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## Yunus promises election on time

Meets 3 parties; BNP says no scope for polls deferral; Jamaat, NCP want July Charter implementation first

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday reaffirmed his commitment to holding the 13th national election in the first half of February next year.

"There is no alternative to election. If anyone thinks of any other alternative, that would be disastrous for the nation," he was quoted as saying.

Yunus gave the assurance during separate meetings with BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party at the Jamuna, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said at a briefing.

Both Jamaat and NCP pressed for prioritising the implementation of the July Charter over the polls and demanded a ban on Jatiya Party's activities, accusing it of abetting the Awami League government in legitimising disputed elections.

BNP, however, said the election must be held within the announced timeframe and there was no scope for deferral.

Speaking with journalists after the meeting, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the BNP was concerned that a group was working to delay the election and make it questionable. "But there is no chance of that. The election will be held within the announced time. The chief adviser also said the same thing.

"He [Yunus] called us to assure us about the election, that it will be held on time. There should be no doubt about this."

Fakhrul dismissed Jamaat's allegation that preparations were on for a blueprint election as completely baseless.

In reply to a journalist's question, he said that there was no discussion on the Jatiya Party issue.

The BNP leader also condemned the attack on Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur. "This incident is very worrying. In the current political situation, we think a thorough investigation is

There is no alternative to election. If anyone thinks of any other alternative, that would be disastrous for the nation.

Chief Adviser MUHAMMAD YUNUS



Students of Chittagong University rush inside the campus through Gate No-2 to take shelter as locals hurl brickbats at them during fresh clashes yesterday, after an overnight confrontation. Following the violence, section 144 was imposed in Chattogram's Hathazari area in the afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

## CU students, locals clash over assault on female peer

240 hurt; 144 imposed; army, Rab deployed

STAR REPORT

Two rounds of clashes between villagers and students of Chittagong University have left at least 240 people injured. The violence was sparked by the alleged assault on a female student on Saturday night and flared yesterday afternoon.

All classes and exams have been suspended for today, while Section 144, banning public gatherings in parts of the area where the clashes took place, is in force until 12:00am Tuesday.

In the aftermath of the violence, the CU administration, in a meeting last night decided to form a probe committee today. And until further notice, army and Rab personnel will remain deployed in and around the campus.

Meanwhile, violence and protests swept through two other public universities yesterday. Bangladesh

BAU closed after clash between students and outsiders

Scuffle breaks out in RU over inclusion of freshers in Rucus voter list

Agricultural University was declared closed indefinitely after students demanding a single combined degree confined over 200 teachers before being assaulted by outsiders. At Rajshahi University, a dispute over excluding first-year students from the Rucus voter list triggered scuffles between students.

Mostafa Kamal of the CU Medical Centre said at least 200 students were treated since Saturday night, many of

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## Xi, Modi talk friendship in 'chaotic' world

Call for trade, investment expansion

AGENCIES

Chinese leader Xi Jinping told India's Narendra Modi the "right choice" is for their countries to be friends as the two met in China for first time in seven years – a new milestone in a nascent rapprochement between the world's most populous nations accelerated by shared frictions with the United States.



Xi and Modi's highly anticipated meeting yesterday, on the sidelines of a regional summit in the eastern port city of Tianjin, comes as both nations face stiff US tariffs under President Donald Trump global trade war, as well as Western scrutiny over their relationships with Russia as the war in Ukraine grinds on.

"The world today is swept by once-in-a-century transformations," Xi told Modi in opening remarks, as both leaders sat face-to-face flanked

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needed. The government has already started a judicial investigation."

Nur was critically injured in an assault by police and army personnel following a clash between his party and the Jatiya Party on Friday.

According to insiders, at the meeting with BNP, which took place after the ones with NCP and Jamaat, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul raised the proposal for a constituent assembly election, citing the two other parties' demands. BNP leaders, however, rejected the idea, saying the constitution does not allow it.

Jamaat leaders expressed disappointment over the announcement of the election work plan before implementing the July Charter, saying this could derail the reforms. They urged the government to take a tough stance against the Jatiya Party, speed up reforms, and make trials for crimes against humanity during the July uprising more visible.

Meeting sources said Jamaat also pressed for a constituent assembly election to introduce proportional representation (PR), noting that 26 of the 31 parties in the consensus commission dialogue had supported the system. They argued that such an election was needed to gauge public opinion.

After their meeting in the afternoon, Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer

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Braving heavy rain, low-income people waited in line to buy essential commodities at subsidised prices from a TCB truck in the Mohammadpur bus stand area in Dhaka yesterday noon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## DUCSU ELECTIONS

We will balance politics and education

VP candidate Shadik Kayem tells Star

SADI MUHAMMAD ALOK

Abu Shadik Kayem, vice-president (VP) candidate from the Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed panel in the upcoming Ducusu election, says he wants to transform Dhaka University from what he calls a "political institution" into an academic one by bringing a balance between education and politics.



"Dhaka University has been turned into a political institute through excessive politicisation. But that does not mean I want depoliticisation. Politics is necessary, but it must coexist with education," Kayem, also

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Will launch 'one ID, all solution system'

GS candidate Abu Baker tells Star

SHARIF M SHAFIQUE

Abu Baker Mojumdar, a former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination (SAD) and now vying for the post of general secretary in the upcoming Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) election, pledged to continue political, social, and cultural struggles on behalf of students.



In an interview with The Daily Star, the "Boishommo Biroddi Shikkharta Sangsad" panel candidate said he had faced expulsion, repression, and attacks for his anti-Chhatra League politics but always stood by the students. "I never broke my

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**CLASHES AT THREE UNIVS ...** Left: An injured student of Chittagong University leaps into a pond to escape attackers. Right top: Students of Mymensingh's BAU ride atop the Dhaka-bound Haor Express train during their "Agri-block" programme yesterday morning. Hours later, alleged outsiders attacked the protesters who had confined university faculty members. Right bottom: RU Chhatra Dal activists and other student bodies clash after JCD leaders vandalised the Rucusu election office, demanding freshers be added to the voter list. Story on Page 1.



PHOTOS: RAJIB RAIHAN (CTG), AMINUL ISLAM (M'SINGH), AZAHAR UDDIN (RAJSHAHI)

## CU students, locals clash over assault on female peer

FROM PAGE 1  
whom were later referred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Some of the injuries were from machetes and daggers; others were beaten with rods and sticks, while some were hit by brick chunks.

Parkview Hospital General Manager Md Zia said seven students were admitted there, including one with a critical head injury. "Imtiaz Ahmed Sayem from the IR department is undergoing surgery."

Two reporters of The Daily Star were also injured while covering the clashes.

### HOW IT BEGAN

Witnesses said a Philosophy department student returned to her private mess at 11:00pm Saturday and found the gate locked. After repeated knocking, the guard refused to open. She was let in after her roommates gathered. Once inside, the guard allegedly shoved and assaulted her, remarking, "Why are you coming in so late?"

As the student informed seniors, the guard fled. But the news spread quickly, drawing hundreds of students and locals to

gather.

The situation escalated into chases and counter-chases, leaving dozens injured.

Army personnel brought the situation under control around 3:30am early yesterday.

### SECOND BOUT

Tension escalated yesterday morning around Jobra village near Gate No-2 when several hundred students gathered on one side while locals stood on the other, chanting slogans against each other.

Around noon, Pro VC (academic) Prof Md Shamim Uddin Khan, Pro VC Kamal Uddin, Proctor Tanvir Mohammad Haider Arif and other teachers arrived to pacify the situation. Soon afterwards, fresh clashes broke out with brick chunks hurled by both sides. At least 10 students and Pro VC Kamal were injured.

No law enforcement officers were present at the scene then.

Witnesses said villagers armed with rods and machetes chased students through paddy fields and alleys.

"This was a planned attack, and the law enforcers

did nothing to stop it," said Saikat Khan, a Bangla student.

Sakhawat Hossain of journalism department said, "They pushed students off rooftops."

Students alleged that despite hours of violence, law enforcement arrived only after 3:00pm. After Section 144 was imposed, around 3:30pm, large contingents of police, Rab, and army entered the campus.

An emergency meeting on the situation, chaired by CU VC was held around 7:20pm on yesterday. After the meeting, CU Registrar Professor Saiful Islam told this newspaper that a 21-member committee has been formed to improve long-term relations between CU and residents of the Jobra-Fatepur area.

Chittogram Deputy Commissioner Farida Khanam said, "More than 300 students were injured in the attack, while no one from Jobra village was hurt, indicating a one-sided assault. I have instructed the local chairman to ensure safe accommodation for all university students tonight."

CU Pro VC

did nothing to stop it," Prof Shamim Uddin said. "The university administration will cover all medical expenses for the injured. We have spoken to the local community, who have assured full cooperation with the university."

A similar clash with locals occurred on October 21 last year, reportedly involving Jubo League and Chhatra League activists. That unrest was settled through mediation.

### BAU CLOSED

Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh was declared closed indefinitely last night after alleged outsiders attacked protesting students who had confined over 200 teachers, including the vice-chancellor, during an academic council meeting convened to discuss the students' demand for a single combined degree.

At least seven students were injured in the attack. Students have been asked to vacate their halls by 9:00am today, said Proctor Prof Md Abdul Alim. "We will investigate the attack on the students and incidents of vandalism on campus."

Unrest began when students of veterinary science and animal husbandry faculties rejected the outcome of an academic council meeting that decided to continue with three degrees: BSc in Animal Husbandry, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, and a separate combined degree.

From 1:00pm, they locked the Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Auditorium, confining over 200 teachers.

Around 7:40pm, when district officials and police intervened, unidentified outsiders allegedly attacked the students, leaving at least seven, including females, injured. Five were admitted to hospital, said Shibli Sadik, a student of the animal husbandry faculty.

Protesting the attack, students brought out a procession and later announced a four point demand, including a single combined degree and resignation of the proctorial body.

The proctor said a four member committee has been formed to prepare a new curriculum for the combined course, along

with a makeup curriculum.

**TENSION FLARES AT RU**  
Scuffles broke out among student organisations at Rajshahi University yesterday over the exclusion of first-year students from the voter list for the upcoming Rucusu election.

Tensions flared at 9:30am when Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists staged a sit-in outside the treasurer's office. At 10:10am, they entered the Rucusu office and resorted to vandalism.

By 11:00am, Chhatra Shibir, Students Against Discrimination (SAD), and other groups staged counter-protests, triggering repeated clashes. At least six students were injured.

University sources said including first-year students may delay the polls.

Rucusu Chief Election Commissioner Prof F Nazrul Islam said first year students could not be included as voters since they were not enrolled when the schedule was announced.

[Our CU correspondent, Chattogram staff correspondent, Mymensingh correspondent, and RU correspondent contributed to this report.]

## Awami League leader stabbed to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A ward-level Awami League leader was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants in Manirampur upazila of Jashore on Saturday night.

The victim, Ashraful Islam, 42, was the general secretary of AL's Mobarakpur ward unit of Chaluhati union, said Bablur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Manirampur Police Station.

The incident occurred around 11:15pm in front of a tea stall near the Sawmill area in Rajgang Bazar, he added.

Quoting witnesses, the OC said Ashraful was in Rajgang Bazar when a group of assailants attacked and stabbed him indiscriminately before fleeing the scene. Locals rushed to his aid and tried to take him to hospital, but he died on the way.

Police later went to the spot and brought the situation under control. However, the motive behind the murder and the identity of those involved remain unknown.

OC Bablur added that an investigation is underway, and police are working to arrest the attackers.

Earlier in May, the interim government decided to ban all activities of the Awami League, including online, under the Anti-Terrorism Act until the International Crimes Tribunal completes the trial of the party and its leaders.

## Yunus promises

FROM PAGE 1

Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher expressed doubts over the interim government's capacity to make the election free and fair when it "cannot even control extortion".

He warned that reforms agreed upon by 31 parties must be implemented before polls, otherwise "the blood given, the lives given... will become meaningless."

The Jamaat leader said they had agreed with the chief adviser that the polls be held in February before Ramadan and had "no confusion or division" over the timeframe. But, he alleged, once Jamaat raised conditions for a fair election, "immediately one party said we do not want polls within this timeframe. Such remarks are a conspiracy."

He added that Yunus had assured them of introducing reforms, ensuring visible justice, and holding a free and fair election of international standard. "But given today's situation, these achievements are at risk of becoming questionable," he said.

The Jamaat leader also alleged "foreign and domestic forces" were pushing a blueprint election, pointing to the "unprecedented" announcement of the election timeframe in London after talks with one party.

"The July Declaration of August 5 was incomplete..."

Some issues were prioritised, others avoided. The government should have decided clearly on the July Charter before announcing the election roadmap and timeframe," he said.

When asked about the Jatiya Party, Taher said, "Awami League's associate Jatiya Party worked with them. So, the same decision

you (CA) took about Awami League, you can take about Jatiya Party."

Jamaat's delegation included Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar, and assistant secretaries general Rafiqul Islam Khan and Hamidur Rahman Azad.

After its meeting, NCP Senior Joint Convener Ariful Islam Adib said the February election should instead be a constituent assembly election to give the July Charter legal and constitutional basis. He warned that otherwise Bangladesh would remain trapped in "a 55 year-long crisis of personalised, authoritarian rule."

Adib voiced concerns about the Election Commission's neutrality, citing a scuffle inside its office over constituency delimitation, and criticised the rule barring those turning 18 after October 31 from voting. "This means youths who turn 18 by February will be excluded despite actively joining the mass uprising."

He said NCP had placed five demands before the CA: welfare for July martyrs' families, action on the enforced disappearance commission's recommendations, stronger action against Awami League and Jatiya Party, coordinated handling of pending cases against AL leaders, and suspension of JP's activities for "legitimising illegal elections".

Adib also alleged that parts of the bureaucracy, business, and media establishment were resisting reform. "The enforced disappearance commission has named DGFI, NSI, SB, CTTC, Rab, and police as directly involved in disappearances. But we have yet to see effective government action," he said.

## We will balance politics and education at DU

FROM PAGE 1  
the central publication secretary of Shibir, told The Daily Star in an interview.

He said the Shibir-nominated panel "Oikyaboddo Shikkhkharti Jote" is designed to be inclusive. "We have Chakma students, physically challenged students, hijabi and non-hijabi female students, national-level athletes, cultural activists, writers, and researchers," he said, adding that candidates were nominated based on their skills and portfolios.

Inspired by the spontaneous response of students, especially female students, Kayem said, "Just as the July uprising

stood for unity, our panel seeks to send an inclusive message for building a new Bangladesh."

He insisted his identity as a student activist was greater than his political affiliation. "During the July movement, I worked alongside many other organisations -- right, left, and centrist. My primary identity is that I am a DU student and an activist of July."

