

Over 48,400 arrested in one month

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Flash processions by the banned Chhatra League and other AL-affiliated organisations were brought out in multiple districts, including Khulna, Kishoreganj, Jashore, Shariatpur, Narayanganj, Cumilla, and Barishal.

The DMP said the banned BCL and like-minded groups watch police movements and bring out brief processions. They would then upload photos and videos of the processions on social media. "Law enforcers were analysing photos and videos to identify the participants," according to the DMP.

On Sunday, 11 AL activists were held from a flash procession in the capital's Gulistan area. Yesterday, the Detective Branch picked up 16 more members of the banned BCL and AL

from various spots across Dhaka.

Mohammadpur police yesterday raided Rayerbazar area and arrested 44 people, including members of a local gang.

Among those detained are drug dealers, muggers, individuals with outstanding arrest warrants, and others involved in various criminal activities, police said.

The law enforcers stepped up their drives after Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury last month ordered them to prevent the AL from bringing out processions, warning that officers who would fail to stop such gatherings would face disciplinary action.

Meanwhile, a list obtained by this newspaper from the Rangpur Metropolitan Police, dated April 23, categories arrests

under various headers, including "instigators/planners/associates of destabilisation," as well as those involved in illegal arms possession, smuggling, robbery, and extortion.

Jannat Ul-Farhad, assistant inspector general of prisons (development), said the overall prison population has remained relatively stable, as new arrests are being balanced by inmates being released on bail.

Chattogram Jail Senior Jail Superintendent Iqbal Hossain, however, said the number of inmates rose recently. Last month, the number of inmates was over 4,500, which was around 5,500 yesterday.

Earlier this year, between February 8 and March 1, police arrested over 30,000 people, including 12,500 during the "Operation Devil Hunt".

Liberation War founding pillar of the state

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According to the post, the NCP stands firmly against "Islamophobia and communalism and does not support religious extremism or fanaticism."

"NCP does not subscribe to either secularist or theocratic ideologies; rather, its goal is to build an inclusive democratic state through the practice of religious coexistence, harmony, and mutual responsibility and empathy."

On national identity, the statement said, "NCP embraces a civilisational national identity instead of one based on nation, religion, or tribe. NCP will develop a national culture by embracing the civilisational identity of the Bengal delta, a confluence of many languages and cultures."

Women's empowerment was listed

as a core priority in Nahid's post.

He noted, "NCP will take concrete steps to ensure women's education, health, safety, leadership, and employment."

"Under family law, NCP will work to realise women's rightful share of property."

Regarding foreign policy, the NCP has taken a strong stance against Indian regional dominance.

"Indian hegemonism and Hindutva in South Asia pose a cultural and geopolitical threat to Bangladesh. NCP will adopt a firm political stance against these hegemonic tendencies. NCP believes Bangladesh should expand strategic relations with other states based on justice, dignity, civilisation, and national interest," the NCP convener wrote.

He also mentioned that the NCP envisions the creation of a new economic zone in the Bay of Bengal region, centred around Bangladesh.

"NCP aims to build an inequality-free, justice-based, corruption-free socio-economic system that resembles a welfare state. Education, public health, agriculture, climate, urban management, labour rights, and employment will be the key policy areas for NCP."

Nahid also reflected on the party's stance against authoritarianism.

"NCP believes that to build a truly democratic state system, restructuring of the state, institutional reform, and the drafting of a new constitution are necessary. Replacing the fascist system with a new political arrangement is NCP's foremost political duty."

The hum beneath our harvests

FROM PAGE 12

substances disorient bees, impair memory and navigation, and often prove fatal. Entire hives have collapsed overnight. For small-scale beekeepers, the damage is devastating.

Equally worrying is habitat loss. As forests give way to brick kilns, roads, and industrial sprawl, wild bees lose access to flowering plants and safe nesting sites. Traditional rural apiculture has sharply declined. Climate change adds another layer of stress, disrupting seasonal rhythms and floral cycles. During a heatwave in April last year, honeybee colonies in Satkhira reportedly abandoned their hives in search of cooler zones.

