said, "Fundamental reforms are necessary before the election. Without implementing some basic reforms, a fair election will not be possible. If an election is held under the current circumstances, it will be an election genocide. We do not want that. We want elections to be held only after a conducive environment is established."

Yesterday, the Jamaat delegation met the EC even though it is no longer a registered political party. Not being

registered with the EC renders the Jamaat unable to run in elections.

Parwar said their appeal to get their registration restored was pending with a court. He hoped they would get justice.

The four-party alliance, including the BNP and Jamaat, was formed in 1999 to strengthen the movement against the then Awami League-led government.

In the 2001 election, the BNP-led alliance won a landslide, and two top Jamaat leaders were made cabinet members.

But the alliance fared poorly in the 2008 election.

In 2012, it became a 20-party combine as several other parties joined in.

The next year, the HC declared Jamaat's registration with the EC illegal on grounds that some provisions of the Jamaat charter went against the country's constitution and election laws.

In the face of widespread criticism for its ties with the Jamaat, which opposed the Liberation War and had sided with Pakistan, the BNP had been keeping a distance from the Islamist party for the past few years.

The 20-party alliance dissolved in December 2022 after the BNP asked its allies not to use the name of the alliance.

## National polls probably this December

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Conference Venue. Yunus is currently visiting the United Arab Emirates to attend the summit.

In response to a query, Yunus said that some of the interim government's priorities include ensuring law and order and rebuilding the country, society, and institutions, which he said had completely failed under the previous autocratic government led by Sheikh Hasina.

To rebuild the country, the government is going through a process of reforms. It established 15 reform commissions focusing on law and order, police, the constitution, the election system, and other areas, he said.

These commissions are reporting back with their suggestions and recommendations on necessary changes. Now, we have what we call a consensus-building commission. We will go to the political parties and so on, see which are the recommendations all agree."

"So that we take that as a charter and then implement an important election," Yunus said.

The interim government had broad international support and everybody wanted to support the rebuilding of Bangladesh, the chief adviser said.

"We want to build a new Bangladesh. The old Bangladesh is completely corrupt. It was corruption-ridden."

Yunus also said he was relieved that the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights published its report on Bangladesh, documenting murders, enforced disappearances, torture, torture chambers, and killing of student protesters by law enforcement on orders from ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

### UAE MINISTER CALLS ON YUNUS

The minister of health of the United Arab Emirates, Abdul Rahman bin Mohamed Al Owais, yesterday called on Yunus on the sidelines of the World Government's Summit.

Asked about any intention to continue holding a leadership position after the election, Yunus said, "I made it very clear. When my job is done, hand over the responsibility to the elected government. I go back to what I enjoy doing most and this is what I believe in my life. I want to continue with that."

Yunus said that his government took power at a time when everything, including the economy and the administration, fell apart. Billions of dollars were taken away from the banking system. So, the government's job was to rebuild the banking system and the economy.

"We are trying to get this [laundered] money back. It's a very complicated procedure," he said.

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## Hasina bore command responsibility

FROM PAGE 1

"The way the system was set up -- the military, police and paramilitary forces were all under the [former] prime minister," he said, adding that the senior political leadership was fully involved and had complete knowledge of everything happening on the ground.

"It has to be investigated what the individual roles and responsibilities were, but it's evident that this was a coordinated, systematic response to the protests."

Alleging the politicisation of the police forces, he said, "A reform process going forward would include separating policing from politics."

The OHCHR report on the July uprising says security forces and law enforcement agencies were under the direct control of Hasina and the former home affairs minister with "no institutionalised parliamentary or independent oversight".

It called the brutal crackdown on protesters "crimes against humanity" and said that with Hasina's central role in the chain of command established, she too can be accused of

those crimes.

"OHCHR has reasonable grounds to believe that the crimes against humanity of murder, torture, imprisonment and infliction of other inhumane acts have taken place, as part of a widespread and systematic attack against protesters and other civilians seen as potentially joining or supporting the protests, in furtherance of the former Government's policy to violently suppress the protests to ensure its continuation in power."

"It would appear that a significant number of the killings by State forces and Awami League supporters would amount to the crime against humanity of murder, as set forth in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court," said the report.

Article 7 of the Rome Statute states that crimes against humanity require a "widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, with the perpetrator knowing that the conduct was part of, or intended for it to be part of, the attack".

Bangladesh is a signatory to the statute.

## 2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema

FROM PAGE 12

they should use alternative routes via Mohakhali Bijoy Sarani and Mirpur-Gabtoli, according to a DMP press release.

Additionally, inter-district buses, trucks, and heavy vehicles have been advised to avoid Abdullaupur and Dhour Bridge intersections, instead using routes through Mohakhali-Bijoy Sarani-Gabtoli.

Vehicles from northern districts via Nabinagar, Baipail, and Ashulia should avoid Kamarpara/Abdullaupur crossings and opt for Savar-Gabtoli or Dhour Bridge-Mirpur Beribadh routes.

For vehicles arriving in Dhaka via Airport Road, a U-turn near Radisson

Blu hotel or using Kuril Flyover via Pragati Sarani is recommended.

Similarly, vehicles on the 300-feet road should avoid Kuril Flyover loop-2 (airport-bound) and instead use Pragati Sarani and loop-4 (Kakoli-Mohakhali bound).

The DMP also advised avoiding the Kaula/airport-bound exit of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway on February 16.

To assist air travellers, the DMP's Traffic Uttara Division will operate free shuttle services from Padma U-loop to the airport. Additionally, due to damage to the Abdullaupur Bailey Bridge, all vehicles must use the Azampur Flyover instead.

## Send Hasina back for trial

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"It has been proven that she is a fascist. She has committed oppression, torture, and genocide in this country," he added.

The BNP leader further said, "We are calling upon the Indian government to immediately return her [Hasina] and her accomplices to Bangladesh and hand her over to the government for trial. This is our expectation."

Responding to the OHCHR's recommendation against banning political parties, Fakhrul said, "We have made it clear that the people will decide. The people will decide

which political parties should exist or contest elections. We are a liberal democratic party. We believe in democracy and its norms -- we have been practicing these principles."

"When the report on the Aynagar [secret prisons] was published, the Awami League government completely denied it. Today, it has been proven that what we have been saying about

# DHAKA

## Batons and water cannons used to disperse protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police charged batons and used water cannons yesterday to disperse protesters demanding the reinstatement of 6,531 assistant teacher appointments in government primary schools.

Many protesters were injured, but they remained on the road despite the police intervention.

The protesters were continuing their sit-in at Shahbagh for the eighth consecutive day yesterday.

Over 300 candidates began gathering in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh at 9:00am, said Khaled Mansur, officer in charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

The law enforcers took action around 2:00pm.

Holding placards in their hands, the protesters were seen chanting slogans in support of their demands. Some had travelled from different parts of the country, and a few even brought their children along. A photojournalist reported that some protesters were also wearing shrouds.

In another development, sacked police officials, who were dismissed at different times during the Awami League government, staged a demonstration yesterday demanding reinstatement.

They marched towards the Secretariat from Jatiya Press Club around 12:00pm to meet the home affairs adviser with their demands.

As they took position in front of the Secretariat, law enforcers intervened and charged batons to disperse them.

The protesters claimed several of them were injured.

One of the protesters, Ayub Ali, was treated at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Masud Alam, sub-inspector of DMCH Police Outpost.

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Left, a woman falls on the ground as police shoot water from a cannon while another tries to protect her during a sit-in at Shahbagh yesterday. Police used batons and water cannons to disperse the protesters, top right, demanding reinstatement of their appointment as assistant teachers in government primary schools. Bottom right, police charged batons to disperse sacked police officials, who were dismissed during the Awami League government, in front of the Secretariat.

PHOTO: STAR

Constitution reform possible before polls

Says Prof Ali Riaz

STAFF REPORT



Several issues of the constitution can be amended before the elections, said Prof Ali Riaz, head of the Constitution Reform Commission, yesterday.

"But it depends on the decision of the government and political parties," he said during a press briefing at the commission office at the National Parliament, reports BSS.

Riaz said they have identified some problems and informed the government about this and hoped that the government will take a decision soon to make the necessary reforms.

In response to a question, he said whether the constitution will be amended through a referendum or not is also a matter for the consideration of the government and political parties.

"Although there are differences of opinion among political parties, I believe there is consensus among them on the reform issue. Whatever is needed for political change must come from within the parties and cannot be imposed from outside," he observed.

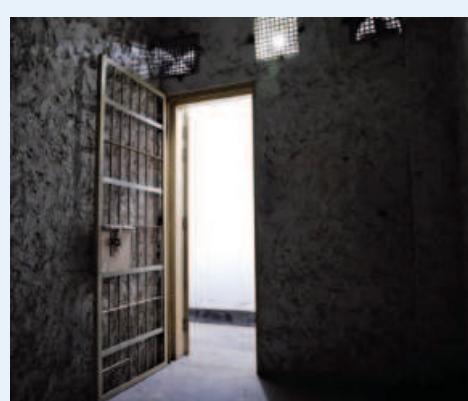
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## Aynaghar: what happened to those still missing?

Family members demand answers, punishment for perpetrators

**Why is that man (pointing to a man in the room) saying my father is dead? We still don't know... maybe he is somewhere else? God knows. How did my father stay in that cell? That cell is too tiny. How did he sleep?**

Hridi, daughter of a victim



**Rab and DGFI need to be disbanded -- there can be no reforms in these forces. We are not looking for just a few token convictions.**

Rezaur Rahman Lenin, Human rights researcher.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With three of the secret detention centres finally unveiled, the families of the forcibly disappeared are faced with a difficult reality -- the loved ones they had been waiting for years are not there.

Year after year, as the families took to the streets again and again during the height of Sheikh Hasina's government's repression, as they faced the police and lived under strict surveillance, most of them held one iron-clad belief -- their family members were inside one of the many secret detention centres, imprisoned but alive.

The alternative was a far worse reality.

Sitting inside a dark seminar room at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday, the families watched a virtual tour of three secret detention centres that were inspected by Chief Adviser Dr

Muhammad Yunus on Wednesday. The photos displayed were taken by the team at Netra News.

As the cameras and crowds cleared after the press conference, the families sat in a daze. Then, one by one, they started breaking down.

Alida Islam Hridi was two and a half years old when her father, Parvez Hossain, was abducted by Rab and forcibly disappeared.

Parvez, a Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal leader from the capital's Bangshal, was picked up from Shahbagh on December 2, 2013. For the past nine years, The Daily Star has documented Hridi demonstrating on the streets, holding a photo of her missing father.