The VP candidate also outlined plans to strengthen academia, which include merit- and research-based teacher recruitment and promotion, teacher evaluation, higher research budgets, modernisation of libraries and labs,

reopening the e-library, scholarships, building new halls, improving food and healthcare facilities, prioritising security for women on campus, and forming an effective sexual harassment prevention cell. "If a proper academic environment is ensured, other problems will gradually disappear."

On hall-based politics, Kayem argued that students no longer wanted organisation or committee-based politics and suggested that students' opinions on this matter could be sought through surveys. "Since only 10-15 percent of students are actively political, imposing politics against the

majority's will would harm their interests. The solution lies not in depoliticisation or single party dominance but in consensus."

Expressed concern about the election atmosphere, he said, "I'm hopeful of students' participation, but the unprofessional behaviour of the administration and election commission is worrying. There are allegations that the commission, proctor, and provosts are helping execute the agenda of a certain party. The whole nation is invested in the Ducusu election. If teachers act professionally and ensure a free, fair, and credible election, it could set a lasting example of

democracy for the country."

Addressing attempts by opponents to question Shibir's position on the 1971 Liberation War, he called them "irrelevant and divisive". "1971 is our existence. The martyrs are the greatest sons of this land. We've never compromised on independence, sovereignty, or territorial integrity. In crucial moments like the July uprising, we proved our stance. So questioning us over 1971 is simply divisive."

Kayem went on to say that he did not believe other candidates were his rivals. "We are comrades-in-arms, all working to build a new Bangladesh, beginning with

Dhaka University."

Regarding campaign expenses, he said his panel was operating within its means. "We are campaigning with our own capacity and with support from alumni, as per Shibir's constitution."

Finally, Kayem urged voters to seize the moment. "In the past 100 years, we collectively failed to build the expected academic environment of our university. After the July uprising, we now have a historic opportunity. It's time to choose the right leadership, transform Dhaka University into an academic institution, and build the dream campus."

## Will launch 'one ID, all solution system'

FROM PAGE 1  
commitment to them and did whatever I could during the July movement."

Baker, a student of geology, added that contesting in Ducusu polls was never his plan when he enrolled at the university. "My dream was to see Sheikh Hasina fall. Fortunately, I was a direct participant in that movement and the uprising. After returning to campus post-August 5, I re-engaged in solving student issues. My years of cultural and political struggle made me realise that if I can be a Ducusu member, it will be possible to address problems faster."

He said their panel, backed by Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad, a student

body formed by former SAD coordinators, was created to bring inclusive and competent leadership to Ducusu. "We are hopeful of winning because our candidates have always been part of the student movements and are qualified in their respective fields."

If elected, Baker's prime goal would be to transform Dhaka University into a research-based institution. He promised to introduce a "One Student, One Bed Policy" to solve the accommodation problem within three months, ensure quality meals at dormitories, and launch a "One ID, All Solutions" system" to provide services such as access to libraries, the registrar's office, and

transport. He also pledged transparency in teacher recruitment, introduction of teacher evaluation system and full-time PhD programmes, lab modernisation, and the recruitment of teaching or research assistants to involve students in research.

On culture, Baker said, "We think that cultural life on campus must be made multidimensional. Before July, the Awami League imposed a one-dimensional culture. We propose setting up of hall-based miniplexes and a central cultural complex for films, music, and literature, so that students can nurture their culture in a more refined way."

Highlighting safety

concerns, Baker admitted that female students' security is still not fully ensured. "But the solution is simple -- deploy Ansar or specialised security teams in front of dormitories. We have also started tackling moral policing and bullying of female students, online and offline, offering legal and psychological support," he said.

Baker urged students to elect honest and committed candidates. "If I meet that standard, vote for me. My dream is not just to win an election, but to take Dhaka University -- and eventually the country -- towards a knowledge-based society. It will not happen in a day and may take 10-15 years, but I'm prepared to begin this journey."

Modi said India was "committed" to taking their

countries' relations forward "on the basis of mutual trust and respect," and referenced the warming of relations, including an easing of tensions along their disputed Himalayan border -- where the two fought a deadly skirmish in 2020.

"The interests of 2.8 billion people in both our countries are tied to our cooperation," he added. Both leaders discussed the need to expand trade and investment ties against the backdrop of US tariffs, and then slapping an additional 25 percent duties on the country as punishment for importing Russian oil and gas, which Washington sees as helping to fund Putin's war in Ukraine.

Both China and India are major purchasers of

Russian oil, though China has yet to be targeted with such measures, reports CNN.

Those purchases could be a point of discussion today, when Modi is expected to hold bilateral talks with Putin, part of his wider diplomacy as he joins a two-day summit of the Beijing and Moscow-backed regional security grouping known as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

In addition to China, Russia, and India, the group includes Iran, Pakistan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, while other leaders from across Asia and Middle East will also join.

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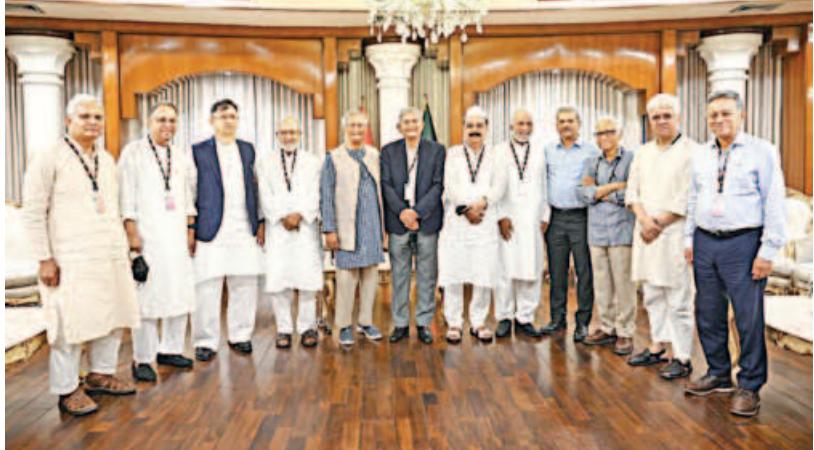
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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus held separate meetings with the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party yesterday. The meetings were held at the chief adviser's official residence, state guest house Jamuna. From left, a BNP delegation, led by the party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir with the chief adviser. Jamaat delegation led by its Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Muhammad Taher. NCP delegation, led by its Senior Joint Convenor Ariful Islam Adeeb.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

## Journos demand legal protection, wage reforms

### Call for swift implementation of media commission's recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist leaders yesterday expressed frustration that none of the recommendations from the Media Reform Commission's report have yet been implemented.

They said no matter how often the media is described as the fourth estate, no steps are being taken to truly establish it as such in a democratic state. Even the report was not included in discussions of the National Consensus Commission.

They demanded the swift implementation of the Ninth Wage Board and the introduction of a separate

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enact journalist protection law
- Set up National Media Commission
- Strengthen journalist organisations
- Ensure TV channels get cable operator fees

Journalists in Bangladesh are increasingly subjected to attacks, threats, and judicial harassment while performing their professional duties, according to rights group Manabbadhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF).

Reporting on terrorism, exposing corruption among influential figures, and uncovering the truth has placed many media workers in serious danger, the organisation's media monitoring report noted.

In August alone, one journalist was publicly stabbed to death, while five journalists in Feni district were attacked and targeted in a murder plot.

Two journalists received death threats, 11 were seriously injured, and 45 faced various forms of intimidation. Three lawsuits were filed against journalists, implicating 33 individuals, and two journalists were arrested.

The attacks extended beyond individual journalists. A roundtable discussion organised by the group Moncho 71 was disrupted, and subsequently 14 people – including a former Member of Parliament, a Dhaka University teacher, and



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## Mob violence claimed 23 lives in August

Says MSF report; warns of rising attacks, threats against journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As there is no limit on expenditure in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) and hall union election campaigns, some independent candidates feel the playing field is uneven.

### DUCSU ELECTIONS

## 'Our promises can't match their money'

Independent candidates say politically backed panels outspend them, leaving playing field uneven

MAHATHIR MOHAMMED

As there is no limit on expenditure in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) and hall union election campaigns, some independent candidates feel the playing field is uneven.

They said politically backed panels have been spending enormous sums on both online and offline campaigns.

This correspondent spoke with around 10 independent candidates. Most said they are relying on funds collected from friends and family, as well as savings from part-time jobs, including tuition classes.

Some said they are struggling to cover leaflet printing costs and alleged that the media is not giving them sufficient coverage.

This year, five female candidates are contesting for the vice president post. Two are running with different panels, while three are independent.

Marzia Hossain Jamila, an independent candidate, said she is running independently because she believes traditional student politics primarily serves the interests

of the parent political parties.

Jamila, a student of the Geography and Environment Department, said she has heard that some panel members are holding feasts for voters in the halls.



Independents say politically backed panels spend heavily

Allege feasts, flashy promotions to woo voters

Call for EC to regulate campaign spending

"The power of my promises in the manifesto is being overshadowed by the power of money," said Mostakim Billah Masud, an independent general secretary candidate.

He alleged that politically backed candidates are spending vast amounts of money, undermining a level

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## BANGLADESH MEDICAL UNIV Country's first robotic therapy centre launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's first Robotic Rehabilitation Centre was inaugurated yesterday at Bangladesh Medical University to provide advanced treatment for patients with long-term neurological diseases and paralysed.

The centre, equipped with 57 state-of-the-art robots, including 22 AI robots, is currently offering trial services to those injured in the July uprising and will soon be opened to the general public, officials said.

Once fully operational, the centre – set up on 8,000 square feet in the basement of BMU's Super Specialised Hospital – will be able to provide advanced physiotherapy services to 50 patients daily, they added.

Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum inaugurated the centre, which was funded by the Chinese government.



She urged BMU authorities to make the centre sustainable and expand similar services to at least three or four districts.

Doctors at BMU said hundreds of thousands of people suffer each year from complex conditions such as road accidents, strokes, neurological diseases, spinal injuries, and long-term disabilities.

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## স্বপ্নের নিবাস গড়তে ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক আমনার পাশে



স্বপ্নের নিবাস  
ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক  
হোম লোন



প্রয়োজন, ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংকের যে কোন শাখা, উপশাখা ও  
ফাস্ট ট্র্যাক যোগাযোগ করুন অথবা ডায়াল করুন

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দিন-রাত ২৪ ঘণ্টা যে কোন ফোন থেকে

## ফ্ল্যাট বা বাড়ি ক্রয়, নির্মাণ, সংস্কার বা বর্ধিতকরণের জন্য সর্বোচ্চ ২ কোটি টাকা পর্যন্ত Home Loan

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ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক-এর

শাখা, উপশাখা ও ফাস্ট ট্র্যাকে যোগাযোগ করুন



ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক  
আমনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী

## BNP doubts EC's capacity but hopes for fair polls: Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has expressed doubt over the Election Commission's capacity to hold a free and fair national election, but said it still hopes the polls will be participatory and inclusive.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed made the remarks yesterday after a meeting with two election commissioners at the EC headquarters in Dhaka.

"We have doubts about the Election Commission's capability -- whether the election will truly be free and fair is in question. Because, although the Election Commission is an independent body, at different levels of the administration there are accomplices [of fascists] in place, who are engaged in various tactics and far-reaching conspiracies to obstruct or



SEE PAGE 9 COL 8

## Death anniv of Nurjahan Murshid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Nurjahan Murshid, a women's rights activist, renowned politician and organiser of the 1971 Liberation War, said a press release.

Marking the day, wreaths will be placed at her grave around 11:00am at Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital today. Besides, food items will be distributed among the destitute.

In 1954, Nurjahan Murshid won as a member of the Provincial Council as a candidate of the Juktifront. She played an active role in the six-point movement in 1966 and the mass movement of 1968-69. She won the 1970 election as a candidate of Awami League.

In independent Bangladesh, she was appointed in 1972 as state minister for health and social welfare.

Nurjahan died in Dhaka on September 1, 2003. She played a significant role in different democratic movements. She was amongst a very small number of Muslim women who entered higher education and obtained her Master's degree in History from Calcutta University in the mid 1940s.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Traders from Paschim Maluhar village in Banaripara upazila transport vegetables, including water lilies and bottle gourd, by boat to sell at Lakutia Bazar. The photo was taken recently in Chandpasha area of Babuganj in Barishal.

## 'Every day, we've to step out taking our lives in our hands'

Prof Samina Lutfa tells rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Certain political interest groups are deliberately creating unrest in the country to serve their own agendas, alleged Professor Samina Lutfa of the Sociology Department at Dhaka University yesterday.

"The government has completely failed to control this unrest. We have never seen a more appalling law and order situation than this. Every day, we have to step out taking our lives in our hands," she said.

She made the remarks at a rally organised by the University Teachers' Network at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla on the campus. The event was

held to condemn ongoing harassment, attacks and dismissals of teachers, as well as the recent assault on Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur.

Speakers also called for ensuring the safety, dignity and justice of citizens.

She said since July, the demand has been to bring the perpetrators of the July killings to justice. However, no investigation or trial has been seen, and as a result, people have lost confidence in the justice system over the past year.

"This has been compounded by the competitive agendas of certain

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

said one recommendation was to make television channels profitable by requiring each cable operator to pay a fixed amount to every channel.

He said the commission had proposed a minimum salary structure equivalent to that of a first-class government employee, instead of a wage board, because the Ninth Wage Board is still tied up in litigation, making implementation impossible even if a new board is formed.

He also urged journalists to mobilise movements for

the implementation of the recommendations.

Chairman of the BJC Trustee Board Rezwana Haque Raja said in a situation where media has sprung up like "mushrooms" and anyone with a mobile phone can now become a journalist, media reform is extremely urgent.

Around 80 percent of media houses do not pay journalists properly. "When reform is neglected, the media will continue to be accused in the future just as it has been in the past," he added.

BJC trustee Talat Mamun said media workers are so divided and the institution so fragmented that even a hawkers' association has far greater organisational capacity, as they are able to press their demands -- something

journalists cannot do.

In the keynote paper, BJC executive Milton Anwar said the Reform Commission submitted its report to the chief adviser on March 22, when the chairman, Kamal Ahmed, mentioned that some recommendations could be implemented immediately.

The immediately implementable proposals were submitted separately within two days, but in the past five months no progress has been made. Instead, he noted, implementation has moved in the opposite direction.

"Instead of establishing a National Media Commission, the government reconstituted the Press Council, which the commission's proposal had recommended for abolition." BJC Member Secretary

Ilias Hossain conducted the discussion.

Among others, Dhaka Journalist Union president Md Shahidul Islam, Dhaka Reporters' Unity secretary Mainul Hasan Sohel, president of Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra Munima Sultan, journalist Hasnain Khurshed, Jagannath University assistant professor Minhaz Uddin, and BBC Media Action country director Md Al Mamun also spoke.

PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 1

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-30 12-45 4-45 6-33 8-00  
JAMAT 5-05 1-15 5-00 6-36 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Journos demand legal protection, wage reforms

FROM PAGE 3

Riaz also asked how journalists can be given legal protection in a country where ordinary citizens themselves face extrajudicial killings, disappearances, and persecution. "Your struggle is actually part of a broader struggle: the fight to secure legal protection for everyone. As a journalist, you should raise questions not only for journalists, but for everybody," he said.

Fahim Ahmed, a member of the Media Reform Commission and CEO of Jamuna Television,

said one recommendation was to make television channels profitable by requiring each cable operator to pay a fixed amount to every channel.

He said the commission had proposed a minimum salary structure equivalent to that of a first-class government employee, instead of a wage board, because the Ninth Wage Board is still tied up in litigation, making implementation impossible even if a new board is formed.

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SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## Country's first robotic

FROM PAGE 3

Long term rehabilitation treatment, they said, is often difficult and expensive. Many of those injured in the July uprising had to be sent abroad due to the lack of advanced robotic therapy. So, establishing a fully functional, sustainable, and robotic rehabilitation system was crucial.

Prof MA Shakoor, chairman of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at BMU, said the centre has a total of 15 types of robots.

He said if a patient begins rehabilitation immediately after a stroke, recovery takes less time whereas starting two years later offers a slim chance of returning to normal life.

If a person begins this robotic therapy after their acute attack has stabilised, we believe they could recover within three months," said Shakoor, also the centre's focal person.

Mohammad Abu Naser, deputy director (hospital) of BMU, said once the trial period ends and formalities,



Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry; Saidur Rahman, secretary of the Health Services Division; Yao Wen, Chinese ambassador; and BMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Shahinul Alam were present at the inaugural event.

## Mob violence claimed 23 lives

FROM PAGE 3

journalists -- were reported as arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act while in police custody.

The MSF report warned that unless the security and independence of the media are guaranteed, the country's democratic future will remain in jeopardy.

Although political violence decreased slightly in August 2025, internal conflicts within parties and attacks by criminal elements continued. Rising disputes within the BNP led to casualties and heightened public insecurity and fear.

MSF data showed that 49 incidents of political violence affected 549 people, resulting in two

deaths and 547 injuries. Additionally, 16 attacks

August, down from 51 in July. These attacks resulted in 23 deaths and 43 serious injuries, with 22 injured handed over to the police.

The MSF report also documented 349 cases of violence against women and children, slightly fewer than the previous month. These included 47 rapes, 19 gang rapes, and four cases of rape followed by murder, with nine victims being disabled girls or women.

A further 24 attempted rapes, 21 incidents of sexual harassment, and 94 cases of physical abuse were recorded. During the month, 41 individuals -- 16 adolescent girls and 25 women -- died by suicide.

At least 38 incidents of mob violence occurred in

August, down from 51 in July. These attacks resulted in 23 deaths and 43 serious injuries, with 22 injured handed over to the police.

The MSF report highlighted that concerns over law enforcement misconduct remain high, alongside continuing attacks on minorities.

Fatalities at the border persisted, with Bangladeshi citizens suffering deaths and abuse at the hands of Indian nationals, while pushback incidents were also reported.

The organisation has strongly urged the relevant authorities to guarantee political participation, peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, equality, and the safety of all citizens.



জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড

৬৯-৭০, মতিবিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০

www.nctb.gov.bd

তারিখ: ১৬ ভাদ্র ১৪৩২ বঙ্গাব্দ

৩১ আগস্ট ২০২৫ খ্রি:

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

সংশোধিত সকলের জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, জাতীয় শিক্ষাক্রম ও পাঠ্যপুস্তক বোর্ড (এনসিটিবি) কর্তৃক প্রতীক্ষিত ২০২৫-২০২৬ শিক্ষাবর্ষের একাদশ-দ্বাদশ শ্রেণির সাহিত্যগাট (গদা ও বিবিতা), বাল্ল সহায় (উপনাম ও নাটক), তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি (বাল্ল ও ইংরেজি-ভাস্মন) এবং English For Today পাঠ্যপুস্তকসমূহ প্রকাশিত সহজে নিরাপত্তা কার্যক্রমেতে মুদ্রণ ও বার্ধাই করে ১৪/০৯/২০২৫ তারিখ থেকে বাজারজাত করা হবে। এ পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে -

- অভিভাবকগাণ এবং শিক্ষার্থীদের এনসিটিবি কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত জলচাপসহ নতুন সংস্করণের পাঠ্যপুস্তকসমূহ ত্বরিত করা হবে।
- পাঠ্যপুস্তকসমূহ ত্বরিত করা হবে।
- যদি কোন শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে এনসিটিবি কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি পাঠ্যপুস্তক ব্যূহটি অন্য কোন সেক্ষেক ও প্রকাশকের পুস্তক প্রত্যাহৃত করা হয়, তাহলে সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিকাশ নেওয়া হবে।
- নকশাপূর্বক পাঠ্যপুস্তক মুদ্রণ ও বাজারজাতকরণ এবং শিক্ষার্থীদের হাতে নির্ধারিত সময়ে পাঠ্যপুস্তক পোছে দেওয়ার সরকারি উদ্দেশ্যকে সহযোগিতা করা হবে।

৩১.০৮.২৫

প্রক্ষেপণ মোঃ মাহবাব উদ্দিন

সচিব

ফোন নম্বর: ২২৩৩-৮৫৬৮৮

Memo No: 27.29.0000.082.011.10.25.247

Date: 31.08.2025

## Job Opportunity

Northern Electricity Supply PLC (NESCO) is a State Owned Company (SOC), responsible for distributing electricity across the distinctive parts of Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions, encompassing 16 districts. Established in August 2005 and commencing commercial operations since October 2016, NESCO has significantly contributed to the region's power distribution, ensuring reliable & uninterrupted electricity supply to its customers. Now, NESCO invites applications from eligible candidates from the bona fide citizens of Bangladesh for immediate appointment for the following post on a contractual basis:

SL	Name of the Post	NESCO Pay Grade	Basic Salary	No. of Post	Age

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# INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2025

BHADRA 17, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

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In this pool photograph distributed by the Russian state agency Sputnik, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, his wife Peng Liyuan, and other foreign leaders pose for a family photo during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, China, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli forces pound Gaza City suburbs  
30 Palestinians killed



AGENCIES

Israeli forces pounded the suburbs of Gaza City from the air and ground, destroying homes and driving more families out of the area as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet was set to discuss a plan to seize the city.

Local health authorities said Israeli gunfire and strikes killed at least 30 people yesterday, including 13 who tried to get food from near an aid site in the central Gaza Strip, and at least two in a house in Gaza City.

Residents of Sheikh Radwan, one of the largest neighborhoods of Gaza City, said the territory had been under Israeli tank shelling and airstrikes throughout Saturday and yesterday, forcing families to seek shelter in the western parts of the city.

The Israeli military has gradually escalated its operations around Gaza City over the past three weeks.

"They are crawling into the heart of the city where hundreds of thousands are sheltering, from the east, north, and south, while bombing those areas from the air and ground to scare people to leave," said Rezik Salah from Sheikh Radwan.

## SCO bears 'greater responsibilities'

Says China's Xi on safeguarding regional peace, stability

AGENCIES

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) security forum now bears "greater responsibility" for safeguarding regional peace and stability, as well as promoting the development and prosperity of its member states, Chinese President Xi Jinping told about 20 world leaders he hosted yesterday evening.

The ongoing SCO Summit shoulders the important mission of building consensus among all parties and stimulating momentum in cooperation, Xi was cited as telling a welcome banquet, Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported.

The two-day summit is being held in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin, reports Reuters.

The SCO comprises China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus -- with 16 more countries affiliated as observers or "dialogue partners".

Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in Tianjin yesterday with an entourage of senior politicians and business representatives.

Xi held a flurry of back-to-back bilateral meetings with leaders including Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko -- one of Putin's staunch allies -- and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his first visit to China since 2018.



Putin is expected to hold talks with Erdogan and Pezeshkian about the Ukraine conflict and Tehran's nuclear programme respectively today, reports AFP.

Xi met Erdogan yesterday to discuss the situations in Gaza and Ukraine, a readout from Ankara said. Turkey has hosted three rounds of peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv this year that have failed to break the deadlock over how to end the conflict.

The Russian president needs "all the benefits of SCO as a player on the world stage and also the support of the second largest economy in the world", said Lim Tai Wei, a professor and East Asia expert at Japan's Soka University.

"Russia is also keen to win over India, and India's trade frictions with the United States presents this opportunity," Lim told AFP.

## Pratirodh Parshad pledges women-friendly campus

FROM PAGE 12

For pregnant and new mother students, daycare centres and breastfeeding corners will be established, the panel added in its manifesto.

Additionally, the Pratirodh Parshad would work to preserve the languages, cultures, practices, and traditions of all ethnic groups from the hills and plains, and to establish equal dignity and rights for all communities.

Under "Food and Nutrition Security", the panel said it would replace privately owned canteens in halls with cafeterias managed by the administration, while food prices would be reduced through subsidies and quality would be improved.

For mental health protection, the manifesto called for establishing a "Mental Health Support Center" under the medical centre and providing both online and offline services. Besides, it said the panel would work to modernise the existing health centre.

It also said the library should remain open 24/7, and

pledged to construct a new library building and safe common rooms for students in every faculty.

On environmental and ecological protection, the panel said public toilets should be installed at different points of the university as needed, with daily maintenance ensured.

Initiatives will be taken to preserve rare and old trees, along with planned greening, while a database of the biodiversity within the university will be created, and a dedicated cell formed for its conservation. Tree felling without a master plan must be prohibited, it added.

The Pratirodh Parshad further pledged to activate the university's publishing house and to publish various books and research papers regularly.

Additionally, it promised to establish a full-fledged translation centre to enable higher education in each student's mother language and to take necessary steps to accept research papers from students.

The manifesto also called for reclaiming university lands that were grabbed.

On literature and cultural practices, it said separate rooms must be arranged in dormitories for students of dance, drama, music, and fine arts to practice. Regular literary and cultural gatherings will be organised in halls and faculties, while a monthly literary and cultural magazine will also be published.

University-owned buses were promised, which would serve till 8:00pm, while commercial uses of fields would be abolished and an annual sports calendar created.

The manifesto said an archive will be established to preserve the history of the great Liberation War, the anti-autocracy movement of the 1990s, the mass uprising of 2024, and all democratic movements.

For pregnant and new mother students, daycare centres and breastfeeding corners will be established, the panel added in its manifesto.

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VOA PURGE  
Trump officials move to fire most of journos  
AGENCIES

The Trump administration has moved to terminate more than 500 employees at the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), the federal body that oversees government funded broadcasters.

The majority of those fired were employees of Voice of America (VOA), the US-backed outlet that President Donald Trump has pledged to close down.

Acting CEO Kari Lake said the decision would "help reduce the federal bureaucracy, improve agency service, and save the American people more of their hard-earned money." Staff members have described the layoffs as "abhorrent", reports BBC.

VOA was set up during World War II to counter Nazi propaganda, and has become a major global media broadcaster.



Ukraine plans new strikes deep into Russia

Says Zelensky

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukraine plans new strikes deep into Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday, after weeks of intensified attacks on Russian energy assets.

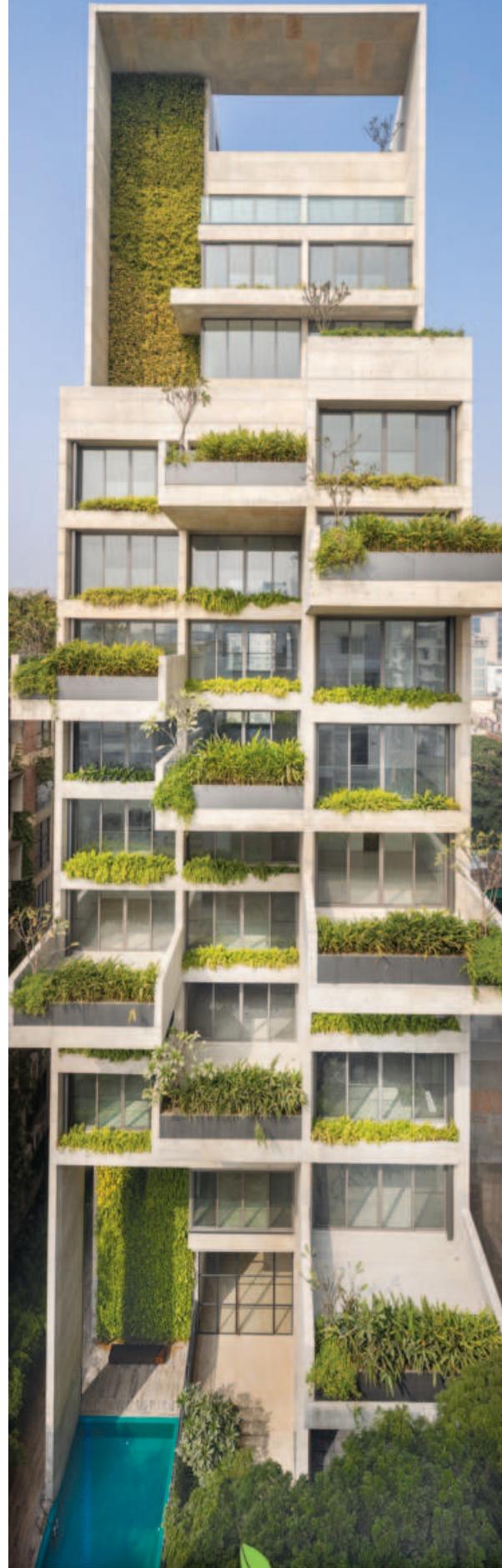
"We will continue our active operations in exactly the way needed for Ukraine's defence. The forces and resources are prepared. New deep strikes have also been planned," Zelensky said on X after meeting Ukraine's top general, Oleksandr Syrsky.

A Russian drone attack damaged four power facilities near the southern city of Odesa, leaving more than 29,000 customers without electricity yesterday morning, the region's governor and power firm DTEK said.

Hardest hit was the port city of Chornomorsk, just outside Odesa, where residential houses and administrative buildings were also damaged, said the governor of Odesa.

