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THE DISAPPEARED OF THE JULY UPRISING PART 1

Hastily buried in unmarked graves

Seven months after the July uprising in Bangladesh, many protesters still remain missing. We investigated 31 cases: six were buried as unclaimed bodies at Rayerbazar graveyard; four were identified by families from among the charred bodies in Ashulia; two were handed over to families after DNA testing; and 19 are still unaccounted for.

We found evidence of systematic government efforts to cover up medical records and bodies of the victims so they can never be found again. This four-part series also documents how families were denied time to collect the corpses from hospital morgues, and how they are now waiting for the bodies of their loved ones.

MASHFIQ MIZAN, KEERO ADHNAN AHMED and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

On July 18, 2024, two days after Abu Sayed's killing in Rangpur, Soheli Rana stepped out of his home in Dhaka's Jatraabari around 6:00pm to join the quota reform movement. He told his mother he would be back soon, but he never did.

Around an hour after he joined the protest in Jatraabari area, police detained Soheli, 28, tortured him, and then shot him several times, four fellow protesters and a person who admitted him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital told

him when he was crossing Uttara to get a bus. He then vanished.

The same day in Uttara, Md Assadullah, a driver and a father of two, was shot by Awami League-affiliated helmeted assailants, according to CCTV camera footage and multiple still images verified by The Daily Star.

Soheli, Faisal and Assadullah never knew each other in life. But their fates converged in death.

Their bodies, along with many others, ended up at Dhaka Medical College morgue. Unidentified, unclaimed.

A nationwide curfew, intended to quash the movement, kept their families from finding them,



A police officer in plainclothes grabs a female protester by her hair near Intercontinental hotel in the capital yesterday. Anti-rape protesters and cops engaged in fistfights and shoved each other when the protesters tried to get to the chief adviser's residence to submit a memorandum.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Protest march foiled by police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police and anti-rape protesters clashed when the latter tried to break a police barricade and submit a memorandum to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at his residence.

Several individuals from both sides were injured in the incident that occurred around 3:30pm in front of the InterContinental hotel.

The protesters' demands include removal of the home adviser for what they say is his failure to ensure women's safety and maintain law and order.

The demonstrators, under the banner of Bangladesh against rape and oppression, marched from Dhaka University to the intersection in front of the hotel, and as they tried to break a police barricade, the cops and the protesters shoved each other and some engaged in fistfights.

At one stage, police used batons, witnesses said.

Several policemen and women protesters were injured, they added.

Adrita Roy, one of the protesters, said, "We were peacefully protesting, but the police attacked us, including the women. Women were at the forefront of our march."

Even male police members assaulted female protesters, she added.

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Star INTERVIEW

There's no need for constituent assembly

People, govt to decide whether AL should be banned, says Salahuddin

WASIM BIN HABIB and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

It has been seven months since the interim government took office. During this time, the caretaker administration has been working to revive the political process and strengthen state institutions. Meanwhile, participants in the July uprising have floated a new political party.

Against this backdrop, Wasim Bin Habib and Sajjad Hossain of The Daily Star recently sat down with Salahuddin Ahmed, a standing committee member and key policymaker of the BNP, to discuss the party's views on the interim government's performance, the formation of the student-led National Citizen Party, the progress toward the forthcoming national elections, and the future of the Awami League.

The Daily Star: Chief Adviser Prof

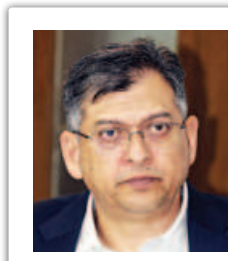
Muhammad Yunus has announced that the next national election is planned for either December this year or mid-next year. How optimistic are you about the announcement?

Salahuddin Ahmed: During our last meeting with the chief adviser, where we discussed various matters, he assured us that preparations are underway to hold the elections by December. We are quite optimistic that he will present a detailed roadmap to the nation, specifying when and how he plans to conduct the elections within that time

frame.

As the constitutional authority, the Election Commission is responsible for holding the national polls. In regular circumstances, at the end of the tenure of an elected parliament, the Election Commission can independently carry

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In Block 4 of Rayerbazar graveyard lie many unidentified victims of the July atrocities.

PHOTO: NAIMUR RAHMAN

The Daily Star. His inquest report, prepared by Shahbagh police, confirms he had multiple pellet wounds on both sides of his chest and bruises on different parts of his body.

Faisal Sarker, 18, a college student who also worked as a supervisor of a bus company, left home for work at Abdullahpur bus stand in Uttara on July 19. By the time he got out, the crackdown on the streets was getting worse.

He called his mother to tell her that he was coming home, in Cumilla, to stay with her until the situation stabilised. His family last heard of

and the six were hurriedly buried in unmarked graves at Rayerbazar before their relatives could collect their bodies, an investigation by The Daily Star has found.

Meanwhile, at least 19 more families we spoke to continue searching for their fathers, sons, brothers or husbands whom they lost during the July uprising. But they don't know if they will ever find them as there are hardly any efforts from the government to resolve the mystery of these missing men.



Celebrating a life devoted to Bangladesh

Prof Rehman Sobhan
turns 90 today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today marks the 90th birthday of Prof Rehman Sobhan, a name that resonates with dedication to the development of Bangladesh.

A towering figure in the country's academic and policy circles, he has devoted his life to advocating for a more equitable and just society, blending scholarly rigour with a commitment to social change.

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A brick kiln in Charfesson, Bhola, has been built on farmland. The owners source clay from the topsoil of neighbouring fields and burn wood to run the kiln, both harmful to the environment and illegal.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

ASSETS OF HASINA, FAMILY, AL Court orders to freeze Tk 600cr Sudha Sadan, 3 flats among properties to be confiscated

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and DIPAN NANDY

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the confiscation of Sudha Sadan, a property registered to Sheikh Hasina's children, and immovable assets of Sheikh Rehana and Radwan Mujib Siddiq.

The court also ordered the freezing of 124 bank accounts associated with Sheikh Hasina, her son Sajib Wazed Joy, her daughter Saima Wazed Putul, her sister Sheikh Rehana, the Bangladesh Awami League, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust, and several other entities.

There is at least Tk 600 crore in these bank accounts. Judge Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order yesterday after ACC Deputy Director Monirul Islam, who is leading a team of investigators, submitted an application for the order.

Monirul wrote in the application that the order was needed because Hasina and the others were trying to transfer the money from these accounts.

The court also issued travel bans on Hasina, Rehana, Joy, Putul, and Rehana's children Radwan Mujib Siddiq Bobby, Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, and Azmina Siddiq Ruponti.

SEIZED PROPERTIES

According to ACC documents, Sudha Sadan is built on 16 katha (1.65 decimals to each katha) of land in Dhanmondi purchased by Sheikh Hasina's late husband, Wazed Miah. The property is registered to Joy and Putul.

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