

## Journo Anis Alamgir taken to DB custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist Anis Alamgir was taken into custody by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch yesterday evening.



DB Chief Shafiqul Islam confirmed the development to The Daily Star, saying they would question him over some matters.

Further details would be provided later, he added.

Anis was picked up from a gym in Dhanmondi in the evening and taken to the DB office on Minto Road around 7:30pm, according to sources.

Anis has worked at several media outlets, including print and electronic media. In recent times, he has drawn attention for his active presence on television talk shows.



Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, noted economist and intellectual Prof Rehman Sobhan and political scientist Navine Murshid speaking at the "The Global History of Liberation War", organised by The Daily Star yesterday. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Jamaat's spin on intellectual killings in '71

### The party blames India for the massacre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar has claimed that it was India who carried out the conspiracy to kill the country's intellectuals during the Liberation War.

He said the murders of intellectuals were "part of a well-planned plot by the Indian army and Indian intelligence agencies."

Porwar made the remarks at a discussion organised by the party's Dhaka north unit at the Krishibid Institution auditorium, marking the Martyred Intellectuals Day yesterday.

He also claimed that Indian forces had already taken control of Dhaka by December 14, while Pakistan soldiers, Razakars, and Al-Badr members were busy saving their own lives rather than searching for people to kill.

"Those from outside the political arena who manipulate and create new political narratives for Bangladesh – the Delhi loyalists of this country – have conventionally and contemptibly tried to place all the responsibility for the killings of intellectuals on Jamaat-e-Islami."

Referring to an interview of Pakistan General Rao Farman Ali, Porwar said the general had stated that the Pakistan army wanted to surrender on December 14.

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## Clamp down now, ensure security

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said it would heighten security and provide police protocol to party leaders, July uprising frontliners, and potential candidates.

"Under the protocol, clear guidelines will be given on how security will be ensured at houses and offices of political leaders and potential candidates in the upcoming election and during their movement and public rallies and in cyberspace," the Chief Adviser's Press Wing said in a statement.

Initiatives have also been taken to provide enhanced security to frontline leaders of the July uprising and other key political figures, it added.

Separately, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operations) SN Nazrul Islam yesterday said the police were working on security arrangements for high-profile individuals like Hadi who face specific threats.

Briefing journalists at the DMP Media Centre, he said the police would provide personal security to those assessed to face high threat levels. However, he stressed that arranging individual security for everyone would not be possible.

Since Friday's assassination attempt on Hadi, a frontliner in the July uprising that toppled Sheikh Hasina, leaders of the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and National Citizen Party have been voicing concerns over safety and security at different public programmes.

Talking to reporters at Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial in Mirpur yesterday morning, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said incidents like the shooting of Hadi could repeat, as "enemies of Bangladesh" are resorting to targeted killings to destabilise the country, reports UNB.

"When Bangladesh is moving towards a new chapter, and when the

people of Bangladesh are dreaming of building a democratic country through a fair election, at that very time its enemies have once again indulged in a killing spree," he added.

Jamaat's Secretary General Mia Golam Porwar echoed his view while speaking at a programme marking the Martyred Intellectuals' Day, organised by Dhaka north city unit of the party at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

"For some time now, a section of journalists and so-called civil society members, acting as Delhi's loyalists, have been writing and speaking on talk shows in a way that suggests there will be no election unless the Awami League participates. Under the pretext of ensuring an inclusive election, they are trying to bring the Awami League into the polls," he said.

NCP Convener Nahid Islam said fear is palpable among the public as the election draws near.

Talking to reporters at the Rayerbazar Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital, he said vested quarters are out to derail the polls.

About the attack on Hadi, he said attempts are underway to erase the legacy of the July uprising and "target its heroes".

He also called for a national unity, saying, "We must not give the fascist Awami League the chance to break our unity."

### EC-LAW ENFORCERS MEET

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) Abul Fazal Md Sanaullah said the message from the EC is very clear: there are no concerns about the election, and it will be held on time.

"The commission is aware of the obstacles being created to disrupt the electoral process, and so is the government."

Sanaullah said the meeting discussed in detail the "covert attack"

on Hadi.

He added that attempts had been made to set fire to two field offices of the EC, and the commission is not dismissing the possibility of further covert attacks.

"A unified message has come from all the forces. Whoever tries to sabotage, obstruct, or damage this election will fail. Wherever firmness is required, all forces will demonstrate that firmness."

He noted that the EC is satisfied with the actions taken so far by law enforcement agencies, though there are areas where more work can be done.

He said discussions also covered whether the covert attacks were part of a larger plan or isolated incidents, whether law enforcement could have acted at the planning stage, and whether there were failures in apprehending those who carried out the attacks.

The election commissioner stressed that law enforcement agencies are active on the ground, investigating the nature of the incidents, and that effective measures will be taken to prevent such attacks in the future.

