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Surge in Swiss Bank deposits reflects massive AL looting

Says Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday expressed concern over the sharp rise in deposits by Bangladeshis in Swiss banks last year, saying it has shown the extent of looting by the Awami League's "corrupt elements and mafias".

"I was disheartened to see newspaper reports indicating a significant increase in the amount of money deposited in Swiss banks [by Bangladeshis]... It clearly reflects the massive scale of plundering carried out by the mafia and looter clique during the fascist rule," he said.

He was addressing a discussion organised by the Biplobi Workers Party at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity, marking the party's 21st founding anniversary.

Fakhru said he did not know who, when, or how such a large amount of money was deposited in the banks. "Every patriotic person may wonder whether any real change has taken place after the uprising... If the report pertains to the year 2024, it is authentic."

According to media reports, the amount of money deposited by Bangladeshis in Swiss banks has increased significantly, rising 33 times in just one year.

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A worker washes used polythene bags -- once carriers of chemicals -- in the already polluted Buriganga River, adding to the environmental concerns. The photo was taken in the Kamrangirchar area of Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

US pledges to work with Bangladesh for regional stability

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United States is committed to working with Bangladesh to promote peace and stability in the region, said the US State Department yesterday.

State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce made the remarks during a press briefing.

She was asked whether the US condemns actions by Bangladesh's interim government, including banning of Awami League and alleged targeting of its supporters -- issues that UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has expressed concern about. In response, Tammy advised the journalist to contact the White House for further clarification.

However, she confirmed

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High-level BNP delegation to leave for China today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A high-level delegation of BNP is set to leave for China today at the invitation of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

The delegation will be led by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and is scheduled to depart Dhaka tonight on an Air China flight at 10:10pm.

BNP Media Cell member Shayrul Kabir Khan confirmed the development.

According to party leaders, the visit is expected to include high-level meetings and policy-level discussions.

The delegation comprises BNP Standing Committee members Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra

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NHRC's rejoinder, our reply

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sent a rejoinder to our editorial titled "End the Persistent Paralysis at NHRC", published on June 13, 2025, based on a report run in our paper the day earlier.

The rejoinder refers to a line in the editorial which stated: "Reportedly, only 25 percent of its budget comes from the state, while 75 percent is provided by international development partners."

The NHRC has clarified that this information is inaccurate. At present, 100 percent of its budget is funded by the government of Bangladesh, with no support from development partners.

OUR REPLY

The statement in our editorial was based on a reference made in our story headlined "NHRC yet to be reconstituted seven months" published on June 12.

We acknowledge that the information mentioned in the original report is outdated, and as per the clarification by the NHRC, it has been fully state-funded since August 2022. We regret the error.

DMC suspends all academic activities

Orders students to vacate dorms amid protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Medical College authorities yesterday announced the suspension of all academic activities for MBBS students for an indefinite period starting today, amid ongoing student protests demanding renovation of academic and residential buildings.

In a notice issued following an emergency meeting of the Academic Council, the DMC authorities also directed all students, except foreign students and those appearing for the university professional MBBS examinations, to vacate their hostels by 12:00pm today.

Later, a press release was also issued regarding the decision.

"Students have been asked to vacate the halls for a short period to avoid any potential risks. It is not possible to implement renovation demands so quickly. Therefore, until an alternative arrangement is made, the directive to vacate the halls remains in effect," Prof Md Kamrul Alam, principal of DMC, told UNB earlier.

This comment could not reach Prof Kamrul Alam for comment despite repeated attempts over the phone.

Abdullah Al Noman, a protesting fourth-year MBBS student, said they would continue their demonstrations

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UIU revokes student expulsions after daylong protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of United International University (UIU) students blocked the Natun Bazar intersection in the capital for several hours yesterday, protesting the expulsion of 26 fellow students.

The demonstration caused severe traffic congestion from Badda to Kuril, leaving many commuters stranded. The blockade, which started around 8:30am, was called off after 6:00pm.

In response to student demands, the university authorities have withdrawn the permanent expulsion orders issued against the 26 students over alleged involvement in campus protests and breach of discipline.

The decision was made at an emergency meeting of the UIU Disciplinary Committee last night, according to a notification signed by Registrar Md Zulfiqur Rahman.

Earlier, around 8:30am, demonstrators began gathering at the intersection as per a prior announcement, said Rakibul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Bhatara Police Station.

Around 50 students gathered at the intersection, holding placards and chanting slogans. Their blockade disrupted traffic on major roads connecting Badda, Kuril, and Rampura, causing significant suffering for commuters, particularly during the morning rush hour.

Tailbacks were reported in Rampura, Badda, Pragati Sarani, and Tejgaon Railgate areas. Many commuters said they were stuck for hours, with alternative routes also heavily congested, forcing them to walk to their destinations.

A brief scuffle broke out around 10:30am when police attempted to disperse the protesters, said the OC, adding that a few police officers sustained minor injuries.

The students, however, regrouped shortly after and continued the blockade. They claimed that police used batons on them, injuring some protesters.

Despite repeated requests from police to clear the road, the students refused to move. By afternoon, limited traffic movement resumed through

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Demanding withdrawal of the expulsions of 26 fellows, UIU students blocked the Natun Bazar intersection, causing severe gridlocks.

Teachers with mild, dormant BNP affiliations were favoured as VCs

Prof Wahiduddin recalls appointment process

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud yesterday said during his tenure as education adviser under the interim government, preference was given to teachers with "mild" or "inactive" BNP backgrounds when appointing vice-chancellors at public universities.

He made the remarks at a discussion titled "The 2025-26 Budget in the Context of LDC Graduation," organised by the Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID) at a hotel in the capital.

Reflecting on his experience in overseeing major university appointments, Prof Wahiduddin said, "Since we are a non-partisan government, we could not appoint anyone based on party loyalty. The greatest challenge was that so many positions were vacant, but I hardly knew personally who could be trusted with these responsibilities. In several cases, I sought help from friends with administrative or political experience."

He explained that he approached Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of BNP and a long-time friend and former classmate,

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Pedestrians walk beneath a tangle of hanging cables, posing the risk of accidents at any moment. The photo was taken on Toyneeb Circular Road in the capital's Motijheel area recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Proportional representation a must for upper house

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Without a proportionate representation (PR) system for the upper house, forming such an assembly would be ineffective, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They noted that while the PR system should be applied in the lower house to uphold people's voting power, political parties have not agreed on it.

So, the system should be incorporated into the proposed upper house instead, they said.

The discussion, titled "Citizens' Thoughts on the Seat Distribution by PR System in the Upper House of the Parliament", was organised by the Nagorik Coalition at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital. Representatives from around 8-10 political parties and civil society members attended the event.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, a member of the National

Consensus Commission, said the upper house proposal was intended to create checks and balances for the lower house and ensure a diverse parliament.

He acknowledged some limitations of PR, such as risks to government stability, the upper house becoming a "dumping ground" for unpopular politicians, and concerns over nepotism. "That's why we're proposing a mixed system, with PR only in the upper house," he said.

He warned that without PR, the upper house would simply replicate the lower one, giving the ruling party more absolute power and deepening autocracy.

The Nagorik Coalition noted that a constitutional amendment would require approval from both houses, but political parties have yet to agree on the percentage threshold for the upper house.

The consensus commission has

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