Today, Hridi is a teenager and an eighth grade student. Leaning back against her chair, she sobbed quietly, away from the harsh glare of the cameras. She had just viewed the brutal 2-foot by 4-foot

cells of the Taskforce Intelligence Centre, where victims of enforced disappearance were kept by Rab.

"Why is that man (pointing to a man in the room) saying my father is dead? We still don't know... maybe he is somewhere else? God knows," she said. "How did my father stay in that cell? That cell is too tiny. How did he sleep?"

These same families had walked up to the headquarters of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) the day after Sheikh Hasina's government fell, demanding to be let in so they could rescue their loved ones.

The DGFI later issued a statement saying there were no detainees in the Dhaka facility.

The press conference yesterday was organised by Mayer Daak, a platform of families like Hridi's.

"Rab and DGFI need to be disbanded -- there can be no

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A group of women anxiously wait on the footpath for a TCB truck to arrive. They had been there since 8:00am, but by noon, there was still no sign of the truck. Many had also waited in vain the previous day, losing valuable work hours. With soaring market prices, these low-income individuals have no choice but to endure long waits to buy essentials from TCB trucks at subsidised prices. The photo was taken near Mohammadpur Bus Stand in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'We'll review nat'l security policies'

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday announced that they will hold discussions on national security policies, including the potential abolition of the Rapid Action Battalion and restrictions on the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence.

"All relevant stakeholders will meet to review and decide on various recommendations, including the abolition of Rab as proposed by the United Nations Office for Human Rights and limiting DGFI to military intelligence activities," he said.

The OHCHR had earlier recommended disbanding Rab and restricting the functions of BGB and DGFI.

The adviser came up with the remark while launching SB Immigration's new online app for visa on arrival and transit visa applications at his ministry. He said the citizens of 14 countries would be able to use the app.

"If the current system works effectively, foreigners will be able to obtain a visa on arrival within 10 minutes. If they submit their information online before arrival, it will be verified, and upon reaching Bangladesh, they will scan the code, make the payment, and receive the visa."

On passport issuance, the adviser suggested reconsidering the need for police verification to simplify the process. "To make the process easier, I am considering whether police verification can be omitted. If it remains necessary, arrangements will be made to streamline it."

## NIKO GRAFT CASE Verdict on Feb 19

COURT CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday set February 19 to deliver the judgement in connection with the Niko graft case filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and seven others.

Judge Md Rabiu Alam of the Special Judge's Court-4 of Dhaka passed the order after hearing closing arguments from both the prosecution and the defence, Belal Hossain, bench assistant of the court, told The Daily Star.

Defence lawyer Mohammad Ziauddin represented the BNP chief in the court in her absence as she is receiving treatment abroad.

Earlier, a total of 39 prosecution witnesses testified in the court.

## ACC sues Mustafa Kamal, family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has filed four cases against former finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, also known as Lotus Kamal, and his family members for illegally acquiring assets worth Tk 165.59 crore and suspicious bank transactions amounting to Tk 849.78 crore.

ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain confirmed this at the commission's headquarters in Segunbagicha yesterday.

In each case, Kamal has been named as an accused. The other accused are his wife, Kashmery Kamal, and his two daughters, Kashfi Kamal and Nafisa Kamal.

## 'OPERATION DEVIL HUNT' 566 more held on fifth day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

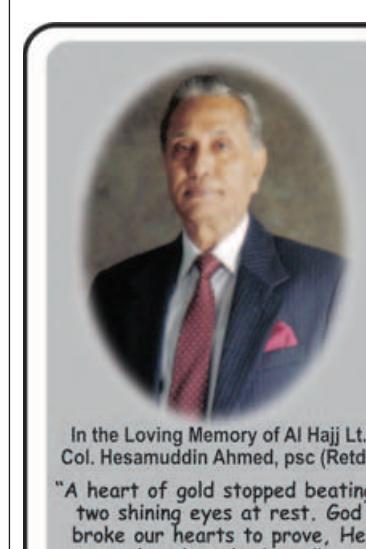
Some 566 more people were arrested in 24 hours till yesterday afternoon as part of the ongoing "Operation Devil Hunt".

Besides, 1,099 others, accused or wanted in previous cases, were also arrested during the same period, according to the home ministry.

The government launched the operation on Saturday to restore law and order following Friday night's attack on "students and people" in Gazipur.

On Wednesday, 1,686 people were arrested, including 591 as part of the drive.

On Tuesday, 1,775 people were arrested, including 607 as part of the operation. On Monday, 1,521 individuals were arrested, with 343 apprehended as part of the operation. On Sunday, 1,308 arrests were reported, but the PHQ did not provide a breakdown of the arrests.



### 13th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Al Hajj Lt. Col. Hesamuddin Ahmed, psc (Retd), served as a Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh in various ministries. He was the Administrator of the Dhaka Municipality, Chairman of RAJUK and other important corporations.

Being the Founder President of the National Shooting Federation Bangladesh, the Founder Member and Founding Vice Chairman RAOWA, his contributions will always be remembered.

He was associated with UCEP Bangladesh, SAHIC and various sports and social welfare organizations. In recognition of his remarkable contributions in the field of Sports development and social welfare he was awarded the National Sports Award (2003), Atish Dipannik Gold Medal, Poet Sarojini Naidu Gold Medal, C R Das Gold Medal etc.

-Dearly Missed & Always Cherished by Wife, Son, Daughter, Daughter in Law & Granddaughters





VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ROMANCE

### Nidra and Prantar go from reel to real

SHARMIN JOYA

Some connections are simply meant to be. For Nidra Dey Neha and Prantar Dastider, it all began on the set of Goutam Koiri's directorial web film *Antonagar* (2023). When they first worked together, little did they know that the film would change their lives forever.

"This project will always be special to both of us," shared Prantar. "Whenever we think about how we got together, it feels like it was destined, as Prantar had no plans of becoming an actor, rather, he wanted to pursue direction," added Nidra.

What began as an on-screen pairing soon blossomed into a real-life bond. They tied the knot on January 31 last year, that too, at the very place where they first met.

"It wasn't love at first sight, but I liked him from the beginning, and wanted to know him better. Working together gave us more time, and the moment I was sure about my feelings, I knew that I was going to marry this man!" Nidra said excitedly. "I was the who confessed first, which actually surprised Prantar."

Prantar then took some time to confirm whether Nidra truly wanted a lifelong commitment. "I knew she was head over heels, and so was I. But I needed to be sure she was ready for this journey with me," said the actor, who made his silver-screen debut with *840*.

Nidra entered showbiz through Miss Universe 2020, where she placed in the top ten. She was crowned Miss Photogenic Bangladesh 2020 and went on to feature in top-brand TVCs, ramp shows, and acting projects. Last year, she made her film debut with *Shoroter Joba*.

As we spoke, they expressed their love and care for each other, with a hint of teasing. "He's an incredibly supportive partner," Nidra shared. "He understands whenever I'm home late—that's the advantage of being in the same profession. At the same time, he ensures that I'm comfortable and well-rested after a long day on set," added the *Adhunik Bangla Hotel* actress.

While this side of her husband won her heart, Prantar shared his admiration for Nidra's cooking. "She's an amazing cook and completely changed how I eat. I used to rush through meals, mixing and swallowing to save time. But she taught me to savor each dish separately and appreciate that eating is a form of art."

Nidra shared her surprise at observing Prantar's newfound love for pets after marriage. "He never had pets before and was initially a bit uneasy around animals, though he liked them. But once, while I was away for a shoot, he bonded deeply with our cat, Fighter. That really impressed me. Now, with three cats and a dog, he loves them as much as I do—and that makes me fall for him over and over again."

I like  
any other  
couple,  
do they  
argue?

"Definitely", Prantar admitted. "But we have a rule—no matter what, we will never disrespect each other," Nidra added. "When we fight, we don't blame each other; instead, we focus on finding the root of the problem. But since I'm the short-tempered one, I tend to have outbursts of anger."

For their first Valentine's Day together, Nidra surprised Prantar by decorating the entire room with hundreds of balloons. "Being an asthma patient, I blew over 200 balloons myself just for him," she shared. Prantar added, "Nidra is expressive, while I'm the opposite. But as we continue this journey together, we're gradually becoming more like the other every day."

Despite working on multiple projects together, including *Shokher Nari*, Nidra and Prantar couldn't collaborate on a Valentine's Day project this year, even after receiving offers. "My father has been diagnosed with cancer, and I'm dedicating my time to him—from his treatment to overseeing everything," Nidra shared.

However, they will reunite on an

upcoming fiction by Mehdi Hasan. "I enjoyed shooting this project the most because there was a scene where I had to beat Prantar—I gave it my best shot by channeling all the annoyance I had toward him," Nidra laughed.

Having recently wrapped up a web series, Prantar is now gearing up for his next film shoot.

As colleagues in the same industry, they appreciate, critique, and advise each other. "Nidra helps me prepare for roles, guiding me on the right amount of effort to put in—neither too much nor too little. I believe this has made my performances more impactful," Prantar shared.

Despite their busy schedules, they make time to watch each other's work and offer feedback. "I loved his performance in *Tithidor*, but I deliberately avoid some of his projects that I feel I shouldn't watch as his wife," Nidra shared. Prantar, however, believes that whatever happens on-screen is part of their profession and never takes it personally. Prantar thinks that one of Nidra's finest performances was in *Hasher Salon*, an episode of *Adhunik Bangla Hotel*.

Nidra and Prantar's relationship is built on mutual respect, shared passions, and immense support, both on and off-screen.



NIDRA'S OUTFIT: AGISTAR  
PRANTAR'S ATTIRE: UMAAB  
NIDRA'S MAKEUP SPONSOR: MAKEOVER FINESSE BY FARHANA CHATTY  
PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHEAD

'Jongli's' first romantic track impresses listeners



Following the unveiling of the protagonist's new look for the much-anticipated movie *Jongli*, its first song, *Jonom Jonom*, was officially released. The music video for this romantic track features the dynamic pairing of Siam Ahmed and Prarthana Fardin Dighi.

The song premiered last Wednesday on the Tiger Media YouTube channel and has already started receiving immense appreciation from fans—many of whom recreated dance and cinematic reels using the song within 20 hours of its release.

With *Jonom Jonom*, Siam makes a return to his signature "chocolate boy" persona, a moniker that fans have long associated with him. His effortless charm, combined with Dighi's graceful performance, adds to the song's appeal, making it a standout romantic number.

