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Plot afoot to erase 1971 spirit: Fakhrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Thakurgaon

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that a vested group was conspiring to erase the spirit of Bangladesh's Liberation War.

"An effort is underway to erase the memory of our Liberation War," Fakhrul said. "They are trying to create a perception that nothing significant happened in 1971... that we did nothing... and that only those involved in the 2024 uprising achieved everything."

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A procession organised by a BNP election aspirant moves from the Jatiya Sangsad towards Tejgaon yesterday, blocking a major portion of the road and causing long tailbacks during the afternoon rush hour. Similar processions held across the city throughout the day added to the public sufferings. The photo was taken in the Karwan Bazar area.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Work with honesty, dedication

Army chief urges Corps of Signals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday expressed hope that the Corps of Signals would continue contributing to nation building through development activities carried out with honesty, sincerity, and a strong sense of duty.

He made the remark while addressing the Annual Commanding Officers' Conference 2025 of the Corps of Signals at the Signal Training Centre and School (STC&S) in Jashore Cantonment, said an ISPR press statement.

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Abu Sayed murder trial may end by January

Says prosecution; ICT hears testimony on Rampura killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal 2 yesterday recorded the testimony of the 12th prosecution witness in the case over the killing of Begum Rokeya University Rangpur (BRUR) student Abu Sayed during the July uprising, with prosecutors expecting the trial proceedings to conclude by January next year.

"We expect to record statements of 30 to 35 witnesses in total. While we cannot say when the verdict will be delivered, we hope to complete the trial proceedings by January," said Prosecutor Mizanul Islam.

Earlier in the day, Aquib Reza Khan, a former electrical and electronic engineering student at BRUR and one of the participants in last year's anti-discrimination student protests in Rangpur, testified before the tribunal.

Aquib took part in the protest and was shot and wounded with shotgun pellets.

The witness said on July 16, 2024, police opened fire on students protesting attacks on their peers. As students attempted to enter the university campus, police blocked the gates and used sound grenades, batons, and tear gas to disperse them.

During the chaos, Aquib said he saw police beat Abu Sayed before retreating, while some teachers, staff, and Chhatra League activists hurled brick chips from inside.

When students reopened the gate, police

again fired rubber bullets and tear gas. "Sayed stood with his hands raised so that police would not shoot, yet ASI Md Amir Hossain and constable Sujon Chandra Roy opened fire on him," Aquib said, adding that Sayed later died in hospital.

Meanwhile, at the ICT-1, two policemen testified as the seventh and eighth prosecution witnesses in the crimes against humanity case



over the killing of two and injuring of two others during the July uprising in Dhaka's Rampura.

Five police officials, including former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, are accused in the case. Of them, former assistant sub-inspector of Rampura Police Station Chanchal Chandra Sarkar is in custody, while the others remain absconding.

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Deported workers call for justice

Demonstrate in front of expats' welfare ministry

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi migrant workers deported from Malaysia formed a human chain yesterday, demanding urgent support for 431 workers who were allegedly exploited by two Malaysian companies — Mediceram and Kawaguchi Manufacturing.

The protest took place in front of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry in Dhaka, where the participants also highlighted mistreatment of Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia.

They urged both Bangladeshi and Malaysian authorities, as well as international buyers, to ensure that affected workers receive unpaid wages, fair compensation, and justice for systemic abuses.

"We also urge the media, activists, rights community, and other relevant stakeholders to give this matter immediate attention," said a statement from the Migrant Welfare Network (MWN).

The statement accused the Bangladeshi High Commission in Malaysia and the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry of failing to protect victims of

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COURT CORNER

MUSIC, PE TEACHERS HC questions the legality of scrapping recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule questioning the legality of the government decision to cancel the recruitment of music and physical education teachers in primary schools.

The court also asked the government to explain why the amended notification issued by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education on November 2 should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries at the ministries of education, and primary and mass education and chairman of the public service commission has been made respondents to the rule returnable in two weeks.

The HC bench of Justice Fahmida Quader and Justice Md Ashif Hasan issued the rule following a writ petition by Supreme Court lawyer Sarwat Siraj Shukla.

