



Unite to build a strong and healthy nation

Says Yunus on World Population Day

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus yesterday called upon development partners, non-governmental organisations, media, and civil society to come forward and cooperate with the government in building a healthy and strong nation.

"Let's all take Bangladesh forward," he said in a message marking World Population Day.

Yunus said this year's theme of the day

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Students and parents cross the street through a broken divider in the capital's Kakrail area. Recent rain has left puddles at the spot, making the risky shortcut even more dangerous. Despite a foot-over bridge nearby, many still choose this path for quicker access. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Starved and tortured for 42 days

2 Bangladeshis held hostage in Libya for ransom; PBI arrests 2 local collaborators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alamgir Hossain had nearly lost all hope. For 42 days, he and fellow Bangladeshi migrant Siraj Uddin were held hostage in a Libyan hideout -- shackled, beaten, and starved by human traffickers demanding ransom from their families in Bangladesh.

Each call home came with fresh torture, livestreamed over "imo," as the captors shouted -- "No money, no life."

The two men, hailing from Noakhali and working at a workshop in Tripoli's Jamazaiton area, were abducted on January 8 this year.

"The abductors later handed us over to another group, who accused us of running a manpower business and sending people to Italy," said Alamgir, who migrated to Libya as a welder in 2022.

"They demanded Tk 4 lakh from each of us. When we said we couldn't pay, they tortured us and then handed us over to a Bangladeshi group."

Their families soon received ransom demands of Tk 22 lakh per person through video calls.

"There were nine Bangladeshis who tortured us," Alamgir said. "We were barely given food or water. They beat us every day for money."

During the calls, the captors whipped their feet with electric cables, smashed their knees so they couldn't stand, even stripped and assaulted them in the freezing Libyan winter, Alamgir added.

At one point, the abductors declared the victims dead and cut off communication, putting more pressure on the families. Siraj's sister-in-law, Parvin Akhter, managed to send Tk 1.5 lakh on January 13, but the torture continued.

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Govt takes steps for media reform, adopts 12 decisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has begun implementing several key recommendations made by the Media Reform Commission, with the information ministry initially adopting 12 major decisions.

The ministry disclosed the move yesterday in a press statement, noting that the 11-member Media Reform Commission, led by senior journalist Kamal Ahmed, submitted its report to the government on March 22 this year.

According to the statement, an ordinance ensuring the protection of journalists' rights will be enacted soon following consultations with stakeholders.

A task force will be formed to reform the newspaper circulation auditing system.

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## Freeze, confiscate S Alam's assets in Singapore Court orders ACC

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to take steps for freezing and confiscating foreign assets owned by S Alam Group Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam, his wife Farzana Parveen, their children, and one son-in-law in Singapore.

The couple's sons are Ashraful Alam, Asadul Alam Mahir, and Ahsanul Alam; their daughter is Maimuna Khanam, and her husband is Ahmed Belal.

The foreign assets include 43 bank accounts, shares of two hotels, eight hotels, development companies, and gold ornaments.

Of the assets, the couple owns shares of two hotels, whose market value stands at 68 million Singaporean dollars. Their sons, daughter, and son-in-law own development companies and other assets. Their daughter owns gold ornaments worth about 53,400 Singaporean dollars. However, the ACC did not mention how much had been invested or deposited in these accounts and companies.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Tahsin Monabil Haq, who leads the inquiry team, submitted an application in this regard.

The judge also ordered the ACC to send a copy of the order to the concerned authorities in Singapore for the next course of action.

On Wednesday, the same court ordered the ACC to

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RMG workers being intercepted by police yesterday as they attempt to march to the state guest house Jamuna to press their demands. Earlier in the day, workers from eight factories of the TNZ Group in Gazipur held a sit-in in front of the Sramik Bhaban at Bijoynagar, demanding arrears and other benefits.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## July injured to get free flats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works has taken up a project to provide free flats in Dhaka to those who were seriously injured during the July uprising.

A total of 1,560 flats will be constructed at an estimated cost of around Tk 1,400 crore, funded by the government, said Syed Md Nurul Basir, chairman of the National Housing Authority (NHA).

"Many people became disabled or lost their ability to work during the July movement. The government will provide them with flats," he said.

The flats will be built on government land in Mirpur Section 9, and the project will be implemented by the NHA. The authority has already prepared the designs.

Each flat will be 1,270 square feet and include two bedrooms, a drawing room, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, and three toilets, the NHA chairman told The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier, the ministry had launched a separate project to provide free flats to the families of those martyred during the July uprising.

That project comprises 804 flats, with a total estimated cost of Tk 762 crore. Each flat will be 1,355 square feet and constructed on government land in Mirpur Section 14.

Chairman Basir said infrastructure development is currently the priority, and building construction is expected to take around four years.

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Every country faces risks from militant attacks  
Says US Chargé d'Affaires

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many incidents of political persecution and repression during the previous Awami League government's tenure were labelled as "militant activities" to divert attention, said US Chargé d'Affaires Megan Bouldin yesterday.

She made the remarks during a courtesy call on Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury at his office in the Secretariat, according to a press release issued by the home ministry.

The two also discussed matters of mutual interest, such as the country's law and order situation, security cooperation, counterterrorism, prosecution of related cases, and the prevention of online sexual harassment of young women, among other issues.

The adviser said the US is a close ally of

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## Pregnant woman killed as bus rams motorbikes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An eight-month pregnant woman died after a bus rammed into several motorcycles on Mayor Hanif Flyover in Dhaka yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Meherunnesa Bhum, 22, a housewife from Madina Chittar area of Jatrabari.

She was heading to Ad-din Hospital in Moghbazar with her husband on a motorcycle when the accident occurred around 10:30am near the Gulistan toll plaza on the flyover.

A Manjil Paribahan bus rear-ended several motorcycles stuck in traffic, leaving at least three people injured.

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