*Jonom Jonom*'s lyrics and composition were crafted by the legendary Prince Mahmud, while Tahsan Khan and Atiya Anisha lent their voices to it. The musical arrangement was handled by popular music director Imran Mahmudul, further enhancing the song's emotional depth.

## British Railways to honour 30 years of 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge'



This year, as Britain's railway system prepares to celebrate the 200th anniversary of modern railways with its *Railway 200* campaign, it has also announced an exciting partnership with Yash Raj Films (YRF) to commemorate 30 years of the iconic Bollywood classic *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (DDLJ).

As part of this initiative, Yash Raj Films (YRF) will present *Come Fall In Love - The DDLJ Musical* to celebrate both milestones. The production will be helmed by Aditya Chopra, the visionary behind *DDLJ*.

The film, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, was largely shot in the UK, with their first encounter at London's King's Cross Station. Trains played a key role in this beloved film, strengthening its ties to British culture.

Set to debut at the Manchester Opera House on May 29, 2025, the production aims to capture the film's magic on stage with an English-language performance and an original score.

## Indywood secures global sales rights for 'Boli'

Indywood Distribution Network (IDN) has officially taken on the international sales rights for *Boli (The Wrestler)*, Bangladesh's official submission for the 97th Academy Awards in the International Feature Film category. The film, which also clinched the top honour at the Busan International Film Festival, is now set for worldwide representation.

Indywood is set to showcase *Boli* at the European Film Market (EFM), held alongside the Berlin International Film Festival, to secure broader global distribution.

Directed by Iqbal H Chowdhury, the film centres on Moju (Nasir Uddin Khan), a seasoned fisherman and former wrestling coach, who dares to take on reigning champion Dofor (AKM Ittam). His decision sparks turmoil, deeply affecting his son Shafu (Angel Noor) and newlywed wife Rashu (Priyam Archi).

Described by Variety as a "slow-burning exploration



of obsession," the film has drawn attention for its unconventional narrative.

Both Indywood's Shyam Kurup and director Chowdhury shared their enthusiasm about introducing *Boli* to a global audience through EFM.

## Screens rife with Valentine's delights



A host of web-films and dramas are set for release this Valentine's Day, adding to the festive fervour. Let's take a look at the entertainment delights lined up for audiences to watch.

Chorki has unveiled the poster for its latest web-film, *Ghumpori*, featuring Tanjin Tisha, Parsha Mahjabeen, and Pritom Hasan. The tagline, "Everyone loves, but how many truly hold on?", has piqued audience curiosity, especially given Pritom Hasan's previous Valentine's release, *Kacher Manush Dure Thuiya*, which gained significant attention last year. Directed by Zahid

Pritom, *Ghumpori* will premiere on February 20.

On February 18, Binge will release Vicky Zahid's web film, *Neel Shukh*. Known for thrillers, Vicky explores romance this time, though the trailer hints at his signature genre. The project marks the first collaboration between Mehazabien Chowdhury and Forrukh Ahmed Rehan.

Meanwhile, iScreen is set to premiere *Ashbe Ki Phire?*, directed by Sagar Jahan and starring Khairul Basar and Tanjin Tisha, it will be released today.

Bongo will also introduce *Next Door*.



*Neighbour*, a lighthearted love story marking Mahmuda Sultana Reema's directorial debut. Starring Aisha Khan and Partho Sheikh, the drama will premiere tomorrow.

Several dramas have already premiered on YouTube. Among them, *Samudraneela*, starring Shohel Mondol and Tania Islam, is now available on Barfi Productions' channel. *Ladies Perfume*, featuring Mosharraf Karim and Jannatul Sumaiya Heme, is streaming on RTV Drama. Another project, *Prothom Premier Golpo*, directed by Rubel Anush and starring Partho Sheikh and Farin

Khan, premiered on Eleven's YouTube channel.

Meanwhile, awaiting release are several highly anticipated dramas, including *Reflection of Love*, starring Yash Rohan and Tania Brishti; *Bosontobowri*, featuring Khairul Basar and Tanjin Tisha; and *Dur Theke Bhalobashi*, starring Yash Rohan and Totini.

Additionally, *Mon Duyari*, marking Apurba and Naznin Nihal's first on-screen pairing, has generated excitement online. Directed by Zakaria Soukhin, it is set to release on CMV's YouTube channel on February 15.



# INTERNATIONAL

28 hurt after car drives into Munich crowd

Afghan asylum-seeker arrested

REUTERS, Munich

Some 28 people were injured when a 24-year-old Afghan asylum seeker drove a car into a crowd of people in Munich yesterday, in what the state premier said was probably an attack, as the German city prepared to host a top-level security conference.

Police in the southern city said a car approached police vehicles stopped by a demonstration held by the Verdi union before speeding up and hitting people.

"It was probably an attack," Bavaria state premier Markus Soeder told reporters. Bavaria's interior minister said he did not suspect there was a connection to the conference.

Police said they had detained the driver and did not consider him to pose any further threat.

Trump orders US diplomats to speak with 'one voice'

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday ordered the "reform" of the US diplomatic corps, effectively curtailing any dissent against his policies.

"Failure to faithfully implement the President's policy is grounds for professional discipline, including separation," the order, entitled "One Voice For America's Foreign Relations," said.



Police work at the scene where a car drove into a crowd in Munich, Germany, yesterday. The suspected attack came hours before leading international figures, including US Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, were in the city for the high-profile Munich Security Conference, which starts today.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Hamas committed to Gaza ceasefire

Says the Palestinian group, confirms it will release Israeli hostages as planned

AFP, Jerusalem

Hamas said yesterday it was committed to honouring a truce with Israel that is facing its worst crisis since it took effect, and added that mediators were pushing for hostages to be released this weekend as planned.

Palestinian sources reported progress in efforts to salvage the ceasefire which was plunged into uncertainty after Hamas warned it would not release hostages tomorrow, citing Israeli violations.

Israel hit back, saying that if Hamas failed to free captives on schedule, it would resume

its war in Gaza.

"We are keen to implement it (the ceasefire) and oblige the occupation to fully abide by it. Mediators are pressuring (Israel) to complete the full implementation of the agreement, oblige the occupation to abide by the humanitarian protocol, and resume the exchange process on Saturday," Hamas spokesman Abdel Latif Al Qanou said.

A Palestinian source said mediators had obtained from Israel a "promise... to put in place a humanitarian protocol starting from this morning".

Egyptian state-linked media said

construction equipment, including bulldozers and trucks carrying mobile homes, was ready to enter Gaza from Egypt.

US President Donald Trump had warned that "hell" would break loose if the Palestinian group failed to release "all" the hostages by noon on Saturday.

The truce, currently in its first phase, has seen Israeli captives released in small groups in exchange for Palestinians in Israeli custody.

UN chief Antonio Guterres has urged Hamas to proceed with the planned release and "avoid at all costs resumption of hostilities in Gaza".

## Grit amid resistance from Muslim league

FROM PAGE 12  
In early March that year, following the central programme, the Kishoreganj Bhasha Sangram Parishad (Language Struggle Committee) was formed with Abdul Wadud Chowdhury as its convener, according to the book "Bhasha Andoloner Ancholik Itihas" by Dr Abu Md Delowar Hossain.

Other members included Rafiq Uddin Bhuiyan, Ashraf Uddin Master, Shamsuddin Ahmed, Professor Habibur Rahman, Narendra Chandra Ghosh, Jagdish Pandit, and others.

Meanwhile, members of the Muslim League's reactionary faction began collecting signatures in support of Urdu as the state language, instead of Bangla.

At the same time, an organisation was formed with madrasa students and teachers, under the leadership of Maulana Ataur Ali, Musleh Uddin, and Saidur Rahman. It campaigned for Urdu as the state language and actively obstructed the activities of the Language Movement.

However, despite their efforts, the movement continued to gain momentum.

Targeting March 11, as the main day of the movement, posters, leaflets and more were distributed across the district as part of a widespread campaign to gather public support.



Gurudayal College Shaheed Minar

A full-scale hartal and strike were observed and separate protest rallies were organised from Islamia Hostel, Gurudayal College, and Tarun Library.

On January 27, 1952, Pakistan's Prime Minister Khawaja Nazimuddin declared Urdu as the state language, prompting the students and locals of Kishoreganj to erupt in protest.

A united Sarbodoli Chhatra Sangram Parishad (All-Party Students' Struggle Committee) was formed, with Hedayat Hossain at the helm. Other members included Abu Taher Khan Pathan, AB Siddiq, Nazrul Islam, Shahadat Chowdhury, and others.

According to "Bhasha Andolone Tekna theke Tentulia" by Ahmad Rafiq, while most religious institutions in Kishoreganj opposed the movement, the Jamiyyate Telaibi Arabiya extended its full cooperation and support

to the movement.

In accordance with the central programme, a large scale campaign was carried out across the district, with February 21 designated as the central day of the movement. Leaflets were distributed and blowhorn announcements were made.

On February 21, another full-scale hartal was observed throughout the district. Students from various educational institutions, including Gurudayal College, Ramanand High School, Sarjubala Girls' High School, Azim Uddin High School, and more, brought out processions that marched throughout the city. The main slogan being chanted was "Rashtrabhasha Bangla chal! (Want Bangla as the state language!).

However, demonstrators in some places faced resistance from followers of the Muslim League and Nezam e Islam. According to the book

"Rashtrabhasha Bangla chal! (Want Bangla as the state language!).

The UN report recommends suspending the officers involved in these killings from the state forces to ensure an impartial trial.

"If these officers are not suspended or dismissed, witnesses will be afraid to testify, which will disrupt the judicial process."

The UN has also recommended reforms in the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973, he

said, adding that before the release of the UN report, the necessary reforms in the laws of the International Crimes Tribunal had already been made.

The UN expresses concerns about the moratorium on the death penalty, suggesting that it should be suspended. But since our judges have the power to decide on the type of punishment, that matter will be addressed later."

"Bhasha Andolone Kosh Volume-1" by M Abdul Alim, the news of students being killed by police in Dhaka reached Kishoreganj on February 22, causing uproar across the district. A mass procession, joined by people from all walks of life and organised by the Rashtrabhasha Sangram Parishad (State Language Struggle Committee), paraded the entire city.

On the day, students at Gurudayal College Hostel hoisted black flags and organised a funeral, while protest meetings were held at the Public Library and Shah Mosque.

In Kishoreganj's Bajitpur upazila, students from Rajkumar Edward Institute also brought out a mourning procession, which marched through local markets and several villages.

