



“This autumn, the Russians use every single day to strike at our energy infrastructure.”  
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

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# NCP won't sign July charter at this moment

Says signing would be meaningless without clarity on implementation, notes of dissent, referendum question

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and MAMUNUR RASHID

The National Citizen Party has decided not to attend today's much-awaited July National Charter signing ceremony, let alone sign the document containing reforms agreed upon after months of intense talks.

The BNP and eight like-minded parties have said they are ready to sign the charter, which is the outcome of three rounds of talks between the National Consensus Commission and 30 political parties.

The Jamaat-e-Islami is yet to officially disclose its decision regarding the signing. Party insiders, however, said there is a strong chance that it will sign the charter.

The NCP says backing the charter at this moment will be meaningless without ironing out key issues regarding its full implementation, such as the fate of reform proposals with notes of dissent and the question of referendum to ensure public endorsement for the reforms.

The party's Senior Joint Convener and Head of Political Liaison Ariful Islam Adeb and Joint Convener Javed Rasin confirmed the decision to The Daily Star at about 1:30am today.

"The process to implement the July charter hasn't been clearly outlined. And what decision will be taken regarding dissenting notes, or what the referendum question will be?" Rasin said.

"We also don't know the wording of the constitutional order. Without knowing any of these, we are not signing the charter."

Minutes later, Adeb announced the decision in a statement on the party's Facebook page.

"Since this signing ceremony will not achieve any legal basis, this is only a formality. We have spoken about this legal basis many times. Therefore, before a legal basis is established, such a formality will turn into another one-sided document like the 'July Declaration'.

"However, since the consensus commission's tenure has been extended, we will participate in its next process and present our position. If our demands are met, NCP will sign later."

Earlier in the day, NCP Convener Nahid Islam, at a press conference, said they would not sign the charter unless their conditions were met.

"Without a legal basis and assurance of a constitutional order, signing the July charter would be meaningless. For this reason, the NCP will not participate in tomorrow's July charter signing event," he said at a press conference at their party

office.

Nahid also demanded that the text of the proposed July Charter Implementation Order and the wording of the question for the referendum must be finalised and made public.

And the order must be issued by the chief adviser to ensure that it "expresses the sovereign will of the people".

He added that all 84 reform provisions

## READY TO SIGN

BNP, Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Nagorik Oikya, Biplobi Workers Party, Rashtra Sanskar Andolan, Nationalist Democratic Movement, Labour Party, Gono Odhikar Parishad, 12-Party Alliance, Jatiyatabadi Samomona Jote, and Khelafat Majlish

## YET TO DISCLOSE DECISION

Jamaat and JSD (Rob)

## SET CONDITIONS TO SIGN

Gono Forum

## WILL NOT SIGN

NCP, CPB, Basod, Bangladesh JSD, and Basod (Marxist)



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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Flames and thick black smoke billow from the top two floors of a seven-storey building at the Chattogram EPZ in the district's South Halishahar, after a massive fire broke out around 2:00pm yesterday. By 7:00pm, the fire spread throughout the entire building.

Hasina should be sentenced to death 1,400 times: Tajul

ICT prosecution closes arguments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday sought the death penalty for deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, calling her the "nucleus" behind the crimes committed during the July Uprising and the "lifeblood" of all perpetrators.

Hasina's directives and actions were central to a chain of crimes that left more than 1,400 dead and between 25,000 and 35,000 wounded, said Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam before the International Crimes Tribunal-1.

"The highest punishment under the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act is death -- Hasina deserves the highest punishment," he told the tribunal, concluding his five-day argument in the crimes against humanity

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# Lowest HSC pass rate in 21 years

GPA-5 count halves; zero-pass schools triple; poor show in math, English to blame

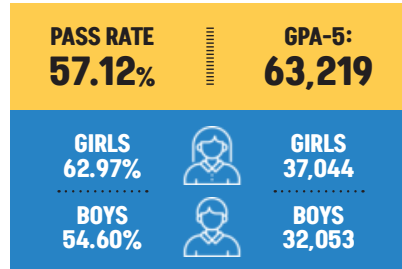
DIPAN NANDY

The pass rate for Higher Secondary Certificate examinations has suffered a steep fall to 57.12 percent, the lowest in 21 years.

The number of students who secured GPA-5, the highest grade point average, has also more than halved to 63,219 from last year's count, according to the results published yesterday.

Institutions with zero pass rate more than tripled to 202, while only 345 had a 100 percent success rate compared to last year's 1,388.

Education board officials pointed out that students performed dismally in English and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), along with mathematics, leading to the poor showing.



They said this year's results reflect the actual state of the country's education system, while in the past, teachers had been asked to take a sympathetic approach to marking to inflate success rates.