DHAKA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2025  
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CREATING  
Greener  
Lifestyles



348,216 sft of natural greenery planted

RANCON



Scan to know more

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার				
প্রধান সংকেত ও টেলিযোগাযোগ প্রকৌশলী (পূর্ব) এর দলে				
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2	1142891. 54.01.1500. 111.05.333.25	Upgradation of latest conference equipment at Railbhavan 8th Floor, Dhaka.	NCT, OTM	28-Aug-2025 16:00:00, 14-Sep-2025 14:30:00
বিবরণঃ				
১. শুধুমাত্র ই-জিপি সিটেমে নির্বাচিত eligibility শর্তাবলী প্রযুক্তির দ্বারা তাগিদ করা হচ্ছে।				
২. নির্বাচিত ও আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বিনা খরচে দরপত্র দলিল দেখতে পারবেন; তবে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য দরপত্র দলিল ও দরপত্র জামানত বাবদ অর্থ নির্বাচিত ব্যাংকে জমা করতে হবে।				
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২. নির্বাচিত ও আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বিনা খরচে দরপত্র দলিল দেখতে পারবেন; তবে দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য দরপত্র দলিল ও দরপত্র জামানত বাবদ অর্থ নির্বাচিত ব্যাংকে জমা করতে হবে।				
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২. নির্বাচিত ও আগ্রহী দরদাতাগণ বিনা খরচে দরপত্র দলিল				

## CU violence points to institutional failures

Stern action against mob violence key to preventing such incidents

We are shocked by the recent violence that occurred near the Chittagong University (CU) campus, leaving more than 300 people injured, including CU's pro-vice-chancellor, proctorial staff, journalists, and scores of students. More than 20 students sustained serious injuries. The brutality that was on display is condemnable, but equally disturbing was the incident that triggered it—the alleged harassment and assault of a female student apparently for arriving home late.

According to media reports quoting the female student, around 11pm on Saturday, the security guard of the building where she resided allegedly assaulted her verbally and physically for returning late. She claimed that when her roommates intervened, the guard fled. Students who chased after him were then allegedly attacked by locals with brickbats. The incident occurred near CU's Gate No. 2, in Jobra village, Hathazari. As the night progressed, tensions further escalated amid counterattacks. Around 12:45am, two assistant proctors and the campus security chief attempted to reach the site, but were blocked by locals. The situation was brought under control after the army was deployed around 3:30am.

However, violence flared up again around 12:20pm on Sunday, when the pro-vice-chancellor and other university officials visited the area to mediate. A large group of agitated students followed, and locals—angered by students' earlier attacks on their homes and shops—responded with renewed violence. Law enforcement authorities then imposed Section 144 in Hathazari municipality from 3pm Sunday to 3pm Monday. All classes and exams at the university have also been suspended. As of 6pm Sunday, our correspondent reported that locals were still blocking the road from CU's Gate 2 to Hathazari, and no one had yet been arrested.

This chain of events highlights multiple institutional failures. The university administration failed to act swiftly and effectively to contain the unrest and ensure student safety. Police were reportedly late to respond, and their inaction during both the early and later stages of the violence is deeply concerning. While police have used excessive force on peaceful protests in some incidents recently, in this case they failed to even deploy basic, non-lethal riot-control tools despite the attackers' use of weapons. These issues need to be addressed.

Given the continuing threats of mob violence, with the CU incident being its latest example, we urge the interim administration to take effective steps to uphold the rule of law. Failure to do so only emboldens groups seeking to destabilise the country. We also urge a thorough investigation into what propelled the CU violence, including identification and prosecution of those involved. The authorities must ensure the safety of students both on and off campus but, equally importantly, must also look into the allegations of shops and homes being vandalised by students.

## July trials must never be compromised

Concerns raised by ICT chief prosecutor warrant scrutiny

Given our political history, there could be some substance in the fears that a political administration may not be as unbiased in the conduct of July trials as a non-political interim government. But compromising thoroughness in favour of expedited trials is not the answer either. However, the apprehension aired at a recent event by the chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal—that the next government may not continue the trials or may not continue with the current prosecution team—indicates a more serious concern. If it happens, he suggested, the justice process may stall. From our vantage point, this seems a bit premature and alarmist. And for the prosecution team to be bogged down by this fear, and consequently to "rush" their work, is deeply concerning.

There are less than six months left before the planned election in February. The Election Commission has already announced a "roadmap," itemising all the preparatory steps to be taken to hold the polls in the first half of that month. But trials cannot be tied to a timeline as it may compromise them. While there is clearly public pressure to hurry the trials of the crimes committed during the July uprising as well as enforced disappearances perpetrated under the Awami League regime, it is extremely important that prosecutors remain unswayed by this so that the trials can provide the justice that both the victims and the accused deserve. Otherwise, they risk being discredited both at home and abroad.

That said, prosecutors must ensure that the process is not lengthened unnecessarily. The higher leadership, both present and upcoming, must also allow it to run its course while removing existing roadblocks, including the dubious cases that are only overwhelming those involved. The July trials, for example, have had to encounter many such cases. The chief prosecutor is right to highlight the caseload, "There are more than 1,800 cases of enforced disappearances, each with multiple layers. Is it realistically possible to investigate them all thoroughly in just a few months?" He adds, "Whoever comes to power next must understand why this process must continue. If they fail to grasp that, there could be no greater misfortune for the nation."

It is heartening to know that the government is taking steps to address some of the concerns. Speaking at the same event, the law adviser assured the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, which is coordinating with the tribunal on such cases, that cases lacking evidence would be withdrawn (except those related to militancy or terrorism). The government, he said, is also expediting the enactment of the draft Enforced Disappearance Prevention and Redress Ordinance, 2025 to transfer investigative responsibility to the National Human Rights Commission. So, there are reforms and amendments necessary to expedite ongoing investigations, which the government must undertake without delay. As for the questions raised about the commitment of a future political government, we can only strengthen institutional safeguards but, in the end, we must trust that they will have the sense to help, rather than disrupt, the justice process. But under no circumstances can the trial process be made questionable.

## THE FEBRUARY ELECTION

# Democracy's burning test



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BOBBY HAJAJ

There comes a time in the life of every nation when the air grows thick with lies. A time when slogans and rumours, like soot from a factory chimney, cloud our sight until we no longer recognise our own reflection in the mirror. For Bangladesh, that time is now. The national election scheduled for February 2026 is not merely another turn of the political wheel; it is the test of whether our long-suffering republic still belongs to its people, or whether it has already been stolen by bureaucrats, backroom engineers, and their chosen political pets.

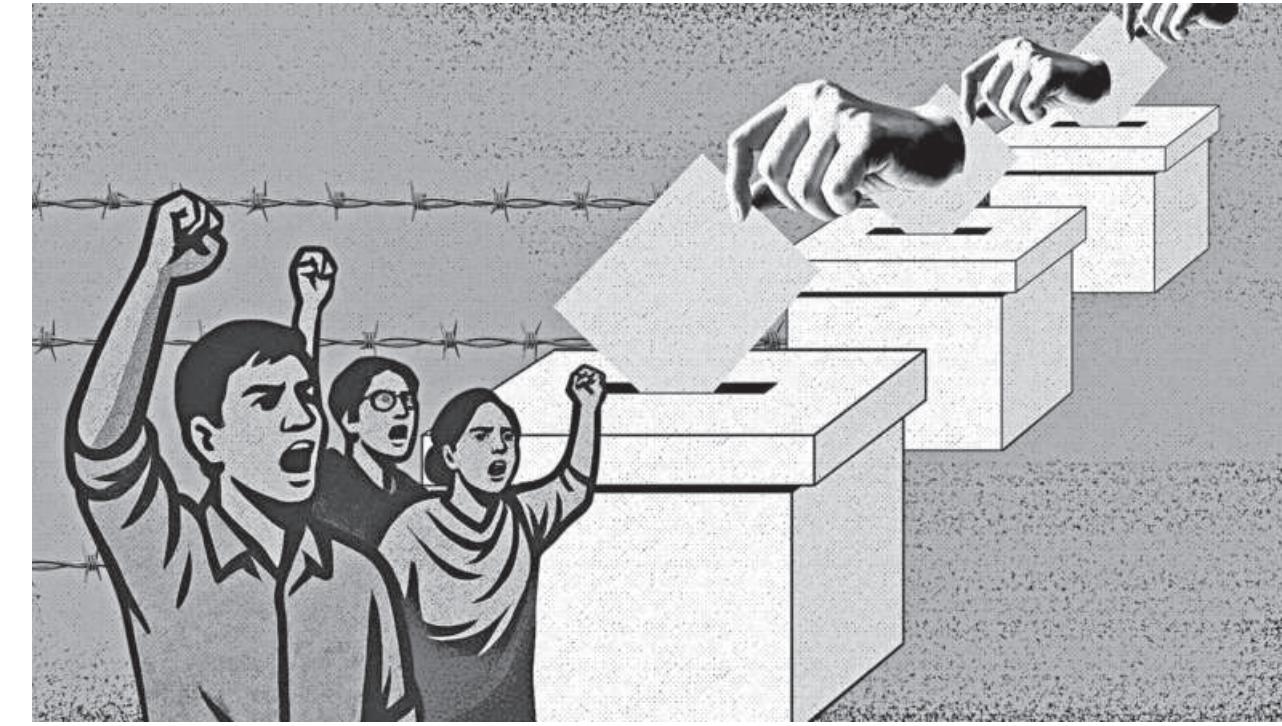
Let us not mince words: those who argue that elections can wait, that the people's voice can be deferred until reforms are completed or until the stars align, are consciously or otherwise hindering our democratic transition. Democracy is not a favour dispensed by a caretaker regime or a prize handed down. Democracy, in its most elemental form, is the ballot box—messy, imperfect, vulnerable to manipulation, yes, but the only mechanism through which sovereignty flows from people to government. Delay it, deny it, derail it, and you reveal yourself for what you are: not committed to democracy.

And yet, astonishingly, some are just showing that tendency. One party, birthed in the laboratory of the interim government, is implicitly claiming to be the sole heir of the July movement. Their leaders—young, articulate, photogenic—speak as though the revolution was theirs alone, as though millions of others who bled, suffered, and marched were mere extras in their scripted drama. This stance is of the most cynical kind. This is, however, not to discredit anybody but to put things in perspective.

To be frank, prominent leaders of this new party did not march to tear down Sheikh Hasina's dictatorship. They cut their teeth in the anti-quota movement, an agitation narrow in scope, focused on government jobs. They questioned Hasina's policy but did not seek her downfall, at least initially. One can say that their purpose was entry into the system, not its dismantling. To now allow such a party to monopolise the July

uprising is an insult to history.

The July movement was not the triumph of any one group. It was, in Ernesto Laclau's words, a convergence, a tidal wave of anger where diverse grievances found a single nodal point: hatred for Hasina's tyranny. Students, farmers, workers, mothers, intellectuals, small parties, large parties, citizens with no party at all—all came together to tear down a dictatorship that had outstayed



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

every welcome. To watch a party claim that legacy as its own is to stand by while truth itself is mugged in broad daylight.

The interim government and its chosen favourites now spin another fiction: that unless they stay in charge, the criminals of July will never face justice. Let us pause here. The parties most likely to win in the upcoming election are the very ones who were hounded, imprisoned, shot at, and vilified by the dictatorship that the movement toppled. Their leaders have tasted tear gas and prison bars. Their activists have carried their dead on their shoulders. Are we to believe that such parties, if chosen by the people,

for proportional representation everywhere. Let us be clear: there are many electoral systems, and none are perfect. Bangladesh has already agreed to a hybrid system, with the Upper House chosen by proportional representation. This gives smaller parties the voice they crave, while preserving the constituency link of the first-past-the-post system in the Lower House. If some parties wish for a different system, that is their right, but to hold the entire electoral process hostage to such demands is unconscionable. Ranked choice voting, or single transferable vote, might be a more elegant system. But no party has asked for either. Instead,

republic. It is the one remaining bridge between the sacrifice of July and the promise of tomorrow. Delay the election, and you betray the martyrs. Derail it, and you mock the millions who marched. Deny it, and you betray the very people of this nation.

Bangladesh is tired of lies. Tired of experiments carried out on its body politic by those who imagine themselves above the people. Tired of manufactured saviours and unelected custodians. In February, the people must speak. And their voice, fractured, noisy, contradictory, yet undeniably sovereign, will be the only mandate that matters.

## How to elevate our public universities in global rankings



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MOHAMMAD TARIKUL ISLAM

For years, I have observed ongoing debates on strategies to improve the global ranking of Bangladesh's public universities. This is indeed a positive sign, as we have been making sincere efforts to accelerate the process of achieving higher scores in various categories set by global ranking platforms such as the Times Higher Education (THE) and QS Rankings.

While reviewing strategies to improve public university rankings, I have closely observed many leading universities, where I have also served as a visiting professor. Several Asian universities are engaged in healthy competition to rank among the world's top twenty universities according to global ranking indicators.

For Bangladesh's public universities to be among the globally recognised and prestigious institutions, a strategic plan is essential. What we need is a timely and practical framework. Below, I present a concise framework for the consideration of the highest authorities of public universities.

Each department of a public university should strive to enrol at least five international students each academic year. The admission process must be entirely independent, conducted online from application to

final admission. All procedures should be carried out under the supervision of the pro-vice-chancellor (Education). Before admission, widespread dissemination of admission notices is necessary, along with communication with universities across South Asia, East Asia, the Far East, and the Middle East. Additionally, through coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the university may arrange admission fairs via Bangladesh's embassies and high commissions abroad, when necessary.

To institutionalise this process, a separate office may be established, which, in coordination with respective departments, will deal with the online selection process and finalise admissions. To accommodate international students, a specific block in residential halls or an entire hall may be designated.

Public universities must develop their own fund management systems and strengthen their reserves. Funding is required to encourage research. A collaborative model with industry should be adopted. Industrial leaders, including those from EPZs, can be invited and briefed on funding opportunities. On occasions such as university anniversaries or other special days, they can be honoured

and given recognition, which would encourage them to contribute to research funding.

The fund should be allocated for Master's thesis, MPhil, and PhD researchers, with an honorarium for supervisors to enhance the quality of research. To ensure merit-based distribution of research grants, a committee should be formed under the leadership of the treasurer, comprising all deans and directors of the faculties and institutions. Within each faculty, a committee headed by the dean should propose names of researchers and supervisors for grant selection. At the end of the year, each faculty should publish an edited volume that compiles its research outputs. This will foster an environment that promotes undergraduate research and healthy competition.

Each public university must also establish its own publishing house to publish the best research papers. A portion of funding should be allocated for this purpose. The press should be overseen by a committee of distinguished professors.

Every department and institute should host at least one internationally recognised scholar annually for a period of one to three months as a visiting professor or scholar. Most of our respected faculty members have some association with foreign universities or research institutions, and they can facilitate these engagements. Invited scholars should be accommodated at the university's guest houses. Their expenses can be partially covered by industry collaboration funds and partially by external funding mobilised by the

departments and institutes, often through the support of distinguished alumni.

Each department and institute should also organise at least one international conference annually and publish a book as the outcome. This will significantly improve university rankings. Departments and institutes should take the initiative to secure funding, again drawing on support from distinguished alumni.

The implementation of the above-mentioned model has now become imperative for Bangladesh's public universities. While older, established universities have already made progress in this direction, newer universities may find it more challenging. Moreover, it is difficult for the central administration alone to execute such a model. Therefore, collective efforts are required to achieve excellence in teaching and research. The corporate sector must come forward with a positive mindset to support research at public universities.