A full-scale hartal was imposed in the district even on February 23. A protest meeting, presided over by Abdul Wadud Chowdhury, was conducted at the city's playground. Others at the meeting included Abu Taher Khan Pathan, Ashraf Uddin Master, Rashidur Rahman Chowdhury, Aminul Haque and more.

On February 25, students and locals constructed a Shaheed Minar.

That same day, however, police issued arrest warrants for Abu Taher Khan Pathan, Ashraf Uddin Master, Aminul Haque and Sundar Ali for their involvement in the movement.

After commencing its work on February 15, following its deliberations, the commission will submit recommendations for necessary actions. Its primary mandate is to engage with political parties and stakeholders of the 2024 uprising to build a national consensus on reforms related to elections, public administration, the judiciary, anti-corruption measures, and police activities.

The Chief Adviser's Office will manage the commission's secretarial duties, while the government will determine the commission's office location.

Dhaka already sent necessary docs to Delhi

FROM PAGE 12  
Muhammad Yunus, has pledged security sector reform. HRW noted that the government launched "Operation Devil Hunt" following violent protests earlier this month, arresting nearly 2,000 people—mostly supporters of the deposed AI government.

Regarding the timing of the reminder, Rafiqul described it as both a diplomatic and political decision, saying, "A reminder will be sent when the leadership deems it appropriate."

So far, India has not responded to Bangladesh's request. "We continue to expect a response from India," Rafiqul said.

Bangladesh has been awaiting a reply and was expected to send a reminder after a certain period if no response was received from New Delhi. The next step will be determined based on India's reply.

Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal confirmed that India received the extradition request from Bangladesh's interim government.

Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at HRW, said, "Bangladesh is

Make sure law enforcers

FROM PAGE 2  
politically polarised after decades of repression by the Awami League government, but the authorities should not repeat mistakes of the past and should instead ensure impartial rule of law."

As the United Nations has said, the interim government should focus on urgent reforms to the political system and economic governance."

The HRW statement mentioned Yunus also called for calm and he said that respecting the rule of law is "what differentiates the new Bangladesh we are working together to build from the old Bangladesh under the fascist regime".

"However, the government should also recognise that the right to peaceful assembly and protest, even by supporters of the former authoritarian government, is a fundamental right protected under international law," it said.

The rights group advised the Yunus government to consider bringing a consensus resolution at the upcoming UN Human Rights Council session in March to request technical assistance, further investigations, and monitoring and reporting by UN-backed human rights experts.

It said the resolution should also acknowledge the tyranny of the previous administration and recognise positive human rights steps taken by the interim government.

"Bangladeshis are angry over the repression by the Hasina administration and they deserve justice and accountability, but it has to be a rights-respecting manner," HRW's Ganguly said.

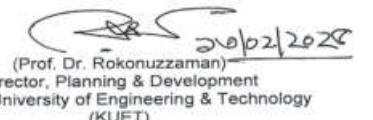
"All crimes, including mob violence, should be punished, but when authority figures characterise opponents as the 'devil,' it can fuel abuses by security forces that have never faced accountability."

| OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR (PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT)<br>Khulna University of Engineering & Technology<br>Khulna-9203, Bangladesh                            |   |   |  |                                       |                            |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| e-Tender Notice  |   |   |  |                                       |                            |
| e-Tender will be invited in the National e-Gp System Portal ( <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.eprocure.gov.bd</a> ) for procurement of |   |   |  |                                       |                            |
| Sl. No.  | Tender ID No.   | Package No.   | Description  | Online Tender Notice Publication date | Online Tender Closing date |
| 01   | 1066174<br>(KUET/P&D/1429/05)/2025<br>Date-13/02/2025 | Package No.-RG-24 (Rev. 1)/2024-2025<br>Open Tendering Method (OTM) | Supply of Lab Equipment for ECE Department                                   | 13 February 2025                      | 02 March 2025              |
| 02   | 1066175<br>(KUET/P&D/1430/05)/2025<br>Date-13/02/2025 | Package No.-RG-25 (Rev. 1)/2024-2025<br>Open Tendering Method (OTM) | Supply of Lab Equipment for CE Department                                    | 13 February 2025                      | 02 March 2025              |
| 03   | 1068096<br>(KUET/P&D/1431/05)/2025<br>Date-13/02/2025 | Package No.-RG-29 (Rev. 1)/2024-2025<br>Open Tendering Method (OTM) | Supply of Lab Equipment for Industrial Engineering and Management Department | 13 February 2025                      | 02 March 2025              |
| 04   | 1074938<br>(KUET/P&D/1432/05)/2025<br>Date-13/02/2025 | Package No.-RG-31 (Rev. 1)/2024-2025<br>Open Tendering Method (OTM) | Supply of X-Ray Machine with all accessories                                 | 13 February 2025                      | 06 March 2025              |
| 05   | 1074946<br>(KUET/P&D/1433/05)/2025<br>Date-13/02/2025 | Package No.-RG-49 (Rev. 1)/2024-2025<br>Open Tendering Method (OTM) | Supply of Lab Equipment for Fab Lab (KUET)                                   | 13 February 2025                      | 27 February 2025           |

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-Gp Portal and no online/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 last selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-Gp system portal have 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)).

  
(Prof. Dr. Rokonuzzaman)  
Director, Planning & Development  
Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET)  
Khulna-9203.

## UN report will be used as evidence

FROM PAGE 2  
home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and used deadly weapons on people, he said.

The UN fact-finding committee in its report clearly states that crimes against humanity were committed during this period.

Those responsible for giving commands are Hasina, Quader and Asaduzzaman.

treatment."

The UN report recommends suspending the officers involved in these killings from the state forces to ensure an impartial trial.

"If these officers are not suspended or dismissed, witnesses will be afraid to testify, which will disrupt the judicial process."

The UN has also recommended reforms in the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973, he

said, adding that before the release of the UN report, the necessary reforms in the laws of the International Crimes Tribunal had already been made.

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According to the book

DAKKA FRIDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2025  
FALUN 1, 1431 BS

The Daily Star

7

INDIAN STATE OF MANIPUR  
President's rule imposed days after CM's resignation

TNN, New Delhi

India's ministry of home affairs yesterday announced that President's Rule has been imposed in Manipur. This came days after Manipur chief minister (CM) Biren Singh tendered his resignation to the governor of the state.

"Whereas, I, Droupadi Murmu, President of India, have received a report from the Governor of the State of Manipur and after considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of that State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India," the notification released by the MHA read.

Yunus, Musk discuss

FROM PAGE 12

how high-speed, low-cost internet connectivity could bridge the digital divide in Bangladesh, strengthen education, healthcare,

### Horrible details of July massacre

#### UN report gives damning proof of Hasina's fascist role

We welcome the long awaited release of the fact finding report of the United Nations Human Rights Office about the crimes and abuses committed by the Awami League government during the July-August uprising. And as expected, it provides conclusive proof of the systematic brutalities inflicted upon protesters as well as Sheikh Hasina's role in orchestrating them. This should put to rest any lingering attempts—domestic or international—to distort, downplay, or whitewash the atrocities the regime carried out in a desperate bid to retain power. The facts are now indisputable, so the path to justice should be clearer than ever before.

In its 114 page report, the UN, based on testimonies from senior security officials, confirms that Hasina herself ordered security forces to kill protesters. On July 19, she explicitly instructed them to "arrest the ringleaders of the protests, the troublemakers, kill them and hide their bodies." Her trusted lieutenant, then-home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, reinforced this directive in meetings with top security officials, ordering the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to use lethal force. These instructions and consequent measures paved the path for the killing of as many as 1,400 people—including many children—in what the UN describes as "crimes against humanity." Other findings of the report are equally chilling.

It states that protesters were shot at point-blank range and killed. It identifies the integrated role of at least seven security forces, including the Army, BGB, and RAB, as well as ruling party activists, who coordinated to arbitrarily harass, arrest, torture, and even execute protesters. The details provided by the report about these developments, and the roles played by both security and intelligence agencies, are shocking. The report also sheds light on the sexual violence committed against women protesters as part of a broader strategy to suppress dissent. It reveals that officers also obstructed medical care for injured protesters, intimidating doctors and pressuring them to falsify medical reports or deny treatment to victims. Forensic pathologists were forced to misclassify causes of death, erasing proof of extrajudicial killings. There were also frequent internet blackouts to disrupt protesters' ability to organise.

Following the unveiling of the report, the UN rights chief has rightly called for additional criminal investigations to determine the full extent of these violations. For now, it is only appropriate that the ongoing trials of former regime figures and officials incorporate these findings as evidence, which the chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) said they would. The UN, however, said it would not share evidence from its investigation with Bangladesh unless the trials meet international standards. There are certain issues that may stand in the way of a UN approval of the justice process, but we hope for the sake of the victims that those will be resolved soon. It is also vital that past crimes by the Awami regime, including enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions, are tried and those responsible held to account. The UN has made a number of recommendations in its report, which too must be seriously considered and acted on.

### Justice for Aynaghar victims

#### The horrors of torture cells must not be allowed to happen again

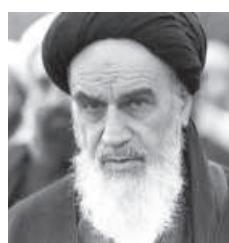
We are appalled to have finally witnessed the insides of secret detention centres known as Aynaghar, where individuals were imprisoned—some for eight to nine years—by security forces of the Sheikh Hasina regime. During a visit to these locations in Dhaka by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and others, chilling details about these torture cells once again came to light. Some of the survivors who accompanied the chief adviser identified the cells where they had been held, recounting the horrific experiences they had endured there. As their photos were published, other survivors also recognised some of the places. These cells stand as a stark reminder of the ousted regime's fascist rule which should never be repeated.

After the political changeover on August 5, many victims of enforced disappearances were released from secret detention centres. We came to know about their experience from interviews and statements. Later, the interim government formed a commission to investigate these cases, and according to its interim report, a total of 1,676 complaints were filed against various government agencies, including RAB, DGFI, DB, CTTC, CID, and the police. Of these, 758 complaints have been verified, revealing that 73 percent of the victims have returned while the remaining 27 percent (comprising at least 204 individuals) are still missing.

The level of brutality inflicted upon these people is beyond belief. Photos and videos released by the chief adviser's press wing show that the detention centres contain tiny cells where almost no light or air can reach. One cell was found to be only three feet by one foot, with a toilet occupying two handspans of space, leaving just two feet for someone to sit with their knees folded. There are cells even smaller than a chicken coop. It has been observed that several modifications were made to the cells, and the walls were repainted to destroy evidence.

