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Holding fair polls govt's main job, but it can't ignore reforms

Says Dr Kamal Hossain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even though the main responsibility of the interim government, formed in the wake of the July mass uprising, is to hold a free and fair election, it cannot ignore people's aspirations for reforms, said Gono Forum founder and eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday.



He said that even 53 years after gaining independence through the Liberation War, Bangladesh has failed to uphold its commitment to equality, human rights, and justice.

He noted that last year's mass uprising occurred because political divisions prevented the implementation of the guidelines agreed upon during the 1990 anti-fascist movement.

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BNP leaders and activists marching through the capital's Shahbagh as part of a procession they brought out from the party's Nayapattan office yesterday. They were protesting the alleged propaganda against BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman and demanding justice for the murder of Lal Chand alias Sohag. The procession marched through Matsya Bhaban and ended at the Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: STAR

Sohag murder being exploited for political leverage

Suspects BNP, starts its own probe into killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing concerns about the brutal murder near Mitford hospital in the capital, the BNP said the issue could be used for gaining political leverage and to destabilise the election environment.



It said those trying to disrupt the political environment and create uncertainty about the polls, using the issue, will be identified and resisted.

The BNP decided to form a committee to investigate the cause of the murder and publicly disclose the report.

"There are ample reasons to suspect that this murder is being used for political gain and as an excuse to disrupt the environment of the upcoming national election," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday told a press briefing at the party's chairperson's Gulshan office.

The murder of Sohag, a scrap metal trader, is being politicised and used to malign BNP and its top leadership, particularly acting chairman Tarique Rahman, Fakhrul said.

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CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY Charges framed against ex-DMP chief, 7 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday framed charges against former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner Habibur Rahman and seven other ex-police officials in a crimes against humanity case filed over the killing of six people in the capital's Chankharpool area on August 5 last year.

The tribunal then set August 10 and August 11 for the opening statements of the prosecution and recording of witness depositions.

The other charges against the accused are murder, command responsibility, abetment, incitement, facilitation, complexity, and conspiracy.

This is the second time any accused have been charged at the ICT for the atrocities committed across the country during last year's mass uprising, which, according to a UN report, left 1,400 dead and over 25,000 wounded.

On July 10, the ICT-1 framed charges against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her two top aides in another case.

Justice Md Shofiqul Alam Mahmood read out the charges as instructed by the tribunal chair, Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, in a packed courtroom with four accused in the dock. The remaining four are absconding.

The absconding are former DMP chief Habibur Rahman, former DMP joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty, former additional deputy commissioner (Ramna zone) Shah Alam Mohammad Akhtarul Islam, and former assistant commissioner (Ramna zone) Mohammad Imrul.



Habibur Rahman

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Trump arms Ukraine, issues Russia ultimatum

Threatens sanctions on countries that buy Russian oil

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump announced new weapons for Ukraine yesterday, and threatened to hit buyers of Russian exports with sanctions unless Russia agrees a peace deal in 50 days, a major shift in policy brought on by frustration with Moscow.

Sitting side-by-side with Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte in the Oval Office, Trump told reporters that he was disappointed in Russian President Vladimir Putin. Billions of dollars in weapons would be distributed to Ukraine, he said.

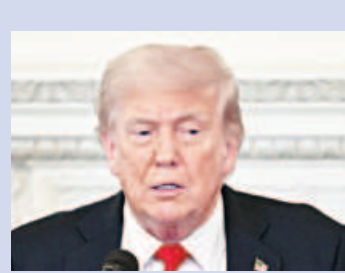
"We're going to make top-of-the-line weapons, and they'll be sent to Nato," Trump said, adding that Washington's Nato allies would pay for the weapons.

The weapons would include Patriot air defence missiles, which Ukraine has urgently sought to defend its cities from Russian air strikes. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed gratitude to Trump for his readiness to protect Ukrainian lives.

"It's a full complement with the batteries," Trump said. "We're going to have some come very soon, within days... a couple of the countries that have Patriots are going to swap over and will replace the Patriots with the ones they have."

Some or all of 17 Patriot batteries ordered by other countries could be sent to Ukraine "very quickly," he said.

His threat to impose so-called secondary sanctions on Russia, if carried out, would be a major shift in Western sanctions policy. Lawmakers from both



Trump threatens secondary sanctions on Russia in 50 days

Says up to 17 Patriot batteries could be available for Ukraine

political parties in the United States are pushing for a bill that would authorise such measures, targeting other countries that buy Russian oil, reports Reuters.