I strongly believe that through public diplomacy, global educational partnerships must be built. To achieve this, distinguished faculty members must be engaged in every research initiative. Seminars on higher education, led by faculty with experience in both teaching and research at home and abroad, should be organised. This will inspire students to become more research-oriented and facilitate the smoother implementation of the model. Ultimately, excellence in higher education will be achieved, leading to a substantial rise in the global ranking of Bangladesh's public universities.

# How poor are the poor? A dive beyond the line



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NAMIRA SHAMEEM

In Bangladesh today, the narrative on poverty has grown louder yet narrower, focusing almost entirely on the headcount ratio. According to a recent State of the Real Economy study by Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), 27.9 percent of people now live below the upper poverty line—a near 10 percentage point rise from the 18.7 percent recorded in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022. This is not merely a statistic; it signals a reversal of hard-fought gains.

Yet, this alarming headline misses a deeper truth. Poverty is not just about how many fall below the line, but how far below. The poverty gap index (PGI) addresses the deeper question: how poor are the poor? The PPRC analysis places the PGI at 1.76 percent, nearly double the 0.93 percent recorded in HIES 2022. While the absolute figure may seem modest, its sharp rise is far from reassuring. This suggests that most of those now classified as poor hover just under the threshold rather than being deeply below it. In other words, poverty is now shallower but more widespread, signalling a condition of fragility.

But what about those just above this line? Here lies the crux: nearly 18 percent of the total 8,067 households in our study fall into the “vulnerable non-poor” category, which

we have defined as those whose per capita expenditure lies between the upper poverty line and the median monthly income. This fragile, precarious group is often ignored in mainstream discourse but lives one shock away from poverty. Evidence from the PPRC-BIGD COVID-19 studies offers strong support: nearly 77 percent of this group slipped into poverty and became newly poor during the pandemic. While the latest PPRC survey cannot track such transitions directly, it is

**Poverty reduction cannot simply be about lifting those already below the line, but also about preventing those teetering at the edge from falling in. Policies overlooking this ‘fragile middle’ will be reactive rather than pre-emptive, allowing reversals to outpace progress.**



FILE VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

plausible that similar vulnerability dynamics persist—many of today’s poor were, in fact, yesterday’s vulnerable non-poor.

If this is true, poverty reduction cannot simply be about lifting those already below the line, but also about preventing those teetering at the edge from falling in. Policies overlooking this “fragile middle” will be reactive rather than pre-emptive, allowing reversals to outpace progress.

The vulnerabilities that were found extend well beyond income. Around 15.5 percent of school-aged children in the sample are not in school. The results show that the most frequently mentioned barrier was marriage (43.7 percent of cases), followed by financial problems (26.6 percent), the need to work (26.2 percent) and lack of interest in education (16.7 percent), highlighting the structural and

motivational barriers in place.

More than half of the households, around 51 percent, report at least one chronically ill household member—a burden that translates into recurring health-related costs and heightened fragility. Debt compounds the stress on households: the bottom 40 percent of households owe at least twice as much as they have in savings, with debts growing by a net seven percent over the previous six months. Food insecurity is another fault line, with 12 percent of households skipping at least one meal in the past week, while nearly nine percent of the poorest decile endured an entire day without food in the past month.

Basic development goals also remain stalled, with over a third of households still reliant on non-sanitary latrines. In addition, among the 15 percent of female-

headed households, around 23.8 percent are in the poorest decile. Imagine the everyday negotiations of such a family, choosing between food and medicines, whether to pull a child from school to save on costs or put them to work to support rising burdens. This is the fragile middle point, where households are not officially considered poor today but would be pushed into poverty over the years by illness or indebtedness.

Adopting a “people’s lens in economic planning,” as the study recommends, means not just seeing poverty as a statistic to be reduced. It means reversing poverty sustainably, accounting for the multidimensionality of vulnerabilities experienced by the fragile middle. It means safety nets that account for current realities. In this particular context, the PPRC recommends a social safety net for households burdened with chronic illness expenses, in line with its findings. It also means nurturing resilience so that the succession of crises our country has witnessed over the past five years—ranging from the pandemic to global inflationary pressures and national political change—does not undo decades of progress. Special emphasis should be placed on those households which are women-headed and youth-heavy, both disproportionately at risk and central to future transformation.

To sum up, it may feel reassuring that poverty depth remains “low.” But in Bangladesh today, that is not a comfort; it is a warning. While the poor are not deeply poor, the vulnerable non-poor, nearly one-fifth of households, stand on the tipping point. To truly reverse poverty requires seeing, valuing and safeguarding the fragile middle, while tackling the broader vulnerabilities that erode resilience. Ignoring them is not just policy oversight; it is a risk we can no longer afford.

## Let them in: Opening Gaza to the foreign press corps



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BINYO KAMPMARK

The Fourth Estate may not be in a good way, corrupted and compromised as it is, but in some instances, it remains the only light cast over the predations and ghastliness of power. For that precise reason, the state of Israel has been most cautious, to the point of folly, of shutting out foreign journalists from covering the Gaza conflict. A job most dirty needs to be done—levelling, disabling, dispossessing and crushing of a strip with over two million Palestinians—and it shall only be witnessed, controlled and invigilated with utmost care.

Only the friendliest of the friendly need apply for access to Gaza, and the call by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier in August that the military bring in more foreign journalists is heavily contingent on control.

The Gaza campaign is proving frustratingly long for the Netanyahu government. During this time, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have become routine killers of journalists. Given the international press ban, the number of those slain by the IDF are overwhelmingly Palestinian. Since the start of the Gaza War, 189 have been killed. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) puts the death toll for all

journalists and media workers between October 2023 and August 2025 at 197. Data from Reporters Without Borders puts the figure of journalists killed in Gaza at over 210, claiming that 56 of them were intentionally targeted by the

ran to aid the wounded and were subsequently butchered.

The list of the dead also includes Associated Press freelance photographer Mariam Abu Daggah; Al Jazeera cameraman Mohammed Salama; freelance photographer Moaz Abu Taha; and Middle East Eye and Quds News Network correspondent Ahmed Abu Aziz.

The justifications for such slaughter by the IDF have become something to behold. A weary formula is at work: first, assume the strike was on a Hamas or militant site, leaving those in the vicinity silly for being there. The official line is the IDF does not target civilians,

National Congress. “That didn’t make them terrorists, nor legitimate targets.”

With these killings and the continuing starvation and deprivation taking place in the strip, many of Israel’s allies are now giving some unwanted advice. On August 21, member states of the Media Freedom Coalition released a statement declaring, “In light of the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, the undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition urge Israel to allow immediate independent foreign media access and afford protection for journalists operating in Gaza.” Of the

28 signatories, the bulk are European, including France, Germany and the UK. With usual conspicuousness, the US remains absent.

The signatories went on to “condemn all violence directed against journalists and media workers, especially the extremely high number of fatalities, arrests and detentions.” It was made clear that civilian journalists were protected in times of armed conflict. “We call for all attacks against media workers to be investigated and for those responsible to be prosecuted in compliance with national and international law.”

While the protection of journalists

in such situations could hardly be fully sealed and assured, Israel will find killing members of the foreign press corps in numbers a more trying prospect. Should the journalists be allowed to scribble and record the vast, engineered crime taking place in Gaza and be harder, more absurd, to make.

*This article first appeared on Countercurrents.org and Scoop Independent News on August 31, 2025.*



Between October 2023 and August 2025, as many as 197 journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

**While the protection of journalists in such situations could hardly be fully sealed and assured, Israel will find killing members of the foreign press corps in numbers a more trying prospect. Should the journalists be allowed to scribble and record the vast, engineered crime taking place in Gaza and in real time, silencing them will become a most formidable, exacting task.**

IDF, while UN Secretary General António Guterres offers 242 as the more accurate figure. Between 2020 and 2022, as many as 165 journalists were killed across the globe, a statistic bound to move even the coldest of analysts.

Add aid workers and medical staff, and you have such cases as the attack on Khan Younis’s Nasser Hospital during the morning of August 25. Initially, it was assumed that two strikes hit southern Gaza’s sole functioning major hospital. At least 20 people died, including five journalists. A closer examination of footage of the strikes by BBC Verify shows the initial assessment to have been conservative. At least four strikes took place. Two staircases were hit in the first wave, and what was initially thought to be a single attack turns out to have been two separate strikes hitting the same location within a fraction of a second. The first, registered at 10:08 local time, killed journalist Hussam Al-Masri, who was in the process of running a live TV feed for Reuters. First responders and journalists

despite killing a vast number in such strikes. Second, belittle those who died in exhaustive fashion, accusing them of being militants, militant sympathisers, or “combat propagandists.” It follows on from the first point: if they were there, they were obviously tarnished one way or the other.

Jodie Ginsberg, chief executive of CPJ, provides a terse, accurate summary on what international humanitarian law says on this subject, “The only individuals who can be considered legitimate targets in war are those directly involved in active combat. Expressing sympathy for proscribed organisations, or even engaging in propaganda, does not make someone a legitimate target.”

One’s political inclination—insofar as protection from military targeting is concerned—is irrelevant to the role of gathering and disseminating news. As Ginsberg goes on to observe, journalists have had leanings and sympathies for such previously proscribed organisations as the Irish Republican Army or the African

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the District Primary Education Officer

Manikganj

### e-GP Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tenders are invited through the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods:

Tender ID and Package No.	Brief description of the tender	Tender security (Tk)	Publishing date, closing date & time
1142024, NBDGPS-1/G1.0544	Goods, Furniture Supply for 47 Nos. Class Room and 07 Nos. of Teachers Room of Selected 12 Nos. of Govt. Primary School at different location of Manikganj District.	160,000	01 Sep, 2025 14:00:00; 16 Sep, 2025 14:00:00
1142025, NBDGPS-1/G1.0545	Goods, Furniture Supply for 41 Nos. Class Room and 08 Nos. of Teachers Room of Selected 10 Nos. of Govt. Primary School at different location of Manikganj District.	150,000	01 Sep, 2025 14:00:00; 16 Sep, 2025 14:00:00

These are online tenders where only e-Tender will be accepted and no offline/hard copies will be entertained. The interested bidders may visit the e-GP Portal website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for further details. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.

29/08/2025

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RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

For '90s kids, BTV was more than just television; it was a window into their childhoods. One show that left a lasting mark was the beloved children's programme *Moner Kotha*.

I immediately fell in love with its vibrant characters: the bubbly Parul, the carefree Baul *bhai* who sang without a hint of worry, and the hilarious Shar *bhai*. Their personalities couldn't have been further apart, yet their friendship always shone through, amidst all the silliness. Each episode had its own little 'happily ever after.'

And then there was our favourite, Dadu *bhai* (Mustafa Monwar). He wasn't just a character. He was a teacher, a storyteller, and for many of us, the first person who taught us how to hold a pencil and see magic in the simplest lines. He would sketch a leaf, or a bird, and along with it share quiet lessons about life. Later, he appeared on screen as himself, fondly called 'Shilpi *bhai*' by Parul, Baul, and Shar. The man with the gentle smile and kind eyes wasn't simply drawing; he was opening windows into our imagination.

What I didn't know as a child was that this gentle figure was, in many ways, a rebel. Mustafa Monwar's art was never just about puppets or paintings. It was about freedom,

about expression, and about believing that children deserve more than entertainment; they deserve hope, creativity, and courage.

While searching for *Moner Kotha* episodes on BTV's YouTube channel, I came across an old video interview, where he talked about its importance in his life.

He described how, even during challenging times, he pursued puppetry passionately, always learning and experimenting. When he joined BTV, he realised he wanted to create something truly meaningful for children.

"While coming up with names, I found a really beautiful one called Parul. I loved that she wakes up her seven brothers every day. Parul has the power to inspire change in society. Then there is Baul, a symbol of our culture, who sings from the heart and never offends anyone. He travels across the country with his songs, and all he wants is the well-being of the people. Shar *bhai*, the buffalo, listens to Baul's songs, loves painting, and tries to draw as well. Sometimes Shar *bhai* and Baul *bhai* get into playful fights. Despite all that, they still love each other deeply. Puppetry is a form of art. It teaches humanity, encourages us to embrace the beauty of nature within ourselves, and express that beauty through creativity," stated the renowned artiste.

Monwar's belief in the power of puppetry

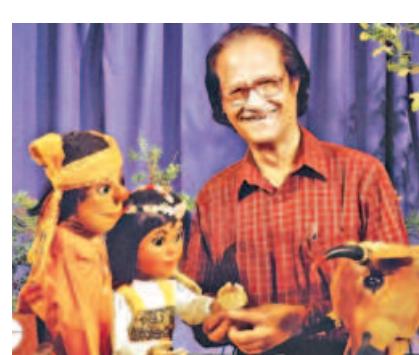
# The 'PUPPET MAN' who taught us to dream

An ode to Mustafa Monwar on his 90th



PHOTOS: STAR &amp; COLLECTED

**Monwar's belief in the power of puppetry was tested during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971. He visited a large refugee camp where the silence of children struck him deeply. They had food and shelter, but their faces had no trace of joy.**



was tested during Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971. He visited a large refugee camp where the silence of children struck him deeply. They had food and shelter, but their faces had no trace of joy.

With just three or four students, Monwar created puppets—a farmer, a freedom fighter, and Yahya Khan. In one unforgettable scene, Yahya Khan points a gun at the farmer and asks, "Where is Mukti (Freedom fighter)?". The farmer replies, "Don't shoot me. I'll tell you," then looks around and finally points to himself and says, "Mukti lives within me. All Bengalis carry the spirit of freedom fighter within them." For the first time in weeks, Monwar finally saw the children smile again.

From refugee camps to the BTV studio, his puppets never stopped speaking for us; they told stories of resilience, beauty, and freedom. And he gave us other treasures too, like *Notun Kuri*, which will soon be on air after two decades.

Just recently, children gathered at the Bangladesh Mahila Samity to celebrate *Mustafa Monwar Jayanti*. They made more than 30 greeting cards for him, colourful testaments of love. Puppet shows filled the stage, while Botala staged *Bonmetherium* for the audience.

At his home, Channel i honoured him as well, with actor Afzal Hossain and painter

Monirul Islam paying tribute. True to form, Monwar asked for more than 100 birds to be released into the sky—a gesture so perfectly him, a symbol of the freedom and imagination he has lived for.

It would be unfair to think of him only as the man behind puppets. Monwar's artistry was vast. He wrote and produced plays like *Roktokorobi* and *Mukhora Romoni Boshikoron*, both recognised internationally.

His recognition began early: a Gold Medal for Best Graphic Work at the All-India Fine Arts Exhibition in 1957, and two more for oil and watercolour at Kolkata University. Later came the Ekushey Padak in 2004, and countless other honours along the way.