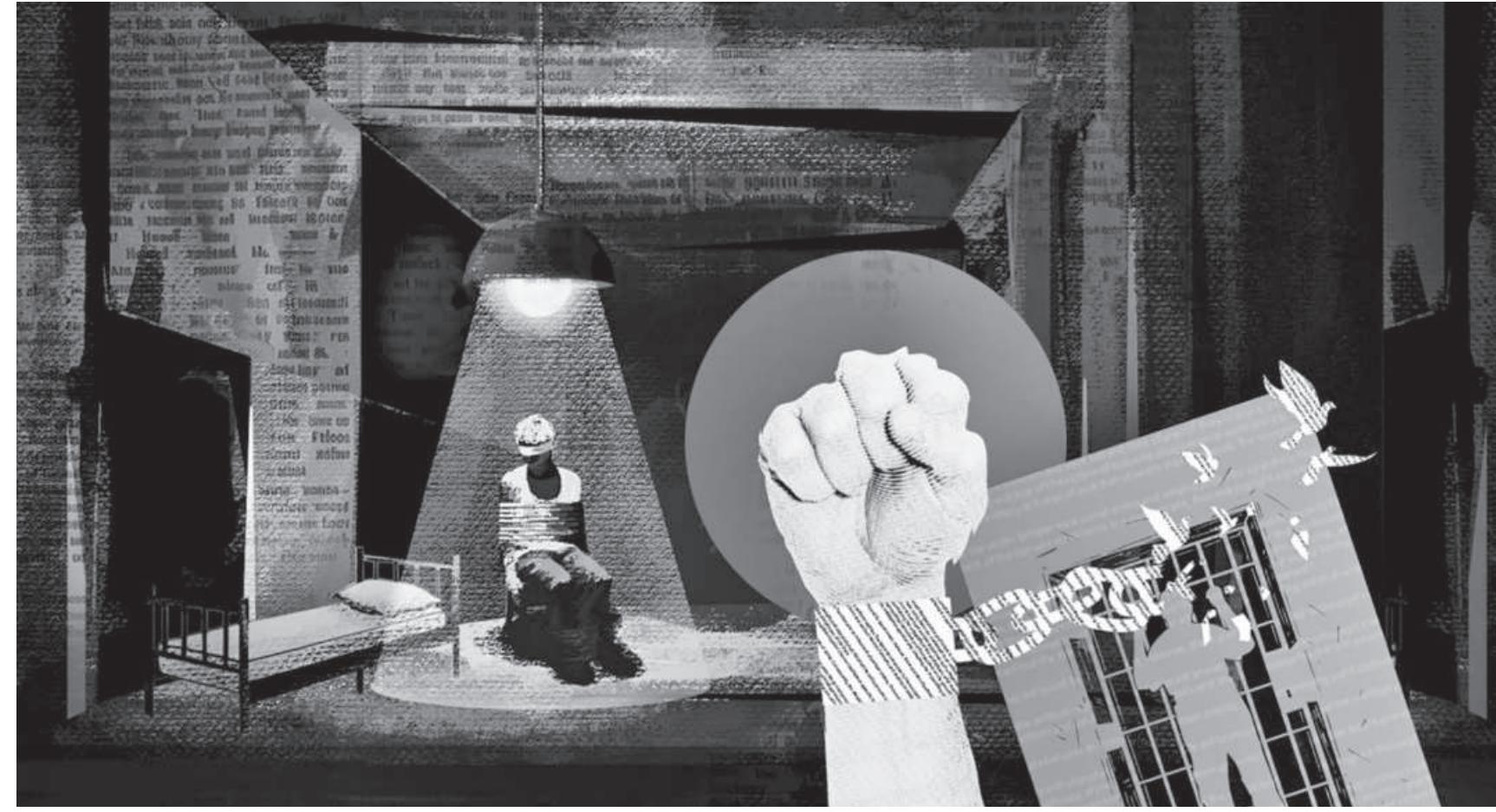
Reportedly, the commission identified more than eight secret detention centres. However, the actual number is believed to be around 700-800, spread across the country. We urge the government to identify all such centres and initiate legal proceedings against those involved in their operations as well as the crimes committed there. It is crucial that the horrors of Aynaghar are not allowed to recur under any circumstances in the future.

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY



#### Khomeini issues fatwa against Salman Rushdie

On this day in 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa and offered a bounty for the assassination of author Salman Rushdie, whose novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) Khomeini denounced as blasphemous.



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

## How the ex-PM used and abused intelligence agencies

We need legal frameworks to prevent their future misuse



#### THE THIRD VIEW

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

#### MAHFUZ ANAM

Two remarkable things happened last Wednesday—the chief advisor visited "Aynaghar" (House of Mirrors), the secret torture cells set up by security and intelligence agencies to confine, interrogate, psychologically break, demoralise, and physically torture a select group of opponents and dissenters whom the political governments of day wanted either eliminated or at least tortured and intimidated into submission.

On the same date, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued its long-awaited report on the Sheikh Hasina government's handling of the July uprising and the killings that took place. The UN fact-finding mission, citing senior security officials, stated: "The prime minister herself told the security force officials to kill protesters to quell the protests and specifically demanded 'arrest the ringleaders of the protests, the troublemakers, kill them and hide their bodies.'" The report quoted testimonials from a meeting held on July 19, 2024. This, seen in conjunction with party secretary general, Obaidul Quader's statement to the press on the same day that security forces had been given orders to "shoot on sight," reveals the diabolical mindset that appears to have dominated the thinking of the former prime minister. The previous day, July 18, the home minister, chairing a meeting of the "core committee," told the BGB commander "to order the use of lethal force more readily."

Nothing could have revealed the atrocious levels to which our intelligence agencies had descended more than the chief advisor's visit to the "Aynaghar." We owe it to the Sweden-based Netra News for breaking the news in 2022 about the secret torture centres set up by the DGFI to torture political opponents. We carried the news one week later. Those of us who operated inside the country were highly constrained and took courage in seeing some Bangladeshi fellow journalists doing the unthinkable.

As we fret over, write about, and condemn what happened, the real challenge is to take effective steps to prevent it all from happening again. The OHCHR has made some vital recommendations that we must now implement—ones that were prevented from being put into practice in the past. We hope that the spirit of the July uprising will ensure nothing similar happens now.

A crucial recommendation is to reform the colonial-era Police Act of 1861. It is quite incredible that we have lived with it even after over 53 years of independence. We have been demanding police reforms for years, especially training them to become a force for the people instead of being an instrument of violence against them.

They need to be trained in modern tactics for handling protests and controlling crowds. Given our history of spirited and immensely politically relevant student movements, our police should have received special training for peaceful crowd control. Instead, they retained the colonial era habits of violently attacking demonstrators, beating them, and resorting to lethal weapons. Then, of course, there is torture in custody, which has resulted in many deaths.

We have protested for decades against the use of lethal weapons to disperse crowds. None of our elected governments made any attempt to reform the police, though both of our main political parties—the Awami League and BNP—were victims of police atrocities while in opposition. In this regard, the suggestion to set up an independent commission to investigate police violations of the law, modernise investigation techniques, reduce mass criminal charges and arrests, and minimise reliance on coerced confessions needs urgent implementation. The establishment of a National Police Commission for fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment also deserves swift action.

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journalists doing the unthinkable.

Regarding institutionalised impunity and a politically pliant justice sector, the recommendation to establish a genuinely independent judiciary reflects a long-expressed desire of our people. The suggestion to create an independent mechanism for the recruitment of judges, protection against intimidation, and guaranteed tenure must also be implemented urgently.

The setting up of an independent public prosecution service and a witness protection programme would greatly contribute to dispensing justice.

A most serious issue highlighted in the UN report is the use and abuse of intelligence agencies, especially the DGFI and NSI, by the political masters of the day. The "Aynaghar" detention and torture centres would not have been set up unless the DGFI and others complied. The relevant question is: did they have the option not to?

The DGFI is mostly manned by members of the armed forces but does

not report to the army hierarchy. It reports to the Prime Minister's Office and, as such, must obey the orders of the political masters of the day. So, the crucial question is: what can that institution do if ordered to undertake illegal activities, as most dramatically exemplified by the establishment of "Aynaghars." Its complicity in forced disappearances, human rights violations, arbitrary confinements, and many other abuses is well known. It is a fact that all governments—both military and civilian—used the DGFI for their own political goals. However, under Sheikh Hasina, it reached its most coercive height. Not only was it used to intimidate, torture, and punish political opponents, but it was also used to fulfil the agendas of notorious private companies—such as capturing banks and securing lucrative contracts. This led to massive corruption. Such misuse of this vital intelligence agency, closely linked to our national security, not only greatly damaged its image and reputation but also compromised its integrity, independence, and ability to serve the nation.

It is our considered view that all our intelligence agencies, especially the DGFI and NSI, must be prevented from being misused by future elected governments. And this is the moment to do it. No past governments did it. And future ones are unlikely to do so, as these agencies are the most convenient tools for oppressing the opposition and implementing highly partisan goals.

Political powers also used the DGFI to intimidate the free and independent media. Private companies were

most importantly, an institutional governance structure—with clear channels of communication, supervision, and accountability—must be set up to provide all intelligence agencies with clear mandates so that each institution and those working in them know what they are expected to do, and what falls outside their mandate. This will give each institution and their chiefs the right and the legal cover to refuse performing any tasks which fall outside of their mandates. The vagueness of current mandates allows political leadership to misuse them. In today's world, the term "security" is used to justify actions that create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. It must also be mentioned that some overenthusiastic individuals within these institutions allowed such abuses because it gave

**In its obsession with remaining in power, Sheikh Hasina's government distorted and misused all institutions, including the judiciary, bureaucracy, police, and intelligence agencies. This facilitated the creation of the fascistic ruling structure from which we have now been freed by the student-led people's uprising.**

them a chance to take advantage of the situation for personal aggrandisement. After all, a sense of unlimited power triggers many unwarranted things within a person.

We must establish an independent and democratic oversight institution that will help govern them better and also prevent their political, partisan, and sometimes even personal misuse. There must also be fiduciary transparency in regard to budget and their utilisation. Examples abound all over the world where powerful intelligence agencies are monitored by parliamentary or other independent oversight bodies. All intelligence agencies—DGFI, NSI, SB, DB—would benefit from such oversight, which will help them operate independently to serve national interest instead of partisan ones.