Prof Khondoker Ehsanul Kabir, chairman of Dhaka Education Board and president of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, said the board did not issue any instructions this year to award marks in a particular way or to overmark to

increase the pass rate.

"We heard that teachers in the past might have been soft in examining the answer papers," he told a press conference while announcing the results at the Dhaka Education Board office.

During last year's HSC exams, the

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

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Blaze rages thru 7-storey CEPZ factory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A massive fire that erupted yesterday afternoon in a seven-storey factory in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) in Chattogram's South Halishahar was still blazing 12 hours on at 2:00am today.

The fire originated on the seventh floor of the building, which housed the warehouse of Adam Caps & Textiles, a towel manufacturer. The sixth floor contained the warehouse of Jeihong Medical Products BD Co Ltd, while the rest of the building comprised other sections of both companies.

By 7:00pm, the flames had engulfed the entire building, while small explosions were occurring inside the factory intermittently. The intense heat forced the firefighters to battle the blaze from afar as it spread to an adjacent three-storey building around 9:00pm.

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## Rucusu election ends peacefully, tallying underway

NUR AHSAN MRIDUL, RU

After 35 years, the Rajshahi University Central Students' Union (Rucusu) and hall union elections were held yesterday amid student panels' allegations of irregularities against each other.

The university's observer team said the polls were largely peaceful, but some instances of mismanagement were noticed.

At a press briefing at the administration building around 6:00pm, Prof Rafiqul Islam, who led the 10-member observer committee, said, "We monitored the voting across centres and submitted a report to the registrar. In our observation, the Rucusu election was conducted fairly and peacefully."

Chief Election Commissioner Prof F Nazrul Islam said voter turnout was 69.83 percent.

A total of 28,901 registered students were eligible to vote for 902 candidates contesting for 23 Rucusu, five senate, and 15 hall union posts. Polling took place from 9:00am to 4:00pm across 990 booths in 17 centres located in nine academic buildings.

By 5:30pm, all ballot boxes were transported to the Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium, but the counting, which was slated for 6:00pm, started around 8:30pm.

The vice-president and the assistant general secretary nominees of the Shibir-backed panel were leading race in Mannujan, Rokeya, Taposi Rabeya, and Khaleida Zia centres as of 12:40am today.

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# Shibir dominates Cucusu and hall union elections

MD ABBAS and SM MAHFUZ AHMED

Along with winning the seventh Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucusu) election, the Islami Chhatra Shibir-backed panel Shompriitir Shikkharthi Jote also bagged most votes in the hall union polls.

Among the Chhatra Dal-backed candidates, only one secured a position in the Cucusu election -- assistant general secretary -- while one candidate from the Binirman Shikkharthi Jote won the post of assistant sports and games secretary.

An analysis of Wednesday's Cucusu and hall union poll results shows that the Shibir-backed panel clinched 24 of the 26 Cucusu posts, including vice president and general secretary.

Among the elected representatives in the hall unions, Shibir-backed candidates secured 18 of the top three positions -- vice president, general secretary, and assistant general secretary. Seventeen independents won posts in these categories, while the Chhatra Dal-backed panel and indigenous student panel bagged five such posts each.

The Cucusu election results were announced by Chief Election Commissioner Prof Monir Uddin at the BBA Faculty auditorium around 5:00am yesterday. Earlier, returning officers from the five faculties declared the hall union results.

Shibir-backed Ibrahim Roni was elected Cucusu VP with 7,983 votes, while his nearest rival, Chhatra Dal-backed Sajjad Hossain, received 4,374 votes.

For the GS post, Shibir panel's Sayed bin Habib won with 8,031

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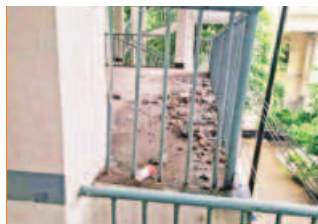
Coordinated support needed to reduce poverty

B1



Moscow hits more gas facilities in Kyiv

P5



Four JnU buildings risky, yet in use

P3

## Clarification on Recent Media Reports Concerning the Chief Financial Officer of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited

Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited wishes to address recent media reports concerning its Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Sazzad Rahim Chowdhury, in relation to a loan default case involving a financial institution.

We would like to clarify that the matter in question pertains to a period when Mr. Chowdhury held a leadership position at a separate organization in the telecom sector about 12 years ago. Importantly, Mr. Chowdhury is not implicated in a personal capacity, and this case has no connection whatsoever to Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited.

Berger Paints Bangladesh remains steadfast in its commitment to the highest standards of governance, financial integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct. There are no allegations or concerns regarding any financial irregularities within our organization.

We urge all stakeholders and members of the public to rely on verified information and refrain from speculation. Berger continues to operate with full accountability and trust, and we appreciate the continued support of the shareholders, customers, partners, and employees of Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited.