These patterns risk unravelling more than just bee populations -- they threaten our agricultural cycles and ecological balance. But some local initiatives are showing promise.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and districts like Jamalpur and Jashore, community-led beekeeping

projects are empowering women and indigenous farmers. With support from NGOs and the Department of Agricultural Extension, these groups are setting up apiaries, improving yields, and earning supplementary income.

An especially creative solution has emerged in response to human-elephant conflict. In areas like Horikhola, Teknaf -- where refugee settlements and elephant corridors intersect -- communities have adopted beehive fencing, a technique inspired by Kenya. Backed by IUCN Bangladesh and UNHCR, the method was introduced in 2021 after a feasibility study.

Here, 20 farmers, including women-led households, were trained in beekeeping. Their hives now form a "beehive fence" protecting homes within a one-kilometre radius. Elephants, which instinctively avoid bees, are deterred without harm. By March 2025, over 30kg of honey had been harvested, and elephant incursions had notably dropped.

This rare initiative offers a win-win: mitigating human-wildlife conflict

while safeguarding pollinators and livelihoods.

Each year, World Bee Day is marked with posters, school campaigns, and awareness drives. Companies like Syngenta Bangladesh have led youth programmes spotlighting bee protection. These efforts matter -- but they are not enough.

We need structural change. Stricter regulations on harmful pesticides. Legal safeguards for habitats. Research on native bee species. Real investment in sustainable farming. As a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Bangladesh is obligated to act.

Bees don't need rescuing. They just need us to stop harming them. And in doing so, we protect our own future.

This World Bee Day, let us place pollinators at the heart of our environmental discourse. Let us stop poisoning our fields. Let us plant flowers, not factories. Let the buzz return -- steady and strong.

Because when bees thrive, we all thrive.

Outrage, shock over Nusraat Faria's arrest

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The actor was escorted to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka amid tight security around 10:00am yesterday, a day after she was arrested at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport before boarding a flight.

During the half-hour hearing, she stood silently in the dock.

At one point, the investigator was asked to submit a report verifying Faria's visa-related documents, which had been presented in support of the bail petition.

On March 27 this year, one Enamul Haque, who suffered bullet injuries on July 19 last year during the protests in Bhatara, filed the case with the court against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, 17 actors, and 265 others.

On April 29, the officer-in-charge of Bhatara Police Station registered it as a First Information Report in line with the court's directive.

WHAT THE ADVISERS SAID

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat yesterday afternoon, Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said, "If we had allowed her to leave, you would have said, 'Sir, you let her go.'"

He made the comments though he and Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam on several occasions stated that no innocent persons would be harassed or arrested even if they were listed as accused in cases.

The IGP had earlier acknowledged that many people had been falsely implicated in cases filed in the aftermath of the July uprising.

In response to a question yesterday, Jahangir said, "We have repeatedly said we will ensure no one faces unnecessary harassment or suffering. Legal action will be taken only against those involved in criminal activities. No innocent person will be punished under any circumstances."

In a Facebook post, Cultural Affairs Adviser Farooki said, "I generally try not to speak beyond the responsibilities of my ministry. But I do have an identity -- I was a part of this industry and will be returning to it. The arrest of Nusraat Faria is an embarrassing incident for us."

"It is the responsibility of our

government to bring actual offenders from the July [uprising] cases to justice. When it comes to blanket cases, our stance is clear: no one will be arrested without a preliminary investigation indicating involvement. And that policy was being followed."

Farooki noted that although a case had existed against Faria for some time, there had been no apparent move by the government to arrest her prior to the conclusion of the investigation. "But the incident occurred right after she arrived at the airport."

He also drew connections between the timing of the arrest and recent political tensions, particularly public outrage over former president Abdul Hamid's travel abroad.

"Perhaps, following the outrage over Abdul Hamid's departure, these events unfolded due to 'over-nervousness' ... These incidents are in no way justifiable."

