

Disclose agreed reforms and announce polls: Khasru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The people of Bangladesh are ready to cast their votes and are eagerly awaiting a national election by December, said BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday.

"Let the people decide who supports democracy and who does not; who supports a democratic order and who doesn't. The people are not fools – they're observing everything closely," he said.

The BNP leader made these remarks after a meeting with leaders of the Left Democratic Alliance and the Bangladesh Jono Adhikar Party at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan.

Khasru said elections are essential for restoring democracy and forming a democratic government through the people's right to vote.

He stressed that the reform issues, on which consensus has already been reached, should be made public without delay.

"What's the difficulty in announcing the election date after disclosing those agreed points to the nation?" he asked.

The chief adviser has said reforms will be based on consensus. Then tell us, where that consensus has been reached?"

**UAE envoy calls on army chief**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A delegation led by UAE Ambassador Abdulla Ali Alhmoudi paid a courtesy call on Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman at the Army Headquarters yesterday.

In addition to exchanging mutual greetings, discussions were held on strengthening relationship between Bangladesh and UAE military, as well as enhancing technological and military cooperation between the forces of both countries, according to an army headquarters notification.

The envoy also commended the professionalism of Bangladesh Army personnel currently engaged in aid to civil power operations within the country.



A mother shields her child from the scorching sun with a piece of cloth while waiting in a long queue at a TCB truck sale in the capital's Mohammadpur area yesterday. With market prices still out of reach for many, low-income families rely on such OMS sales to buy daily essentials at subsidised rates.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## 31 killed by mobs in 3 months

Says HRSS report on Jan-March, suggests strengthening rule of law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If urgent steps are not taken to strengthen the rule of law, democracy, and fundamental freedoms, the country's overall human rights situation may deteriorate further, the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS) has warned.

In its quarterly report released yesterday, the rights body emphasised the need for inclusive dialogue with political parties, civil society, journalists, and citizens to improve governance and ensure constitutional rights through proper law enforcement.

At least 47 people were killed and 2,475 injured in 325 incidents of political violence across the country in the first three months of this year, according to the HRSS.

Most of the violent incidents were linked to struggles for supremacy, political vengeance, extortion, and attempts to control various establishments, the rights body said in its report for January-March, based on media reports and its own findings.

Of the total incidents, 190 were intra-party clashes between rival factions of the BNP, while six were within the Awami League and nine within the National Citizen Party (NCP). In addition, 58 clashes occurred between BNP and AL, 16 between BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, five between BNP and NCP, nine between AL and NCP, and three between AL and Jamaat. The remaining 29 incidents involved confrontations among other political parties.

During the same period, at least 31 people were killed and 64 injured in 70 incidents of mob beatings across the country.

At least 91 journalists were reportedly tortured and harassed in 67 incidents, while 24 journalists were named as accused in 10 separate cases.

The report further noted that nine individuals were killed in incidents involving "gunfights," torture by law enforcement agencies, or while in custody. Of these, three died in two reported "gunfights," four as a result of torture, one in police custody, and

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**47 killed in political violence**  
91 journos attacked  
9 extrajudicial deaths  
21 deaths in prison  
512 women and girls faced violence

SOURCE: HRSS

**'We must not let fascism return'**  
Says Prof Ali Riaz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The result of institutional weaknesses and the failure to build a democratic state over the past 53 years are the reasons behind the establishment of a fascist regime in Bangladesh, said Prof Ali Riaz, vice-chairman of the National Consensus Commission.

He made the remarks at the beginning of a discussion between the commission and the Amjanata Party, at the LD Hall of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday.

Commission members Iftekharuzzaman, Badiul Alam

**"People across all levels of society have endured the oppression of fascism for the past 16 years."**

PROF ALI RIAZ

Majumdar, Safar Raj Hossain, and Monir Haidar, special assistant to the chief adviser, were present at the discussion.

In his opening speech, Prof Riaz also said the aim of the commission is to develop an inclusive national charter through discussions with all stakeholders – a charter that would serve as a roadmap for the future of Bangladesh.

He further noted that people across all levels of society have endured the oppression of fascism for the past 16 years and emphasised that such a period must never return.