Throughout the more than three-year-old war, Western countries have cut off most of their own financial ties to Moscow, but have held back from taking steps that would restrict Russia from selling its oil elsewhere. That has allowed Moscow to continue earning hundreds of billions of dollars from shipping oil to buyers such as China and India.

"We're going to be doing secondary tariffs," Trump said. "If we don't have a deal in 50 days, it's very simple, and they'll be at 100%."

A White House official said Trump was referring to 100% tariffs on Russian goods as well as secondary sanctions on other countries that buy its exports.

Still, Trump's announcement of a 50-day grace period was greeted with relief by investors in Russia, where the rouble recovered from earlier losses and stock markets rose.

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas welcomed Trump's tougher line on Russia, but said a 50-day ultimatum on punishing Moscow was "very long," reports AFP.

"It is very positive President Trump is taking a strong stance on Russia," Kallas told journalists. "On the other hand, 50 days is a very long time if we see that they are killing innocent civilians every day."

Trump, who returned to power this year promising a quick end to the war, said his shift was motivated by increasing frustration with Putin, who, he said, had talked about peace but continued to strike Ukrainian cities.

Population policy updated to harness demographic edge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After 13 years, the government has updated the Population Policy with the aim of achieving six key objectives, including fully harnessing the potential of the country's demographic dividend.

Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum yesterday inaugurated the Bangladesh Population Policy-2025 at a programme at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium to mark World Population Day, which was on Friday.

In 2012, the government enacted the Population Policy,

The demographic dividend is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15-64) is larger than the non-working-age share: UNFPA.

with the first objective of reducing the total fertility rate (TFR) to 2.1 by increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate.

The updated policy, prepared by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry, reflects a major shift, placing greater emphasis on harnessing the potential of the demographic dividend rather than focusing on population control.

The demographic dividend is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15-64) is larger than the non-working-age share, according to UNFPA.

Bangladesh is currently going through the demographic dividend period.

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Woman, 2 children found murdered in their home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the bodies of a woman and two children with their throats slit from their house in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as 25-year-old Moyna Begum, wife of Rafiqul Islam, a garment worker; their daughter Raisa Akter, four; and son Md Nirab, two.

They were found inside their house in Ward-7 of Bhaluka municipality after neighbours noticed blood near the door and alerted the police.

"We recovered the three bodies with their throats slit around 11:30am," said Md Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Bhaluka Police Station.

"The murders are believed to have taken place either late last night [Sunday] or early today [yesterday]. At the time, Rafiqul was away on his night shift."

The OC said Rafiqul's younger brother, Nazrul Islam, an auto-rickshaw driver, had also been living in the same house. "After the incident, Nazrul fled. We now suspect he may have committed the triple murder over a family dispute."

Police also recovered an anti-cutter, believed to be the murder weapon, from Nazrul's room.

Before fleeing, Nazrul reportedly sold his mobile phone and SIM card to a local around 8:00am, claiming he needed the money as he would not be allowed back into the house without clearing due rent, OC Humayun said.

Meanwhile, Moyna's brother, Johirul Islam, filed a case

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Even amid the pouring rain, some people have no option but to visit a TCB truck for the daily essentials at subsidised prices. The photo was taken in front of the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in the capital's Rayerbazar area yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Four 'ARA men' held with UZI at Rohingya camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Four alleged members of the Arakan Rohingya Army (ARA) have been arrested during a joint operation by the Bangladesh Army and Armed Police Battalion (APBn) at Rohingya Camp II in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya.

The raid was carried out around 6:45pm on Saturday in Block C-6 at the house of camp community leader (majhi) Kefayet Ullah. A foreign-made UZI submachine gun and Tk 14 lakh in cash were recovered, according to a press release.

The detainees are Md Anas, 30, of Block E; Kefayet Ullah, 35, of Block C-6 in Camp II; Mansur Ahmed, 32, of Block C-14; and Yasser Ararat, 35, of Block C-16 in Camp 9.

Preliminary interrogation revealed that they are active ARA members under notorious criminal Nabi Hossain.

According to the press release, the group had gathered to buy foreign arms from a dealer named Elias, who managed to flee during the raid. The seized weapon, reportedly used by the Myanmar military, was meant

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