Farooki expressed hope that Faria would receive appropriate legal recourse and concluded by urging more sensitivity in handling sweeping cases.

NCP CONDEMNS

The arrest and imprisonment of Nusraat Faria in an attempted murder case has turned the judicial process of the country into a mockery, National Citizen Party (NCP) said in a statement yesterday.

"We have witnessed how, earlier this month, former president Abdul Hamid, who was accused of orchestrating attacks and shootings during the July uprising, left the country without any obstacles. The identities of 626 individuals who took shelter in different cantonments following the uprising remain undisclosed."

"Moreover, the fallen fascist regime and its supporters, who were directly involved in the July massacre, continue to operate freely in public spaces and on social media, engaging in anti-citizen activities," reads the statement.

The NCP said that the arrest and imprisonment in such a showpiece case where people were made accused sweepingly, have set a precedent of undermining the judicial process regarding the July massacre.

CAAB rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh's aviation sector. Over the decades, CAAB has consistently worked in alignment with international standards, upholding the principles of the Chicago Convention and ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs).

2. It is noted with deep concern and dismay that CAAB observes a series of recent publications in a well-circulated national daily "The Daily Star" containing misperception on aviation regulations and practices. Such reporting not only threatens to mislead the public but also severely undermines the reputation of Bangladesh's civil aviation system on the international stage. This rejoinder is issued to formally address these repeated misrepresentations and to reaffirm CAAB's unwavering commitment to professionalism, transparency, and international obligations.

3. The report claimed in the first part of the news "Time after time, the internal safety department of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh uncovered irregularities in pilot licensing and raised concerns about aviation safety, only to be overridden by the civil aviation's higher authorities". The fact is that CAAB conducts investigations as routine affair in case of any reported violation of regulations and resolves the issue as per recommendation of the investigation. There are no instances that CAAB did not act on the recommendations of any investigations. Therefore, the claim made in the report "Only to be overridden by civil aviation's higher authority" is not valid.

4. **Conflict of interest** The report on "Chowdhury Md Zia Ul Kabir" claims "Zia signed his own licence, he was the flight safety regulator charged with ensuring that pilot licences were compliant, exposing a blatant conflict of interest" claims that there was conflict of interest. The CAAB procedure of issuance of license involves detailed steps conducted by various personnel and needs to be approved by the Chairman, CAAB. As the then Director of FS&R division, Chowdhury Md Zia Ul Kabir was the authorized person to sign on all licenses on behalf of the Chairman. As such there was no conflict of interest.

5. **No Experience** It is general practice across the aviation world, the experience of higher or similar category aircraft is considered while designating some pilot as instructor of a rare type aircraft. The report on "Captain Kabir-ul-Alam" claims "Captain Kabir-ul-Alam was allowed to perform an exam flight to be certified as a "Designated Check Pilot" for an aircraft called Fokker 50, a CAAB letter from November 5, 2023, shows," which was a non-conformance with ICAO and CAAB regulations. The fact is that the said Captain Kabir-ul-Alam was "Authorized" as DCP-D (Designated Check Pilot for Flight Simulator Training Devices or FSTD) for Fokker 27 MK 50 FSTD. Captain Kabir-ul-Alam fulfilled the prerequisites of CAAB for designating him as SFI (Synthetic Flight Instructor) for Fokker 27 MK 50. He was then authorized as DCP-D on the said aircraft considering his substantial experience as instructor and check pilot. No violation of rules was committed in the said authorization.

6. **False flying records:** The case of "Captain Nuruddin Al Masood" is a sub-judice matter.

7. **Less than Half Qualified** The report on "Captain Abdur Rahman Akand" claims "But before being certified as an ATPL, Akand flew only 154.35 hours -- less than a third required for such a sophisticated licence, according to the documents he submitted to CAAB as part of the regulator's internal inquiry". The related ICAO Regulation ICAO Annex-1 para 2.6.3.1.1.1 says "500 hours as pilot-in-command under supervision or 250 hours, either as pilot-in-command or made up by not less than 70 hours as pilot-in-command and the necessary additional flight time as pilot-in-command under supervision". Captain Abdur Rahman Akand had logged more than 500 hours as Pilot-in-command under supervision and a grand total of 4,000 hours plus as pilot before applying for the ATPL. Therefore, he definitely had fulfilled the requirements and there was no violation of ICAO and CAAB regulations.