"Particular attention was given to the country's border regions, including the southeast and areas with Rohingya settlements, where certain recent trends have been observed. It was suggested that law enforcers see whether they are linked to larger events."

Home Secretary Nasimul Gani; Lt Gen SM Kamrul Hasan, principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division; Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam; BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui; Ansar and VDP Director General Maj Gen Abdul Motalab Sajjad Mahmud; and DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sajjat Ali attended the meeting.

to Alamgir, who was driving the motorcycle used in the shooting, and that Alamgir communicated with them multiple times before and after the incident.

Besides, the National Board of Revenue's intelligence wing has frozen the bank accounts of Faisal Karim Masud, his company Apple Soft IT Limited, and all his family members on suspicion of involvement in the attack, said Ahsan Habib, director general of the Central Intelligence Cell.

Investigators believe at least five people were involved and that they had been surveilling Hadi for at least a week prior.

CCTV footage shows Faisal entering the Inqilab Cultural Centre with three others on December 4, speaking with Hadi, and later attending a meeting with him on December 9. Photos also show Faisal and Alamgir campaigning with Hadi near the Shilpakala Academy.

Originally from Patuakhali, Faisal lived in the capital's Adabor area with his family. He became a member of the Chhatra League's central committee on May 11, 2019.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) Vice-President Abu Shadik Kayem called to besiege the home adviser's office at the Secretariat today, pressing a set of demands, including the arrest of those involved in the shooting.

In a post from his verified Facebook account, Kayem urged students to gather in front of the Ducusu building at 12:00pm today to join the programme.

## Reform commission chiefs frustrated

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In at least ten ordinances with which he was directly involved, resistance initially came from the bureaucracy, said Itekharruzzaman, also the executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

"Only after pressure, persuasion and firm decisions did these reforms move forward. Most draft laws were not shared publicly. Only under pressure were they uploaded to websites for a short period. Civil society never knew which recommendations were finally accepted or rejected."

He further criticised a later amendment to the National Human Rights Commission law that reintroduced bureaucratic dominance in the selection committee.

Badiul Alam Majumder, head of the Election Reform Commission, expressed dissatisfaction with the implementation of his commission's proposals.

"Many reform proposals were made to clean up the political arena, but most were not implemented."

He said that his commission clearly proposed internal democracy within political parties.

"Party leaders should be elected from the grassroots level to the national level. Wealthy individuals should be kept away from party leadership. Political parties should come under the Right to Information Act."

None of these proposals was adopted.

Although laws require political parties to form nomination panels based on grassroots opinions and to avoid maintaining affiliated organisations, these requirements are not being implemented, he said.

"Unfortunately, these legal provisions exist only on paper."

The commission's proposals for unconditional verification of candidate affidavits, measures against loan defaulters, habitual defaulters, unchecked election expenditure and enhanced accountability mechanisms have also been ignored, Badiul added.

Reforms take time and cannot be achieved overnight, said Shipping Adviser M Sakhawat Hussain.

He went on to express disappointment with the Election Commission.

"I am disappointed that many reform proposals have not been implemented. For example, the 'no vote' option was rejected. I think the Election Commission has an allergy to this suggestion."

While no government can fulfil all expectations, some key reforms could have been implemented through routine office orders of the Election Commission.

"The commission can ensure candidates submit expense accounts through routine orders. We have done this before, but many of our proposed restrictions were dropped," said Sakhawat, also adviser for the Labour and Employment and Jute and Textile ministries.

## 'Anti-Bangladesh activities from India must stop'

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sentences already handed down by Bangladesh's judicial authorities.

Additionally, Bangladesh sought India's cooperation in preventing suspects involved in the recent attempted assassination of independent Dhaka-8 aspirant Sharif Osman Hadi from fleeing to India. It urged New Delhi to ensure their immediate arrest and extradition should they enter Indian territory.

Emphasising regional responsibility, the ministry said that as a neighbouring country, India is

Several election reform proposals have been implemented, but deeper structural and cultural issues continue to hinder meaningful change in Bangladesh's electoral system, said Election Commissioner Abul Fazl Md Sanaullah.

Immediately implementable reforms have been carried out, including longer nomination scrutiny, mandatory income and asset disclosures, affidavit commitments to follow the code of conduct, restrictions on posters, joint candidate platforms and the initiation of expatriate voting, with over 450,000 registered so far.

However, deeper problems remain, including profitable elections, excessive involvement of lawmakers, lack of grassroots candidate selection, and weak mid-term accountability mechanisms.

Challenges such as the "winning nomination syndrome" and disqualification of loan defaulters persist.

CCTV coverage is expanding, public scrutiny of affidavits has been extended, and digital platforms are being encouraged to reduce campaign pollution, Sanaullah added.

Not a single recommendation from his commission has been implemented, said Kamal Ahmed, chief of the Media Reform Commission.

"We proposed more than 100 reforms, but I am sorry to say that not even one has been accepted or implemented by the government. Bureaucratic resistance and a lack of political will remain the main obstacles."

