



## SM Ali's 97th birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 97th birth anniversary of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder editor-publisher of The Daily Star and a luminary in journalism of Bangladesh.

SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors over a career spanning 44 years. He also led the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) as its chairman.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, he was one of the few Asian journalists who stood out in regional journalism.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Fishermen cast their nets in the Turag River near Bosila. The relocation of tanneries from the Rayer Bazar area to Savar has led to a decline in pollution levels in the capital's rivers, making them once again habitable for fish. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## RAMPURA KILLINGS

## Frame charges against 4 accused

### Prosecution urges ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday completed its hearing on charge framing and pleaded before the ICT-1 to charge four accused -- two former BGB officials who later returned to the army, and two police officers -- in a crimes against humanity case filed over the killing of 28 protesters during the July uprising in Rampura.

The prosecution brought six charges against the accused: Lt Col Mohammad Redowanul Islam, Maj Rafat Bin Alam Moon, former additional deputy commissioner Rashedul Islam, and former Rampura Police Station OC Mashiur Rahman.



The two former BGB officers were produced before the tribunal as the charges were read out. Two video clips were played in the courtroom, showing Redowanul firing shots while wounded protesters lay on the roads.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the tribunal that, to sustain the Sheikh Hasina-led government through maximum force, authorities decided on July 17, 2024, to deploy the BGB at key entry points and strategic locations across Dhaka.

Following the order, BGB and police teams took positions in Rampura and Banasree on July 18, led by 5 BGB Commander Lt Col Rakibul Hasan and Deputy Commander Maj Rafat. Rakibul later left the scene for Pilkhana, handing over command to Rafat.

At the same time, 26 BGB Commander Lt Col Redowan, then Khilgaon Zone ADC Rashedul, and former Rampura Police Station OC Mashiur were in charge of nine BGB and six police platoons.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

## Stay neutral, you have historic responsibilities

CA tells SPs at meeting on election; IGP instructs them to uphold professionalism

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The field-level police officials have been directed to remain neutral and avoid aligning with any political party or candidate during the upcoming national elections.

They were also instructed not to accept any financial support from political candidates.

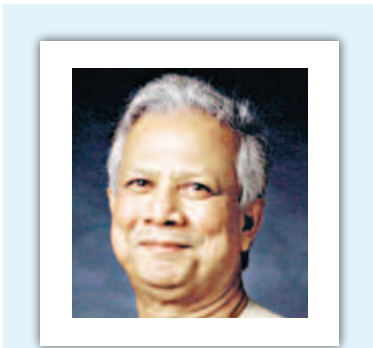
The superintendents of police (SPs) were reminded to treat the upcoming elections as a "historic responsibility" and work to ensure a smooth and credible election.

The instructions were delivered during two separate meetings: one with Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus and another with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Baharul Alam.

The views exchange meeting with Yunus was held in the morning at the Chief Adviser's Office in Tejgaon, while the second took place later that day at the Police Headquarters (PHQ) titled "Meeting on election matters with the Inspector General of Police".

During the closed door meeting at the PHQ, Baharul emphasised that this election could bring about significant changes, as it involves a referendum alongside the national election to determine whether the parliament would transition to a bicameral system.

Baharul instructed the officers to uphold their professional duties and maintain impartiality, ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process.



**This election is not an ordinary one -- it has come at the cost of the sacrifices made by those who were martyred in the July mass uprising.**

PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS  
Chief Adviser

He urged the officers to stay neutral and avoid siding with any political entity.

In addition to the instructions, the police passed five more key directives during the meeting, The Daily Star has learnt from meeting attendants.

Baharul also instructed the immediate release of officers transferred for administrative reasons. He reminded officers to strictly adhere to social media

guidelines and ensure that cases involving police assaults are investigated without delay.

He also addressed allegations of money being collected for police clearances, stressing that such practices should cease and clearances should be issued properly.

The newly-appointed Gazipur district SP Md Sharif Uddin highlighted the importance of coordination among law enforcement officers, especially during crucial election-related incidents.

He pointed out the need to establish a clear structure for force movements in advance, ensuring officers are well-informed about their instructions on election day.

Sharif also emphasised the need to strengthen wireless communication to prevent any disruptions during the election.

Cumilla SP Md Anisuzzaman suggested not to appoint any controversial individuals as presiding officers, while Joypurhat SP Mina Mahmud suggested that CCTV cameras should be installed where body-worn cameras are unavailable.

In response to the concerns, Baharul said that it would not be possible to ensure CCTV cameras at all polling centres.

Special Branch chief Golam Rasul instructed officers to avoid maintaining any personal relations

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Long-route buses and trucks struggle to enter the capital beneath the Jatrabari-Gulistan flyover due to an illegal leguna stand, causing heavy traffic and delaying commuters. The photo was taken in the Jatrabari area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Dhaka seeks to shape 'new canvas' in ties with Delhi

Says Bangladesh envoy to India

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is trying to shape a "new canvas" in its relations with India, where both countries share a common future, said Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Riaz Hamidullah yesterday.

"It is easier said than done, but it is possible. We have divergent views and sensitive issues, but that is the nature of our relationship. Focusing on only one aspect would not do justice," he said at an interactive session organised by the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Kolkata.

Calling the relationship "organic," Riaz said both countries are growing fast, with economic engagement exceeding \$25 billion, including sectors like tourism.

He said Bangladesh has not restricted the mobility of Indian nationals and added that people-to-people connections continue to

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## ACC probing 50 former, current cops over graft

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating allegations of bribery and corruption against at least 50 former and current police officials.

Over the past 15 years, multiple cases have been opened against officers at different levels -- from senior leadership to station-level constables.

ACC sources said after the recent exposure of massive graft by former IGP Benazir Ahmed, the commission filed cases against several senior officers, including former IGPs Benazir Ahmed and Nur Mohammad, former DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman Miah, and former DB chief Harun Or Rashid, for allegedly amassing illegal wealth.

ACC insiders said the officers under investigation -- described as loyal to the previous Awami League government -- now fear losing their jobs, facing lawsuits, arrests, and public criticism.

Investigators say the accused officers accumulated large amounts of illegal wealth through bribery, recruitment and posting trades, tender manipulation, interference in criminal cases, and what has become known as "arrest trading". Some senior officials are also accused of using excessive force and firing on protesters during the quota-reform movement.

So far, around a dozen cases -- including murder cases -- have been filed against top police officials, including a former IGP and a former DMP commissioner, along with dozens of others.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## Health assistants to continue demo

### Vaccination, services disrupted nationwide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health assistants have decided to continue their work abstention, stating that the authorities have failed to convince them that their demands, including amendments to their recruitment rules, will be addressed soon.

As a result, the vaccination of children and several other services across the country will remain halted for over a week.

Meanwhile, a group of Community Health Care Providers (CHCPs) continued their demonstration for the third consecutive day yesterday, demanding payment of their 17 months of arrears and permanent employment.

Consequently, services at 662 community clinics across the country have been disrupted.

Routine vaccination for children, registration of newborns, and several other services came to a near halt as several thousand health assistants began a sit-in at the Central Shaheed Minar on Saturday to push for their demands.

The sit-in, which began in front of the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) on Tuesday, continued yesterday.

Fazlul Haque Chowdhury, member secretary of the Bangladesh Health Assistant Association Central Coordination Council, said they had a meeting with DGHS Director (Admin) ABM Abu Hanif, who informed them that the necessary papers had already been sent to the public administration ministry.

However, the process has yet to begin, Fazlul added, explaining that district leaders recommended continuing the work abstention, and thus their programme will persist.

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