8. a. **Rules Overlooked (CPL Issue)** The report claims "10 students from Galaxy seeking CPLs were required to fly 300nm on the Raishahi Saidpur-Jashore-Raishahi route and make full stops in the transit airports. The students instead flew from Raishahi to Saidpur and then went back to Raishahi, and did the same with Jashore". Flying via Raishahi for refueling purposes is an essential requirement when no other nearby aerodromes are available to continue flying the next route. Here the requirements of compliance "full-stop landings at two different aerodromes" were fulfilled. The 300 NM cross-country flights being

conducted by the Flying Schools are in full compliance with CAR 84 and ANO 1.

b. **Rules Overlooked (PPL Issue)** The report claims "The students flying the 150nm "solo flights" also had their teachers onboard with them even though this was supposed to be unsupervised flights, meaning they flew their exam flight with help, documents show." ICAO permits flight by a student pilot without a licence, rating or endorsement, by stating "solo flight time under the supervision of an authorized flight instructor". Both CAR 84 and ANO 1 have promulgated the same. The 150 NM cross-country flights conducted by the flying schools are in full compliance with CAR 84 and ANO 1. However, as conflicting information received from Galaxy Flying Academy and Bangladesh Flying Academy & General Aviation, CAAB is scrutinizing the issue in view of existing rules and regulations. Should there be any non-conformance found, CAAB will take action as per regulation.

9. **Suspicious service** CAAB took initiative to automate the pilot licensing exam system. Considering the high cost involved with foreign software company, CAAB started computerbased exam system designed by local vendor. The exam was controlled by CAAB personnel. CAAB never received any complain regarding the computer-based exam system. However, the administrative process to acquiring this software was not completed for various reasons. This matter is under scrutiny. Mentionable, CAAB initiated the process to acquire new software with upgraded features.

10. **Selective defamation of individuals in support a group with vested interest**

a. The report deliberately misled the readers by giving references as fragments without the full context and its explanatory notes.

b. The report selectively tried to defame some group of personnel with false allegation basing on self-interpretation of related rules and regulations. It hints to the possibility of serving the purpose of some groups having vested interest.

c. The report deliberately undermined the credibility of the pilot community of the civil aviation industry of Bangladesh.

11. **Undermining Reform in Bangladesh's Aviation Sector** Although CAAB has made significant efforts to modernize its operations, align with international standards, and promote transparency, its progress has been consistently challenged by entrenched interest groups. These groups, driven by a desire to preserve non-transparent practices and retain undue influence within the aviation sector, have actively attempted to obstruct reforms intended to strengthen institutional capacity and accountability. Ironically, these efforts to tarnish CAAB's reputation have intensified as the authority accelerates its compliance with international aviation standards. The report bears the trace of the same intention and surely detrimental not only to the growth of aviation sector of Bangladesh but also the credibility of Bangladesh's Civil Aviation sector across the globe.

12. In view of the above, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) strongly condemns the continued dissemination of unfounded and misleading reports by "The Daily Star". These actions not only misrepresent the integrity and professionalism of CAAB, but also pose a serious threat to public trust, aviation stakeholder confidence, and Bangladesh's international standing as a responsible Member State of ICAO.

13. CAAB urges all concerned media platforms to act with responsibility and refrain from publishing speculative or unverified information relating to civil aviation. Any attempts to undermine the credibility of CAAB without substantiated evidence will be viewed as a direct affront to the nation's strategic interests and regulatory sovereignty in the aviation sector.

14. CAAB remains open to constructive dialogue, transparency and accountability; but will not hesitate to take lawful and appropriate measures to safeguard its institutional dignity and to uphold the commitments of Bangladesh to ICAO as per the Chicago Convention.