With the gradual collapse of the law-based world order, the necessity and rising relevance of intelligence agencies, particularly those linked to defence establishments, are greater than ever. We acknowledge this need. However, we must also ensure that these institutions are trained, equipped, and elevated to global standards. For that to happen, we must eliminate political and partisan influence over these critical institutions.

Just as we value these institutions and need them to serve us better in handling our security issues, we also need the legal and governance related infrastructure to prevent the kind of abuse and misuse that we have witnessed and suffered from in recent years.

# Devils, heroes, or something in between?



OF MAGIC AND MADNESS

Badiuzzaman Bay  
is assistant editor at The Daily Star.

BADIUZZAMAN BAY

What's in a name? Quite a lot, actually. Names define identities. Names shape perceptions. They also help set narratives, assign blame, and even influence outcomes. It, therefore, makes sense that the simple act of naming a "mob" has suddenly become contentious because of all the baggage it brings with it in present-day Bangladesh. This debate—triggered by the launch of the Operation Devil Hunt following renewed anti-fascist campaigns and Adviser Mahfuz Alam's characterisation of mobs as "devils" in a stern warning to *Touhid Janata*—was perhaps inevitable in a country reborn through a violent uprising by individuals who would have been branded terrorists or anarchist mobs, and severely punished, had they failed. In a remarkable turnaround, they are now national heroes, and rightly so.

The question is, who qualifies as a mob then? Can such a generic term even capture the diversity and nuances of different groups? While Mahfuz was more specific in his portrayal, the home ministry was less so as it alluded to "saboteurs who attacked students," individuals with warrants against them, "troublemakers", and even the eponymous "devils" as targets of the joint forces operation. This could encompass, among

shared aggression, whether a group is labelled as protesters, agitators, or simply a mob can lead to vastly different public perceptions and politico-legal consequences.

So before diving into these complexities, let's establish the basics. A mob, by definition, is a large, disorderly crowd intent on causing disturbance or violence. If you search online, you will come across context-specific variations such as "woke mobs," "vigilante mobs," "nationalist mobs," "religious mobs," "troll mobs," etc. I remember writing about "lynch mobs" in 2019 when mass hysteria over a bizarre rumour—that human heads were being collected for Padma Bridge construction—led to seven people being killed. As I argued back then, mob violence "is not justice—it's what justice looks like when it is privatised and leased out to the most dominant groups in society." And whatever form it takes, and however justified the motive seems to be, it remains unacceptable in a democratic system where due process and rule of law are considered sacrosanct.

Since the fall of the Awami League government, there has been a wave of mob-related incidents leaving debilitating effects across various sectors, including education. On Monday, a group of individuals besieged

that fostered deep-seated anger and distrust among people. While such behaviour cannot be condoned, things get trickier when the target of this anger is Awami League itself, or what remains of it.

The argument of those opposing the labelling of such acts as mob violence is, if I understand correctly, that any actions targeting the symbols of the ousted regime are necessary to prevent its resurgence.

self-evident.

But what if there are provocations? True, the Dhanmondi 32 demolition was largely a reaction to Sheikh Hasina's virtual speech from India—an act that, given the trauma of her reign of terror, was bound to provoke outrage. Had she not shown the audacity to attempt a political comeback while evading justice for her many crimes, the destruction could perhaps have been avoided. But this reasoning



It is crucial to understand the difference between fighting actual fascism and scoring symbolic victories in an already triumphant landscape.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Theoretically, you cannot deny the logic—the gross human rights violations the party committed during July-August alone, as highlighted again by the just-released fact-finding report of the UN human rights office, make this non-negotiable. The question, however, is not about the goal but the methods being used to achieve it. After the uprising, there was broad consensus that what happened during this period, including the destruction of public property and infrastructure, served a greater cause, and as such, participants faced no legal repercussions. But should such concessions still be granted six months later, when the nation is trying to claw its way back to some much-needed stability? The answer is

tells only half the story, for expecting a former dictator to behave responsibly is a naivety we cannot afford at this stage.

What about our own responsibility to pre-empt her move, and more importantly, protect the greater interests of the nation? The anti-fascist camp's headlong dive into a trap ostensibly designed to raise questions about the direction of "new Bangladesh" exposes the fallacy of their campaign. Understanding the difference between fighting actual fascism and scoring symbolic victories in an already triumphant landscape is crucial. Moreover, a mob is a deeply unstable force that may take on a will of its own once activated. It is no surprise

that the call to disrupt Hasina's speech set off a domino effect of attacks, vandalism, and arson targeting Awami League-linked houses and establishments in as many as 35 districts. Will anti-fascist mobilisers take responsibility for these attacks, or the reputational damage thus caused to Bangladesh? The UN has already warned about meeting international standards in trials for the perpetrators of July-August massacre. We cannot expect fair justice and global support in our bid while condoning extrajudicial actions against the remnants of Awami League.

The reason we focus more on the Dhanmondi incident and its aftermath is because of the insistence by some anti-fascist voices on challenging the labelling of their supporters, as if they represent an organised force governed by strict discipline. The truth is, under the broad anti-fascist umbrella, numerous political and religious banners exist—just as there are many types of mobs emerging across the country. A mob, however you characterise it, cannot be expected to see reason or exercise restraint. It cannot distinguish between political and criminal actions, between "reactions" and "revenge," or between legitimate targets and collateral damage.

Another danger of encouraging mobism is how easily it can morph into expressions of ideological fanaticism. For instance, the same mobs that destroyed Mujib's murals and statues over the past months could feel emboldened to attack any structure, symbol or event that they perceive to be anti-religious. In fact, some already are. A recent video shows a man standing before the Raju Memorial Sculpture at Dhaka University, calling it an "idol" and urging its destruction. Monday's book fair assault, the disruptions of women's football matches in Joypurhat and Dinajpur, or the spate of attacks on shrines in recent months—all point to the effects of organised chaos and aggression.

As part of the Operation Devil Hunt, the authorities have so far detained nearly 3,000 individuals, many likely linked to mob-related incidents. But security crackdowns alone cannot prevent this trend. It demands deeper reflection. Should we continue to condone unregulated public outbursts? Should we so easily fall for "provocations"? Or can we channel our grievances into more structured responses that can solidify our transition to democracy, prevent the resurgence of any form of fascism, and restore Bangladesh's global standing? Whatever we do, the idea of a mob must be left in the past.

## The honeymoon period of the interim government is over



THE STREET VIEW

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MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Six months into the tenure of Bangladesh's interim government, led by Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus, the country finds itself at a crossroads. What started as a moment of hope—a chance to break free from the chains of authoritarian rule—has increasingly turned into a struggle for meaningful reform. While the government has made strides in establishing reform commissions and investigating past human rights abuses, the promises of democracy, stability, and prosperity remain unfulfilled. In this critical moment, it is time to ask: can the interim government truly deliver, or will it fall victim to the same pitfalls that have plagued Bangladesh's political system for decades?

The government came to power with lofty promises of change, yet six months later, much of that optimism has begun to fade. While some proposed reforms including limits on the prime minister's tenure and a bicameral parliament could pave the way for stronger democratic institutions, these reforms are yet to materialise. Besides, the public is growing frustrated because of the lack of a clear roadmap for the future.

The greatest test for the interim government remains the economy. With inflation continuing to rise and essential goods becoming increasingly unaffordable, many Bangladeshis are questioning whether the government truly has a handle on the economic crisis. Despite some signs of stabilisation in certain sectors, the majority of the population still feels the weight of economic hardship. The absence of real relief for the people, coupled with continued market manipulation by syndicates, has only deepened the distrust in the government's ability to address the crisis. Moreover, imposing VAT on some goods and services added salt

to the wounds, further burdening ordinary citizens who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Political instability remains another pressing issue. The question of when the next general election will take place has become a political flashpoint. Dr Yunus's suggestion of holding elections by late 2025 and early 2026 may seem reasonable from a reform standpoint, but the opposition—led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party—demands a vote by

economy, curb inflation, and rein in market manipulation. These are not easy tasks, but they are necessary for the long-term health of the country.

Equally pressing is the issue of law and order. The reluctance of the police force to take action, fuelled by fear of retaliation for their role in suppressing the July-August protests, has left a dangerous security vacuum. Crime and mob violence are on the rise, and the public is losing confidence in the ability of law enforcement to protect them. The government must take immediate steps to restore law and order, ensuring that the police are held accountable while also protecting the rights of the people.

However, perhaps the most daunting challenge the interim government faces lies within its own bureaucracy. Bangladesh's bureaucratic system is notorious for inefficiency, corruption, and an ingrained culture of

figures over their duty to the people, and many bureaucrats seem more focused on maintaining the status quo than implementing much-needed reforms. The situation has become so dire that even simple requests for services often result in frustration, delays, and, at times, exploitation.

The reform of this bureaucratic system is crucial if Bangladesh is to break free from its cycle of inefficiency and corruption. However, the government has been slow to tackle these deep-rooted problems. The failure to reform the civil service is not just an administrative issue—it's a political one. Without addressing these systemic issues, the government will continue to be undermined by the very institutions it seeks to change. Reforming the bureaucracy is not a matter of tinkering with policies; it requires a fundamental shift in the culture and operations of the civil service.

Finally, the government must confront the spectre of past crimes and human rights abuses. The previous regime, led by the Awami League, is guilty of numerous atrocities, and many of its members have yet to be held accountable. The investigation process has been slow, and many ask whether those responsible will ever face justice. The interim government must ensure the judicial process remains independent and transparent, allowing for true accountability without political interference.

The time for empty promises and political gamesmanship is over. If the interim government is to succeed, it must act swiftly and decisively. The people of Bangladesh deserve a government that will put their needs first, not one that is bogged down by bureaucracy, political favouritism, and economic mismanagement. True reform will require more than just words—it will require action, accountability, and a clear vision for the future.

In the coming months, the government will face a crucial test: can it overcome the challenges that have plagued Bangladesh's political system for so long, or will it become just another failed experiment in transitional rule? The answer will determine not only the future of this government but the future of Bangladesh itself.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

mid-2025. With no clear consensus on the election timeline, political uncertainty continues to fester. Moreover, allegations of government favouritism towards certain political groups have only deepened divisions, raising concerns about the neutrality of the administration.

If the interim government is to survive, it must address these challenges head-on. The lack of a concrete election roadmap is a major source of instability, and it must be resolved as quickly as possible. Similarly, the government must take decisive action to stabilise the

authoritarianism. These issues are not easily addressed, and the government's struggle to reform the civil service is becoming increasingly apparent. The red tape and lack of accountability in the public sector have often hindered progress on numerous fronts.