But if you ask me, his greatest achievement is something more delicate, something less tangible. It's the way generations of children grew up believing that creativity matters, that art can make you free, and that even in the darkest of times, joy can be found through imagination.

And maybe that is why, decades later, I can still close my eyes and hear Baul *bhai*'s carefree songs, Parul's laughter, and Shar *bhai*'s hungry jokes. And in the middle of it all, Dadu *bhai*'s patient voice, sketching not just on paper, but across the canvas of our childhood.

## NEWS

### BNP at 47: Caught between prospects

FROM PAGE 12

lack of unity at the grassroots remain pressing challenges.

Prof Mojibur Rahman of Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research observed that while the BNP initially seized the post-August 5 opening, its activists soon got mired in crimes.

"At first, we saw the party was doing well, but later we saw the party men getting involved in extortion, grabbing, tender manipulation, and various criminal activities," he said.

Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman of Jahangirnagar University's government and politics department noted that the BNP must rein in its grassroots to stay on the right track.

BNP's long spell out of power is unprecedented. Founded in 1978, it had earlier ruled under the leadership of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia for over a decade in total. Leadership now rests with their son, Tarique Rahman, who has been in London since 2008.

The party weathered the 2007-08 army-backed caretaker regime; a debacle in the 2008 polls; boycotts in 2014 and 2024; and widespread rigging in 2018. With Hasina's ouster, opportunities have emerged, but so have internal challenges.

BNP itself admits to disciplining over 5,000 members for wrongdoings.

Rights group Ain o Salish Kendra reports 77 BNP men were killed in infighting over the last 11 months.

Aminul Haque, convener of Dhaka North City BNP, said, "After August 5, some so-called new BNP

activists have been engaged in unethical activities. In this context, the party's biggest challenge now is to weed them out and prepare for the February election."

Secretary General Fakhrul, speaking at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club on Friday, urged BNP leaders and activists to refrain from doing anything that tarnishes the party's image. "You haven't yet come near power. Many conspiracies are afoot. You must tackle those and go to the people with your unity and good deeds."

#### NOMINATION, POLARISATION

The upcoming polls will also test the BNP's nomination process, with insiders fearing an outburst of resentment among long-suffering leaders if they are denied tickets.

Analysts warn the party must avoid "selling" nominations and ensure competent candidates are fielded.

Prof Hasanuzzaman said, "The BNP's nomination process must not turn into a business like in the past, and the right person is expected in the right place. For this, preparation is needed."

Another challenge comes from opportunists who joined the BNP after Al's collapse. "Three types of people are in the BNP now: the original BNP, former AL men seeking shelter, and secret groups," said Prof Mojibur. "The party must be careful."

While Jamaat has already announced its candidates, the BNP has not, and the uncertainty risks deepening divisions. Prof Mojibur said that since the BNP has yet to

decide its candidates, many problems are likely to continue emerging.

A survey by the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development shows undecided voters rising to 48.5 percent from 38 percent over eight months, signalling BNP's difficulty in energising the electorate, for the first time under Tarique's leadership and despite AL's absence.

Uncertainty is also growing over whether the election will be held on time, as Jamaat and NCP press for the July Charter's implementation and proportional representation, which the BNP opposes.

#### GOVERNANCE, ECONOMY

Even if BNP returns to power, analysts warn that restoring law and order, reforming institutions long dominated by officials appointed under AL's influence, and rebuilding business confidence will be major tests.

Prof Hasanuzzaman said, "If the party comes to power, even bigger challenges [than controlling the grassroots] in socio-economic, political, and international arenas will arise, which it will have to face."

Industrial zones have already seen at least 15 clashes among BNP factions over the jhooth (fabric scraps) business, leaving 30 injured and unnerving traders. Business leaders stress that only political stability will reassure them.

Prof Mojibur said that Tarique's biggest test, if the party returns to power, will be whose advice he follows. Ignoring the party's seasoned, trusted leaders would be his gravest mistake, he added.

Speaking at a programme titled "National Consultation on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Electoral Process" at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital yesterday, he said, "On behalf of the commission, we'll do

everything realistically possible. We're considering whether we can deploy assistants—volunteers from BNCC and Scouts. Alongside this, a logical suggestion has been raised regarding transport facilities, and we must take that into consideration."

He added that persons with disabilities should be able to cast their votes anywhere inside the polling centre, including the ground floor, if they wish.

### Evil forces attempting to foil polls

FROM PAGE 12

opportunity for people to establish their rights in Bangladesh through elections," he said while addressing a discussion.

The discussion, titled "Purpose and Significance of the BNP's Establishment", was held at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), in Dhaka, marking the party's 47th founding anniversary.

While the interim government is trying to uphold the people's rights, some political parties are imposing conditions to serve their partisan interests, Tarique said.

"By doing so, they may be attempting to create obstacles in the electoral path in a planned way."

He said the BNP from the very beginning has been pressing the demand for holding an election at the quickest possible time, as the party believes that people need political power first. "If an elected government formed through direct voting fails to fulfill public expectations, people will get a chance to change

that government through the next election, something that is practiced in democracies worldwide," he added.

Tarique urged the democratic political parties to refrain from blocking the electoral process with conditions saying that no reform initiatives would be sustainable by creating obstacles to the practice and application of the people's rights.

"Establishing people's rights through effective democratic political practice is much more urgent than textbook reforms," he said.

He said BNP fully agrees on the matter of reforms in the state and politics. Since reforms are important. But he cautioned that no reform will be sustainable if obstacles are created in the exercise of people's rights.

Though the interim government came based on public desires, Tarique said he does not think that there is any logical reason to expect this government to perform like an efficient and accountable political

government.

The longer the interim government stays in power, the more its weaknesses will become visible, giving anti-uprising evil forces scope to create confusion, he warned.

Pointing to recent incidents, including the attack on Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur, Tarique said the country's stability is either becoming complicated or being made complicated.

Criticising mob violence, he said, "No one of us will tolerate mob violence. Every soldier of Shaheed Zia and Khaleda Zia will be sensitive and respectful towards the dignity and rights of women."

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, its Standing Committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Abdul Moyeen Khan and Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, among others, spoke at the discussion conducted by BNP Publicity Affairs Secretary Sultan Salauddin Ahmed Tuku.

### Govt must be held accountable

FROM PAGE 12

registered party's programme be termed as mob activity?

"The attack was carried out by Jatiya Party activists. We've seen earlier that such political tensions can arise, but branding one side as a mob and giving facilities to the other is unacceptable."

He also alleged that Jatiya Party is an "identified fascist force" that repeatedly legitimised the AL's authoritarian parliament in the past.

"If anyone tries to support such fascists again, it must be resisted collectively."

#### NUR'S HEALTH IMPROVING

Meanwhile, DMCH Director Brig Gen Asaduzzaman told reporters that Nur is now doing well and is likely to be released from the hospital soon.

"However, he is still experiencing pain and problems sleeping due to the blunt force trauma and fractures he sustained. We conducted another CT scan and found that intracranial

hemorrhage has healed significantly."

The hospital authorities will decide soon on shifting him to a cabin from the ICU, he added.

"Such fractures usually heal within four to six weeks, and he [Nur] does not need to remain in the hospital. He is expected to be discharged within a week, as the fractures are not displaced and will heal over time," the hospital director said, adding that Nur is now able to speak to others and is consuming liquid food.

The Gono Odhikar Parishad president was admitted to intensive care following a head injury, along with fractures in his jaw and nose. He also suffered an internal bleed in the brain.

Nur was beaten up by police and other members of other law enforcement agencies during a clash between supporters of Gono Odhikar Parishad and Jatiya Party in the capital's Kakrail on Friday.

### Country now has 12.63cr voters

FROM PAGE 12

on October 31, and based on that we will finalise the voter roll," he said.

Asked whether there will be special arrangements for voters with disabilities, he said the EC would try to accommodate them as much as possible.

Meanwhile, Election Commissioner Abul Fazal Md Sanauallah said the EC is considering deploying volunteers from the Bangladesh National Cadet

Corps and Bangladesh Scouts at polling centres to assist persons with disabilities, the elderly, and those unable to physically move easily in casting their votes.

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## From decay to display 150-year-old printing press relocated to Mymensingh Museum



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The remains of a printing press, believed to be around 150 years old, were relocated to the Mymensingh Museum on Saturday after being abandoned for decades near the city's Mrittunjyo School.

Sabina Yeasmin, field officer at the Department of Archaeology (Dhaka and Mymensingh Division), said the relocation was carried out with the support of law enforcers as per instructions from higher authorities.

"This century-old artefact will be preserved and displayed for visitors," said Sabina, who also serves as custodian of the museum.

Earlier in August, members of the Antiquities Preservation Committee, a local group of researchers and cultural activists, discovered the decaying press exposed to the elements, with many of its parts missing.

Committee member Abdul Kader Chowdhury claimed the machine dates back about 150 years.

Archaeology researcher Swapon Dhar traced its history to 1875, when Sherpur zamindar Harchandra Roy Chowdhury brought the press to Mymensingh. Later, several literary figures, including Girish Chandra



Roy Chowdhury, Sreekantha Sen, Sreenath Roy, Horikshore Ray, and Upendra Kishore Ray, became involved in operating it for publishing literary works.

In 1947, the press was used by Anath Bandhu Guha, founder of Mrittunjyo School. Soon afterward, it was handed over to Maulana Shamsul Huda Panchbaghi, a noted Islamic scholar, reformer, and political leader from Gafargaon upazila.

The press remained active even after Bangladesh's independence, printing political leaflets and posters.

Citing historical records, Rezaul Karim Aslam, a collector of ancient musical instruments, said the press was manufactured by HS Cropper and Co, a UK-based firm founded by Henry Smith Cropper. The company produced such models between 1866 and 1892. A nameplate on the press bears the inscription PATENT 2403, matching a patent registered in 1867.

On August 25, the preservation committee formally appealed to the Department of Archaeology to protect the press.

The issue drew wider attention after The Daily Star published a report headlined "150-year-old printing press left to decay" on August 29.

## Garbage piles choke Goalanda highway

SUZID DAS, Faridpur

The authorities of Goalanda municipality in Rajbari have been dumping waste along the Dhaka-Khulna Highway at Padmar Mor for years, causing suffering for locals.

The municipality, established in 2000, is constructing a waste management plant. In the meantime, garbage is being dumped in the open, including household and medical waste from private hospitals and clinics.

Sources said the plant is being built on 100 decimals of land in Goalanda's Notun Para area under the supervision of the Department of Public Health Engineering at a cost of Tk 6 crore.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw municipal three-wheelers and vans dumping garbage on the roadside along the Dhaka-Khulna Highway at Padmar Mor. People passing the area covered their faces with cloth or hands, while some waste had already spilled onto the highway.

Rashid Sheikh, a tea stall owner at Padmar Mor, said, "It's difficult to run the shop when bad smell comes



from the garbage. No one wants to stay here."

Nazmul Khan added, "We suffer the most as we need to go to the upazila headquarters using this road. During rain, the piles of garbage spread onto the road, forcing vehicles and pedestrians to pass through it."

Nur Mohammad, a teacher at Goalanda Government Technical School and College, said students struggle to pass through on their way to school.

Md Rajos Khan, executive engineer of Roads and Highways in Rajbari, said, "The municipality did not take

permission to dump garbage on our land. I raised the matter at a district coordination meeting. The municipal authorities said they would remove the waste soon."

Shohidul Islam, engineer of the Department of Public Health Engineering, said 95 percent of the plant work has been completed, with rain delaying the rest.

Contacted, Goalanda UNO and acting municipal administrator Nahidur Rahman said, "I will instruct those responsible to quickly remove the waste from the side of the highway."

### BNP doubts EC

FROM PAGE 4  
prevent a free election," Rizvi said.

He said the commission had assured them it was considering all aspects, prioritising transparency, and making the necessary preparations for a free election. The commission was also aware of the remarks made by some political parties regarding the proportional representation (PR) system, he said.

"We believe that at this moment, it is not possible to implement the PR system. Our leaders have already informed the Election Commission about this in detail. The commission is carrying out its duties in line with its constitutional responsibility," Rizvi added.

The BNP leader said their discussion mainly focused on "Vision 2030", which includes a pledge regarding voting rights for expatriate Bangladeshis.

Condemning the attack on Gono Odhikar Parishad chief Nurul Haque Nur, he said, "We demand an impartial investigation into the incident and appropriate action against those responsible."

## Our promises can't match their money

FROM PAGE 3  
playing field for independent candidates.

"Union elections under different panels reduce the scope for electing candidates based on merit and other activities," he added.

Samir Faiyaz, an independent candidate for assistant general secretary, said panels are spending heavily on social media promotion, which ordinary students cannot match.

He urged the Election Commission to regulate campaign budgets to ensure transparency.

Ariful Islam, an independent vice president

candidate, said he would not spend more than Tk 509, of which around Tk 300 has been spent. "Printing 10-15 thousand handbills and leaflets as a student is a crime, in my view," he said.

"Those spending enormous sums will likely recover the money through tenders, extortion, and embezzlement. Students should choose their representatives based on qualifications and merit."

Ahmed Hasan Jony, an independent vice president candidate at Hazi Muhammad Muhsin Hall union, said independent

candidates inevitably fall behind politically backed candidates. "I managed to print leaflets, and three days later the official campaign started," he said.

Jony said he borrowed money from friends, relatives, and his small tuition salary to cover expenses.

"Politically backed candidates easily raise funds from their party and senior leaders, while I struggle to support volunteers on my campaign," he added.

Tanveer Baree Hamim, vying for general secretary

from a JCD-backed panel, said the party only provided leaflets; all other expenses were borne by the candidates themselves.

He said independent candidates adhered to the same practices, including hanging banners and festoons, and said there was no difference between candidates in terms of campus campaigning.

SM Farhad, contesting the general secretary post from the Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed panel, said, "We do not even take our meals properly. Offering meals does not help in getting

votes. Our seniors cover minimal leaflet printing costs. We have not organised any campus programmes. Differences only exist in online campaigns."

Contacted, Code of Conduct Taskforce head Prof Dr Golam Rabbani, who is investigating complaints regarding election code violations, said, "We have not received any complaints regarding providing meals to voters or making expensive online content. If we do receive complaints with evidence, we will analyse them and take necessary action."

## Every day, we've to step out taking

FROM PAGE 4

political groups. They have exploited gaps in law enforcement and, to serve their own interests, have created unrest in Bangladesh in various ways," she added.

Referring to the people's uprising as an expression of public anger, she said, "A year has now passed. This should be a time for peace and reconstruction. Such actions cannot be allowed to continue any longer."

Regarding the situation involving DU Professor Sheikh Hafizur Rahman, she said, "When we see a colleague being humiliated by a group while trying to express

his opinion, and our university administration remains completely silent, we realise there

and the current one." Referring to the attack on Nur, she added, "After this incident, the home



is hardly any difference between the self-serving adviser has no moral ground to remain in administration of the past

Mosahida Sultana, associate professor of the Accounting Department, said, "The uprising was a people's movement, where women and students actively participated. But within a year, the situation has changed. Interest groups are taking advantage of the situation; students are becoming apolitical."

