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## July frontliners dominate the Ducusu race

Nominations close with 509 submissions

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

Many frontliners of the July uprising, which brought down the Sheikh Hasina regime, are now in the spotlight as leading candidates in the Ducusu election.

So far, nine panels have been announced for the 28 Ducusu posts. Most of the student groups nominated July protesters for either of the top three positions – vice-president, general secretary or assistant general secretary.

According to students, many candidates for other posts also participated in last year’s uprising.

“The leaders who were at the forefront of the mass uprising and inspired others with their courage have earned respect from the students. Many of them are now leading the panels for the Ducusu election. I believe voting students will have a soft corner for them,” said Abu Baker Mojumder, GS candidate from Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad.

Chhatra Union leader Meghmallar Bosu, contesting for GS from Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote, said, “The spirit



A battery-powered rickshaw whizzes down a street in Dhanmondi yesterday with a child seated next to the driver and three women on the passenger seat meant for two. While their inadequate braking system, overloading, and speed put lives at risk, the livelihoods of thousands of families depend on these unauthorised vehicles.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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### JULY CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION

## What notes of dissent could mean

Objections recorded during consensus talks may shape future of politics, governance

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The July National Charter, finalised after weeks of consensus talks, faces a delicate challenge over notes of dissent, most of them from the BNP and its allies.

Eleven such objections, nine from the BNP bloc alone, now raise questions about whether key provisions, ranging from caretaker government appointments to curbs on prime ministerial powers, will be implemented if the party comes to power.

The BNP and allies have agreed to implement dozens of reform proposals if they come to power, while positioning themselves in favour of preserving parliamentary supremacy and executive discretion.

They stood apart from most other parties on a series of key proposals that would reshape the balance of power between the executive, parliament, and oversight institutions.

Politicians and members of the National Consensus Commission, headed by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, say that a note of dissent is an expression of disagreement – a formal record of opposition, typically written in a structured manner.

The commission, which steered the dialogue,

**BNP leaders argue that the dissent does not amount to rejection, but rather serves as a safeguard should they return to office and wish to legislate along their own lines.**

has sought to allay fears that the dissent will derail the charter’s implementation, emphasising that the dissent should be seen as part of democratic bargaining rather than a threat to national agreement.

“A note of dissent signifies participation in the process while expressing disagreement,” said Badiul Alam Majumdar, a member of the National Consensus Commission.

The commission’s Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz is also optimistic about the implementation of the July Charter despite the notes of dissent.

“Politics always involves diverse views and paths, and working together despite differences is essential,” he said.

Rival parties, however, voiced unease at what

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### SADA PATHOR LOOTING

## Admin officials, law enforcers involved

Finds probe body; ACC preliminary report names 42 including politicians

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Some government officials including members of law enforcement agencies were involved in the rampant looting of stones from Bholaganj’s Sada Pathor area, found a probe committee of the Sylhet district administration.

The seven-page report also made 10 recommendations, including departmental investigations and punishment of the officials found guilty, said Padmasan Singha, additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet and head of the probe body.

He said the report was submitted to outgoing Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Sher Mahub Murad yesterday afternoon.

However, he declined to share further details without the approval of senior officials.

On August 12, the district administration formed the probe body after an outcry over the looting.

The probe committee was asked to submit its findings within three working days. On Sunday, the deadline was extended by another three days.

Meanwhile, the Anti-Corruption Commission prepared a preliminary

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### AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

## Wait for justice: 21 years and counting

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Twenty-one years have passed since the gruesome grenade attack was carried out on an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka, leaving at least 24 people killed and 300 injured.



Then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who later ran the country for 15 years as prime minister and was forced to resign and flee on August 5 last year amid a mass uprising, narrowly escaped the attack on this day in 2004.

Two cases – one for murder and another under the Explosive Substances Act – were lodged after the incident, considered to be one of the most sensational crimes in the country’s history.