Despite the government's call for reform, many citizens still find themselves entangled in a web of bureaucracy that stifles action and delays change. Long-standing issues such as corruption, inefficiency, and the disregard for citizens' rights persist within the civil service. Public servants often prioritise loyalty to political

## CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

### CROSS

- 1 Golf goals
- 5 Yellowstone animal
- 9 Steer clear of
- 11 Doctor's reading
- 12 Island off Naples
- 13 Happened
- 14 Even score
- 15 Sent
- 17 Lost one's footing
- 19 Scrollwork shape
- 20 Condescending look
- 21 TV spots
- 22 Shiny finish
- 24 Sit-up targets
- 26 Bridge utterance
- 29 In the style of
- 30 Cut off
- 32 Passed over
- 34 "The Last Jedi" role
- 35 Shire of "Rocky"
- 36 Steer clear of
- 38 Vote in
- 39 Indy entrant
- 40 Frees (of)

### 41 Garden sections

- DOWN
- 1 Accords
- 2 Uses
- 3 Entice
- 4 Knight's title
- 5 Post-dinner sound
- 6 Wed in secret
- 7 Evaluate
- 8 Marsh plants
- 10 Put to rest
- 11 Bill stamp
- 16 Jane Eyre, for one
- 18 Cribbage markers
- 21 Memo letters
- 23 Web spinner
- 24 Acid's opposite
- 25 Dealt with a leak, maybe
- 27 Evergreen tree
- 28 Like ranked players
- 29 Fall flower
- 30 Petty fight
- 31 Textile workers
- 33 Photos
- 37 Chemist's place

### SATURDAY'S ANSWERS



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## Leadership role adds to MIRAZ'S CT CHALLENGE

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced Mehedi Hasan Miraz as Bangladesh's vice-captain for the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy yesterday evening, mere hours before the squad's scheduled departure for the UAE, continuing the custom of frivolity when it comes to national team's vice-captaincy.

There are many examples of the slapdash nature of decision making when it comes to naming a vice-captain for the Tigers. One such instance happened in July 2023, during Bangladesh's home series against Afghanistan, when then skipper Tamim Iqbal's injury forced the BCB to appoint Liton Das as vice-captain just a day before the first ODI.

Later when Tamim announced his shock retirement after the first match, Liton stepped up and captained the team in the second and third ODI.

The BCB had done better in this regard ahead of the ICC ODI World Cup 2023 and last year's ICC T20 World Cup. Current three-format captain Najmul Hossain Shanto was named Shakib Al Hasan's deputy in the former and Taskin Ahmed was Shanto's deputy in

the latter way in advance.

But this time, before a major tournament like the Champions Trophy, the BCB waited till the very end to disclose who will be Shanto's second-in-command, reverting to older ways.

"Miraz was the designated second man for us. One also has to understand that there really was no one else we could have given it to," a BCB official claimed.

One could argue that vice-captaincy or its late announcement holds little significance, but on-field leadership is of particular importance for any team and especially for a side like Bangladesh which has to maximise its resources to the fullest if it hopes to do well in the tournament.

Miraz had recently captained the Test and ODI side in the West Indies. In that series, he was able to articulate his plans to the rest with Liton Das noticeably helping him manage the field from behind the stumps.

Miraz has played 103 ODIs for the Tigers and his batting has become increasingly important for the side in recent years while his contributions with the ball has always been crucial.

The Tigers are also without ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is still

serving a bowling suspension and was not picked for the Champions Trophy squad, which makes Miraz's all-round contributions even more important.

As captain, Miraz made history in the West Indies tour, leading Bangladesh to their first Test win in Caribbean soil since 2009. However, Miraz got plenty of help from Liton, who could be heard on the stump mic suggesting field changes and who should come to bowl.

Liton's captaincy instincts were on full display in the T20I series in the West Indies, which the Tigers swept 3-0. Had Liton not lost his place in the Champions Trophy squad for his woefully awful form, he would have likely been named vice-captain, not Miraz.

However, now the added responsibility of aiding Shanto in leadership alongside the weight of performing with both bat and ball has been thrust upon the shoulders of Miraz.

This tournament could prove to be a acid test for Miraz's future as a leader as well as if he can handle the added leadership responsibilities and perform as an all-rounder, he is likely to be earmarked for a promotion to permanent captaincy when the position opens up.



New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner and Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan pose with the Tri-Nation Series trophy on the eve of the final in Karachi yesterday. The Black Caps have been the team to beat in the 50-over tournament, having won by comprehensive margins against both Pakistan and South Africa. Pakistan made into the final after recording their best run chase in ODIs -- chasing down the Proteas' 353-run target on Wednesday. With both sides set to clash again in the Champions Trophy group stage alongside Bangladesh and India, today's showdown is more than just about silverware -- it's a statement for what is to come. PHOTO: PCB

## CT will bring more ICC events to Pakistan: PCB chief

**AGENCIES**

Pakistan will host a major ICC men's tournament in nearly three decades next week and its cricket chief is hopeful that a successful ICC Champions Trophy will bring a flood of other such events.

Top teams shunned Pakistan after the 2009 attack on a bus carrying Sri Lankan cricketers in Lahore and it took the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) years to convince foreign counterparts that it was safe to visit.

"ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is a culmination of those efforts," PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi told Reuters.

"Once we successfully staged home international series and consistently delivered PSL [Pakistan Super League] editions at world-class standards, the ICC accepted and recognised Pakistan's readiness to host a global event."

Pakistan's last major men's ICC event as hosts was the 1996 ODI World Cup. Pakistan was supposed to host the 2008 Champions Trophy as well but the ICC shifted that tournament to South Africa owing to security concerns.

Even though ICC had named Pakistan as the sole host of this year's Champions Trophy back in November 2021, all of India's matches, which includes the highly anticipated India-Pakistan clash on February 13, will take place in the UAE after India refused to send their team to Pakistan.

The PCB also upgraded the stadiums in Karachi and Lahore in an 11th-hour facelift and are now ready to host the event set to begin on February 19.

"Since 2019, all major Test-playing nations - except India - have toured Pakistan, some multiple times," Naqvi said. "Our successful hosting of this event will further enhance Pakistan's credentials, positioning us as a strong contender for more ICC events."

## 'Mayhem' in final Merseyside derby at Goodison Park

**AGENCIES**

A chaotic end to Wednesday's Merseyside derby, featuring a last-gasp goal and a raft of red cards, provided the perfect conclusion to an old-fashioned tussle between Everton and Liverpool, the last at Goodison Park after 131 years.

Everton captain James Tarkowski equalised deep into stoppage time to earn them a 2-2 Premier League draw against Arne Slot's side.

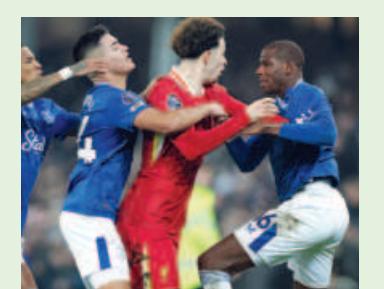
But it felt like a victory to Everton boss David Moyes and the Toffees faithful, who serenaded their squad long after the final whistle.

"It was mayhem all game," said Everton boss David Moyes, whose team are unbeaten in their last four league games.

"It was an old fashioned throw back in some ways. I think it was hugely important that Evertonians get to finish as best they can in this stadium."

Everton are set to move to a new 53,000-capacity stadium next season and Goodison was given a fiery goodbye in the last clash between the two sides, whose stadiums are separated by less than a mile.

Everton's Beto scored the game's opener in the 11th minute before



Timed at 97:08, James Tarkowski's equaliser for Everton was the latest goal scored on record (from 2006-07) in a Premier League Merseyside derby.

This was the 120th and final Merseyside derby between Everton and Liverpool at Goodison Park in all competitions as Everton are set to move to their new stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock for next season.

Mohamed Salah first set up Alexis Mac Allister's goal in the 16th minute and then scored his own in the 73rd and

the league leaders looked poised for victory.

Tarkowski struck a blistering goal into the corner in the 98th minute, sparking bedlam among players and fans.

Everton's Abdoulaye Doucoure then sparked a melee by celebrating in front of the Liverpool fans at full-time.

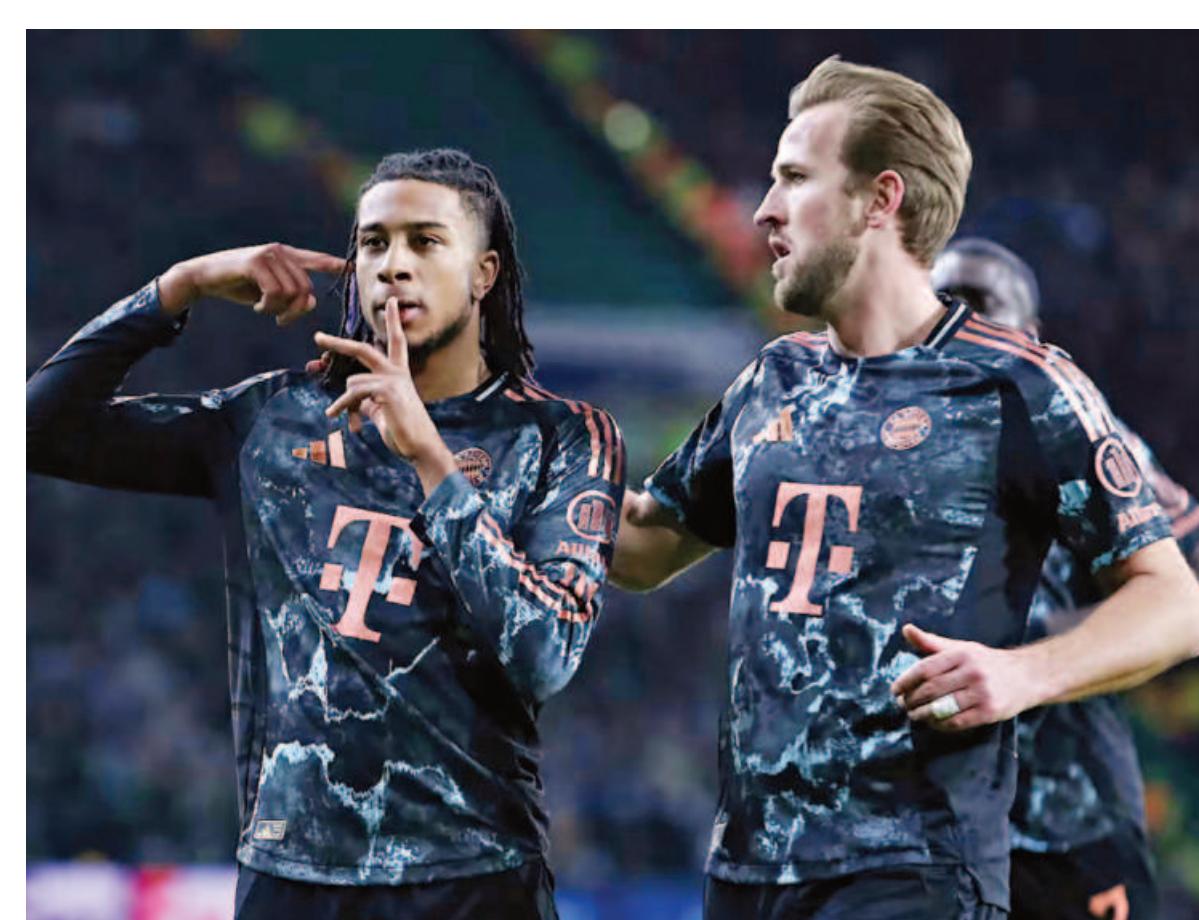
Doucoure and Liverpool midfielder Curtis Jones were sent off before the Reds' manager Arne Slot and his assistant Sipke Hulshoff were also shown red cards for their protests towards referee Michael Oliver.