4 Bagerhat, 5 Gazipur seats restored

HC declares EC gazette illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared illegal the Election Commission's gazette notification that reduced the number of parliamentary seats in Bagerhat from four to three and increased the number of seats of Gazipur from five to six.

The court also ordered the EC to restore the constituencies of the districts as those were earlier.

The bench of Justice Sashanka Shekhar Sarkar and Justice Faysal Hasan Arif delivered the verdict after hearing a petition filed by Bagerhat Press Club, its District Bar Association, BNP, Jamaat, Islami Andolon, and Truck Owners' Association challenging the legality of the EC's decision.

SC upholds bail for Latif Siddique

Police seek Ivy's arrest in two more cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court order that granted bail to former jute and textile minister Abdul Latif Siddique and journalist Md Monjurul Alam Panna in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

A three-member bench headed by Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury passed the orders after dismissing two state petitions seeking a stay on the HC's order on November 6 granting them bail.

"There is now no legal bar to their release,"

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Govt okays 28 public holidays for next year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has announced the official list of public holidays for 2026, totalling 28 days off.

The list includes 14 general holidays and 14 declared under executive order. Of these, 11 coincide with weekends, allowing government employees to enjoy 17 full days off.

Following approval by the Advisory Council last Thursday, the Ministry of Public Administration issued a formal notification regarding the holiday list.

As in the current year, holidays for Eid-ul-Fitr will span five days, Eid-ul-Adha six days, and Durga Puja two days in 2026.

Offices that operate under their own laws and regulations on working hours and holidays may declare holidays in the public interest, following their respective rules.

Songs for the soul

How 'Mayer Tori' is reviving folk music in the north

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

In the remote Sonahat village under Kaliganj upazila of Lalmonirhat, a chorus of young voices singing "Manush Bhajle Sonar Manush Hobi" (If you preach humanity, you'll become a person with a heart of gold) could be heard from afar.

A small signboard outside a tin-roofed house read "Karmoloy Gurugriha". Inside, around 60 to 70 children sat on mats. Some were playing the harmonium, some practising rhythm on the dotara (a two-string local instrument), while others were singing or playing other instruments.

Villagers stood around, mesmerised by the melody.

"At our Gurugriha, we conduct classes twice a week — on Fridays and Saturdays — where we teach folk songs and traditional instruments. Children from rural areas usually have no access to cultural education, so we're trying to give them that opportunity here," said Guru Nityananda Roy, the instructor.

"Mayer Tori", a cultural organisation,



runs the music school. As part of the initiative, over 500 children in several remote villages across Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts are learning traditional Bangladeshi folk genres such as Lalon Geeti, Marfati, Murshidi, Bhawaiya, Palli Geeti, and other forms of rural songs.

The children are also learning to play traditional instruments, including the dotara, ektara, khamak, sarinda,

tabla, flute, Bangla dhol, and violin.

Suraloy Gurugriha in Dewdoba village under Aditmari upazila of Lalmonirhat is also engaged in a similar effort under the initiative.

Guru Lopideb Nath, instructor at Suraloy Gurugriha, said, "Our students are dedicated. They don't just learn songs; they learn values — respect, compassion, and empathy."

In Halmajipara village under



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Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, Fakirul Islam instructs children under the same initiative.

"Most of our students come from working-class families. Through folk music, they dream of a brighter life. We are proud of them," he said.

Norwegian poet, photographer, and researcher Wera Saether, deeply moved by Bangladeshi folk culture, founded

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'You cannot uphold, defy constitution at once'

Farhad Mazhar on holding referendum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poet and thinker Farhad Mazhar has questioned the authority of the interim government to hold a referendum on constitutional reforms, saying it has taken an oath to uphold the constitution.

"You can't uphold the constitution and act against it at the same time," he said. He made the remarks yesterday while addressing a discussion titled "Challenges of Building a New Bangladesh," organised by the Centre for Democracy and Peace Studies at the Jatiya Press Club.

Mazhar said taking oath under Sheikh Hasina's constitution was a "serious betrayal". Arguing that only a constituent assembly

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