Our Reply

According to CAAB's own inquiry, the training process of at least 142 pilots, many of whom received their licences over the last two years, were not up to the mark. Many did not complete the required flying hours or the crucial solo flight. At least two falsified their flight records. And CAAB knew all of these, but The Daily Star failed to obtain any records or any official statement that any of these licencees faced any action.

The Daily Star specifically narrated the details of a meeting held on May 21, 2024, by the licencing head of that time, where multiple objections from CAAB's own safety experts were overridden to grant licences to two pilots who did not complete their exam flight as per the pre-requisites outlined by aviation rules. The Daily Star has verified the discussion of the meeting, and the resultant decision taken, using the meeting minutes itself.

As regards the conflict of interest of Chowdhury Md Zia Ul Kabir signing his own Air Transport Pilot Licence, the highest level of certification for a pilot, our report, citing the CAAB chairman, mentioned that the CAAB chief approves licences before they are signed by a designated official.

We are strained to believe that the head of the organisation is responsible for checking every single flight log of every single pilot applying for a licence, since there is a fully-staffed department dedicated to it. At that time Zia signed his own ATPL licence in 2018, he was the head of that department. While working on the report, The Daily Star did not find any guidelines in CAAB regarding what alternate steps are to be followed if the head of that department wants to apply for a licence to ensure due diligence.

The rejoinder also states that no rules were violated in authorising Captain Kazi Kabirul Alam to become a check pilot of a flight he never flew.

The Daily Star reviewed CAAB's guidelines on the designation of DCP-D and found that the check pilot must "Hold (or held) ATPL with instrument rating (as applicable) endorsed on type." In addition, the pilot must "have accumulated a minimum of 1,000 hours pilot-in-command of which minimum 750 hours pilot-in-command on type."

According to CAAB's own Air Navigation Order, Fokker 27 MK 50 is a higher category aircraft, and a fully different aircraft from the plane Kabirul has experience in, which is Fokker 27.

The rejoinder stated that Captain Abdur Rahman Akand had fulfilled the requirements to get his ATPL and there was no violation of ICAO and CAAB regulations.

The Daily Star has reviewed the same law that CAAB cites in its rejoinder and found that even a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL), the licence a pilot is required to take before getting the ATPL, cannot be issued with 26.5 hours pilot-in-command time, because ICAO Annex-1 in para 2.4.3.1 says that the applicant shall have completed not less than 100 hours as pilot-in-command or, in the case of a course of approved training, 70 hours as pilot-in-command.

The rejoinder said the 300 NM cross-country flights being conducted by the two flying schools are in full compliance with Civil Aviation Rules, 1984 and Air Navigation Order.

The two aerodromes in which the students were supposed to stop are Jashore and Saidpur. It would be highly concerning if there are no refuelling facilities available at Jashore and Saidpur airports, as the rejoinder suggests, since these are two fully functional airports serving dozens of commercial flights each day.

The rejoinder said the 150 NM cross-country flights conducted by the flying schools are in full compliance with Civil Aviation Rules, 1984 and Air Navigation Order. It also said that CAAB is scrutinizing the issue in view of existing rules and regulations. Should there be any non-conformance found, CAAB will take action as per regulation."

The Civil Aviation Rules, 1984 and Air Navigation Order state that students flying with an instructor on board cannot log that flight as a solo flight. The flights then have to be categorised as "dual" or "solo under supervision", as the case may be.

The rejoinder said the pilot licencing exams are controlled by CAAB personnel and not any external vendor.

The Daily Star has included in its report an interview with the "vendor" in question who had said on the record that CAAB does not have control over the data or the source code.

The rejoinder made vague, unsubstantiated accusations about The Daily Star serving vested groups in achieving their goals. The Daily Star neither serves the interests, nor has any liaison with any of these unidentified groups that CAAB mentions in its rejoinder. The Daily Star rejects these vague accusations, and has shown the merits of the points it made in its reports.