Professor Kamrul Hasan Mamun of the Department of Physics, Professor Kazi Maruf Islam of the Development Studies Department, and Associate Professor Tahmina Khanam of the Department of Management also spoke at the rally.

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# Forbidden NAZRUL

**The charm of Western verse had begun to make its mark on Bengali poetry. Yet, in this very decade, Nazrul Islam witnessed a suppression of his expression and literary efforts, as his work faced relentless attacks and effacement. Over time, at least five of his books were banned: Jugabani (1922), Bisher Banshi (1924), Proloy Sikha (1931), and Chandrabindu (1931). Nowhere**

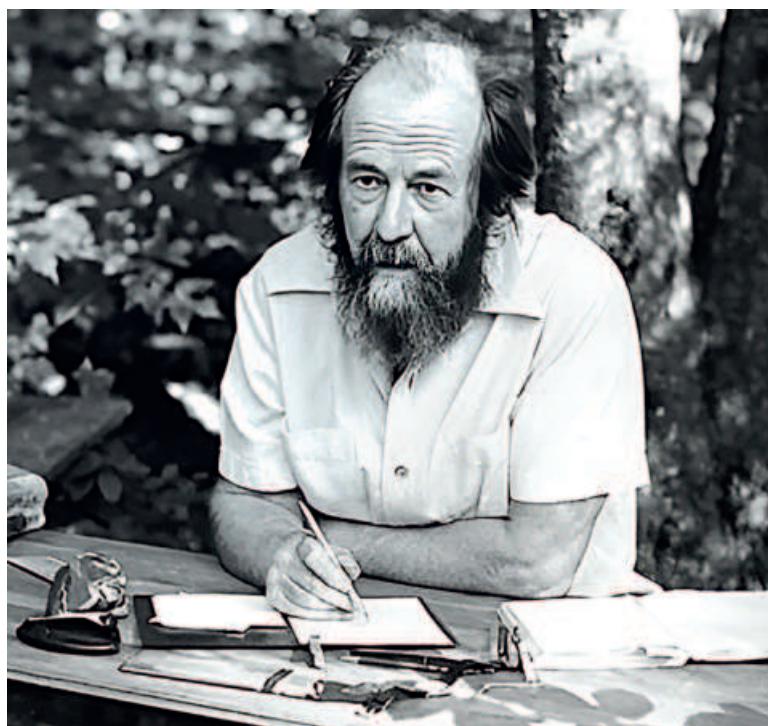
ARKA DEB

Both Bengalis are grappling with intense periods of unrest. While the political events unfolding in these two lands may not align directly, they share one significant commonality: distrust. We see a populace that no longer has faith in its leaders. Across various sectors of society, people are expressing intense anger towards those in power, each, in their own way, saying 'NO.' The state, however, dislikes hearing no. Much like the patriarch in a traditional family, it does not tolerate dissent. To maintain its authority, it binds the people through a combination of affection and control—sometimes soft, sometimes stern. It provides cultural entertainment, subtle threats, and basic sustenance such as rations and allowances. With these comforts, the state expects its citizens to submit, stay quiet, and endure their hardships without complaint. And often, this is the case. But occasionally, there are exceptions. In such times, we witness a faint sense of desperation in those who govern. They search

go to such lengths to suppress and persecute him? To find the answer, we should go back in time.

The origin of literary censorship can be traced back to ancient Greece. The philosopher Socrates managed to establish an intellectual community, only to later face charges for supposedly 'corrupting' young minds through incessantly questioning the state and denying the supremacy of the gods. Among the three people who accused Socrates was a poet named Meletus. In *Euthyphro* (circa 5th century BC), Plato described Meletus as the youngest among the accusers and noted that Socrates was unfamiliar with him prior to the trial. When the votes were cast, 500 Athenians participated, and Socrates lost by a margin of just 60 votes, receiving 220 in his favour. The result: he was sentenced to death by drinking a poisonous potion of hemlock.

In 1616, the Church warned Galileo Galilei to cease promoting heliocentrism, the theory that the Sun is at the centre of the solar system. His *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief*



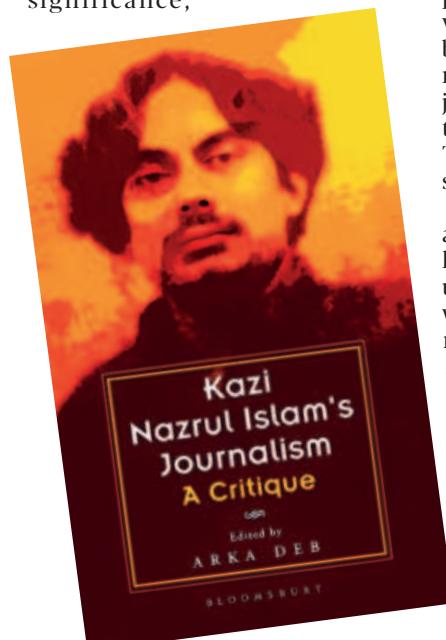
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008)

tactic reminiscent of Voltaire, who, to evade censorship, also released his works anonymously or through uncredited publishers.

In 1949, *Jugabani* saw its second edition in East Pakistan, with proceeds directed towards the poet's medical expenses. In Kolkata, multiple editions were published by Rupshree Press, under the guidance of Nani Mohan Saha and with Zohra Khanam as the publisher. Though *Jugabani* eventually faded from regular circulation in Kolkata, a century later all of its editorials are now accessible worldwide. Considering the lasting circulation and enduring impact of this collection, we realise how limited were the labels and restrictions imposed on Nazrul and his work. His editorials reveal a writer far beyond the accepted stereotype, showcasing his incisive opinions and his role as a vigilant social critic. Unlike typical newspaper articles that often lose relevance over time, Nazrul's writings in *Jugabani* are exceptional. They remain equally relevant to Bengalis across both sides of the border, provoking thought and engagement on pressing issues such as racism, global warming, Bengal's trade potential, Bengali nationalism, and anti-colonialism.

In one essay, *The Trade of Bengalis*, Nazrul advises his readers to enter business with confidence, free of any inferiority complex, writing: "We must forcibly break down this ugly high-and-low mentality embedded in our society and birth." In another editorial, *Why Our Strength Doesn't Last*, he critiques Bengali society's dependency on servitude: "...Why do we stand like cowards and take blows? At its core, it's the same reason—we are servants, we are employees. Can you show me a single nation that rose by working for others? For ten or fifteen rupees, we easily sell our

had drawn strength from it. Since independence, the song has been recorded, featured in films such as *Chittagong Armory Raid*, and continues to resonate in collective memory. The relevance of *Bhangar Gaan* endures today, symbolising the spirit of rebellion in both Bangladesh and West Bengal. Each poem in *Bhangar Gaan* carries historical significance;



This book could well have been a 'Red Book' for Bengalis. That it did not achieve this status reveals our own shortcomings and ultimately, our deep indifference towards Nazrul's legacy.

On 1 August 1924, Nazrul Islam's *Bisher Banshi* was published. Just a few months later, on 22 October, the government issued Gazette Notification No. 1027, banning the book under Section 99 K of the Criminal Code. *Bisher Banshi*, spanning only 33 pages, bore a known



Title page of Agnibina

**else in the subcontinent, either before independence or after, has a single poet seen so many of his works censored in such a short span. Even globally, only a few instances are comparable.**

for instigators—the ones who fan the flames of public anger—and they attempt to silence them.

There are many ways to silence a voice. The easiest is to tempt or buy the person off. But what about the one who is unyielding, who remains uncompromising? For them, the state devises other strategies. They may be forced into exile, intimidated repeatedly, or subjected to bans on their work. This has been the way of things across nations and eras. But to what extent can oppression bend the spine of someone who dares to say "no"? Does burning books, banning writing, or censoring expression truly mark the end of an author? How does a writer carry on, day by day, with censorship looming overhead? And what mindset drives those who impose these bans? In this space, let us address these questions through the life and works of Kazi Nazrul Islam, journeying through the global history of literary censorship to understand the broader implications of suppression and voicing.

Bengali poetry heralded modernism in the 1920s, which was the very first decade of Kazi Nazrul Islam's literary life. The charm of Western verse had begun to make its mark on Bengali poetry. Yet, in this very decade, Nazrul Islam witnessed a suppression of his expression and literary efforts, as his work faced relentless attacks and effacement. Over time, at least five of his books were banned: *Jugabani* (1922), *Bhangar Gaan* (1924), *Bisher Banshi* (1924), *Proloy Sikha* (1931), and *Chandrabindu* (1931). Nowhere else in the subcontinent, either before independence or after, has a single poet seen so many of his works censored in such a short span. Even globally, only a few instances are comparable. Bengali poetry has been richly productive, but none of its poets had to bear such repression. Why would a state feel threatened by a poet—a creator whose sole weapon was his words? Why did the state

*World Systems* (1632) led to his trial. Initially jailed, he then spent eight years under house arrest. Publicly, he was forced to renounce his beliefs. Yet five hundred years later, whose truth endures? The Church's truth, or Galileo's? Who is more respected today, Meletus or Socrates?

A similar fate befell Voltaire. His novel *Candide* (1759) and his philosophical treatise *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (1733) were banned for questioning the outdated conventions of French monarchy and society. Voltaire was imprisoned in the Bastille for eleven months and later exiled in isolation in England. His whole life was a battle to defend his ideas and beliefs. Ancient, medieval, and modern—each era offers us examples: the state remains unchanging in its resistance to new ideas. It demands loyalty, submission, and compliance. Those who resist, who refuse to surrender, become détenus.

We can bring ourselves directly to the timeline of Kazi Nazrul Islam, and explore the era's international poets alongside him. Nazrul was deeply inspired by the success of the Russian Revolution, and his revolutionary fervour was further fuelled by his close leftist allies, such as Muzaaffar Ahmed. Together, these influences instilled in his writings a call for the triumph of the proletariat, a celebration of revolution, and a cry for the emancipation of the masses. The first of his books to be banned was *Jugabani*, a collection of editorials previously published in *Nabajug* newspaper. Released on 27 October 1922 by Arya Publishing House, *Jugabani* quickly became a target, with police seizing 350 copies directly from the publisher. Notably, Nazrul employed a shrewd tactic here: while Arya Publishing House was responsible for the publication of *Jugabani*, Nazrul listed himself as the publisher. In this way, he shielded the publishing house from legal jeopardy. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose wrote to Dilip Kumar Roy that he too

manhood, our freedom, yet we refuse to engage in business, to try and stand on our own feet. This degrading servitude has reduced us to weakness and humiliation." Nazrul's question resonates in today's start-up-driven world, challenging us to reconsider its relevance in the present context.

Information on Nazrul Islam's significant works is accessible on Wikipedia, yet one more book merits special mention: *Bhangar Gaan*. Banned in 1924, this collection of eleven revolutionary poems remained absent from the public sphere for twenty-five years. However, the opening song of the collection, *Karar Oi Louho Kopat*, still serves as an anthem of defiance in both India and Bangladesh. If anyone asks me which Bengali song is the most timeless and powerful protest anthem, I would say it is *Karar Oi Louho Kopat*. Even freedom fighters and leaders such as Chittaranjan Das found inspiration in its verses during his imprisonment. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose wrote to Dilip Kumar Roy that he too

risk, which Nazrul acknowledged. At the beginning of the book, he wrote:

"For some time now, I have been advertising that I would publish certain poems and songs as a second volume of *Agnibina*. Instead, I have published them here in *Bisher Banshi*. For various reasons, I changed the name from *Agnibina*, Part / Volume II to *Bisher Banshi* and was compelled to omit few poems and songs. As long as the law, in the form of 'Ayan Ghosh,' holds up its cane, it is wise to keep certain so-called 'rebellious' verses absent."

The ban on *Bisher Banshi* proved a blessing in disguise. Gopal Das Majumdar, owner of DM Library and publisher of the book, reflected in his memoir *Smaran Baran*: "It turned out to be fortunate. A few copies of *Bisher Banshi* had been kept in the binding room. The police did not discover them. In the midst of the storm, those hidden copies quickly sold out."

Similarly, Nazrul Islam's other books, such as *Praly Shikha* and

*Chandrabindu*, were both banned in 1931 just a few days after publication. By this time, Nazrul had already been imprisoned and, while in custody, had undertaken a gruelling 39-day hunger strike to demand better conditions for his fellow prisoners. This meant that over an entire decade he endured repeated prohibitions and repression, yet remained steadfast in his convictions. The state's arsenal of fear and censorship seemed feeble against the resolve of a poet dedicated to truth. German philosopher Herbert Marcuse, who was nearly a contemporary of Nazrul, argued that a state primarily enforces censorship for three reasons: to protect the foundations of its power, to suppress critical and penetrating thought, and to secure uniform compliance from its citizens. But often we see scientists, poets, and thinkers emerge as voices of dissent, as thorny obstacles in the path of authoritarian rule. They say no and resist authoritarianism with every fibre of their being. Nazrul's 39-day hunger strike against British colonial oppression is a towering symbol of this resistance. Despite the bans on his books, he refused to capitulate, articulating his stance in *Rajbandir Jabanbandi* (1923):

"I stand accused of sedition, and so today I am imprisoned and charged at the royal court... I am a poet, sent by the Creator to reveal hidden truths and to give shape to the abstract. Through the voice of the poet, God speaks, and my words are vessels of His truth. These words may be deemed treasonous in the eyes of royal judgment, but in the light of justice, they are neither an affront to justice nor a defiance of truth. The revelation of truth shall not be stifled."

Here was a poet unwilling to abandon truth, come what may. In his eyes, only the supreme truth held ultimate worth, and its expression was inevitable. No confinement could restrain him. Do we not witness in Nazrul's words and actions the timeless pursuit of truth seen since the days of Socrates? And does not this truth—no matter how much time's dust accumulates upon it—stand as the sole eternal reality?

I wish to recount *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962) by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. This book laid bare the horrors of Stalin's regime, capturing the agonies of life in the gulags. The story of Ivan is, in essence, Solzhenitsyn's own testament. For eight years he endured the gulag camps as a price for not aligning with Stalin's whims. Later, after release, he was forced to live in remote Kazakhstan. When Nikita Khrushchev came to power, a debate in the Politburo arose over publishing *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, ultimately resulting in its edited publication. Khrushchev's logic was that it would expose the atrocities of Stalin's rule. But did Khrushchev truly wish for a writer's freedom, or was it purely a political manoeuvre? The irony is undeniable: this same Khrushchev had banned Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* (1957), barred him from accepting his Nobel Prize, and expelled him from the Writers' Union. Pasternak had to plead with Khrushchev, saying, "Leaving my homeland would be equal to death." Khrushchev's treatment of Solzhenitsyn and Pasternak reveals an eternal condition—beneath the mask, the face of power remains the same, and the poet's fate is sealed.

The Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, another of Nazrul's contemporaries, faced repeated bans from 1925 to 1946 under Soviet rule. She was expelled from the Writers' Union, accused of political indifference, excessive mysticism, and ultimately labelled as "decadent" by the Communist Party. Politburo member Andrey Zhdanov went as far as to publicly call her a "harlot-nun." Her *Requiem*, a poetic testament to the life of repression, remained unpublished in her homeland until the 1980s.

The question remains: does a poet's fate change with shifts in society? Does a change in nation or a change in leadership alter the state's restrictions? The answer, it seems, is a resounding no. For instance, in 1982, Subhash Mukhopadhyay, a leftist poet from West Bengal, was denied the Nehru Soviet Land Prize by the Communist Party of West Bengal for translating Solzhenitsyn's work. But history is not without irony. Rulers who tried to silence poets have come and gone, while the poets' verses endure. Solzhenitsyn, Nazrul Islam, Akhmatova, and Mukhopadhyay—all survive through the legacy of their words, dancing across blank pages, defying centuries. No authority has the power to sever this lifeline of truth.

Arka Deb is the Editor-in-Chief at *Inscript.me* and author of the book *Kazi Nazrul Islam's Journalism – A Critique*.



Kazi Nazrul Islam at Sitakunda in 1929



**Dominik Szoboszlai's stunning free-kick gave Liverpool first blood against Arsenal with a 1-0 win in Sunday's battle between the Premier League title favourites. A tense tussle at Anfield looked set to end in a stalemate until the Hungarian's 83rd-minute strike ensured the defending champions remain the only side with a perfect record from the opening three games.**

## What to WATCH

SONY SPORTS 1  
Asia Cup Hockey  
Bangladesh vs  
South Korea  
Live from 2:00  
pm

T SPORTS  
Bangladesh vs  
Netherlands  
2nd T20I  
Live from  
6:00 pm

STAR SPORTS 1  
US Open  
Live from  
9:00 pm

## Isak saga nears climax as D-Day approaches

STAR SPORTS DESK

The transfer window has entered its final, frantic stretch, with the clock ticking towards 12:00 am Tuesday (Bangladesh time) deadline. After a summer of record-breaking spending, dramatic twists, and last-minute hijackings, clubs across the continent are preparing for one final scramble before the shutters come down. And with that, the



longest transfer story of the summer looks to finally be heading to a conclusion after Newcastle United's top brass failed to convince star striker Alexander Isak to stay at St James' Park last Monday. The Swede staged a one-man rebellion to move to Liverpool and the path seems clear as Newcastle signed Stuttgart striker Nick Woltemade to fill the striker's void. Now it is up to the Reds to agree on a fee closer to Newcastle's £150m valuation which would smash the British transfer record.

## Osaka, Gauff welcome US Open 'deja vu'

REUTERS, New York

Coco Gauff and Naomi Osaka's fourth round US Open clash promises a nostalgic spectacle on Monday, six years after their memorable first meeting at Flushing Meadows.

Back in 2019, the then-15-year-old Gauff made her Arthur Ashe debut against defending champion and world number one Osaka, who won 6-3, 6-0 before comforting a tearful Gauff and



urging her to address the crowd. That moment of sportsmanship remains iconic.

"It was a hyped-up match, and I put way too much pressure on myself," said Gauff, who reached the round of 16 this year after beating Poland's Magdalena Frech 6-3, 6-1. "It would be a cool kind of *deja vu*, but hopefully a different result."

Osaka, seeded 23rd, echoed the sentiment. "I remember just knowing she was going to be a great player." Osaka went on to win the 2020 US Open and 2021 Australian Open but has struggled since.

Gauff, the third seed, lifted the 2023 US Open trophy in a final that drew 3.4 million viewers, surpassing Novak Djokovic's win a day later.

"Tennis needs this," said seven-time major winner Venus Williams, often cited as an inspiration for both players, of their rematch.

## BCB set to finalise election schedule today

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

For the past few months, the upcoming Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) election has been a central topic. Today, the BCB board of directors will convene in Sylhet to finalise the schedule for the much-anticipated election.

"The election roadmap and schedule are likely to be finalised during the meeting," a BCB director, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star on Sunday.

According to Article 15.1 of the BCB constitution, the term of the executive committee is four years from the date of its first meeting. The last BCB election was held on October 6, 2021, with the first meeting of the newly elected board taking place the following day. In line with the constitution, the current executive committee must conduct the next election by October 7, 2025.

As per the electoral process, the BCB's chief executive officer -- under the directive of the president -- must issue a notification 30 days prior to the election, inviting nominations of councillors in accordance with sections 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 of the constitution to form the next general assembly.

The board is also expected to approve the appointment of a sports marketing consultancy firm for managing events of the Bangladesh Premier League T20 tournament. It has been reported earlier that New York-based International Management Group (IMG) is likely to be confirmed for a multi-year deal to manage the franchise-based competition.

The board is also set to make several financial approvals and ratify budgets during today's meeting, which will begin at 2:00 PM at the Grand Sylhet Hotel and Resort.

## Tigers seek to foster 'healthy competition'

Hosts eye series win today

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Bangladesh are enjoying a successful spell in the T20I format, having won five out of their last six matches, including the eight wicket win over Netherlands in Sylhet on Saturday, and in every one of those victories a different player has emerged as the player of the match.

Taskin Ahmed, with figures of 4-28, won the prize against the Dutch in the first of three T20Is. Before him, Parvez Hossain Emon and Jaker Ali won it for their match-winning fifties against Pakistan at home while skipper Litton Das and all-rounder Mahedi Hasan won it in Sri Lanka for a blistering 76 and a four-wicket haul respectively.

Five different players emerging as match winners shows that the side is not dependent on one or two individuals. And in every game, these stellar performances were supplemented by others as well.

Against the Dutch, Saif Hassan put up one such all-round showing.

Saif, returning to the T20I side after nearly two years,



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

replaced Shamim Hossain in the XI, who hadn't fully recovered from a recent fever.

He grabbed his chance with both hands, taking two wickets with his part-time off spin, and also scoring a blistering 36 not out off 19 balls, which included one four and three sixes.

Netherlands because if Shamim regains his fitness, he could come back into the side.

Still, Saif coming off the bench and making an impact will benefit the side as it encourages "healthy competition" within the players, felt assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin.

"Whoever comes in, if he performs well, it creates healthy competition within the team. That will bring very good results for the side. The more performers we have sitting on the sidelines, the more impact it will have on the team," Salahuddin told the media yesterday.

"We are trying to move away from a mindset where one might secretly wish for a teammate not to perform well. When competition among the boys increases, their standards will rise," he added.

Salahuddin praised the 26-year-old's commitment but requested all to not go overboard in praising him.

"Don't put someone on a pedestal too quickly nor drag them down in a hurry. Him playing well in his comeback game is a testament to his strong mentality."

## O'Dowd trades bat for mic

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Netherlands opener Max O'Dowd is known for his many hobbies off the field. The 31-year-old enjoys DJing, runs a YouTube channel featuring travel vlogs, and has been documenting his experiences from the ongoing Bangladesh tour.

On Sunday, he added another skill to his list -- sports journalism. During teammate Noah Croes' maiden press conference at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, ahead of the second T20I against Bangladesh, Max surprised everyone by walking in with a GoPro and sitting among the journalists.

Netherlands media manager Corey Rutgers had warned that Noah was nervous for his first media appearance, but Max's playful presence quickly eased the mood. He filmed the entire session and even asked cheeky questions, including the story behind Noah's nickname "Tonker" and his favourite Bangladeshi cricketer.

Noah, smiling, named Mustafizur Rahman. "It's a good one, Maxi. There are honourable mentions, but it's hard to go past Mustafizur. Facing him at the 2024 T20 World Cup was a really cool experience," he said.

## Kings players ready to embrace Cabrera's system

SPORTS REPORTER

Experienced defender Topu Barman believes that Bashundhara Kings players possess the merit, standard, and maturity required to adapt to Javier Cabrera's playing system in the upcoming five training sessions ahead of their FIFA friendlies against Nepal.

The Bangladesh team are scheduled to play two international friendlies against Nepal on September 6 and 9 as part of their preparation for the crucial Asian Cup Qualifiers against Hong Kong in October.

Ten players from Bashundhara Kings joined the national camp on Saturday evening after completing their club's pre-season training. The Kings management had earlier declined to release the players early, citing injury concerns and the need for pre-season preparations. As a result, Cabrera was left with only 13 senior players over the past 15 days of training.

The 40-year-old Spaniard will finally have his full squad available in today's session -- the first time the entire team will train together.

Topu dismissed concerns about the Kings players missing the earlier part of the camp.

"Our standard and ability will

allow us to pick things up quickly. I believe the team's combination will also take shape within these five sessions," said Topu, who captained Bangladesh in June's Asian Cup Qualifiers match against Singapore.

Despite the absence of key players -- both local (Sheikh Morsalin, Shakil Ahad Topu, Mehedi Hasan

conditions and their home advantage. But we are not overly concerned. We aim to win both matches with the quality we have," he added.

Topu also expressed confidence in the fitness levels of both groups of players, despite training separately for the past two weeks.

"These 15 days were crucial for Bashundhara Kings' pre-season. We trained as a unit, which helped build fitness, bonding, and team chemistry. Pre-season is vital for any club globally, and it was no different for us," said the 30-year-old defender.

"We had a 27-day training programme, including 12 days ahead of our AFC Challenge League match. We remained unbeaten in four games. Similarly, the national team also played three or four matches. So I believe both groups are in good rhythm, even if the training methods were different."

Meanwhile, Cabrera conducted training on Saturday with only 13 players after releasing eight members of the under-19 team who had been temporarily included in the camp.

Topu dismissed concerns about the Kings players missing the earlier part of the camp.

"Nepal will be tough, especially considering the high-altitude



system in the next five training sessions."

Topu dismissed concerns about the Kings players missing the earlier part of the camp.

"Our standard and ability will



Sauravi Akanda Prity celebrates one of her two goals as Bangladesh defeated arch-rivals India in a topsy-turvy match of the SAFF U-17 Women's Championship at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday. It was a consolation win for the girls in red and green, who had lost against India 2-0 in their first meeting and then were held by Bhutan 1-1 to let India confirm the title with a game in hand.



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## BNP at 47: Caught between prospects and perils

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has survived Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule, during which over a million cases were filed against its leaders and activists for trying to launch street agitations demanding elections under a non-partisan government. Thousands were jailed, including Chairperson Khaleda Zia and other top leaders.

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader had once mocked that the BNP would become another "Muslim League". That prediction has not come true. Instead, after the unprecedented July uprising toppled Hasina's government, with AL top brass fleeing abroad and the party's activities banned, the BNP has emerged as the country's largest political force.

As the party marks its 47th founding anniversary today, it eyes the prospect of returning to power while navigating perils posed by its unruly rank and file.

Extortion, land grabbing, and other criminal activities by its leaders and activists have continued unabated since the August 5 changeover last year, undermining acting chairman Tarique Rahman's efforts to reshape the organisation.

Though many see the election, slated for February next year, as a formality for BNP's return to office, analysts say the party faces its toughest test: misdeeds by its grassroots, organisational weaknesses, and other parties pushing for proportional representation under the July Charter.

### WEAKNESSES, INFIGHTING

Analysts warn that BNP's organisational weakness, infighting, and a

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



## Pratirodh Parshad pledges women-friendly campus

DU CORRESPONDENT

Gonotantrik Chhatra Jote-backed Pratirodh Parshad will solve accommodation issues, prioritise research, and ensure a women-friendly campus if elected in the Dhaka University Central Students' Union polls, the left-leaning panel said as they unveiled their manifesto yesterday at Madhur Canteen.

The panel's general secretary candidate Meghmallar Bosu read out the 18-point manifesto, which also highlighted issues like structural reform to strengthen Ducusu and guaranteeing the rights of all ethnic groups.

Pratirodh Parshad also called on the authorities to specify central and hall union election dates in the academic calendar.

In its manifesto, it pledged to amend the Dhaka University Order 1973 and make it mandatory for two elected student representatives to be present to fulfil the quorum of senate meetings. It also proposed 10 elected representatives to the senate, instead of the current five.

Removing an elected representative from Ducusu or hall unions would require a referendum, the manifesto reads.

The panel also promised to empower students by introducing a teacher evaluation system and increasing the number of scholarships.

According to the manifesto, the panel demanded 10 percent of the university budget for Ducusu, while also promising research assistantships and fellowships for the students.

Regarding accommodation, it promised seats for students from their first year under the administration's supervision.

Meanwhile, to ensure a women-friendly campus, it promised to work to establish cybersecurity measures, and freedom of movement and of expression for female students, adding that the university's sexual harassment prevention cell must be made fully functional.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

**ATTACK ON NUR**  
Govt must be held accountable  
Says youth and sports adviser



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain yesterday said the government cannot avoid responsibility in the attack on Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur.

"Even during the Awami League regime, we didn't see such an incident occur... Whoever carried out the attack, the interim government bears responsibility as it is in power. It must ensure justice so that no one dares to commit such heinous crimes again," he told reporters after visiting Nur

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

## Country now has 12.63cr voters EC mulls accessibility plans for elderly, those with disabilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The total number of voters in the country now stands at 126,307,504. Of them, 64,004,455 are male, 62,058,819 are female, and 1,230 are from the hijra community, Election Commission Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told journalists at the EC headquarters in the capital yesterday.

He said that as of June 25, a total of 4,571,216 new voters were added to the draft voter list, while 2,132,590 names of deceased individuals were removed. Between then and yesterday, another 137,642 voters were added at the field level, while 1,038 deceased voters were removed.

Earlier, following the March 2 update of the draft list this year, the number of voters stood at 123,732,274.

The EC secretary added that another updated list will be prepared by October 31, including all those who will turn 18 by then. "We will release another updated list

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

## Sexual abuse rampant in Rohingya camps

Says ActionAid study

AFP, Dhaka

Sexual harassment remains the most pressing concern for Rohingya women and adolescents living in squalid refugee camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, according to a study released yesterday.

Cox's Bazar is home to around a million largely Muslim Rohingya minority, fleeing a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

ActionAid -- one of the largest non-profits operating in the camps since the influx in 2017 -- conducted 66 in-depth interviews, revealing dire challenges faced by women and adolescents.

"Sexual harassment is the biggest concern," said Tamazer Ahmed, policy, research and advocacy manager at ActionAid.

"Early marriage and polygamy have become normalised, and 93 percent of interviewees remained outside the scope of legal assistance."

**Early marriage and polygamy have become normalised, and 93 percent of interviewees remained outside the scope of legal assistance.**

Tamazer Ahmed, policy research and advocacy manager at ActionAid

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