A draw edges Liverpool seven points clear at the top of the Premier League, while Everton move 10 points above the relegation zone in 15th.

Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk, however, lamented that referee Oliver lost control of the game.

"You know what happens when there is a tussle, I think the referee didn't have the game under control," Van Dijk told TNT Sports.

Despite Van Dijk's reservations, the draw, which featured four goals and four red cards, was a fitting finish with neither side able to claim permanent bragging rights -- the tally totalling 41 wins apiece at Goodison for the Merseyside rivals with 38 draws.



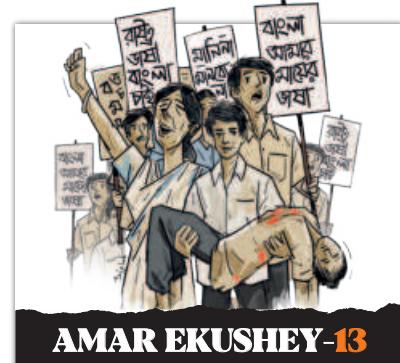
Michael Olise celebrates with Harry Kane after putting Bayern Munich ahead with a stunning shot in the 45th minute in their Champions League playoff first leg against Celtic on Wednesday. Kane doubled the lead with a 49th-minute volley at the far post, and when it looked like Bayern were headed for an easy win, late pressure from Celtic saw the Scottish side cut the deficit in the 79th minute thanks to Daizen Maeda's close-range header. Bayern, however, managed to edge the game 2-1.

PHOTO: BAYERN MUNICH

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**Grit amid resistance from Muslim League**

AHMAD ISTIAK

Despite the petition by opposing groups demanding Urdu as the state language, the intense wave of the Language Movement swept through Kishoreganj in 1948.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



PHOTO: KAMOL DAS

**LIZARDS OF LUCK** ... A pair of Tokay geckos lounging in a crevice at the Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary in Fatikchhari. Native to Southeast Asia and abundant in Bangladesh, these large, nocturnal reptiles are named for their distinctive "tokay" call, a loud sound heard in the evening. Tokay geckos are carnivorous, feeding on insects, small animals, and occasionally fruit. Their unique toe structure allows them to cling to walls and ceilings, making them excellent climbers. They thrive in tropical and subtropical habitats, often in trees or rocky areas. Solitary and territorial, males are particularly aggressive. In East Asian cultures, the Tokay gecko is seen as a symbol of good luck and fertility, with folklore attributing supernatural powers to it.

**Send Hasina back for trial**  
Fakhrul urges India, says party happy with UN report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has expressed satisfaction with the fact-finding report by the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the July uprising and urged India to extradite ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina for trial over mass killings.

The party also opposed the proportional representation system and the holding of local elections before the national polls.

It added that it is up to the people to decide which political parties should exist or participate in election.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir made the remarks during a press briefing at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday morning. Earlier in the day, he held a meeting with British Deputy High Commissioner James Goldman.

"We are satisfied with the published report. The truth has been revealed. When the UN says something, people believe it. When political parties like ours say the same thing, many are reluctant to believe it. Anyway, I want to thank the UN team for coming here and presenting the report."

He opined that the report rightly said all the killings and massacres were carried out under the directives of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

**2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema begins today**

STAR REPORT

Thousands of devotees yesterday began gathering on the bank of the Turag River in Tongi for the 2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema.

The congregation of mostly Maulana Saad Kandhalvi followers begins today and ends with Akheri Munajat on Sunday.

The first phase of Biswa Ijtema, attended by the followers of Maulana Zubair Ahmed, took place from January 31 to February 5.

Organisers yesterday said people from different countries had arrived and all preparations had been made.

Sayem, media coordinator of Tabligh, said, "For the first time in history, Shab e Barat coincides with the Ijtema. Lakhs of devotees will offer Shab e Barat prayers together."

**TRAFFIC DIRECTIVES**

Dhaka Metropolitan Police issued a set of traffic directives for February 16, reports UNB.

All vehicles, except those carrying Uttara residents, air passengers, airline crew, fire services, law enforcement, and ambulances, must avoid the Airport Road. Instead,

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**Trump-Putin call 'not a betrayal' of Ukraine**

Says US defence secretary; Europe warns Trump against Ukraine deal 'behind our backs'

AFP, Brussels

Donald Trump's defence chief yesterday denied that the US president was betraying Ukraine by opening talks with Russia's Vladimir Putin, as blindsided European powers insisted they and Kyiv must have a seat at the table.

Trump on Wednesday stunned European allies by agreeing to launch negotiations with Moscow on ending the nearly three-year Ukraine war, in his first publicly announced phone call with Putin since returning to power.

The US president revealed he expected to meet Putin in Saudi Arabia for Ukraine peace talks, in an extraordinary thaw in relations that sparked fears Kyiv would be frozen out.

That came after his administration poured cold water on Ukraine's goals of reclaiming all its territory and pushing to join Nato's protective umbrella.

"There is no betrayal there. There is a recognition that the whole world and the United States is invested and interested in peace," US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth said ahead of a meeting with his Nato counterparts in Brussels. "That will require both sides recognising things they don't want to."

Britain's defence secretary, John Healey, echoed that message, warning "there can be no negotiation about Ukraine without Ukraine, and Ukraine's voice must be at the heart of any talks."

Rutte insisted that any potential peace deal had to be "enduring", pointing to similar comments made earlier by Hegseth.

- Trump, Putin set to meet in Saudi Arabia
- Kyiv must be part of peace talks: UK
- Zelensky is set to meet US VP JD Vance in Munich

**National consensus panel formed**

It'll adopt six reform commissions' suggestions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a seven-member National Consensus Commission to review and adopt the recommendations submitted by the six key reform commissions.

The Cabinet Division announced the formation of the commission in a notification. Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus had earlier said he would lead this commission.

The members of the new commission are Prof Ali Riaz, head of the Constitutional Reform Commission; Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, head of Public Administration Reform Commission; Safar Raj Hossain, head of Police Reform Commission; Badiul Alam Majumder, head of Election Reform Commission; Justice Emdadul Haque, head of Judiciary Reform Commission; and Dr Iftekharuzzaman, head of Anti-Corruption Reform Commission.

The commission will operate for six months

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**Modi brings tariff 'gift' to Trump talks**

Holds one-one meet with Musk

AGENCIES

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will come bearing gifts when he meets Donald Trump, hoping concessions on tariffs, fresh business deals, and the prospect of cooperation on China would win the US president's favour.



Ahead of his White House meeting yesterday afternoon, Modi has readied promises including increased liquefied natural gas, combat vehicle and jet engine purchases, according to Indian government officials who declined to be named.

Indian officials are also looking at trade negotiations, possible deals on US agriculture exports to India and investment in nuclear energy, along with tariff cuts in at least a dozen sectors, including electronics, medical and surgical equipment, and chemicals.

Those are areas Trump's team believes India needs to make improvements, according to another person familiar with their thinking. It's a "gift" for Trump, said one of the sources, who declined to be named as they previewed a private meeting.

For his part, Modi wants help with the case of billionaire Gautam Adani, an ally of his who was indicted by the Justice Department in November over an alleged bribery scheme. Adani denies wrongdoing.

Another thorny issue will be in the background: the alleged Indian intelligence plot to assassinate a Sikh activist in the United States during the

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**10 CU students punished for assaulting teacher**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram University yesterday punished 10 female students, expelling one of them and suspending the others for two years, for physically assaulting an assistant proctor and journalists.

Another female student and a male pupil were also suspended on allegations of hurting religious sentiments.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the university's Board of Residence, Health, and Discipline Committee at the vice chancellor's office.

The committee also recommended cancelling the certificates of the student who was expelled for assaulting the assistant proctor, said Mohammad Saiful Islam, acting register of the institution.

"We will send the recommendation to the university syndicate for further action," he said.

The assault by students residing at Sheikh Hasina Hall occurred around 11:30pm on February 5 over the vandalism of a boat-shaped sitting structure in

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Tents have been set up on the Biswa Ijtema ground on the bank of the Turag in Tongi as devotees from home and abroad start gathering there to join the second phase of three-day Biswa Ijtema, one of the largest congregations of Muslims, that begins today. The photo was taken around 4:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: MONJURUL HAQUE

**Yunus, Musk discuss bringing Starlink to Bangladesh**

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus had an extensive discussion with Elon Musk to explore future collaboration and to make further progress in introducing Starlink satellite internet service in Bangladesh.

The founder of SpaceX and chief adviser talked about the potential transformational impact of Starlink's satellite communications, particularly for Bangladesh's enterprising youth, rural and vulnerable women, and remote communities, says a press release of the chief adviser's press wing.

On the Bangladesh side, Khalilur Rahman, high representative for the Rohingya crisis and priority issues, and Lamiya Morshed, principal coordinator of SDGs, attended the virtual meeting.

On the SpaceX side, the company's Vice President Lauren Dreyer, and Global Engagement Adviser Richard Griffiths were present.

Prof Yunus and Musk discussed

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