The commission faced repeated difficulties in collecting information from government offices despite a gazette notification requiring all ministries and departments to cooperate.

He criticised the dropping of the proposed Journalism Protection Act, saying that no clear explanation was provided even though the commission had prepared a draft law to support it.

He warned that journalists remain highly vulnerable, especially ahead of elections.

The government would be held responsible for any attacks on media workers, as none of the recommended safeguards have been implemented.

Kamal also criticised the government's rejection of proposals to establish a permanent and independent media commission.

The commission began its work with high expectations to improve workers' lives but achieving results has been slow and difficult, said Razekuzzaman Ratan, a member of the Labour Reform Commission.

His commission focused on four main areas: recognition of workers, simplification of registration processes, regularisation of remuneration and ensuring rehabilitation after work-related incidents.

"Despite our efforts, these proposals

have not been implemented," he said.

Successful reforms depend not only on good proposals but also on proper implementation under an accountable government, said Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Historical experience shows many reforms fail due to weak implementation rather than poor laws or bad intentions.

Sobhan praised the CPD's new reform tracking platform, calling it a sophisticated tool to monitor proposals from inception through implementation.

"The platform alone is not enough. Civil society must actively monitor and hold both the government and parliament accountable for reform progress."

He urged building a broad coalition within civil society, working closely with the media and other stakeholders to ensure reforms are implemented effectively.

"This is a deeply political act and demonstrates that civil society can move beyond dialogue to take real responsibility for governance and democracy," he said.

The current debate stems from Bangladesh's experience of democratic decline, said CPD Distinguished Fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya.

An alliance of politicians, bureaucrats and large businesses had weakened competitive politics, creating a non-competitive economy, crony capitalism and an oligarchic system where policy-making independence was lost.

"Reform is not just about plans or enthusiasm. Citizens must remain consciously involved if reforms are to be implemented," said Debapriya, also the convener of Citizens Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

## EC adds ICT charge-based

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the Political Parties and Candidates' Code of Conduct 2025 for parliamentary elections, election campaigning may be conducted from three weeks before polling until 48 hours before the start of voting, the letter said.

On Thursday, the EC issued another circular following the announcement of the election schedule and the referendum. It included a gazette notification of the twin votes, the appointment of returning officers and assistant returning officers, and other election-related matters.

The circular cited candidate qualifications and disqualifications as laid out in Article 66 of the Constitution and Article 12 of the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

However, it did not mention Section 20(C) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973. This provision was added through an ordinance issued in October.

"We expect that the interim government of Bangladesh will take all necessary measures for ensuring internal law and order, including for the purpose of holding peaceful elections."

## Hadi to be flown to Singapore today

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Mymensingh, and finally travelled by motorcycle to Garo Palli, crossing into India around 3:30am with the help of a local involved in human trafficking.

Sources in Mymensingh police said that around 11:00pm, the deputy commissioner of DMP's Ramna Division, along with officers and Haluaghat police, conducted coordinated raids in Haluaghat, Dhobaura, and Nalitabari to arrest Faisal and Alamgir.

During the raids, suspected human traffickers Philip Snaal and Sanjay Chisim were identified. Sanjay and four others were detained, but Philip was not found despite a separate operation.

During interrogation, Sanjay said he helped two Bangladeshis cross into India in the early hours of Saturday. He also told police that Philip and his associates have more information.

Police detained Sanjay Chisim, 25, and Sibirano Dio, 36, and brought them to Dhaka. Philip Snaal's wife, father-in-law, and a local Awami League leader were handed over to Nalitabari police for investigation.

At a press briefing in Dhaka, DMP's Additional Commissioner (Crime and Ops) SN Md Nazrul Islam, however, said there is no confirmed information that they have left the country.

A case was registered with Paltan Police Station late last night against one named and several unnamed accused.

### PRIME SUSPECT'S WIFE, BROTHER-IN-LAW HELD

Meanwhile, Rab detained three people during separate raids conducted in different parts of Dhaka and Narayanganj over the last 24 hours.

The detainees are Faisal's wife Samia, his friend Monika, and his brother-in-law Shipu, Wing Commander MZM Entekhab Chowdhury of the Rab Media Wing told The Daily Star last night.

A large number of cheque books bearing Faisal's signature, along with several electronic devices, were recovered from the arrestees, he added.

The Rab official said Faisal had been in contact with all three before and after the shooting, adding that Faisal stayed with his wife in Narayanganj on the night before the incident and left for Dhaka at dawn, where he went to his friend Monika's residence.

Rab also arrested Abdul Hannan, 40, the registered owner of the motorcycle used by the assailants. The motorcycle has been seized for fingerprint analysis.

Later in the day, a Dhaka court placed Hannan on a three-day remand.

At the court, Hannan said he bought the motorcycle from Mirpur, but it remained unused at home, adding that he later sold it but could not complete the ownership transfer because he was ill.

The DB picked up two more people from Savar and took them into custody.

A DB officer said the two had links