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**Scientists are sure about one thing – if we can’t provide a suitable environment for hilsa, we will not get any.**

MOLLA EMDADULLAH,  
project director, Hilsa  
Development and  
Management Project



### HILSA PRODUCTION IN LAST DECADE IN LAKH METRIC TON

#### CAUSES FOR DECLINE

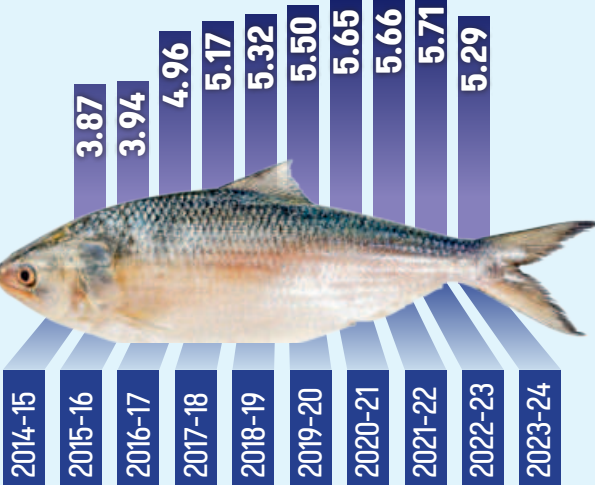
Rough seas and heavy monsoon rains cut fishing trips short

Sandbars and shallow rivers blocked migration at 20 key points

Pollution and declining plankton disrupted the food chain

Illegal trawlers near coasts depleting breeding stocks

Little ecological restoration beyond seasonal bans



## From full nets to lighter hauls

Even in peak season, hilsa yields leave fishers disappointed

PINAKI ROY with SUSHANTA GHOSH and SOHRAB HOSSAIN

Hilsa season is usually a time of joy – for both fishermen and consumers who wait eagerly for the national fish. This year, however, despite the end of a 58-day ban, it has turned somewhat bleak. Along the southern coast, fishermen have been returning with lesser catches and bigger losses.

Shamsu Bepari, owner of the trawler FB Mayer Doa from Kalapara, has gone on five trips since the ban ended. On his last trip, he returned to the Mohipur Fish Landing Centre with only 22kg of hilsa and 30kg of other fish worth Tk 40,000, against costs of Tk 1.75 lakh.

“I’ve lost nearly Tk 8 lakh,” he said.

The trawler’s skipper, Mohammad Yunus, said they travel up to 600-700km into the deep sea, consuming a litre of fuel per 20km. “But strong winds and rough seas are forcing early returns. We’re suffering losses every time, but we’re still getting ready with nets, fuel, and ice, hoping for a better catch.”

In Bhol’s Nasir Majhi fishing village, Hossain Majhi caught only 15kg of hilsa in

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## Israel okays plan to conquer Gaza City, calls up reservists

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel’s defence minister yesterday approved a plan for the conquest of Gaza City and authorised the call up of around 60,000 reservists, piling pressure on Hamas as mediators push for a ceasefire.

Defence Minister Israel Katz’s move, confirmed to AFP by a spokesperson, came as mediators awaited an official Israeli response on their latest proposal.

While mediator Qatar had expressed guarded optimism over the latest proposal, a senior Israeli official said the government stood firm on its call for the release of all hostages in any agreement.

The framework that Hamas had approved proposes an initial 60-day truce, a staggered hostage release, the freeing of some Palestinian prisoners and provisions allowing for the entry of aid into Gaza.

On the ground in Gaza City yesterday, Mustafa Qazzaat, head of the emergency committee in the Gaza municipality, described the situation as “catastrophic”.

He told AFP that “large numbers” of people were fleeing their neighbourhoods, with the majority of those displaced “on the roads and streets without shelter.”

Aida Abu Madi, a 48-year-old resident of Zeitoun, said she fled with her husband, children and three grandchildren to the home of relatives in western Gaza City.

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