He said the time has come to build a new Bangladesh and that ongoing

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**PARVEZ KILLING**  
Another accused confesses

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mahathir Hasan, an FIR-named accused in the case filed over the killing of Primeasia University student Jahidul Islam Parvez, yesterday gave his confessional statements to a Dhaka magistrate.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mizanur Rahman sent Mahathir to jail after recording his statements when the investigator produced him at his chamber with a police forwarding report, said a court staffer.

Details of the statements could not be known immediately. On April 23, another accused Al Kamal Sheikh gave his confessional statements to the magistrate. Law enforcers have so far arrested six accused, including three FIR-named ones.

On April 19, Parvez, 24, a third-year student of the university, was stabbed to death in front of the campus in Banani. The next day, his cousin, Humayun Kabir, filed the case with Banani Police Station, naming eight people, including Sobhan Niyyaz Tushar, joint convener of Students Against Discrimination's Banani thana unit, and Hriday Miaz, joint member secretary of the same unit, and accusing 25-30 unnamed individuals.

**Speak up against sexual harassment on public transport**

Urge speakers; awareness campaign launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sexual harassment on public transport is not just a women's issue, but a serious societal concern that requires collective action, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They stressed that staying silent in the face of such behaviour only perpetuates the issue and urged bystanders to intervene and support victims.

The remarks were made during the launch of an awareness campaign titled "Hold the Bar, Not Her Space," aimed at making public transport safe and harassment-free for women.

The campaign was launched at the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) premises, jointly organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), DTCA, and UN Women Bangladesh, with support from the Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh.

Sheikh Moinuddin, special assistant to the chief adviser on road transport and bridges,

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## MAYORAL GAZETTE

**Ishraque meets CEC**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Ishraque Hossain met Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday, as the Election Commission awaits a legal opinion from the law ministry regarding the issuance of a gazette declaring him the mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation.

Ishraque arrived at the EC headquarters in the afternoon to discuss the latest developments with the CEC. The meeting came just two days after the EC sought the law ministry's consultation on the matter.

In the 2020 DSCC election, held on February 1 of that year, Awami League candidate Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh was declared the winner, defeating Ishraque by a margin of nearly two lakh votes.

However, on March 27, 2025, a court overturned that result and declared Ishraque instead as the mayor.

Nearly a month after the verdict, the EC sought

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## 204 held between April 18-23: ISPR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army, in coordination with other law enforcement agencies, arrested 204 individuals during joint operations conducted across the country between April 18-23.

The Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) issued a press release to inform the update yesterday.

The operations were carried out by units under different infantry divisions and independent brigades of the army in Dhaka and several other districts.

The arrestees include those accused in murder cases, illegal arms holders, listed criminals, smugglers, juvenile gang members, drug dealers and addicts, and members of illegal syndicates. They were handed over to local police stations for further legal procedures following preliminary interrogation, according to the release.

Illegal items including 16 firearms, 410 rounds of

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## Declare April 24 as National Workers' Day

Demand activists on 12th anniv of Rana Plaza collapse; seek compensation for victim families

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Relatives of the deceased, survivors, and labour leaders gathered at the Rana Plaza site in Savar yesterday to mark the 12th anniversary of the tragedy and renew their calls for justice and compensation.

From the early hours of the morning, mourners placed flowers at a makeshift altar erected in front of the remains of the collapsed building, where 1,136 workers were killed and more than 2,000 injured when the 10-storey structure collapsed during working hours on April 24, 2013.

Survivors and their families say little has changed in the years since. Many have yet to receive adequate compensation or see justice delivered.

They called for the harshest punishment for those responsible, including building owner Sohel Rana, and for the fulfilment of compensation claims.

Salma Akhter, a former garment worker who was on the eighth floor of Rana Plaza during the collapse, said, "I'm living an inhumane life. My spinal cord injury has left me unable to return to a normal existence. I've received nothing but a token donation."

Her story echoes those of hundreds of other survivors who continue to suffer from long-term injuries, poverty, and limited access to medical care or financial support.

Rahela Begum, who lost her son Rabbi Mia in the collapse, visits the site every year to seek solace and demand accountability.

"My son was murdered. I've cried until my tears have run dry," she said. "We deserve justice. We demand the Tk 48 lakh compensation promised to us."

Despite years of inaction, labour leaders remain cautiously hopeful that the interim government will finally act on



Workers set up the stage as part of last-minute preparations for the 116th edition of the traditional Jabbarer Boli Khela (Jabbar's Wrestling Competition), scheduled to be held at Laldighi in Chattogram today. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN