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## VICTORY DAY TODAY

# A nation born out of blood and grit

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The tide of war had turned by mid-December in 1971. The promise of freedom was no longer a dream. It had hardened into tangible certainty.

For nearly nine months, the Pakistani army -- supported by local collaborators -- had unleashed unspeakable brutality. They had killed, raped, pillaged and plundered. Just before they were about to be vanquished, their vicious collaborators also silenced the nation's brightest sons and daughters. They wanted to turn the verdant green of Bangladesh into a wasteland of

scorched red.

That freedom, which had inched closer and closer through the nine months, now seemed to be just within reach.

From the first days of December, Mukti Bahini fighters moved with renewed confidence. Their presence was felt even inside occupied Dhaka. From the outskirts, allied Indian and Bangladeshi forces closed in, tightening the circle. The city became a stage where the final act was about to unfold.

The sky opened up too. It had been a particularly wet monsoon. But now it was about to become a particularly fiery winter as allied

fighter planes roared overhead, their strikes shaking the earth beneath Dhaka. Leaflets drifted down with dire warning: "Lay down arms before the time runs out."

Pakistanis panicked.

According to the Pakistan government's Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report on December 7, Governor AM Malik sent a secret cable to President General Yahya Khan presenting the grim picture. "No amount of lip sympathy or even material help from world powers except direct physical intervention will help. Is it worth sacrificing

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The Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban was illuminated in the national colours of red and green last night on the eve of the 54th Victory Day. The nation will commemorate this day with due solemnity and heartfelt tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**HADI SHOOTING**  
AL leaders  
planned the  
attack to  
derail polls

Says case statement;  
another held; prime  
accused still at large

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi was part of a broader conspiracy to disrupt the upcoming national election, create division among political parties, and undermine candidates' morale, according to a case filed with Paltan Police Station in this regard.

Filed by Inqilab Moncho's Member Secretary Abdullah Al Jaber on Sunday night, the case blames Awami League leaders for sabotage, crude bomb attacks, arson, arms supply, spreading rumours online, and intimidation, through direct and indirect instigation, instructions, and patronage, since August 2024 with the aim of obstructing the February polls.

As part of the plan, Hadi, an independent aspirant for Dhaka 8 and spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, was shot on December 12 (Friday) to disrupt the polls, and is now fighting for his life, the case alleged. The 33-year-old was flown to Singapore yesterday for advanced treatment.

The case, which was transferred to the Detective Branch of Police yesterday, named Faisal Karim Masud alias Rahul alias Daud, 37, as the prime accused for opening fire on Hadi, along with several other unnamed accused.

Early yesterday, Rapid Action Battalion

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**Candidates, July  
warriors can now  
apply for firearms**

Govt issues policy guidelines

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In a major development, the government has issued policy guidelines on granting firearm licences and appointing retainers (persons to carry firearms) to individuals who are politically important and candidates contesting the national election.

According to a circular issued by the home ministry yesterday, the policy aims to curb election-time violence and intimidation.

### POLICY AT A GLANCE

- Applications to be filed thru district magistrate
- Licence valid until 15 days after polls results
- Self-defence only, no multiple firearms, not for hobby or sport
- One retainer allowed if licence holder can't carry or use weapon

This development comes amid growing concern over candidates' security in the wake of the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi, an MP aspirant of Dhaka 8, a day after the election schedule was announced, a ministry source said.

The source added that intelligence agencies have also identified some 200 high-profile individuals, including 157 student coordinators across the country, who played an important role during the July uprising.

Based on scrutiny and threat analysis, these individuals will be provided security or get a firearms licence, along with election candidates.

Speaking on the matter, Abeda Afsari, deputy secretary of the home ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday, "The policy has come into effect immediately. Now, by applying to the government through the district magistrate, candidates and politically important persons, like the July warriors, can acquire firearms licences."

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Bir Bikram Uky Ching during the Liberation War

For his exceptional valor, Uky Ching was conferred the Bir Bikram title, the only indigenous man to receive the gallantry award.

This was not his only operation. From the very beginning of the war, he displayed bravery in one battle after another across Sector 6. Notable among these

were the battles at Hathibandha, Pakhihura, Rowmari, Raygan, and Chowdhuryhat, according to Uky Ching's memoir written in the daily Prothom Alo in 2005. He died in 2014.

But he was not alone. From the plains to the hills, indigenous men and women

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### A PEOPLE'S WAR, A WORLD'S RECKONING

This Victory Day, revisit 1971 through a global lens. Don't miss your free eight-page supplement inside the newspaper.

Editors' Council condemns arrest of journo Anis Alamgir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council has strongly condemned the arrest of journalist Anis Alamgir, saying it triggers memories of state repression against journalists during the past autocratic regime.

In a statement issued yesterday, the council expressed deep concern over Anis being summoned to the Detective Branch (DB) office without specific charges and subsequently arrested under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

"We have witnessed such practices in the past during the Awami League government. Then, false cases, harassment, and indiscriminate arrests against journalists were regular occurrences. The current incident is a repetition of that regrettable reality," the statement, signed by its President Nurul Kabir and General Secretary Dewan

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New textbooks are arriving at schools across the capital. Students will receive them on the first day of the new year. The photo was taken yesterday in the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

**Outrage erupts at resistance rally over Hadi attack**

**Speakers term it a plot to destabilise Bangladesh**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an all-party resistance rally yesterday expressed outrage over the shooting of Dhaka-8 independent aspirant Sharif Osman Hadi, terming it part of a broader conspiracy to destabilise the country.

Presiding over the event at the Central Shaheed Minar, Amar Desh Editor Mahmudur Rahman demanded that Hadi's attackers, as well as death row convicts deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, be handed over from India by December 25.

"Otherwise, by the blood of Hadi, we will launch a resistance movement against every Indian establishment in Bangladesh."

The two individuals who attacked Hadi, who is also the spokesperson of Inqilab Moncho, have allegedly fled to India.

Rahman added, "If the killers are not extradited by December 25, the work permits of every Indian working in Bangladesh must be revoked."

Security cannot be ensured through an "inept" home ministry, he said, urging the formation of law-and-order committees in every ward, comprising all political parties, to identify "fascist collaborators" and hand them over to the law.

Mahmudur, who took over the responsibilities of

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## Khaleda's condition remains unchanged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia remains in critical condition in the intensive care unit of Evercare Hospital in Dhaka, where she has been receiving treatment for the last 22 days.

The former prime minister has been placed on elective ventilator support to rest her lungs and other organs, her doctors said on Thursday.

The BNP Media Cell said last night that her condition remains unchanged. She has developed several additional complications, including infective endocarditis, acute pancreatitis, and severe bacterial and fungal infections.

Khaleda, 80, was admitted to the hospital on November 23 on the advice of her medical board after being diagnosed with infections in her heart and lungs.



A Palestinian woman walks past residential buildings damaged and destroyed during Israel's assault on Gaza City. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## A nation born out of blood and grit

FROM PAGE 1  
so much when the end seems inevitable?"

No civil government existed after December 6, 1971. When the Indian Air Force bombed the city, there were no civic agencies available to clear the roads or attend to the injured and wounded persons. Major General Rao Farman Ali Khan, a Pakistani officer present in the Eastern Wing during the war, wrote this in his book "How Pakistan Got Divided".

"Dacca was a ghost city. Most of the time it was under curfew, out of fear of Mukti Bahini activities. Most of the pro-Pakistan elements were panicking now, be they East or West Pakistani," he wrote.

Siddik Salik, then public relations officer of the Pakistan army, described the situation of December 14. Yahya sent a message to Malik and Lieutenant General AAK Niazi, the military commander of Pakistan's Eastern Command.

It reads, "You have now reached a stage when further resistance is no longer humanly possible nor will it serve any useful purpose. You should now take all necessary measures to stop the fighting and preserve the lives of all armed forces personnel from West Pakistan," Salik later wrote in his book "Witness to Surrender".

Amid the growing speculation of surrender, on December 16 morning

Major General Gandharv Singh Nagra, who was close behind commando troops, held back at the Mirpur bridge and wrote a chit to Niazi.

It said: "Dear Abdulla, I am at Mirpur Bridge. Send your representative."

Major General Jamshed, Major General Farman and Rear Admiral Sharif were with Niazi when he received the note at about 9:00am.

Farman said "Is he (Nagra) the negotiating team?" General Niazi did not comment.

The obvious question was whether he was to be received or resisted. He was already on the threshold of Dacca.

But the Pakistani did not have any reserves with which to resist Nagra. Both Farman and Sharif agreed, then, to do what Nagra asks.

Niazi then sent Jamshed to receive Nagra and asked Pakistani troops to respect the cease fire and allow Nagra a peaceful passage.

"The Indian general entered Dacca with a handful of soldiers and a lot of pride. That was the virtual fall of Dacca. It fell quietly like a heart patient. Neither were its limbs chopped nor its body hacked. It just ceased to exist as an independent city," Salik wrote later.

Lieutenant General JFR Jacob reached the headquarters of Pakistani forces that afternoon to discuss surrender. Niazi, received Jacob.

"Col [MH] Kharu read out the terms of surrender. There was dead silence

in the room, as tears streamed down Niazi's cheeks. The others in the room became fidgety," Jacob wrote in his book "Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation".

Rao Farman Ali objected to surrendering to the Indian and Bangladeshi forces. Niazi said what Jacob was asking him to sign was unconditional surrender.

Jacob assured that they would be treated as soldiers with due dignity and the Geneva Convention would be honoured. That there would be respect for all ethnic minorities.

Niazi passed the document to the others. They wanted some changes. Jacob reiterated that the terms were already very generous and walked out of the room, leaving the Pakistanis to deliberate.

Then the two parties discussed the modalities of the surrender.

Niazi said he would like it to take place in his office. Jacob told him that the ceremony would take place at the Ramma Race Course, now Suhrawardy Udayan.

He felt it would be appropriate to have a public surrender in full view of the people of Dhaka who had suffered so terribly.

Niazi argued that this was not appropriate.

Jacob said Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, commander of the Indian Eastern Command, also chief of

the joint Bangladesh and India forces, would be given a guard of honour by detachments of the Indian and Pakistani armies.

After that Aurora and Niazi would sign the documents. Niazi would then surrender his sword, proposed Jacob.

When Niazi said he did not have a sword, Jacob said that Niazi would surrender his sidearm. Niazi seemed unhappy but kept silent.

Pakistani officers agreed with the Indian terms and Niazi went to Dhaka airport to receive Jagjit Singh Aurora.

It was against this backdrop, on December 16, 1971, in absence of MAG Osmani, the Bangladesh forces commander-in-chief, the government decided that AK Khandaker, deputy chief of staff of Bangladesh forces, would represent the Bangladesh Army at the surrender ceremony.

Officials began looking for Khandaker and finally found him near New Market in Kolkata. They told Khandaker that Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad had asked him to go directly to Dum Dum Airport.

"At that time, I was wearing civilian clothes, that is, a shirt and a sweater, and I did not even have time to change into military clothes," Khandaker remembered in his book titled "1971 Bhetore Baire."

After reaching the airport and climbing two or three steps, Khandaker noticed an Indian army jeep

approaching. It stopped at the bottom of the steps and out came Aurora with his wife.

Khandaker moved down the steps to make room for them to board the plane.

"General Aurora put his hand on my back and smiled softly, you are the commander of the Mukti Bahini. You go first."

After reaching Dhaka, Khandaker travelled with Aurora in his jeep. They passed a sea of jubilant people as they went to the race course, the very ground from where nine months ago, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had announced in his captivating baritone, "...The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. The struggle this time, is a struggle for independence. Joy Bangla!"

Niazi gave Aurora a military salute and shook hands.

"It was a touching sight. The victor and the vanquished stood in full view of the Bengalees, who made no secret of their extreme sentiments of love and hatred for Aurora and Niazi respectively," Salik wrote.

The stage was set for the watershed event, for the dawn of a new history and the birth of an independent nation. In that moment, the flow of time seemed to halt—as if the world itself held its breath, awaiting the arrival of a new dawn.

"The ceremony was simple and it ended within a few minutes,"

## Prosecution appeals against ICT verdict on Hasina, Kamal

Seeks enhancement of life sentences to death penalty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday filed an appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, seeking enhancement of the life sentences of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to capital punishment.

The appeal, based on eight grounds, challenges part of the verdict delivered by ICT-1 on November 17 in a case linked to the July uprising.

While the tribunal sentenced Hasina and Kamal to death on one major charge, it handed down "imprisonment until natural death" for a separate charge. Former IGP Chowdhury Abdulla Al-Mamun, who turned state approver, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the case.

Mamun's brother Shamsul Abedin told The Daily Star yesterday that they received relevant documents and are preparing to appeal against the tribunal's judgement soon.

At the tribunal premises, Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told reporters that the July uprising crimes amounted to serious human rights violations and heinous offences, deserving capital punishment, while the massive and deadly

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## The indigenous bravery in Liberation War

FROM PAGE 1  
stood shoulder to shoulder with their Bangladeshi brothers and sisters in the Liberation War as fighters, organisers and informants.

Though the exact number of fighters from indigenous communities has never officially been recorded, their contributions have been documented in several books, including "Muktijuddhe Adibasi" by Ayub Hossain and Charu Haque, and "Adibasi Muktijuddha" by Tapon Kumar Dey.

According to these books, hundreds of indigenous youths from the Oraon, Munda, Kora, Kol, Mahali and Rajuar communities of Rajshahi's Barendra region and Chapainawabganj joined the war at the call of indigenous leader Sagram Majhi.

From Rangpur and Dinajpur to Sylhet and Netrakona, indigenous men and women from both plains and hills fought as combatants, spies and organisers.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, resistance took an extraordinary turn when an indigenous king opened his palace to refugees and freedom fighters, transforming royal privilege into a weapon of war.

In search of their stories, this correspondent travelled across several districts, including Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Khagrachari, Mymensingh and Netrakona, and interviewed at least 40 indigenous freedom fighters, elderly residents, and members of royal families.

Their accounts tell stories of the valour and sacrifice of the indigenous communities, though most remain unrecognised.

Liberation War researcher Alsan Chowdhury says, "During the war, Pakistanis inflicted greater damage on indigenous peoples than on Bengalis. From the very beginning of the war, indigenous communities became one of the primary targets of the Pakistani Army. Yet, even after being completely dispossessed, indigenous people sacrificed everything and took part in the war. Far less work has been done on the contributions of indigenous peoples to the Liberation War than was necessary—almost none at all."

**BARENDRA REGION**  
Sagram Majhi was born in Kendubuna Para village in Godagari union of Rajshahi's Godagari upazila. Today, it is known as Sagrampur.

Elected to the provincial assembly in the 1954 Jukto Front election, Sagram was known among indigenous people as a key organiser of the war.

From Sagrampur alone, at least 25 indigenous youths joined the war; none are alive today. Indigenous youths from almost every village in nearby Gogram, Rishikul and Matikula unions also took part.

One such fighter is Narayan Chandra Murari, 72, of the Munda community from Bottoli village under Gogram union. In April 1971, local Razakars looted Bottoli. To save his life, Narayan, then 17 or 18, fled to India with others.

"In India, we took shelter at the refugee camp in Hatinagar Colony of Barhampur. We were given ration cards. A few days later, Sagram babu came to the camp, gathered the youths and said, 'Everyone must now go to war. There is no other way to survive.'

Santals like Naika Kislu, 78, from Mohamadpur village of Tanore upazila, recalled how Sagram went to every camp enrolling indigenous people for training. "After training at Gourbagan Youth Camp, I fought in the Mehediupur sub-sector."

Among the Santal fighters, platoon commanders Bishwanath Tudu and Chompa Soren made significant contributions.

From the Oraon community, the lone platoon commander was Rampada Oraon, now 83.

He told The Daily Star that his platoon, having around 30 fighters, fought battles in Poragram, Rohanpur, Shibganj, Radhakantapur, Godagari, Tanore and Mohonpur.

"We launched three attacks on the Tanore and Mohanpur police stations. In the final three-pronged assault on Tanore on November 29, the station was liberated on November 30. One indigenous freedom fighter was martyred, and another was seriously wounded," he said.

Shortly after, Pakistani soldiers and Razakars looted and burned their villages, and after independence, fighters returned to destroyed homes.

According to the Liberation War Affairs ministry, 62 indigenous people from Godagari thana in Rajshahi are officially recognised, though the actual number is believed to be higher.

**NORTHERN BENGAL**

One major front for indigenous resistance was Rangpur.

According to "Bangladesh Independence War: Sector-Based History, Sector 6", after massacres in Rangpur city, the cantonment and EPR headquarters on March 25-26, Santal leader Joyram Soren and Oraon leader Budu Oraon met political leaders Sheikh Amzad Hossain, Mujibur Rahman Master and others.

They decided to destroy Rangpur Cantonment on March 28.

Thousands of Santal and Oraon

Joyram Soren stands at the Rangpur Cantonment entrance.

**DINAJPUR REGION**

Meanwhile, over 100 people from the Santal, Munda, Kora, Oraon, Mahali and Turi communities of Ranipukur union in Biral upazila of Dinajpur district joined the war.

They trained at Shivbari camp in Gangarampur under retired EPR soldier George Das, fighting first under sub-sectors and later under George

Bahini.

From the endangered Kora community of Halajy village, at least 14 men joined. Only one, Kina Kora, is alive. "To stop the Pakistanis from moving freely, we decided to destroy the bridge in November. Under George

Das's leadership, 20 of us planted 40

and was captured, tortured and killed during reconnaissance for the Madhabpur operation.

In Sylhet's tea gardens, over 600 indigenous people were killed. One massacre was the May 1 killing of 47 workers in Sreemangal's Bharaunda Tea Garden, according to the book.

Soldiers killed Nakula Hazra first, then shot around 60 workers near the Kali temple, witnesses said.

Survivor Bijoy Hazra said, "The Punjabis slaughtered innocent people like birds. My father and brother were among the martyrs. Another brother survived despite being shot."

**CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS**

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, while Chakma and Bomang royal families opposed the war, Mong king Mongpru Sain stood apart.

He opened the Mong Palace and royal granary to refugees and fighters, handed over his weapons and vehicles, and turned the palace into a shelter and medical centre.

Hundreds of Marma and Tripura youths joined his call, while he himself fought on the front lines, notably in the Battle of Akhra.

Freedom fighter Chai Uri Mong said, "In May-June, the king went camp to camp urging indigenous people to join.

"I fought in the Manughat sub-sector. In August, we attacked the Pakistani headquarters at Andharmanik, killing a Pakistani captain and a Junior Commissioned Officer. On September 9, an ambush on a Pakistani boat convoy at Panchhara left 25 Pakistani soldiers dead."

Meanwhile, despite the Chakma king's opposition, many Chakma fighters made heroic contributions. KK Roy of the royal family joined the war, while Ramaniranjan Chakma was martyred in Ramgarh, and EPR sepoy Hemranjan Chakma in Bogura, according to the book "Muktijuddhe Adabasi".

At the war's outset, provincial assembly member Manabendra Narayan Larma began organising the Jumma people.

**INDIGENOUS WOMEN WARRIOR**

Among the three women awarded the Bir Protik for heroic contributions during and after the Liberation War, Kankan Heninchita, a Khasi tribal

woman, was the only indigenous recipient.

Her story, along with those of other women fighters, is documented in "Bangladesh Shadhinota Shongram O Nari Muktijoddha-Volume 1" by Meherunessa Mary.

Before the war, she was married to Majid Khan, a Pakistani EPR soldier who deserted during the war. Later, her sister and brother-in-law were martyred by Pakistani forces. While searching for her husband, Kankan was detained on suspicion of being a Mukti Bahini spy and brutally tortured. After tracing Majid Khan, the Pakistanis forced her to work as a spy inside Mukti Bahini camps.

But having lost her family and dignity, Kankan decided to take revenge. She contacted Captain Helal Uddin, commander of the Laximpur camp, and became a spy for the Mukti Bahini instead. Using the trust of Pakistani soldiers, she stole weapons and ammunition and delivered them to freedom fighter camps.

In August, despite great risk, she personally carried explosives and mines for the operation to destroy the Jardia Bridge in Sunamganj. Based on her intelligence, the Mukti Bahini carried out attacks and fought at least 20 successful battles, including Basrai Tila, Betirgaon-Nurpur, Teblai, Mahabatpur, and Silairpar.

Indigenous women served both on the front lines and in medical services. Two Garo freedom fighters, Sandhya Rani Sangma and Veronica Sangma from Mymensingh and Netrakona, joined the war after training at the nursing centre of the Joyram

# DHAKA

## NEXT NAT'L POLLS Cabinet orders neutrality of government employees

### STAR REPORT

The Cabinet Division has issued a strict directive instructing all government employees to carry out their duties in a neutral and lawful manner during the upcoming national parliamentary election and referendum.

The order also says that no obstruction should be created in following the lawful instructions of returning officers.

The directive was sent yesterday to secretaries of all ministries and divisions, the inspector general of police, directors general of the Coast Guard and Ansar, divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, and heads of all government offices and agencies.

In the same circular, the Cabinet Division also instructed all ministries

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus unveils a commemorative postage stamp at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday, marking Victory Day being celebrated across the country today.

PHOTO: CA'S PRESS WING

## Structural weakness, politics undermine country's anti-graft efforts: speakers

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's efforts to curb corruption and ensure transparency will remain ineffective unless accountability reforms address the broader governance system, speakers said at a roundtable discussion yesterday.

They said the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Information Commission (IC) continue to face structural weaknesses, political influence, and operational constraints, despite existing laws and institutions.

The discussion, titled "Reimagining Institutions of Accountability in Bangladesh", was organised by the Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) of BRAC at the BRAC Centre in the capital. CPJ presented findings and recommendations from its Ideas Papers on the ACC and the IC, identifying institutional gaps and possible reform pathways.

**Individuals who have amassed illicit wealth often continue to enjoy public respect and authority. This has become an accepted way of life. Accountability institutions must be effective, transparent, and able to work together to challenge such norms.**

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN, executive director, TIB

At the event, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said commissions such as the ACC and the IC do not operate in isolation.

Their effectiveness depends on a broader ecosystem involving parliament, the judiciary, public administration, and non-state actors, including political parties, the media, the private sector, NGOs, and families, he said.

"If we want a governance system that is accountable to the people, the entire ecosystem must support corruption control and the right to information," he said, adding that the current reality often shows the opposite.

He pointed to the social acceptance of corruption, noting that individuals who have amassed illicit wealth often continue to enjoy public respect and authority.

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## Resignation of home adviser sought Chhatra Odhikar Parishad places five-point demand

### STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Chhatra Odhikar Parishad yesterday placed a five-point demand before the government, calling for the resignation of senior officials, accountability for killings allegedly involving India's Border Security Force (BSF), and restrictions on political participation ahead of the next parliamentary election.

The demands were announced at a press briefing at Madhur Canteen on the Dhaka University campus.

They demanded the resignation of the home affairs adviser and the chief adviser's special assistant responsible for home ministry matters.

The group warned that if the accused shooters of Hadi, Faisal Karim Masud and Alamgir -- allegedly

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## One or two murder incidents occur sometimes: CEC

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday dismissed concerns over a deterioration in law-and-order situation, saying there are no obstacles to holding a free and fair national election.

He described the recent shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi as an isolated incident, saying, "One or two incidents of murder or violence take place sometimes."

Speaking at an event in Dhaka's Gulshan, CEC Nasir said, "Where has law and order deteriorated? From time to time, one or two incidents of murder or violence occur..." he said.

"Similar incidents happened earlier, including the killing of Ahsanullah Master," he said, urging people not to draw broad conclusions based on a single event.

Comparing the current situation with periods of severe unrest in earlier years, CEC Nasir said that at those times, police stations were non-functional, and officers could not operate. "Compared to that situation, law and order have improved significantly," he said.

He called on all quarters to dispel doubts about the upcoming election. "There may be apprehensions in the media and elsewhere, but we have no doubts. The election will be held on time and will be conducted in a free, fair and competitive manner with everyone's participation," he said.

He also said the EC held a meeting yesterday with



AMM Nasir Uddin

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A man cautiously navigates construction materials while crossing a section of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in Dhaka where drainage repair work is underway. Prolonged reconstruction near Karwan Bazar has encroached on much of the roadway and footpath, forcing pedestrians onto the busy road and exposing them to serious risk. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Nation celebrates Victory Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The nation is set to celebrate Victory Day today, as the country was liberated from the Pakistani occupation forces on this day 54 years back through a nine-month-long bloodstained War of Liberation.

On December 16, 1971, Bangladesh was born as an independent country at the cost of the supreme sacrifice of three million people.

The government has taken extensive programmes to celebrate the great Victory Day, while the day will begin with a 31 gun salute in the capital this morning.

The president and the chief adviser are expected to pay tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the Savar National Martyrs' Memorial as the sun rises today.



Then, the Bir Shrestha families, war-wounded freedom fighters and brave freedom fighters, under the leadership of the liberation war affairs adviser, will lay wreaths there.

In addition, foreign diplomats in Bangladesh, political and social organisations and people from all walks of life will pay tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

On the occasion, the national flag will be hoisted in all government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings and Bangladesh embassies and missions abroad, while important buildings and establishments will be illuminated.

As part of the nationwide celebrations of Victory Day, the country is set to make a world record by parachuting with the highest number of national flags.

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## 'Nothing more than a token gesture'

### TIB slams Police Commission Ordinance, 2025

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Police Commission Ordinance, 2025 fails to meet long-standing public demands for an independent police commission and risks entrenching bureaucratic control over law enforcement, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in a statement yesterday.

TIB described the ordinance as "nothing more than a token gesture that undermines the possibility of establishing an independent police commission".

The organisation slammed what it called bureaucratic intrusion into a body meant to ensure police accountability and professionalism, and to function independently of both the government and the police.



**All activities and decision-making processes of the commission would inevitably remain under bureaucratic and police influence.**

According to the statement, provisions on the commission's composition "clearly pose risks of conflict of interest," particularly the mandatory inclusion of retired bureaucrats and police officials in its leadership, including the appointment of a retired police officer as member secretary.

"All activities and decision-making processes of the commission would inevitably remain under bureaucratic and police influence," said TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman.

TIB warned that the ordinance could turn the commission into "a haven for retired and deputed officials," allowing the culture of impunity within the police to continue.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



# NEWS

## Nothing more

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"Given the presence of powerful figures such as the cabinet secretary and the home secretary in this committee within Bangladesh's governance structure, it is unrealistic to expect decision-making to remain free from government and bureaucratic influence or conflicts of interest," the statement said.

The organisation also questioned why the Citizen Complaint Management Committee and the Police Complaint Resolution Committee would be formed with commission members themselves, arguing that such arrangements would make independent and impartial complaint resolution impossible.

It added that the lack of financial independence in the law would "effectively turn the proposed Commission into a subordinate government office".

TIB also criticised the ordinance for allowing complaints that would normally fall under the jurisdiction of the National Human Rights Commission to be resolved through "coordination".

Concerns were also raised over Article 13 of the ordinance, which refers to maintaining a "balance between public security and human rights".

TIB said the absence of a clear definition of "public security" could allow human rights violations to be justified in its name.

TIB urged the government to revise and amend the Police Commission Ordinance, 2025, saying such changes are necessary to establish a genuinely independent police commission.

"Even if a police commission is formed under the proposed framework, it will neither be independent nor capable of fulfilling its intended purpose. Instead, it will become another project that wastes public funds while reinforcing the dominance of government-loyal, retired and deputed administrative and police officials," the statement said.

## Nation

FROM PAGE 3

Like the previous years, the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs will organise three-day Victory Fairs in all districts and upazilas.

Victory Day songs will be performed at Suhrawardy Udayan at 3:00pm today, while new-generation artists will perform songs of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra simultaneously in 64 districts.

The president will felicitate the members of the Bir Shrestha families at Bangabhaban in the afternoon.

As per the government's special programmes to mark the 54 years of independence, 54 paratroopers from the Bangladesh Army, Air Force, and Navy will perform a flag-bearing skydive at Tejgaon old airport in the capital at around 11:40am today, setting a new Guinness World Record.

Prior to the parachuting, the three forces will conduct separate fly-past demonstrations at the same venue from 11:00am.

Earlier, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus released a commemorative postage stamp on the occasion yesterday.



Narayan Pal shapes everyday items -- including teacups and piggy banks -- from clay on a traditional potter's wheel. Defying the widespread use of machines in pottery today, he continues a family craft by working the manual wheel he has used since childhood

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 250-BED BAGERHAT DISTRICT HOSPITAL Patients suffer as ICU remains non-operational

Expensive equipment lies unused amid staff shortage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The 250-bed Bagerhat District Hospital, the only major public healthcare facility for nearly 20 lakh people in the district, is struggling to provide critical services, as its Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has remained non-operational for nearly 11 months, while expensive diagnostic equipment lies unused.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found an automatic biochemistry analyser worth Tk 38.28 lakh lying idle and covered in dust in the pathology department. The machine, capable of conducting around 50 advanced tests and processing up to 360 samples per hour, was supplied by the DGHS on March 7, 2023, to enhance diagnostic capacity. However, it has yet to be installed.

Hospital officials said the supplier, Bangladesh Science House, did not provide installation support. Several letters sent to the DGHS seeking assistance also went unanswered.

"As a result, more than 6,000 patients who visit the hospital every month for pathological tests are being deprived of 40 to 45 types of tests at affordable costs," said Md Hasnuzzaman

Rasu, head of the pathology department.

The hospital's 10-bed ICU, located on the seventh floor, also remains locked despite being fully equipped with ventilators, cardiac monitors, infusion pumps, a defibrillator, a blood gas analyser, oxygen therapy systems and other essential facilities. Restrooms for doctors

"Critically ill patients are now being referred to Khulna or Dhaka, which increases both cost and risk," said Lipi Khanam, in-charge of the unit, adding that prolonged disuse could damage the equipment.

Jahidul Islam Jadu, general secretary of Bagerhat Blood Foundation, urged the authorities to take immediate steps to



PHOTO: STAR

and nurses are also lying unused.

Hospital sources said the ICU was initially launched with three beds during the Covid-19 pandemic and later expanded to 10 beds under a health ministry project. The unit was inaugurated on November 14, 2023 and remained operational until December 2024, when the project ended, and assigned staff were withdrawn.

resume ICU services and install the unused diagnostic machine.

Hospital Superintendent Dr Asim Kumar Samadder said an acute manpower crisis was behind the prolonged shutdown.

"We need at least 3 consultants, 4 medical officers, 12 nurses and 16 support staff," he said, adding that the hospital currently has only 26 doctors against 59 sanctioned posts.

## Delegations

FROM PAGE 4  
Kolkata under the Victory Festival programme.

They will also attend several memorial events, including paying tribute at the Victory Memorial.

Meanwhile, a delegation of eight war veterans and two serving officers of the Indian Armed Forces has arrived in Dhaka to commemorate the Liberation War and participate in Bangladesh's Victory Day celebrations.

The Indian delegation will interact with freedom fighters and senior officers of the Bangladesh Army, Navy, and Air Force, according to a press statement from the Indian High Commission.

"These exchange visits provide a platform for Bangladeshi Muktijoddhas and Indian war veterans to celebrate the unique friendship between the two countries and to renew memories of the Liberation War, which reflects the shared sacrifices of the armed forces of Bangladesh and India for Bangladesh's freedom," the statement said.

On the Right to

Information Act, Iftekharuzzaman said surveys show that 93 percent of people in Bangladesh are unaware of the law. He added that enforcement remains

"weak, as officials often cite state security to deny information, even though the RTI Act is meant to prevail over other laws."

Meanwhile, a press release issued by the EC last night said the CEC, through his earlier remarks, only sought to convey that the shooting of Hadi would not derail the elections.

DHAKA TUESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2025  
POUSH 1, 1432 BS  
The Daily Star 5

## Absence of specific

FROM PAGE 3

CJ by superseding their seniors. They are Justice KM Hasan, Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, Justice MM Ruhul Amin, Justice Md Tafazzul Islam, Justice ABM Khairul Haque, Justice Md Muzammel Hossain, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, and Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

Despite repeated attempts, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul could not be reached on his mobile phone.

## Structural weakness

FROM PAGE 3  
cannot be curbed through legal frameworks or punitive measures alone. It requires a fundamental shift in cultural socialisation and social behaviour, he said.

While ministries have codes of conduct and laws, independent commissions are essential for accountability. Wohab said, adding that these bodies must be citizen-centric to earn public trust.

"We are socialised to evade punishment rather than embrace ethical behaviour," he said.

He warned that an excessive focus on punishment can stigmatise individuals and families and create cycles of exclusion.

Instead, he said, the state should prioritise prevention and harm reduction, noting that corruption is sustained by a nexus between power, the economy, and society.

CPJ Deputy Executive Director Shahariar Sadat moderated the discussion.

## One or two

FROM PAGE 3  
senior law enforcement officials and issued directives to ensure security throughout the election period.

"They have assured us that peace and order will be maintained until the election and that they are capable of ensuring a smooth polling process."

Meanwhile, a press release issued by the EC last night said the CEC, through his earlier remarks, only sought to convey that the shooting of Hadi would not derail the elections.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
DECEMBER 16  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-20 12-45 3-45 5-22 7-00  
JAMAAT 5-55 1-15 4-00 5-25 7-30  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD  
Road Division, Cox's Bazar  
Phone: 02334462460  
E-mail: [ecox@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:ecox@rhd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 35.01.2224.132.25/2048

Date: 15/12/2025

### RHD Invitation for e-GP Tenders

This is to notify for all concerns that e-Tenders is invited and published on 15 December, 2025 in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for procurement of works for the following Tenders. Interested persons/firms can see details by visiting the website [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Sl.	Tender ID	Tender Reference No.	Name of work	Date & time
01.	1191224	E-GP/PMPMAJOR/04/BRIDGE/EE/COXRD/2025-2026	Construction of 44.02m (1 x 42.68m) Long P.C Girder Bridge (Bonder Bridge) at 455th k.m (Ch: 454 + 629) on Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Cumilla (Moinamati)-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf National Highway (N-1) under Cox's Bazar Road Division during the year 2025-2026.	Last selling: 11.01.2026, 16:00 Closing: 12.01.2026, 13:00
02.	1191225	E-GP/PMPMAJOR/05/BRIDGE/EE/COXRD/2025-2026	Construction of 44.02m (1 x 42.68m) Long P.C Girder Bridge (Domdoma BGB Checkpost Bridge) at 454th km (Ch: 453 + 551 km) on Dhaka (Jatrabari)-Cumilla (Moinamati)-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar-Teknaf National Highway (N-1) under Cox's Bazar Road Division during the year 2025-2026.	Last selling: 11.01.2026, 16:00 Closing: 12.01.2026, 13:00
03.	1191226	E-GP/PMPMAJOR/06/ROAD/EE/COXRD/2025-2026	Surfacing work by DBS Wearing Course at Ch: 00+800 km to Ch: 16+000 km of Khuruskul-Chowfaldandi-Eidgaon Zila Road (Z-1132) under Cox's Bazar Road Division during the year 2025-2026.	Last selling: 11.01.2026, 16:00 Closing: 12.01.2026, 12:30

Md. Rafiq Bin Manjur  
Assistant Engineer (A.C), RHD  
Road Division, Cox's Bazar

GD-2758

Rokan Uddin Khaled Chowdhury  
ID No. 602345  
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD  
Road Division, Cox's Bazar

GD-2758

## Resignation of home

FROM PAGE 3  
currently in India -- are not handed over to Bangladesh within 72 hours, the Indian High Commission in Dhaka should be shut down.

They urged the Election Commission (EC) to issue a circular barring the Jatiya Party from participating in the upcoming election. Their fourth demand called on the EC to prevent Awami League leaders from contesting the election as "independent" candidates, alleging such attempts are aimed at sabotaging the polls.

The fifth demand sought the identification and immediate punishment of police and armed forces personnel accused of attacking Chhatra Odhikar Parishad supporters on August 31.

Chhatra Odhikar Parishad President Nazmul Hasan alleged that the Awami League is operating covertly to undermine the election, referring to incidents involving explosives and an arson attack in Mymensingh in which a sleeping driver was burned to death.

He called for an end to what he described as a politics of violence and intimidation.

Referring to the August 31 programme, he said law enforcement personnel

attacked demonstrators with the intent to kill, leaving several injured, and alleged that no action has yet been taken against those responsible.

Questioning the credibility of the EC to issue a circular barring the Jatiya Party from participating in the upcoming election, their fourth demand called on the EC to prevent Awami League leaders from contesting the election as "independent" candidates, alleging such attempts are aimed at sabotaging the polls.

He urged the chief adviser and the advisory council to act immediately, warning that public anger would escalate if the five-point demand is ignored.

The circular, signed by Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid, said all employees must comply with any lawful instruction of the returning officer on an urgent basis. It also mentioned that no employee can be transferred without the permission of the Election Commission.

The circular further reminded that the Election Officers (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 remains in force to ensure a free, fair and neutral election by maintaining discipline and control over election officials.



### বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

Directorate of Purchase  
WAPDA Building (9th Floor), Motijheel, Dhaka-1000, Tel: 02223383081  
E-mail: [dir.purchase@bpdb.gov.bd](mailto:dir.purchase@bpdb.gov.bd)  
[www\\_bpdb.gov.bd](http://www_bpdb.gov.bd)

### e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	EOI closing date and time	EOI opening date and time
01.	1193196	CS-1 FY 25-26	27.11.000 0.304.26.2 06.25, Date: 11/12/2025	Procurement of Consultancy services for Review and Updating of Design, Documentation and Preparation of a Complete Manual for latest version of Integrated Management System (IMS) Embracing ISO 9001:2015 (QMS), ISO 14001:2015 (EMS) & ISO 45001:2018 (OH & SMS) and carrying out all activities leading to IMs Certifications for BPDB including Training.	30-Dec-2025, 14:20	30-Dec-2025, 14:20
02	1194492	CS-2 FY 25-26	27.11.000 0.304.26.2 07.25, Date: 11/12/2025	Procurement of Integrated Management System (IMS) Certification with ISO 9001:2015 (QMS), ISO 14001:2015 (EMS) & ISO 45001:2018 (OH & SMS).	30-Dec-2025, 14:15	30-Dec-2025, 14:15

These are online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit

## Two killed in Pak militant raids on banks

AFP, Quetta

Heavily armed militants looted several banks in Pakistan's Balochistan province yesterday before clashing with security forces, with one policeman and a civilian killed, authorities told AFP.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack in southwest Pakistan, where ethnic Baloch separatists have stepped up attacks on security forces in recent years.

"It was an organised heist in which at least three banks were looted of about 150 million Pakistani rupees (around \$530,000)," a police official in the Panjgur district said.

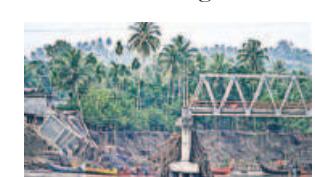
"They tried to loot two more banks before clashes erupted with security forces, forcing them to flee," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to talk to the media.

## DEADLY FLOODS Indonesia to revoke 22 forestry permits

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesia will revoke more than 20 forestry permits across the country, the forestry minister said yesterday, after deadly floods and landslides devastated parts of the northwestern island of Sumatra.

Environmentalists and experts have pointed to the role forest loss played in flash flooding and landslides that this month killed more than 1,000 people and washed torrents of mud into villages.



The government will revoke 22 forestry permits that encompass more than one million hectares of land, forestry minister Raja Juli Antoni told reporters.

More than 100,000 hectares covered by the cancelled permits were on Sumatra, he said. "With the addition of another one million hectares today, around 1.5 million hectares of our forests have been regulated," he said.



Moroccans look at a destroyed vehicle and other debris following a flash flood in the coastal town of Safi, about 300 kilometres (186 miles) south of the capital Rabat, yesterday. The death toll from flash floods that hit the coastal town over the weekend rose to 37, local authorities said.

PHOTO: AFP

## AL leaders planned the attack to derail polls

FROM PAGE 1  
arrested Kabir, a close associate of Faisal, from Narayanganj and later handed him over to the DB, Rab officials said.

The case statement further alleged the attack was premeditated and executed by the accused and his unnamed associates, facilitators, and financiers – both directly and indirectly – following instructions from "others".

It said that Hadi played an active role in the July 2024 uprising and later helped form the political cultural platform "Inqilab Moncho". It added that he had continued to make critical statements against the Awami League and demanded its ban over allegations of crimes against humanity. Hadi became a target of hostility and received multiple threats, particularly after videos of his speeches and rallies spread on social media, it said.

Following the Election Commission's announcement of the election schedule on December 11, Hadi had intensified his campaign activities as an independent aspirant for Dhaka 8.

The case further alleged that fugitive AL leaders and activists at various levels, led by Sheikh Hasina, have been involved in open and covert conspiracies since August 5, 2024 – when the Hasina-led AL government was ousted.

It added that Faisal had infiltrated Hadi's election campaign several days before the attack and was present with him on the day of the shooting.

With no lawyer representing them, they yesterday told the court that they were unaware of the

attack on Hadi.

### ANOTHER HELD, COPS SEARCHING OTHER SUSPECTS

Kabir, also known as Datbhanga Kabir, who was arrested yesterday from Narayanganj, is originally from Patuakhali but had been living in the Adabor area of the capital. After the shooting incident, he went into hiding in the Baktabali area of Fatullah, said Lieutenant Commander

They suspect Alamgir was

Photographs obtained by law enforcement show Faisal and Alamgir campaigning with Osman Hadi near the Shilpakala Academy.

RAB officials said Kabir was among those who accompanied Faisal to Inqilab Cultural Centre on December 4, a fact corroborated by CCTV footage.

The investigation is ongoing, and efforts are underway to identify and apprehend other individuals involved in the incident.

According to DB sources, prime accused Faisal and his associate Alamgir may have fled to India early Saturday via the Haluaghat border points in Mymensingh.

Meanwhile, several other suspects are under surveillance.

A DB source, seeking anonymity, said a private car had been kept ready since the morning in the Paltan area on the day of the incident – for the assailants to escape in case of any trouble.

"Police are looking for the driver of the rented car, as the suspects hired it beforehand. Investigators are also trying to find out if the driver was aware of the plan."

Law enforcers also said Faisal's wife sent Tk 10,000 and Tk 30,000 separately to the driver's phone number after the incident.

Investigators are also trying to trace the firearms used in the shooting.

Yesterday, BGB detained two associates of Philip Sna, who is suspected of assisting the attackers flee to India from Sherpur's Nalitabari border area.



Sharif Osman Hadi being carried onto an air ambulance that departed for Singapore yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

driving the motorbike from which Faisal opened fire on Hadi. The two were identified through photographs from Hadi's election campaign taken on the day of the incident, as well as CCTV footage of the shooting.

Meanwhile, a court placed three arrestees in the case – Faisal's wife, Suheda Parvin Samia, brother-in-law Wahid Ahmed Shipu, and friend Maria Akter Lima – on a five-day remand each.

With no lawyer representing them, they yesterday told the court that they were unaware of the

Naim Ul Haque. "Acting on intelligence, we arrested him around 5:00am from the Baktabali area. He was interrogated for several hours and later handed over to the DB at night."

According to investigators, CCTV footage shows Faisal entering the Inqilab Cultural Centre on December 4 along with three other individuals. The footage shows Faisal speaking with Osman Hadi inside the venue. He was later seen attending another meeting with Hadi on December 9.

Police are looking for the driver of the rented car, as the suspects hired it beforehand. Investigators are also trying to find out if the driver was aware of the plan."

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## Editors' Council condemns arrest of journo Anis Alamgir

FROM PAGE 1  
Hanif Mahmud, read.

According to the council, Anis was called to the DB office on December 14, detained there, and shown arrested the following day in an anti-terrorism case.

Terming the action "unacceptable," the council said that if there are specific allegations against a journalist, they must be resolved through the conventional and just legal process, not by summoning them to the DB office and detaining them without charges.

The statement also highlighted that following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina regime on August 5, 2024, numerous journalists were implicated in "false murder cases," with many still imprisoned.

Despite assurances from the law adviser to take steps against such

harassment, the council noted that the cases have not been withdrawn.

Demanding the withdrawal of all baseless cases, it called for an immediate end to the harassment of journalists.

Meanwhile, Anis was placed on a five-day remand yesterday.

Early yesterday, Arian Ahmed, a central organiser of the July Revolutionary Alliance, filed the anti-terrorism case with Uttara West Police Station against Anis, actor Meher Afroz Shaon, Maria Kispotta and Imtu Ratish.

On Sunday, Anis was picked up from a gym in Dhammendi and taken to the DB office on Minto Road.

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

## Outrage erupts

FROM PAGE 1

Inqilab Moncho while Hadi undergoes treatment, administered an oath before the crowd. "On the question of Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty, we will remain united beyond party lines. We will build resistance against any repressive, fascist and subservient politics that undermine the country's democracy, people's rights and national interests."

"We will not allow the Indian-backed Awami League – who are subservient to Indian hegemony, anti-people and anti-state forces, their collaborators, along with the cultural fascists

into a tributary state of India, who want to reduce us to subservience and who want to engulf this country."

Whenever "July" came under attack, the chief adviser called for maintaining the "anti-fascist unity of July", he said, adding, "We are doing that – we are united. But your government has failed because you have not been able to arrest even a single armed agent of fascism."

Referring to the attack as a "package conspiracy to sabotage the election", he said those who carried out the attack will not allow a free and fair election.

Nahid Islam, convener of National Citizen Party, said the attack on Hadi was akin to an attack on July and Bangladesh itself.

He called for the resignation of the home adviser as "he is morally unfit to remain in office".

"For the past 16 years, the intelligence agencies have been used to suppress opposition parties and dissent. They demonstrated efficiency in enforced disappearances and killings, but after August 5, that efficiency seems to have vanished."

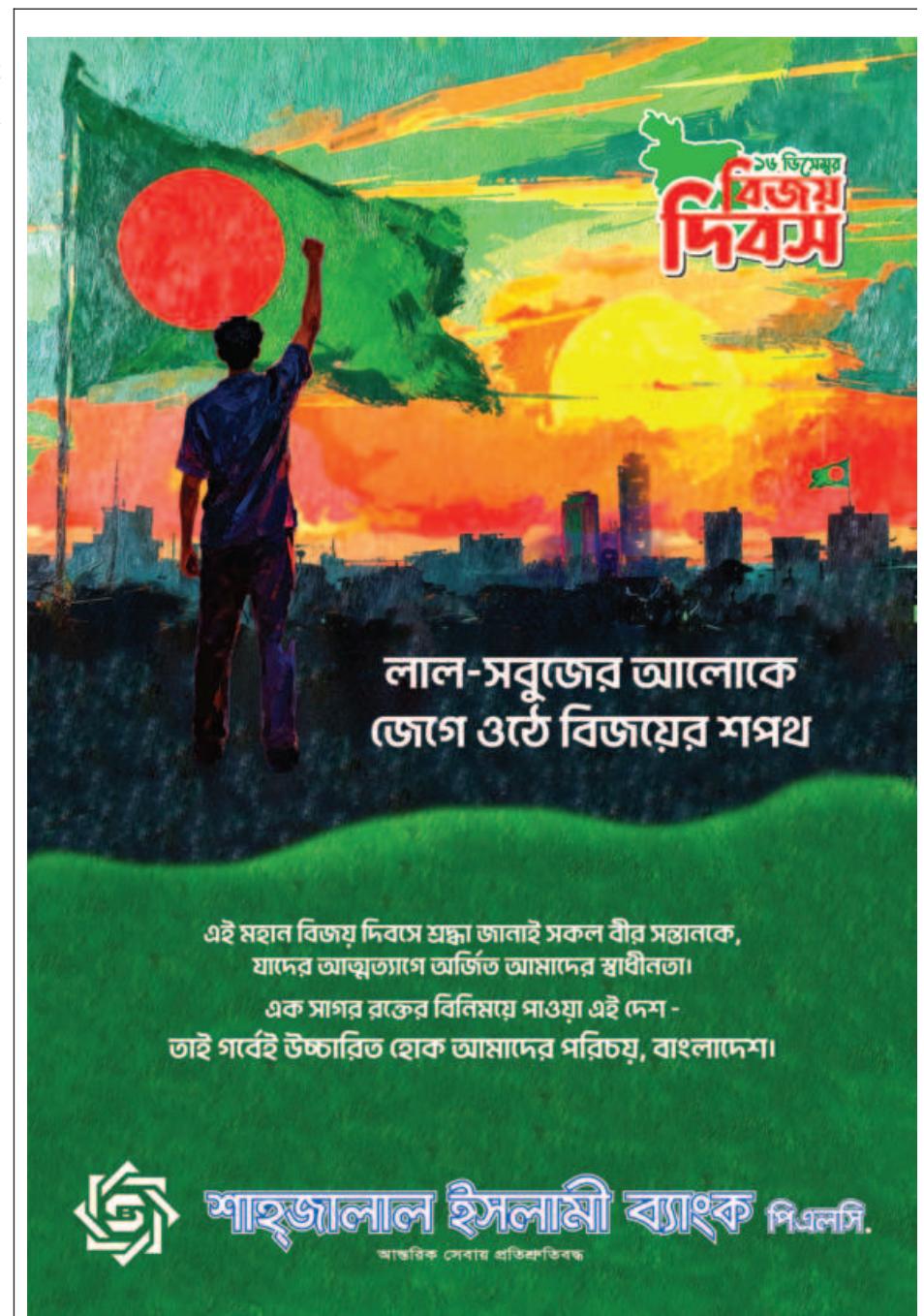
"Not only was victory achieved that day, but the resistance against Indian aggression also began from that very day, and it continues. Tomorrow, on Victory Day, we will not hold a victory rally; we will hold a resistance rally."

He further said it would be wrong for India to assume it can continue to interfere politically and meddle in the elections like before. "India's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity also depend on Bangladesh. Therefore, India must also be cautious and maintain a respectful and dignified relationship with Bangladesh."

United People's Bangladesh Convener Ali Ahsan Zona said the syndicate involved in the attack on Hadi must be crushed to the ground. "The Indian agent network and any Bangladeshi agencies involved must be brought before the public and punished."

Ducus Vice President Abu Shadik Kayem said the interim government has failed to ensure the security of citizens.

Fatima Tasnim Zuma, another Ducus leader and an organiser of Inqilab Moncho, said, "How dare the Chief Election Commissioner call the attack an isolated incident and still remain in office?... It was not just two shooters – a syndicate was involved in this incident. A section of the state forces was also involved."



জীবিত ও শহীদ বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাঃ  
জাতির শ্রেষ্ঠ স্মরণ।  
মহান মুক্তি সংগ্রাম, স্বাধীনতা সুস্থানঃ  
তোমাদেরই অবদান

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অফুরন...

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
আপনার পাশে  
গৃহীতের সংস্কার

সর্বাধিক মুক্তি ও সুস্থ হাতঃ ৮%

খরচের সর্বোচ্চ মোমানঃ ২৫ বছর

অপের সর্বোচ্চ পরিমাণঃ ২০০ লক্ষ টাকা

মুদ্রণ ও স্টুডি প্রক্রিয়া

জীবিত ও শহীদ বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাঃ  
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শুভেচ্ছা

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জাতির শ্রেষ্ঠ স্মরণ।  
মহান মুক্তি সংগ্রাম, স্বাধীনতা সুস্থানঃ  
তোমাদেরই অবদান

বিজয় দিবসের  
শুভেচ্ছা

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
আপনার পাশে  
গৃহীতের সংস্কার

সর্বাধিক মুক্তি ও সুস্থ হাতঃ ৮%

খরচের সর্বোচ্চ মোমানঃ ২৫ বছর

অপের সর্বোচ্চ পরিমাণঃ ২০০ লক্ষ টাকা

মুদ্রণ ও স্টুডি প

# INTERNATIONAL/NEWS

DHAKA TUESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2025

POUSH 1, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

7

## SECURITY TRIAL

### Hong Kong court finds tycoon Jimmy Lai guilty

REUTERS, Hong Kong

Hong Kong's High Court yesterday found tycoon and pro-democracy campaigner Jimmy Lai guilty of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces in the city's highest-profile trial under a China-imposed national security law that could see him jailed for life.

The landmark case has drawn international scrutiny of Hong Kong's judicial independence amid a years-long crackdown on rights and freedoms in the global financial hub after 2019 pro-democracy protests that Beijing saw as a challenge to its rule.

While 78-year-old Lai's supporters see him as a freedom fighter, Beijing sees him as a mastermind of the protests and a conspirator advocating for US sanctions against Hong Kong and the mainland. Chinese authorities have rejected accusations of eroding the city's rule of law.

"There is no doubt" that Lai "had harboured his resentment and hatred of" China for many of his adult years, Judge Esther Toh told a packed courtroom as the tycoon, wearing a pale green jumper and a grey jacket, sat with his arms folded.



Palestinian women react as a man collapses at the entrance to the Nur Shams refugee camp in the Israeli-occupied northern West Bank yesterday, after residents were expelled earlier this year during an ongoing Israeli military operation.

PHOTO: AFP

### Candidates, July warriors can now apply for firearms

FROM PAGE 1

The decisions on granting a licence or retainer will be made after scrutiny by the district magistrate and the intelligence agencies.

In this process, the applicant will bear the cost for obtaining a licence and the appointment of a retainer. If the applicant can operate the firearm, then there is no need to apply for a retainer."

Police have already started threat analysis of high-profile individuals, including political candidates, to provide special security measures.

Md Faruq Hossain, joint commissioner (crime) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We may not be able to provide police security to all; in those cases, we may deploy Ansar members."

Meanwhile, Chattogram Metropolitan Police

Commissioner Hasib Aziz has directed his subordinates to provide additional security to candidates of the National Citizen Party and leaders of Students Against Discrimination.

In a wireless message issued yesterday, he instructed all personnel to remain alert and ordered officers in charge of the city's 16 police stations to coordinate efforts to ensure security.

Asked whether there was any specific threat, Hasib Aziz said, "There is no specific threat, but police will provide security as an added precaution following the incident in Dhaka [attack on Hadi]."

**POLICY, APPLICATION**  
As per the "Firearms Licence and Retainer Appointment Policy for Politically Important Persons and Parliamentary Candidate

Nominees, 2025", when an application is filed, the district magistrate will carry out preliminary verification within two working days, and intelligence agencies will complete security checks within three working days for issuing a firearms licence.

To be eligible, an applicant must fall within the covered categories and, where applicable, be assessed as facing a security risk based on intelligence reports.

The guideline also requires a permanent address and proper arrangements for storing and safeguarding the weapon. It limits the licence to self-defence, bars approvals for multiple firearms and automatic or military-grade firearms, and says licences will not be issued for hobby or sporting purposes.

The guideline says an approved firearms

licence issued under this framework will remain valid until 15 days after the election results are published, after which it will be treated as automatically cancelled. It adds that the home ministry may convert such a licence into a general firearms licence if the applicant meets the conditions that exist for a general firearms licence.

If a licence holder cannot personally carry or use the weapon for valid reasons, a retainer may be allowed to carry it. To qualify, a retainer must be a Bangladeshi citizen aged at least 25, trained in firearm use and medically fit, with a fitness certificate from a government hospital.

Each politically important person or candidate will be allowed only one retainer. No firearms licence will be issued in a retainer's name. Retired police

or retired armed forces members will get priority.

The retainer may carry the weapon, but responsibility for the weapon and compliance will remain with the licence holder, and the retainer must carry the licence and approval documents while carrying it. The policy bars the weapon from being used for unlawful purposes, sold, transferred, or used beyond the purpose for which the licence or approval was granted.

Licences and approvals may be cancelled if misuse is proven or conditions are violated, and notes that the guideline is intended to complement the Election Commission's code of conduct, not override it.

"Besides, granting licences could lead to potential misuse of firearms as many would get one for the sake of it," he said, adding that the government must ensure strict monitoring.

candidates and politically important persons.

Commenting on issuing firearms licences, Tawohidul Haque, associate professor at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research at Dhaka University, said the state must take full responsibility for ensuring security and not resort to stopgap measures like providing firearms licences.

"How many people will be given licences? Is it enough to secure the candidates? The government must take proper steps to address security concerns," he told The Daily Star.

Earlier, on December 13, the core committee meeting on law and order at the home ministry approved the decisions to provide firearms to

### Chile elects Kast as president in rightward shift

Crime concerns defined campaign

REUTERS, Santiago



Jose Antonio Kast won Chile's presidential election on Sunday, leveraging voter fears over rising crime and migration to steer the country in its sharpest rightward shift since the end of the military dictatorship in 1990.

Kast secured a commanding 58 percent of the vote in a runoff with the government-backed leftist candidate Jeannette Jara, who won 42 percent and swiftly conceded.

Throughout his decades-long political career, Kast has been a consistent right-wing hardliner. He has proposed building border walls, deploying the military to high-crime areas, and deporting all migrants who are in the country illegally.

In a victory speech to a raucous crowd who waved Chilean flags at the headquarters of his Republican Party in the upscale neighborhood of Las Condes in Santiago on Sunday evening, Kast pledged "real change."

"Without security, there is no peace. Without peace, there is no democracy, and without democracy there is no freedom, and Chile will return to be free of crime, anxiety and fear," he said.

**IN PRECIOUS MEMORY**  
Surely we belong to Allah and to Him we shall return

**Jahanara Amir**  
16-12-1944 to 10-12-2025

You left behind loving memories to cherish  
May you rest in peace in Jannah until we meet again.  
-- Ameen --

Beloved wife of Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam  
Devoted Mother of Barrister Tania Amir,  
Adil Islam and Zaid Islam  
Mother In Law of Aliza Adil Islam and Shahid Doha,  
Grandmother of Nader, Emaad, Arash,  
Samar, Aiman, Arshan and Aaran

### Prosecution appeals

FROM PAGE 2

scale of attacks on unarmed civilians left no scope for lesser sentences.

In another development, the prosecution yesterday began arguments in a case against former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman and seven of his subordinates over the killings of six people in the capital's Chankharpul area on August 5 during the July uprising.

The prosecution said Habibur had ordered police

to open fire on unarmed protesters. At this stage, the tribunal asked whether the commissioner's order was to open fire from a kneeling position.

The prosecution confirmed, saying, "Yes, he ordered that." However, commissioner Habibur failed to take any action against his subordinates who disobeyed his orders. Instead, he awarded police officers for suppressing the student movement.



**ইসলামী ব্যাংক**  
বাংলাদেশ মিএবসি | ইসলামী ব্যাংক মার্কিন

**বিজয়**  
খোলা আকাশে  
মুক্ত বাতাসে  
প্রাণতরা শ্বাস

গোরবময় এই দিনে  
বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও শহীদদের প্রতি বিনয় শ্বাস

১৬ ডিসেম্বর  
মহান বিজয় দিবসে বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের প্রতি বিনয় শ্বাস

প্রবাস ক্ষিম

বিদেশে কর্মরত বা অবস্থানরত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিক মাসিক জমা অর্থ বৈদেশিক মুদ্রায় বা বাংলাদেশে তিনি যে বাংক একাউন্টে রেমিটেন্স প্রেরণ করেন, সে একাউন্ট হতে জমা প্রদান করে এ ক্ষিমে অর্থ নিতে পারবেন। মাসিক পেনশন জমা সর্বনিম্ন ১,০০০ টাকা এবং সর্বোচ্চ ১৫,০০০ টাকা।

প্রগতি ক্ষিম

বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিক ও কর্মচারীদের জন্য এ ক্ষিম। প্রাতিষ্ঠানিকভাবে অথবা নিজ উদ্যোগে এককভাবে এ ক্ষিমে যুক্ত হওয়া যাবে। মাসিক পেনশন জমা সর্বনিম্ন ১,০০০ টাকা এবং সর্বোচ্চ ১৫,০০০ টাকা।

সুরক্ষা ক্ষিম

স্থানীয় নিয়োজিত বাক্সের জন্য এ ক্ষিম। কৃষক, রিকশাচালক, শ্রমিক, কামার, কুমার, জেলে, তাঁতি, দোকানদার, ব্যবসায়ী, গৃহিণীহ অনানুষ্ঠানিক খাতে নিয়োজিত বাক্সগুলি এ ক্ষিমে যুক্ত হতে পারবেন। মাসিক পেনশন জমা সর্বনিম্ন ১,০০০ টাকা এবং সর্বোচ্চ ১৫,০০০ টাকা।

সমতা ক্ষিম

বাল্প আয়ের নাগরিকদের (যাদের বাসস্থান আয়নীমা অনুর্ধ্ব ৬০ হাজার টাকা) জন্য এ ক্ষিম। সমতা ক্ষিমে মাসিক চালাক হার ১,০০০ টাকা, যার মধ্যে চালাকতার জমাৰ পরিমাণ ৫০০ টাকা এবং বাকি ৫০০ টাকা দিবে সরকার।





## Special Supplement

Art &amp; Design : Department of Films &amp; Publications (DFP) • Assistance : Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
BANGLABHABAN, DHAKA01 Poush 1432  
16 December 2025

## Message

Today, 16 December, marks our great Victory Day. This day stands as a symbol of our national pride and the culminating success of our struggle for independence. On this joyous occasion, I extend my warmest greetings and heartfelt congratulations to all Bangladeshis living at home and abroad.

Independence is our greatest achievement, founded upon a long history of exploitation, deprivation, and struggle. On this very day in 1971, we attained our long-cherished freedom and sovereignty through a nine-month-long, bloodied Liberation War. On this day, I pay my deepest respect to the valiant martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the war, the wounded freedom fighters, the mothers and sisters who lost their dignity, the families of the martyrs, and all the courageous individuals who dedicated their efforts to the cause of our independence. It is through their sacrifice that Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation.

The aim of the Liberation War was not confined merely to political independence; one of its fundamental objectives was to establish economic emancipation and social justice. Yet even after five decades, our people have not achieved complete political and socio-economic freedom. In this context, the student-led mass uprising of 2024 has rekindled hope for building a just Bangladesh, free from discrimination and corruption.

To ensure that the true benefits of independence reach every citizen, we must further strengthen and institutionalize our democracy. We must cultivate a culture of tolerance, mutual respect, and unity at every level of personal, social, and national life. Inspired by the spirit of the great Liberation War, let us commit ourselves to working together to build a prosperous Bangladesh, free from discrimination and all forms of oppression. This shall be our pledge on this glorious Victory Day.

*Mohammed Shahabuddin*  
Mohammed Shahabuddin



But it does not end there. The motley mixtures and innumerable complex collection of feelings that construct the stories also generate feelings and realizations of similar nature. Humans become aware of their dormant and obvious ideas in this way. At the same time, they enter the process of becoming one with the collective. Besides, the world of experience is always there. It is true that humans gather experiences through words or deeds only; but how far can that extend? And how far can a person stretch the boundaries of his experiences? The events or actions – whether of individual humans or of the collective – can travel very far by crossing the geographic boundaries, and can even transcend the boundaries of time if they wear the garb of stories. If the stories permit the small and big collections of experience to travel great distances, only then can individual experiences expand by accepting the companionship of the collective.

But it does not end there. The real magic of stories commences in the next phase. The words of stories routinely travel from one mouth to another. They go through a reduction process. Their shape becomes more and more complex. By breaking the boundaries of place and time, they become storehouses of multidimensional knowledge. Myths are born. From the structure of myths, many people get the raw-material for attachment to the collective. The human society grows in this kind of backdrop. They become inter-related groups of people, who consider themselves to be of similar type up to one degree or another.

New types of stories and new myths occupy the lives of modern humans in perennially new forms, in such a manner that it appears as if we have emerged from a world of stories. As if, the stories no longer have much role in the making of individuals and the existence of the collective. But the reality is not at all like that. It is not long ago that humans started to recognize and identify themselves as nations. Many theoreticians have shown decisively that the stories of religious-books, magazine-stories, especially those of novels have played a critical

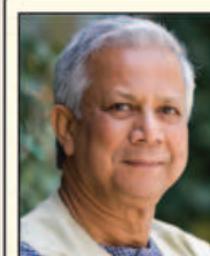
Story of Liberation War  
and the Human Society of  
Bangladesh

Mohammad Azam

Many people say that humans live through stories. Stories are their habitats; their existence; past; future. This statement is applicable even more in case of languages. Many pundits have said, language is man's habitat; man's existence. It undoubtedly has many philosophical and existentialist ramifications. But simply said, the raw materials accumulated and manifested in languages ultimately become the main refuge for human existence. Stories are the greatest among these raw materials. In other words, the subtle ingredients conserved in the shape of stories are the best suppliers of that raw material.

In this context, we can mention a speculation about early humans. Many scientists hold the view that more than one species like the Homo Sapiens had flourished on earth. Out of them, one species has survived. How? That must have happened through numerous blood-spilling struggles. But what advantages did the Homo Sapiens have in that struggle? What was the reason? It is assumed that the main reason was stories. The Homo Sapiens could advance much in life's struggle because of the accumulated stories related to their mutual and collective struggles. Besides, sudden events and favour from nature were also there.

What does a story do? From where does its big role come? The main task of a story is the creation of mutuality between individuals. Stories create an average picture by gradually reducing the innumerable distinct attributes of individual human beings. Images of life are presented through stories. People observe one another, but how much can they see? Much of the huge population remain outside their purview. However, stories present many such characters who gradually generate the concept of average human beings. Through this, man's own shape and boundary are also created. Story itself is a structure or framework. Natural and man-made structures remain present there. The collective human is also there. The individuals in the stories perform individual actions inside the diverse structures and events of collective humans. The humans can visualise themselves in this beautiful structure of collective framework. They can observe their surroundings. They become engaged and related to each other.

CHIEF ADVISER  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH01 Poush 1432  
16 December 2025

## Message

Today, 16 December, is our great Victory Day—an unforgettable and glorious chapter in the history of Bangladesh. On this day in 1971, following nine months of a bloodied Liberation War, we achieved our long-cherished victory. Through immense sacrifice and the bloodshed of countless martyrs, we secured our independent national identity and our red-and-green flag. On this occasion, I extend my warmest greetings to all Bangladeshis living at home and abroad.

I pay my deepest respect to the brave martyrs who laid down their lives during the Liberation War and throughout our long struggle for independence. Their supreme sacrifice strengthens our resolve to stand firm against injustice and oppression and guides us along the path of freedom in every crisis and struggle.

The dawn of independence that rose through the victory of 1971 has, over the years, too often been dimmed by the shadows of authoritarianism and misrule. Through the July uprising, we have once again gained the opportunity to establish a democratic system free from discrimination, corruption, and tyranny. The extensive reform initiatives undertaken by the present Interim Government to build a well-governed and progressive Bangladesh are now moving towards successful completion through the collective participation of our citizens. I hope that through these efforts, authoritarianism will be uprooted and transparency and accountability ensured, alongside people-centric and sustainable development in all spheres of the state.

May this Victory Day serve as a renewed call to national unity. Let it be a day on which we pledge to uphold, at any cost, our commitment to the true empowerment of the people and the democratic transformation that has begun, guided by the enduring spirit of the great Liberation War.

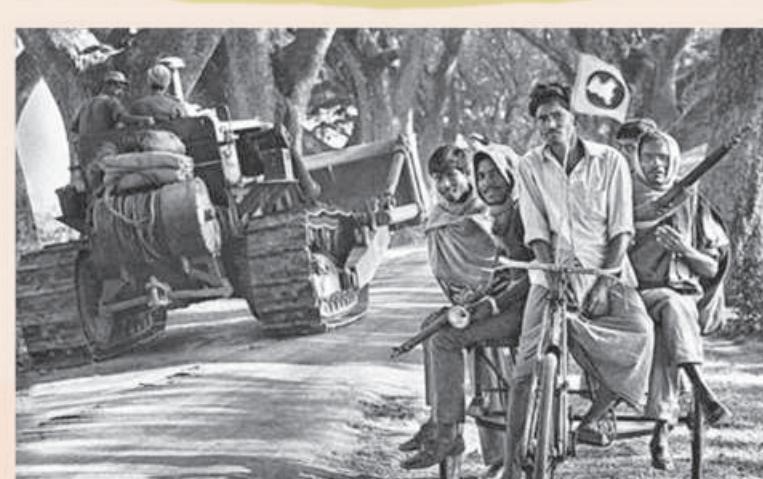
Let us work together to build a safe, happy, and beautiful Bangladesh for the new generation, fulfilling the promise of the hard-earned independence we achieved through immense struggle. Let us move forward hand in hand—irrespective of religion, ethnicity, or community—on the path of peace and prosperity.

*Professor Muhammad Yunus*  
Professor Muhammad Yunus



## Inspiration of Victory Day in the context of July Mass-Uprising

Professor Dr. Mamun Ahmed



another, and turning this riverine cum fertile land into a graveyard, they left no stone unturned to subdue the people of this country. But they failed to comprehend the ever-awake spirit of freedom in the being of its people. They forgot that the people of this land were greatly inspired by the poem of a valiant son of this soil named Sukanta Bhattacharya:

When all of a sudden on the innocent soil  
The paddy of consciousness was born,  
Erasing the deaths during last famine  
The spirit of Bangladesh again returned.  
The country becomes agitated with the words:  
'Either paddy, or life',  
By dying once, they have forgotten  
The fear of death today.

The glorious Independence War of 1971 has a historical perspective. The people of this country were subjected to systemic deprivations during Pakistan's 24-year-long misrule.

The resources created through the labour of its people were transferred to West Pakistan. This amount was around Taka 300 crore per year. The condition of mills, factories, and various infrastructures in this region was very frail. Then the borders of East Pakistan were kept unguarded during the India-Pakistan War of 1965. It was as if the only task of the eastern wing was to supply raw-materials for the development of Pakistan's western wing. The culture and heritage of East Pakistan or Bangladesh was also not attached any importance. The desire for the right of self-determination that got solidified in the minds of the masses here was ignored year after year. This huge discrimination created the path for an independence struggle. It generated a confluence where the aspiration of 75 million people merged at a common point. All movements for self-determination and autonomy of the Bangalis conducted during the decades of 1960s and 1970s were geared towards that confluence.

Then during the fiery nine-months of 1971, the freedom-seeking people of Bangla built impenetrable fortresses on every inch of their land starting from Teknaf to Tetulia. The adolescent boy who never went beyond the boundaries of his village stepped out to join the war while his mother was asleep. Some among the innumerable freedom fighters returned, while some mingled forever with the red sun on the green of Bangla's flag. Therefore, the 9-month-long people's war and the Victory Day of 16 December were not the achievements of a lone individual. All 75-million people of Bangla had a share in that. The masses included the peasants, labourers, students, job-holders, men, women, children, the elderly, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, people living on the plane-lands and the hills – or everybody.

Our liberation struggle was a people's war by any judgement. Apart from anti-independence Razakars, all the people of Bangladesh irrespective of their age had participated in that war directly or indirectly. The contribution of that rural woman who hid the arms of the freedom fighters or served them cooked food was no less important than that of the fighters who went to the war with arms. The common masses raised their hands in homes praying for the victory of the freedom fighters. In many cases, the mothers themselves sent their armed offspring for ridding the country of enemies. As the tortures and repressions by the Pakistanis intensified, the spirit of resistance among the Bangalis became even stronger. The modern weaponry and ammunition of the Pakistanis could not be effective against that spirit.

We did obtain an independent country in exchange for lakhs of martyrs at the end of nine-month-long Independence War; but the misrule by the post-independence government and its failure to run the country properly paled the dream of independence as visualized by the common people of this land. This failure in running the statecraft

please turn over

It was 16 December 1971; the time was 4.31 pm in the afternoon. The commander of the Pakistani Eastern Command Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi removed the honorary-applent from his shoulder. He handed over his .38-bore revolver along with the lanyard to chief of the eastern command of Indian Army Jagjit Singh Aurora. Two drops of tears rolled down from Niazi's eyes. The freedom-seeking Bangali spectators assembled at Dhaka's Ramma Racecourse Maidan burst out in joyous celebration. A golden chapter was added to the history of this land. The day was Thursday. The roads of Dhaka were already occupied by the masses since morning. The surrender of 93,000-strong Pakistani military-men led by Niazi marked the victory of Bangali in the great Independence War of Bangladesh. The freedom fighters (Muktibahini) and the Indian forces had entered Dhaka via the Savar-Mirpur Road after 10.30 in the morning amid huge applause and jubilation of the masses. The common people welcomed them on the way. That was a golden day after nine-months of blood-drenched war. The sun of victory rose in the sky of Bangla at the cost of three million martyrs. Since then, over half a century has elapsed, but that pride and joy of victory remain unfaded till today.

The liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971 was by any judgement an extraordinary people's war. The pains of deprivation and the desire for freedom nurtured by seventy-five million people had coalesced on a path to freedom. The people of this land could elicit recognition of their rights following a long chapter of 190-years of British and 24-years of Pakistani misrule. That great moment of victory did not arrive all of a sudden. The trend of protest was started through the chorus of 'no, no' voiced by the students and masses after the forceful announcement by Muhammad Ali Jinnah that Urdu should be the lone state-language of Pakistan. The starting point of our great struggle for freedom also commenced from that juncture. The people of this land conveyed that they were not afraid of the blood-red eyes of tyrants. From then on, the freedom-struggle was carried forward through a long trail of agitations that was centred on the great language movement of 1952 and the subsequent movement for autonomy. The Pakistanis considered the people of Bangladesh as a weak and spineless nation. That same 'weak' and 'powerless' people displayed their proverbial valour during the nine-months of the liberation war; that bravery was written on the pages of history. Through that process arrived the golden moment of victory on 16 December 1971.

The Roman writer Publius Syrus had said, "Where there is unity, there is always victory". This triumph of the Bangalis was in fact the outcome of their unity. The Pakistanis repeatedly tried to break this resistance. They tried to shatter the morale of this nation through 'Operation Searchlight' conducted on the dark night of 25 March. Through indiscriminate killings of innumerable people, burning of habitats one after

## Special Supplement



## Sacrifice for Freedom of Speech

Rezauddin Stalin

The first condition for freedom of speech is self-sacrifice  
The sound 'freedom' emerging from the tongue's oscillation  
Infects the towns and villages like the sounds of sea,  
But it was blocked constantly by the walls of blood-red eyes  
Even the prisons became research-labs of imposters in twenty-first century  
The years rolled on through the hands of my resistance  
And my entries for the diary got edited incessantly  
Like myriads of stars.

Where the humming of bees and the news of paddy-sheaf are not rare  
Nor are the ripples of rivers and the cries of hornbill infrequent,  
The sound of the farmer's footsteps wet with dew, unending stream  
Of tears flowing from the eyes of a child waiting for father,  
The fleeing of emperor, the shouts of grocery-owner,  
Or the rise and fall of the share market.

The second condition is the stirring of beauty filled with victory's feast  
Beauty implies love engraved on the letter of dedication for spring –  
Those who returned for vengeance – riding on liberation war's wagon  
Let them feel the caution of the secretive hunter while standing  
Before the burning coal of sunrise on Asia's coast,  
Let them see the fire in the eyes of wildcat, or read  
My poem flooded with the moonlight of alkaline ice.

The third condition is to seek a crown adorned with the diamond of pledge  
Removing the signal of traffic-rabbit on a path laid with tinsel of golden leaf  
Searching like the squirrel through the gaps of tree-leaves –  
And for that we need the self-sacrifice of Titumir or Khudiram –  
In whose crystal-clear eyes the whole of Bangladesh can bathe and cleanse,  
In real terms, the third condition is the inheritance of age-old tradition  
A bright essence like the sizzling geranium  
Made of copper, zinc, silver, and steel plates.

We shall have to traverse our path by turning the conditions centring  
Beehives of lungs into noun at one point and adjective at another,  
We shall have to take preparation like the ants' silent journey,  
I believe the gold-plated crown shall be found in a termites' mound  
Or inside the hole of rats, and then the time shall be transformed  
Into an amazing rosy season – the spring.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed



## Inspiration of Victory Day in the context of July Mass-Uprising

between 1971 and 1975 threw the newly independent country into total darkness. Whereas the country needed a development-oriented humanistic leadership during the period, the masses got an inhuman and undemocratic autocracy. Thousands of opposition political activists were killed. No progress was made in developing the country's infrastructure. Initiative was taken to throttle and kill the democratic aspirations of the people. As a consequence, a terrible famine struck the country in 1974. In terms of gruesomeness, it was comparable to the most horrific famines that befall this land in history. Widespread corruption at all levels and inefficiency cum mismanagement in governance exacerbated the impact of famine manifold.

The citizens saw in bewilderment that when children were dying on the roads due to hunger and people were trying to cover their body with whatever they could gather, the members of the ruling party were spending their days in luxury. As if the sorrows and pains of the ordinary people meant nothing to them! The situation became more and more intolerable due to these exploitations, brutality, and misgovernance. Silent revolts started to take shape gradually. For strangulating and killing this revolt, the ruling party forcibly imposed one-party misrule on the country. Apart from four government-controlled newspapers, all periodicals were banned. Attempts were made to establish the one-party Awami-Baksali rule by suppressing freedom of speech throughout the land. The blood-spilling changes in the political apparatus in August 1975 took place as a response to that.

This change brought the great declarer of independence Ziaur Rahman to the centre of politics. He ascended to state-power by riding on the crest of a successful Sepoy-People Revolution. He launched a new democratic journey after assuming power by lifting embargoes on the opposition parties and opinions. He started a new brand of development-oriented politics; it was aimed at building a new Bangladesh by involving

all citizens irrespective of their party or opinion, who were kept at the centre of this novel politics. Zia was a resolute administrator. He pursued liberalisation of trade and commerce and adopted policies that encouraged investments in the private sector for economic recovery. Readymade garments industry and foreign remittances, which are today strong edifices of Bangladesh economy were both initiated during his rule. He brought about transformation in the rural economy through the canal-digging program. But the conspirators became active just when this great son of the soil was carving out a leadership role for Bangladesh in the global domain through a modernistic, inclusive, and future-oriented leadership. He had to embrace martyrdom at the hands of a group of derailed military men in May 1981.

Then at the end of a long autocratic rule by Hussain Muhammad Ershad, multi-party democracy was once again restored in Bangladesh at the beginning of 1990s under the leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia. Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Begum Zia was at the helm of state power during the first halves of the decades of 1990s and 2000s. It facilitated not only a return to parliamentary democracy during those episodes, efforts were also made to strengthen the state-institutions and make the country stand on a firm footing by gearing up development activities.

But autocratic misrule once again descended on this country following assumption of office by Bangladesh Awami League through the Ninth Jatiya Sangsad Election held in December 2008. Far-reaching conspiracies were hatched for weakening the base of independence of this land through nullifying all significant achievements in all fields. Democracy was exiled by holding one unilateral cum rigged election after another. A cult was created around the autocratic ruler Sheikh Hasina and her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The only objective for creating this cult was to worship chosen individuals. By depriving the people of their democratic rights, an ethereal concept of 'politics of development' was floated. Behind this facade, a carnival of corruption was underway through nepotism, plundering of banks, and trafficking of money to foreign lands. All injustices, tortures, and misrule were perpetrated by packaging those with the so-called 'Spirit of the Liberation War'. Unbearable tortures were meted out if anyone dared to make minimum protest against this long autocratic rule. All instruments of state-machinery were indiscriminately used for the purpose. The people of Bangladesh even became familiar with a terrible nightmare called 'enforced disappearance'. Those who protested, especially the supporters of opposition ideologies, were abducted on a massive scale. Most of them could not be traced out again. After the fall of autocracy, people came to know that many of the abducted people were kept at a prison called 'Aynagar', from where only a handful of men could return.

The right of the people to express their opinion and choose their leaders was usurped through holding one-sided and fake elections one after another during 2014, 2018, and 2024. Attempts were made to silence the democratic movements of the opposition parties by applying muscle-power, filing cases, and attacking gatherings. But as the saying goes: the dawn comes nearer as the night deepens. A new sun of victory was rising beneath the dagger of the oppressor.



## Great Victory Day

## Song of Victory

Abdul Hye Sikder

Tears and rivers of blood brought about the tidings,  
Triumphant song of Victory-Day in proud Bangladesh.  
Song of triumph in fields and towns, victory-song at heart  
That victory for freedom and ending exploitation.

After independence we had to bear unforgettable pain  
Hunger and deprivations after so many years.  
Even now spilling of blood, even now harsh deeds of misrule,  
Please dye our hearts with red and green for ejecting that ghost.

Victory is unfettered air, clouds above the open window,  
Victory is our terrain from Teknaf to Tentulia,  
Let victory arrive at every home – the biggest among all,  
Make this victory fierce and strong at every moment.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

a political event; but the claims that are made in history, fine arts or politics of getting the whole in the partial mould of 'for and against' is akin to denying the huge expanse of the liberation war. It should also be said that the mistakes of those who provided leadership to the liberation war in various ways, or the crimes of those who opposed the war, are not sufficient for capturing the whole liberation war, as they represent only a tiny fragment of the story of liberation war.

This lack of comprehension has been devastating for our politics or state-building. The failure to utilise the extraordinary opportunity that we had and still have for forging the feeling of unity by discovering individual and collective lives in the shape of stories has been a terrible experience for our community. We are bound to be pained by this. But that is not the last word, nor is it a conclusive statement.

There are histories that remain beyond the ones written with pen and paper. It should also be said that aspects not captured in writing may be the real history. Only a small fragment of the stories in man's lived experiences are expressed through fine arts. It may often become impossible for fine arts to search for those complex knots in public domain that remain intertwined with the stories. But the tales of public lives endure. And to speak about politics, especially party-politics, it must be said that this arena usually remains active based on some narrow, self-centred, and motivated stories. Its objective most often does not include a commitment towards the stories of public lives. Therefore, what has been said about the liberation war in diverse forms and what would be spoken about it in future are only small parts of a whole – distorted in many instances.

The real liberation war exists in the public sphere; it will be even better if we say, 'in the stories of public life'. That story may sometimes hide itself after becoming cornered due to the signals of directly-experienced reality. However, it can never erode as it has been obtained from life. It can emerge with all its appeal and full force on the fresh ground of dynamic life in opportune moments, because of its deep kinship with life beyond imposed relationships. Therefore, this vast and diffused liberation war holds promises for us. If the learned society becomes collectively pledge-bound to conserve these stories in the liberal arena of history or fine arts, if the liberation war of the common people starts to get translated at a higher rate through direct involvement of politics, only then can we advance on the path of people-centric state-formation. That would not only be an indication of our development, it would also be the chief catalyst for progress. The latent potential of the liberation war of Bangladesh's human society has persisted over the past fifty-four years; it will remain in the coming days as well. □

(The writer is a Professor of Bangla Department, Dhaka University, now serving as Director General of Bangla Academy on deputation.)

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

Just as the people of Bangla irrespective of their age built up resistance against the intolerable tortures of the Pakistani invading forces in 1971, the common people of this country once again confronted the autocratic dictatorship of Sheikh Hasina that stretched from 2009 to 2024. The agitating students and masses came down to the streets protesting excessive quotas in government jobs. It was soon clear that it no longer was a movement only of students; people's grievances accumulated over one and a half decades then flowed to the confluence of a struggle aimed at ousting the autocrat. As if, those unforgettable days of the liberation war had returned. People irrespective of their class, profession, and age came down to the streets again by getting imbued with the fiery mantra of a revolution. Ignoring the blood-red eyes of the autocrat, they sang aloud in a chorus similar to the fiery days of the liberation war:

During the terrible storm of Boishakhi  
When the sky falls apart  
The torn sail is shredded further  
The lighting beckons;  
Suddenly I hear the sound of conch  
And I see the bird of dawn singing.

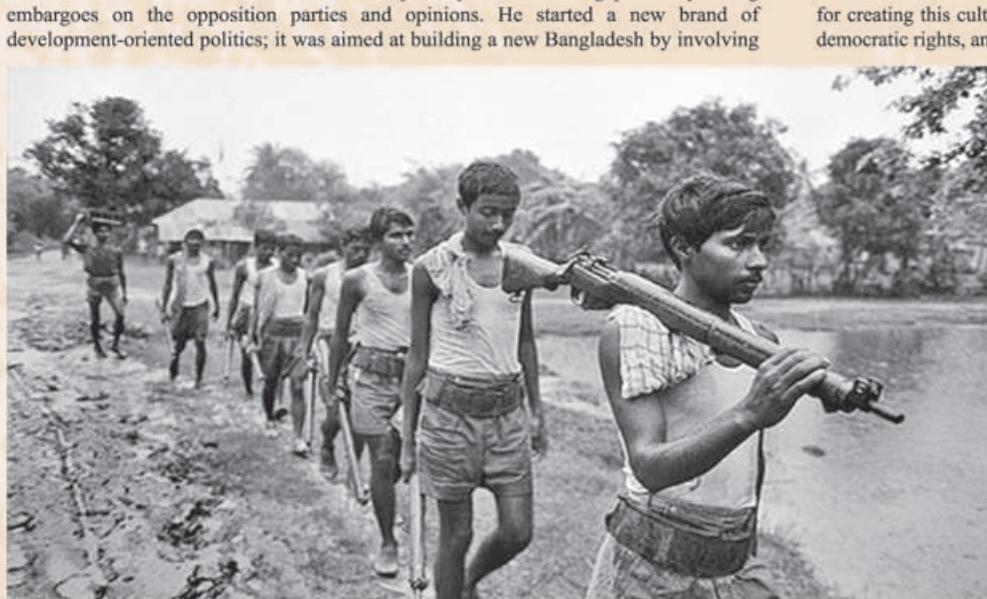
The victory of the masses through an unforgettable 36-day-long people's uprising during July-August was finally achieved. Just as the intense resistance of the students and masses during the liberation war dug the grave of Pakistani misrule, the July-August Movement of 2024 also led to victory of the masses. It proved that a nation which emerged victorious in 1971 was bound to triumph again through the mass movement of 2024. The spontaneous jubilation of the people in all corners of Bangladesh when the autocrat was brought down generated extraordinary scenes. As Alexander Hamilton had said, 'There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty, that makes human nature rise above itself, in acts of bravery and heroism'. Extraordinary heroes were born from among ordinary citizens during this anti-autocracy movement. They proved by spilling their fresh blood the claim made by William Shakespeare: 'Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once'. Innumerable heroes like Abu Sayeed, Meer Mugdha, Wasim Akram, Farhan Fayyaz brought back memories of valour witnessed during the 1971 liberation war. Extraordinaries was born out of the ordinary. They created a new history by opening up their chests before the bullets of the autocrat.

A one-sided narrative was prepared by keeping the War of Independence in the forefront during the 15-year-long autocratic rule of Sheikh Hasina. All anti-fascist initiatives were crushed through repression by labelling those as 'anti-liberation-war' and 'anti-independence'. The people's movement of July-August succeeded in rescuing Bangladesh from that narrative. This uprising has opened up a new possibility for fulfilling the unmet dreams of the peasants, labourers, porters, and workers who took up arms. The July Mass-Uprising has generated the inspiration for running Bangladesh in accordance with the real spirit of the liberation war. This inspiration must be nurtured and sustained at any cost.

The July Uprising has taught us that no particular party or group can claim the sole proprietorship of the spirit of liberation war. It belongs to all citizens, it is everybody's. Just as all Bangladeshi had contributed to the liberation war, similarly, the glory of victory belongs to the common people of this country. The people of Bangladesh shall never permit the reappearance of autocracy in this land under the garb of 'politics of development' or 'politics of spirit'. We shall have to take an oath on the occasion of Victory Day for building a Bangladesh that belonged to all its citizens by cherishing in our hearts the lessons of July 2024. □

(The writer is Pro-Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University.)

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed



'DENYING VICTORY DAY IS DENYING OUR OWN EXISTENCE'

# July's cultural warriors highlight significance of VICTORY DAY



Akram Khan



Khijir Hayat



Azmeri Haque Badhan



Ashfaque Nipun

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSVED AND COLLECTED

## RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

After July 2024, Bangladesh discovered a renewed sense of unity as the nation came together to stand against injustice. Over time, however, we began to notice divisions forming among the people. Some started questioning the very essence of our Liberation War itself. To confront this growing apathy and division, some cultural voices of the July movement divulge their take on what is at stake for the soul of our nation.

Director Ashfaque Nipun was never afraid to call a spade a spade. He has consistently spoken out against injustice, and during the July movement, he remained a firm voice, while also condemning 'mob justice'. When asked about the significance of December 16 and the growing attempts to question it, the director offered a frank and uncompromising response.

"December 16, 1971, is an inseparable part of our national story. It was on that day that the people of Bangladesh fought against the occupying Pakistani army and its collaborators and won their freedom. The once mighty Pakistani forces were forced to surrender and leave this land, and we gained a new country. That is why December 16 will always remain historic."

"If we had not witnessed victory on December 16, 1971, the history of Bangladesh might have been written very differently."

For Nipun, our Victory Day is more than a historic date; it is the foundation of the nation. "The victory of December 16 must be honoured, along with the sacrifices of the martyrs, the wounded, and the *birangonas* of the nine-month-

long war. Their contributions are an essential part of our birth story."

He also highlighted the inspiration drawn from ordinary citizens. "The resistance of ordinary people has always been our greatest source of inspiration. Even during the mass uprising in July '24, which led to the fall of an authoritarian government, the history of December 16 continued to guide us. The lessons of 1971 have always acted as a compass. If we could defeat one of the most powerful armies in the world then, we can do it again."

**As long as Bangladesh exists, December 16 will remain part of our history, our celebrations, and our victory narrative. It reminds us that when ordinary people stand united on the side of justice, any victory is possible - Ashfaque Nipun**

He added, "The contribution and historical importance of December 16 can never be denied. No matter how many narratives try to question it, some days become permanently historic and cannot be diminished. That is why us Bangladeshis, once 70 million and now close to 200 million, continue to celebrate December 16 every year and will continue to do so. The history of Bangladesh's victories begins on December 16, and every victory that

follows draws strength from it."

"As long as Bangladesh exists, December 16 will remain part of our history, our celebrations, and our victory narrative. It reminds us that when ordinary people stand united on the side of justice, any victory is possible."

Badhan was a fierce voice when it came to the July uprising; she strongly voiced her opposition to the killings of innocent children and students during the movement. The actress was shocked when she found out that there are certain people who are trying to demean our Liberation War.

Reflecting on the significance of Victory Day, the actress said, "I can say today that I am a free citizen of Bangladesh only because we achieved victory on December 16. Without that victory, I would not be able to say this. There is no alternative to it. At that time, I would not have been a citizen of Bangladesh. I would have been a citizen of some other country. That is why this day is deeply important to me."

Addressing attempts to undermine the history of 1971, Badhan was blunt. "I do not know where these ideas come from, but trying to distort or deny the Liberation War comes from ignorance and foolishness. It is a result of a lack of education. If people genuinely loved their country and their own identity, they would never deny the Liberation War, 1971, or our Victory Day."

Filmmaker and actor Khijir Hayat was vocal during the July movement, openly calling out the previous regime through his social media posts. Known for directing the Liberation War-inspired film *Ora 7 Jon*, Hayat has remained

firm in his position on the ongoing debate comparing 1971 with the 2024 movement.

Addressing the comparison, he said, "The first and biggest mistake we can ever make is comparing 2024 with 1971. 1971 marks the birth of our nation. December 16 is when we earned victory. If we deny that, then we are denying our own birth."

Emphasising the broader political journey of the nation, Hayat noted that a country is not shaped in a single moment. "A nation goes through phases and different kinds of revolutions, but you cannot ignore your birth. December 16 is the birthday of Bangladesh. If you ignore your own birth, nothing really remains. My position is very clear. Do not ignore your birth. At the same time, our revolution cannot be undermined either."

Filmmaker Akram Khan, known for Liberation War-based films such as *Khacha* and *Nakshi Kathar Jamil*, was among the first to urge artistes to speak out against the injustice faced by students during July. As both a July warrior and a filmmaker deeply shaped by the spirit of the Liberation War, Khan sees the recent uprising through a historical and moral lens.

"Our Liberation War gave us our sovereignty, our cultural identity, and a moral compass. Whenever the nation feels lost or confused, we must return to the ideals of the Liberation War. There is no comparison between July and the Liberation War. One gave birth to the nation; the other was a people's uprising to reclaim democracy and challenge repression and inequality. July follows the continuity of the Liberation War, but it can never replace it."



## Victory Day being marked with aerial display, concerts and nationwide events

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The nation will mark the 54th Victory Day with a comprehensive programme that combines spectacle and remembrance, featuring parachute displays, live music, theatre, television broadcasts, and community-led cultural events, all coordinated by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy and different national TV channels.

On December 16, 54 paratroopers carrying national flags will descend over Dhaka, marking each year of independence. Spectators can view the air show from Taltala Gate, opposite the IDB Bhaban.



The two-day *Bijoy Utsab* begins on December 15 at Suhrawardy Udyan, opening with an acrobatic show and followed by the folk-theatre production *General Osmani*. Written by Riju Lakshmi Oborodh and directed by Shamim Khandakar, the play explores the life of *Muktibahini* commander-in-chief General M A G Osmani, highlighting a pivotal chapter of the Liberation War.

Victory Day itself will feature a large concert at Suhrawardy Udyan, with performances by Shayan, Shironamhin, Lalon, Bangla Five, Tonger Gaan, Aftermath, Firoze Jong, and F Minor. Songs from Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra will also be



performed simultaneously across all 64 districts.

Television networks are dedicating extensive programming to the day. Boishakhi Television will air patriotic music, Liberation War-era film songs, the feature films *Hangor Nodi Grenade* and *Alor Michil*, and the drama *Birangana*. Maasranga Television will broadcast *Shesh Prohor*, while RTV will run special coverage on December 17. Deepo TV will feature *Deepo Prohhati, Amar Bangla*, and the documentary *Swadhinotar Shesh Juddho*, and Duronto TV will highlight children's programmes including *Lal Shobujer Bijoy* and *Amader Mukti Gaan*.

Public participation is central to the commemorations. On the afternoon of December 16, Udichi, Bangladesh Students' Union, and Bangladesh Youth Union will organise a flag procession, women's march-past, and performances of freedom songs, beginning at the Engineering Institute gate and concluding at the Central Shaheed Minar. The Liberation War Museum will host a children's cultural programme, with performances from schools, music academies, and youth organisations.

The programmes reflect a national effort to honour 1971 while passing the legacy of independence to new generations - on the ground, on stage, and across the country's screens.

## BIDYA SINHA MIM to make Chorki original debut

Actress Bidya Sinha Mim is set to make her Chorki original debut with an upcoming untitled film, scheduled to go on the floors later this month. The project will be directed by Kazi Asad, known for the Chorki series *Adhunik Bangla Hotel*, and promises to present Mim in a role distinct from her usual glamorous image.

Chorki chief executive officer Redoan Rony welcomed the actress to the platform during the contract signing held on December 13. Mim said she was drawn to the project's emotional storyline, written by Mahamudul Hasan Tipu, Kazi Asad and Asaduzzaman Abir, and hopes audiences will respond positively.



## SHAHID MAHMUD JANGI honoured at 70 through songs and memory

Lyricist Shahid Mahmud Jangi was honoured on his 70th birthday through a music-led tribute at Dhaka's Russian House, organised by Ajob Karkhana. Titled *Apon Aloy Shahid Mahmud Jangi: Gaaney Gaaney Sottor*, the programme brought together musicians, writers and cultural figures to reflect on his enduring influence on

Bangladeshi music.

The evening marked the launch of a book of the same name, edited by Joy Shahriar, documenting Jangi's career and lyrical legacy. The celebration also featured performances of his songs by artistes across generations, highlighting the continued relevance of his work.

## Director Rob Reiner and wife found dead in LA home

Filmmaker and actor Rob Reiner, 78, and his wife, photographer Michele Singer Reiner, 68, were found dead at their Brentwood home in Los Angeles, with authorities investigating the incident as an apparent homicide. The bodies were discovered on Sunday, December 14 afternoon, and the family later confirmed the deaths, requesting privacy.

US media reported injuries consistent with a knife attack, though the official cause of death has not been disclosed. Best known for directing classics such as *When Harry Met Sally*, *Misery* and *Stand by Me*, Reiner also co-founded Castle Rock Entertainment. He is survived by his children from his two marriages.



## 'I don't know what mistake I have made'

FROM PAGE 16

"I have been doing this for two decades. My job is not to bow down to anyone," he said in a packed courtroom, adding that he had been vocal during the rule of BNP, Awami League, as well as during this interim government. "And I will continue to do so."

"If anyone wants to tag me as a puppet of a particular party, that is their problem," the journalist added.

Anis continued, "I express all my views on Facebook; nothing is undisclosed..."

Regarding his remark on the possible attack on Chief Adviser Mohammad Yunus's residence, he said, such an incident is a possibility considering the demolition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib's residence at Dhanmondi 32, which he termed a "politics of revenge".

"I do not know what mistake I have made here. I have no links with anyone. If Dr Yunus wants, he can

turn the whole of Bangladesh into a prison – he can do so," he added.

After hearing from both sides, the magistrate rejected Anis' bail petition and put him on remand.

Yesterday, Arian Ahmed, a central organiser of the July Revolutionary Alliance, filed the case with Uttara West Police Station against journalist Anis, actor Meher Afroz Shaon, Maria Kispotta, and Imtu Ratish.

On Sunday evening, Anis was picked up from a gym in Dhanmondi and taken to the DB office on Mintu Road.

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.

According to the case statement, the five accused, including Anis, were under the patronage of the Awami League before August 5 last year. Since the July uprising, they have allegedly been spreading propaganda

through social media and talk show appearances to facilitate the return of the AL.

The complainant mentioned that on the night of December 14, while at home, Arian Ahmed noticed on his mobile phone that the journalist had made several posts from his verified Facebook account and, during talk shows, warned that attacks would be carried out on the July Smriti Museum, Dr Muhammad Yunus' residence, and Grameen Bank.

The statement also says that Maria Kispotta, Meher Afroz Shaon, and Imtu Ratish posted from their personal Facebook accounts in an attempt to rehabilitate the AL.

Such posts have allegedly inspired activists of the banned organisations Chhatra League and Jubo League to engage in conspiracies and terrorist activities aimed at destabilising the state and damaging state infrastructure, the statement added.

Ahmed was identified on social media as the bystander who hid behind parked cars before charging at the gunman from behind, seizing his rifle and knocking him to the ground.

"My son is a hero. He served in the police, he has the passion to defend people," Ahmed's father, Mohamed Fatehal Ahmed, told state broadcaster ABC News in an interview.

He said that Ahmed is an Australian citizen and sells fruits and vegetables. A GoFundMe campaign has been set up for Ahmed with just over A\$1,000,000 (\$665,100) raised in a few hours. Billionaire hedge fund manager Bill Ackman was the largest donor, contributing A\$99,999 and sharing the fundraiser on his X account.

US President Donald Trump called

Ahmed "a very, very brave person" who saved many lives. Chris Minns, the premier of New South Wales state where Sydney is located, has hailed him "a genuine hero" and said the video was "the most unbelievable scene I've ever seen".

Major cities including Berlin, London and New York step up security around Hanukkah events following the attack.

Police gave no details of their firearms, but videos from the scene showed the men firing weapons that appeared to be a bolt-action rifle and a shotgun.

Albanese said measures being considered ranged from curbs on open-ended licences to limits on weapons held by a single individual and the types that are legal, including modifications, with permits restricted to Australian citizens.

Witnesses said the 10-minute attack at the beach, crowded on a hot weekend evening, sent about 1,000 people attending a Hanukkah event fleeing along the sand and into nearby streets.

Clarify your remarks on Hadi

FROM PAGE 16

government," he added.

Rafiqul Islam Khan, assistant secretary general of Jamaat-e-Islami, in his speech, called for the resignation of the home adviser over the attack on Hadi.

The discussion was chaired by Jamaat's Dhaka South Ameer Nurul Islam Bulbul.

According to sources, Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Md Khoda Bakhsh Chowdhury and other senior officials were present at the meeting and assured the delegation that the demands would be fulfilled.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Chhatra Shakti, the student wing of the National Citizen Party, blocked the Shahbagh intersection yesterday.

Protesters there also demanded the resignation of the home adviser for failing to maintain law and order.

The demonstration brought vehicular movement in Shahbagh and surrounding areas to a standstill, reports UNB.

Abu Bakar Majumdar, convener of the NCP's student wing, said, "We demand the immediate arrest of the attackers who assaulted Hadi."

On Friday, a day after the schedule for the 13th national parliamentary election was announced, Hadi, an aspirant for the Dhaka-8 constituency, was shot in the head in the capital's Puranapaltan area, leaving him critically injured.

He was flown to Singapore yesterday for better treatment.

"To counter the defeated group, our Victory Day pledge should not be the politics of revenge or hostility; rather, it should be the establishment of a self-reliant, prosperous, and democratic Bangladesh with the aim of delivering the fruits of victory to every household," he said.

"From the time Bangladesh gained independence until today, whenever the country's democracy has faced threats, we have seen that the country's independence and sovereignty have also faced threats. At every turn in history, this truth has been proven, whether on November 7, 1975 or on August 5 2024," he said.

He said attempts to intimidate freedom-loving and democracy-seeking people would fail.

Every movement, including 1971,

## 3 advisers must go if demands are not met

FROM PAGE 16

supported the attack or incited violence against Hadi and the July revolutionaries must be socially boycotted.

Second, within 48 hours, area-based combing operations must be launched against leaders and activists of the Awami League. All "terrorists" linked to the organisation must be arrested and illegal weapons recovered.

Third, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina must be brought back to the country to execute the verdict against her for crimes against humanity. Diplomatic relations with India must be reviewed and not normalised until the accused are repatriated.

"If the demands are not met immediately and no visible improvement in the law and order situation is seen, the home adviser, law adviser, and foreign affairs adviser must resign," said the Ducus VP.

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Every movement, including 1971,

## 2ND PHASE OF GAZA TRUCE Israel, Hamas trade blame for delay

AGENCIES

on October 10, Israel has continued to attack Gaza on a daily basis, carrying out nearly 800 attacks and killing hundreds, according to authorities in Gaza, while blocking the free flow of humanitarian aid.

Meanwhile, US envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner yesterday briefed EU foreign ministers on Trump's Gaza peace plan via video conference, an EU official said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said that he had suggested to EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas that Kushner and Witkoff provide an update on the implementation of the plan to the foreign ministers during their meeting in Brussels, reports Reuters.

Israel is awaiting the return of the remains of the last captive, Ran Gvili, which it says is a condition of moving to the second and more complicated phase of the ceasefire.

## 'Polls will be held on time defying conspiracies'

FROM PAGE 16

of the Liberation War are now trying to establish a new history of victory," he added.

"To counter the defeated group, our Victory Day pledge should not be the politics of revenge or hostility; rather, it should be the establishment of a self-reliant, prosperous, and democratic Bangladesh with the aim of delivering the fruits of victory to every household," he said.

"From the time Bangladesh gained independence until today, whenever the country's democracy has faced threats, we have seen that the country's independence and sovereignty have also faced threats. At every turn in history, this truth has been proven, whether on November 7, 1975 or on August 5 2024," he said.

He said attempts to intimidate freedom-loving and democracy-seeking people would fail.

Every movement, including 1971,

November 7, 1975, and the anti-autocracy movement of the nineties, had proven that the people's victory could not be stopped when they were united, he said.

About the upcoming election, Tarique said, "This is no ordinary election; it is more complex and important than any previous elections. The aspirations, interests, and potential of the present and future generations, and above all, the question of Bangladesh's sovereignty, are linked to this election."

Presiding over the event, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said if voted to power, BNP would ensure the security of the "July fighters" who took part in the July-August movement.

BNP Standing Committee members Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan, Moyeen Khan, Salahuddin Ahmed, Hafizuddin Ahmed and others also spoke at the event.

**মৃত্যু থেকে প্রজন্ম  
বিজয় থেকে অগ্রয়ণ**

শক্তির মুক্তি সকল বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের, যাঁদের আত্মাগত  
ও প্রেরণায় আগামীর বাংলাদেশ গড়ার প্রত্যয়ে এগিয়ে চলি একসাথে।

সবাইকে মহান বিজয় দিবসের উভয়ে।

**আল-আরাফাহ ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি | aib**

**বিজয়  
আমল অঙ্গকৃত...**

**মহান বিজয় দিবস**  
আমাদের সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক ও  
দেশবাসীকে জানাই  
প্রাণচালা শুভেচ্ছা

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## Let's transform our victory into progress

Victory Day returns with renewed hope for democracy

As Bangladesh marks Victory Day today, the national mood is a complex blend of sombre remembrance, cautious optimism, and electric anticipation. Flags fluttering from rooftops commemorate the 1971 liberation from Pakistan—a war that secured independence but left the country with colossal human loss and an economy in ruins. Like many nations, Bangladesh is shaped by its scars. Yet, it has repeatedly defied odds. This year, however, amid political upheaval, there is something more potent than resilience in the air: hope.

Traditionally, Victory Day is a tribute to the martyrs of 1971. But this December, as it did last year, the day carries an additional meaning. We honour the architects of independence, but also commemorate those whose sacrifice dismantled Sheikh Hasina's 15-year grip on power in 2024. Their deaths have expanded the moral meaning of Victory Day, linking past liberation to present resistance against misrule.

Bangladesh now stands at a rare political and economic confluence. On the one hand, the country is on the brink of economic graduation, set to shed its least developed country status next year. On the other hand, it is poised for political renewal, with a national election slated for February. The interim government has moved to steer the nation towards the ballot box despite formidable challenges along the way. As a result, the coming election is not seen merely as a procedural necessity, but as a moment of political exhilaration—and reckoning. The stakes could not be higher, because the political landscape has shifted. The young people who stood before police, water cannons and bullets in 2024 are now a political force. They will scrutinise the next government with a hawk's eye. Any new administration must resist the familiar temptation of vengeful, winner-takes-all politics.

Bangladesh has mastered the art of survival, but it has struggled with the craft of democracy. Hasina's rule proved especially corrosive: civil liberties were systematically crushed, and the key opposition party was hollowed out. This year, Victory Day, therefore, is more than a celebration. A true success story demands a nation that can argue without silencing dissent and govern without oppression.

Beyond politics, the economy demands urgent attention. Inflation now functions as a regressive tax on the poor and the squeezed middle class, while persistently high unemployment threatens to sour the optimism of the youth. Addressing these twin pressures is not just an economic imperative—it is a political one. Therefore, the message of this Victory Day is unmistakable: the work of nation-building is unfinished. The garment sector—the engine of the economy—needs a fairer deal for its workers. Minority rights must be shielded from violence and exclusion. And the environment, particularly the capital's hazardous air quality, requires immediate triage.

Victory was won in 1971 through heroic sacrifice. It will be more meaningful if we can now deliver justice, dignity, and democracy—not just endure, but govern ourselves better.

## Reforms crucial for a functioning democracy

Govt must implement some key changes before election

It is disheartening that the interim government has yet to take any major initiative to implement the proposed reforms by various reform commissions. The July uprising created a rare political opening, raising public expectations that long-delayed institutional reforms would finally happen. Yet, many crucial proposals remain ignored, diluted, or quietly dropped, undermining the very purpose for which these commissions were formed. In this context, the frustration expressed by the chiefs and members of several reform commissions over the lack of implementation is justifiable.

Reportedly, a wide gap persists between recommendations and implementation, with many major reforms stalled and recommendations dropped. A telling example is the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Reform Commission's proposal for quarterly public accountability reports. This recommendation was neither radical nor complex; it sought only to introduce basic transparency in a vital institution. Despite this being one of the commission's most important proposals, it was later removed. And despite broad political support for most other proposals, many were not enforced.

The Election Reform Commission's experience is equally disheartening. Its proposals to promote internal party democracy, ensure transparency in political financing, and strengthen candidate scrutiny were meant to address the root causes of the country's dysfunctional electoral culture. Key recommendations—such as electing party leaders from the grassroots, limiting the influence of wealthy individuals, and bringing parties under the Right to Information Act—were not adopted. While the Election Commission has taken some immediate steps, including better affidavit disclosure and expanded CCTV coverage, these fall short of tackling deeper problems like nomination syndromes, unchecked campaign spending, and weak accountability.

Perhaps most concerning is the state of media reforms. Reportedly, the Media Reform Commission proposed more than 100 reforms, yet not a single one has been implemented. Dropping the proposed Journalism Protection Act raises serious concerns about the safety of journalists, especially as the national election draws near. A free and secure media is central to any credible democratic process. The government's rejection of a plan to establish a permanent, independent media commission is also unfortunate.

While reforms cannot be achieved overnight, many of the recommendations made by the commissions could have been implemented through routine administrative orders or minor legal adjustments. The problem, therefore, is less about capacity and more about commitment. Economists and civil society leaders have rightly warned that Bangladesh's democratic decline has been driven by an alliance of political, bureaucratic, and business interests resistant to change.

Without progress in implementation, reforms risk becoming yet another missed opportunity—one the country can ill afford as it seeks a credible return to democratic governance.

# EDITORIAL

## Victory Day and the republic we owe ourselves



### MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun  
is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

### FAHMIDA KATUN

December 16 returns each year as a solemn river of memory, carrying the sound of marching feet across muddy fields, the echo of gunfire, whispered prayers, and the tears of mothers who waited, uncertain whether their sons would return. Victory Day marks the moment when people long denied dignity rose to claim their place in history, declaring they would no longer live as subjects but as citizens. The 1971 Liberation War was fought for the right to speak, to choose, to dream, and to live with justice. It was the culmination of a long struggle against economic exploitation, political exclusion, and cultural repression under Pakistani rule.

From the 1952 Language Movement to the 1969 mass uprising and the denial of the 1970 electoral verdict, each injustice reinforced the conviction that emancipation could no longer be deferred. When independence finally came after nine months of bloodshed, it was infused with an extraordinary vision: Bangladesh would be a republic founded on democracy, equity, social justice, and respect for human dignity.

Fifty-four years later, that vision remains incomplete. Bangladesh has endured, advanced, and surprised the world in many ways. At the same time, the road from 1971 to 2025 has been uneven and often painful. The years following independence were marked by deep instability. Assassinations, coups, counter-coups, and long stretches of military and quasi-military rule disrupted the democratic experiment. Governance weakened, corruption deepened, and institutions failed to develop the resilience needed to withstand political shocks. Time and again, the promises of liberation have been repeatedly tested by political turbulence, institutional fragility, and missed opportunities.

The restoration of parliamentary democracy through the 1991 election offered a moment of collective hope. Yet, that hope proved fragile. Politics failed to mature into a system governed by rules rather than rivalries. Elections increasingly became winner-takes-all contests, in which power meant exclusion rather than accountability.

The erosion of democracy became most pronounced between 2014 and 2024. Elections continued, but genuine participation steadily diminished, and voting lost its meaning for millions. Power grew

increasingly centralised, dissent was constrained, and fear displaced public debate. Accountability weakened as institutions were reshaped to serve those in authority. As democratic space narrowed, public trust eroded. Rising hardship, especially among unemployed and frustrated youth, eventually transformed quiet disillusionment into open resistance.

contain mob violence and maintain public order, raising concerns about citizens' safety and security. Investment has failed to recover, businesses continue to face high operating costs, and policy uncertainty has damped confidence. Job creation, particularly for young people, remains elusive, despite youth unemployment having been a central trigger of the July uprising.

Economic growth has slowed to around four percent in fiscal year (FY) 2025 (provisional), down from 4.2 percent in FY2024. Private investment has remained stagnant for years, with its share of GDP falling from 24 percent in FY2024 to 22.5 percent in FY2025 (provisional). Employment generation has stalled, and unemployment rose to 3.6 percent in 2024 from 3.35 percent a year earlier. Domestic resource

remain a huge challenge. Regulatory reforms remain unfinished, accountability systems are fragile, and public institutions often fail to serve citizens fairly. Development driven mainly by growth targets, without strengthening institutions accordingly, has reached its limits.

The political moment ahead is therefore critical. The announcement of the national election on February 12, 2026, has brought cautious relief. After more than 17 months of unelected rule, a return to electoral legitimacy is essential. However, early incidents of violence have raised doubts about whether the election can be conducted freely, fairly, and peacefully. The interim government faces its most critical test not in managing economic indicators but in safeguarding the democratic process itself, because



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

without democracy, economic growth is meaningless for the majority.

As Bangladesh celebrates its 55th Victory Day this year, the commitment of future leaders must be evident. Democracy must be restored not only through elections, but through institutions that ensure accountability and inclusion. Economic reforms must prioritise job creation, fairness, and resilience. Social progress, especially for women and girls, must be protected and deepened. Politics must rediscover restraint, dialogue, and respect for dissent.

The martyrs of 1971 did not sacrifice their lives for managed participation or selective justice. They fought for a republic where citizens would be sovereign, power would be held accountable, and progress would be shared. Victory Day urges us to honour that legacy not just with remembrance but with determination.

mobilisation has weakened as the tax-to-GDP ratio declined from 7.4 percent in FY2024 to 6.8 percent in FY2025. Poverty has begun to rise again, according to World Bank estimates. Social stresses are also deepening, with progress on ending child marriage remaining alarmingly slow.

Still, Bangladesh's longer-term achievements deserve recognition. Over the five decades since independence, the economy has expanded substantially.

Per capita income has risen, exports have strengthened, and remittance inflows have remained robust. Dependence on foreign aid has declined significantly and for many poverty was going down. These accomplishments were built on sustained investments in human development, the labour of millions of workers, particularly women, and the perseverance of households, striving for better lives.

However, institutional problems

have remained a challenge.

However, institutional problems

# The unhealed wounds of 1971: Bangladesh's unfinished liberation



K A S Murshid  
an economist, served with the Foreign Ministry of the Mujibnagar Government during the Liberation War in 1971.

K A S MURSHID

The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War was not merely a military conflict; it was a civilisational rupture that tore through the social fabric of an entire nation, leaving scars that have never properly healed. While we celebrate our victory each December, we have collectively failed to confront the psychological devastation that persists across generations, or to adequately honour those who sacrificed everything in those nine terrible months.

#### Mujibnagar

One of the most persistent and damaging myths about our liberation struggle concerns the Mujibnagar Government—the provisional government of Bangladesh that operated from April to December 1971. A narrative has taken root, particularly among those who prefer simplified hero-worship over historical complexity, that the leadership of Mujibnagar lived comfortably in exile while freedom fighters died in muddy trenches. This is not merely wrong; it is an insult to those who carried the immense burden of organising a liberation struggle while being stateless and under constant threat.

The Mujibnagar Government, sworn in on April 17, 1971, at Baidyanathatala in Meherpur, operated under extraordinary difficulty. These were not men enjoying cushy exile; they were coordinating a multifaceted war effort while dodging Pakistani intelligence operations, managing a humanitarian catastrophe involving one crore refugees, and conducting desperate diplomacy efforts to win international recognition. Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad worked himself to exhaustion, orchestrating the formation of the Mukti Bahini's eleven sectors, establishing training camps, managing arms procurement, and creating administrative structures for a country that didn't yet legally exist.

The government established a functioning bureaucracy in exile, organised revenue collection in liberated zones, ran a clandestine radio station (Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra) that sustained morale across occupied Bangladesh, and coordinated with the Indian government while maintaining Bangladesh's distinct identity and autonomy. They managed internal political tensions between various factions, dealt with the complications of armed groups operating semi-independently, and



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

planned for post-war governance—all while knowing that capture meant certain death.

To dismiss their contribution as comfortable exile is to fundamentally misunderstand what leadership in crisis entails. Wars are not won by battlefield courage alone; they require logistics, diplomacy, intelligence, coordination, and vision. The Mujibnagar Government provided exactly these elements. Without their organisational framework, the courage of individual fighters would have amounted to sporadic resistance rather than coordinated liberation.

#### Wounded generation

What we rarely discuss with adequate gravity is the complete dislocation of an entire generation. The 1971 war was not a distant conflict fought by professional soldiers; it was a catastrophe that invaded every home, disrupted every life, and fundamentally altered the trajectory of millions of individual

never returned; others returned to find their homes occupied, their property looted, their professional networks destroyed.

For those who remained, life became a daily negotiation with death. We lost friends whose names now exist only in fading memories. Some were killed outright by the Pakistani military or their local collaborators. Others simply disappeared—picked up at checkpoints, taken from their homes at night, swallowed by a machinery of violence that left no records and offered no closure. Families still don't know where their sons, brothers, and fathers lie buried.

And then there were our women. The systematic campaign of sexual violence during 1971 represents one of the war's most devastating legacies and one we have most shamefully failed to address. Estimates suggest between 200,000 and 400,000 women were raped during the nine months of conflict. This

“unmarriageable” by the very violence inflicted upon them. Others lived in silence, carrying trauma they could never speak about because our society offered no space for their pain. Their children, born of rape, faced their own discrimination.

#### Untreated trauma

Here lies perhaps our greatest failure: we

never healed. Bangladesh emerged from

1971 with a population carrying massive

psychological trauma, and we had neither

the concept nor the resources to address it. Post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was not yet

part of global consciousness, let alone in a

newly independent, desperately poor nation

struggling simply to feed its people.

But the absence of a medical framework doesn't make trauma disappear; it simply forces it underground. An entire generation carried unprocessed grief, rage, guilt, and terror into the free Bangladesh. They raised

children unhealed, and those children absorbed the unspoken wounds. This is how trauma becomes intergenerational—not through genetics but through the emotional environment of families and societies that cannot acknowledge their pain.

We never had truth and reconciliation commissions. We never created spaces for survivors to tell their stories and be heard. We never provided systematic support for rape survivors or their children. We never helped refugees process the loss of homes and livelihoods. We never allowed freedom fighters to discuss what they had witnessed and done. Instead, we rushed towards nation-building, mistaking silence for strength and suppression for healing.

The consequences persist. Our politics remains poisoned by unresolved questions about collaboration and resistance. Families harbour secret resentments spanning generations. Veterans struggle with memories they cannot share. Women carry shame for the violence committed against them. And all of these fester beneath a surface narrative of triumphant liberation.

**The unfinished work**  
Bangladesh was supposed to be different. We were told we possessed a natural unity—a homogeneous population sharing language, culture, and history. This was always somewhat mythical, but it contained enough truth to inspire hope for a cohesive national identity transcending the religious divisions that had torn apart the subcontinent.

Yet we have squandered this potential. Instead of building on our shared sacrifice in 1971, we have allowed that very history to become another site of division. Religion has been weaponised for political gain, creating fault lines where solidarity should exist. The spirit of secular Bangalee nationalism that animated our liberation has been systematically undermined by those who prefer a fragmented population to an empowered one.

The time has come to reclaim what we fought for. This means finally, 53 years later, beginning the healing we should have undertaken in 1972. It means creating spaces for the complex truth-telling. It means honouring all who contributed—from Mujibnagar's exhausted administrators to rural fighters to women who survived unspeakable violence. It means acknowledging our wounds rather than performing strength we don't feel.

Most importantly, it means rebuilding the unity that was 1971's promise—not by denying our diversity or suppressing difficult histories, but by recognising that our shared trauma and shared liberation bind us more deeply than any subsequently manufactured division ever could. We are all children of 1971. It is time we began acting like it.

## Preserving 8 Theatre Road: Our Liberation War's nerve centre



Sharmin Ahmad  
is daughter of Tajuddin Ahmad and founder of One Light Institute and a peace educator dedicated to preserving Bangladesh's liberation history.

SHARMIN AHMAD

In the heart of Kolkata, at 8 Shakespeare Sarani—formerly known as 8 Theatre Road—stands a building whose walls once echoed with the pulse of a nation's liberation. Today, it is known as Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, a site of spiritual and cultural significance named after Indian nationalist and spiritual master Sri Aurobindo. However, in 1971, during Bangladesh's Liberation War against the genocidal Pakistani military regime, it served a very different purpose: it was the wartime headquarters of the first government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, popularly known as the Mujibnagar Government. It was here that the first prime minister of Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmad, led the war for independence with unmatched resolve, humility, and vision.

Though the mango grove at Baidyanathatala in Meherpur was named Mujibnagar by Tajuddin Ahmad and declared the first capital of Bangladesh, the government was compelled—due to the intensifying war situation and bombardment in surrounding areas—to relocate its operational base to 8 Theatre Road. Tajuddin Ahmad declared that wherever the government moved during the war, it would carry the name Mujibnagar, in honour of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was in prison in Pakistan and made the president of the first government. Thus, this Kolkata address became the de facto Mujibnagar—the first capital in exile.

The building, then under the ownership of the Government of India and used by the Border Security Force (BSF), was transformed into a sovereign space. Within its modest rooms, Tajuddin Ahmad ran a government-in-exile that became one of the most principled, successful and effective administrations in Bangladesh's history. He lived in a small, austere room adjacent to his office, washing his own clothes and refusing the comforts of

family life. He had taken a solemn vow: until Bangladesh was free, he would not return to his family or indulge in personal comfort. His leadership was not only strategic but deeply moral.

From this very building, some of the most consequential decisions of the war were made. It was here that the National Advisory Committee was formed, with Tajuddin Ahmad as its convenor and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani as its chairman. This committee played a pivotal role in uniting political forces and strengthening the liberation movement. On November 21, 1971, the decision to formally establish the Bangladesh Armed Forces was taken here. From here, Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad wrote to Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi requesting formal recognition of Bangladesh. Her affirmative response, received at this very building, marked a turning point in the war.

This recognition was not only a bilateral milestone—it reverberated across the globe. The Bangladesh Liberation War unfolded against the backdrop of the Cold War, where the United States, the Soviet Union, and China each held differing positions. From 8 Theatre Road, appeals were made that reached far beyond South Asia, shaping debates in the United Nations and influencing humanitarian responses worldwide. The plight of one crore refugees in India drew international media coverage, mobilising civil society groups in Europe and North America, and making Bangladesh's struggle a matter of global conscience.

Perhaps most significantly, it was within these walls that Tajuddin Ahmad laid down three non-negotiable conditions for the entry of Indian allied forces into Bangladesh: first, that India must recognise Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state; second,

that military operations would be conducted under a joint command of the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini; and third, that Indian forces would withdraw as soon as instructed by the Bangladesh Government (Tajuddin Ahmad's speeches, in *Tajuddin Ahmad Itihaser Pata Theke*, edited by Simeen Hussain Rimi, Dhaka, Pratibhas, 1999, p387, 411-412). These conditions were accepted, underscoring the Mujibnagar Government's

leaders at 8 Theatre Road positioned their cause within a worldwide movement for dignity and freedom. This global resonance gave the liberation war moral weight far beyond its borders.

Indian diplomat and former Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit later recalled in his book *Liberation and Beyond: Indo-Bangladesh Relations* and in his interview in "Itihaser Satty Sandhane" (edited by Matiur Rahman,



PHOTO: SRI AUROBINDO INSTITUTE OF CULTURE  
To avoid bombardment in surrounding areas, our Liberation War's headquarters was relocated from Baidyanathatala in Meherpur to 8 Theatre Road, now 8 Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata, which houses the Sri Aurobindo Bhavan.

insistence on sovereignty, dignity, and mutual respect—even while operating from exile. As Barrister Amir-ul Islam later noted in his interview published in *Tajuddin Ahmad: Alok Anontodhara* (edited by Simeen Hussain Rimi, Pratibhas, 2006, p87), that even the allied troops did not enter France during the Second World War under any conditions—an observation that highlights Tajuddin Ahmad's foresight in securing Bangladesh's sovereignty through clearly defined terms for India's allied forces.

In insisting on sovereignty and equality, the Mujibnagar Government aligned Bangladesh's liberation with broader global struggles for decolonisation and self-determination. Just as African nations were asserting independence and Vietnam was resisting external domination, Bangladesh's

Dhaka, Prothoma Prokashan, p213) that it was Tajuddin Ahmad and Syed Nazrul Islam who proposed to the Indian government the formal recognition of Bangladesh and formation of the joint command. He also recalled Tajuddin strongly opposed the Indian Army's proposal for a unified command structure. His principled stand, taken from within this very building, was a testament to their statesmanship and courage. Despite being guests in a foreign land, they earned India's respect as equals.

This building also bore witness to internal strife. It was here that conspirators within the political fold attempted to undermine—and even assassinate—Tajuddin Ahmad (Muqeel Hasan, *Muldhara 71*, Dhaka, The University Press Limited, 1986, p145). Yet, he remained steadfast, running the government

with discipline, transparency, dedication and vision. He initiated the National Militia Project, composed of freedom fighters, to prepare them for post-war nation-building and to act as the country's third defence pillar alongside the military and police. His vision was rooted in justice, law, and order—not retaliation. After Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's return from prison, he abandoned the militia project; instead, a controversial Rakkhi Bahini was formed. Sheikh Mujib also issued a general amnesty without parliamentary consultation, allowing collaborators and war criminals to escape justice.

Despite the monumental role this building played in the victory of Bangladesh, its legacy remains largely unmarked. After the war, the property eventually came under the custodianship of Sri Aurobindo Bhavan. In 2018, I submitted a letter to the board of trustees and the board of directors of the property through an intermediary, respectfully requesting that a commemorative plaque be installed to honour the building's role as the wartime headquarters of the Mujibnagar Government and where Bangladesh's first prime minister lived. Though no formal reply was received, an officer noted that such a request should come through the Government of Bangladesh. While earlier efforts to preserve the historic site did not succeed, the responsibility to safeguard its legacy remains. The government can continue to pursue formal recognition and custodianship in due course, while civil society can at least work towards placing a memorial plaque to honour the role the site played during the Liberation War. Preserving this legacy will help ensure that the democratic principles born of that struggle are remembered with dignity and protected from distortion.

Preserving 8 Theatre Road is about contributing to global heritage. Nations worldwide safeguard sites that symbolise their fight for freedom—whether it is the wartime headquarters of Charles de Gaulle in London or the preserved independence landmarks of African states. By honouring this building, Bangladesh will affirm its place in that global tapestry of liberation, reminding the world that its victory was achieved through principled leadership and international solidarity.



# The Gen Z guide to thriving in your first job

**Your first job is 50% tasks, 50% learning how to navigate tasks. The real advantage comes when you consciously build a learning system tailored to your role. Instead of waiting for onboarding sessions to hand you everything, take initiative: search for internal documentation, past reports, project archives, and templates. Spend your first few weeks spotting patterns.**

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Your first job feels a bit like walking into adulthood with Google Maps turned on, praying the little blue dot knows where it is going. You are excited, anxious, overprepared in weird ways, and underprepared in the ways that matter. But the truth is, entering the workforce in your early twenties is not just about learning office etiquette or remembering everyone's name on day one. It is about designing the systems, habits, and expectations that will shape your entire professional identity. So, here is a grounded, strategy-forward guide to what you should do before and during your first job.

#### Build your professional operating system before the job starts

The smartest thing you can do is set up your own professional OS before your first official morning commute. This means creating a digital and mental toolkit that will help you organise tasks, track progress, and avoid drowning in small responsibilities. Start by setting up a task-management space through tools like Notion, Todoist, Google Calendar, or ClickUp. Your goal is not to aestheticise productivity but to build a system where every deadline, learning target, and recurring task lives visibly. Before the job begins, sketch out templates for daily logs, weekly reflections, and project trackers. This habit trains your brain to operate rhythmically instead of reactively, which is the difference between surviving your first job and quietly excelling. This system also becomes your personal archive, capturing accomplishments, challenges, and learning moments you will later need for appraisals, job switches, or higher studies. Essentially, you build the scaffolding so that when the real work starts, you are not wasting bandwidth building your processes from scratch.

#### Set expectations with yourself instead of obsessing over perfection

One of the biggest traps in your first job is believing you need to prove yourself

immediately, flawlessly, and loudly. That usually ends with burnout, overcommitment, and a personality crisis by the end of your first month. The better approach is expectation-setting—not with your boss, but with yourself. Sit down before joining and interrogate what you expect this job to give you. Is it skills? Exposure? Stability? A launching pad? Alignment matters because entering a job expecting mentorship when the environment is sink-or-swim is a recipe for resentment. When you are clear on why you joined, you can remain emotionally grounded even on tough days. Once you start, observe the pace of the workplace, understand the implicit expectations, and gradually adjust instead of trying to outperform everyone right away. Learn to differentiate between visibility and value because you do not need to overdo it to be recognised; you just need to contribute thoughtfully and consistently.

#### Learn how to learn on the job, not just how to perform

Your first job is 50% tasks, 50% learning how to navigate tasks. The real advantage comes when you consciously build a learning system tailored to your role. Instead of waiting for onboarding sessions to hand you everything, take initiative: search for internal documentation, past reports, project archives, and templates. Spend your first few weeks spotting patterns. Try to understand how decisions are made, how communication flows, what your team prioritises, and what metrics matter. Set up weekly self-reviews where you interpret what you learned, what confused you, and what you need to clarify. This builds a compounding knowledge base that slowly makes you irreplaceable. When you treat learning as an active process rather than something that happens passively around you, you accelerate your ramp-up period and quietly build a mastery that others will eventually notice.

#### Master workplace communication without losing your personality

Communication is the secret skill that determines how people perceive your work, your competence, and your reliability. It is not just about writing proper emails; it is about developing a communication presence. Before your first day, practice rewriting your texts, emails, and messages to be clearer, shorter, and slightly more structured. When you start the job, observe how your team communicates to understand whether they are formal, rapid-fire, emoji-friendly, context-heavy, or context-light. Mirror the tone without erasing your own voice. Learn the art of sending progress updates even when nobody has asked yet; it reduces micromanagement and builds trust. Another underrated skill is learning how to ask for help elegantly, framing it as "I have tried X, Y, and Z; here is where I am stuck." This makes you appear proactive even when you are confused. Over time, you find the balance between professional clarity and personal warmth, i.e. the place where you sound like yourself but also like someone who knows what they are doing.

#### Build financial habits from day one, even if your salary is screaming otherwise

You do not need a massive paycheck to build good financial habits. You need discipline, awareness, and maybe a soft scolding from your future self. Before your job starts, set up a second bank account that acts as your invisible money vault; later, this becomes the home of your savings, emergency funds, and eventual investments. Use your first month to observe your spending patterns, then gradually tighten them. Review subscriptions, set bill reminders, automate savings, and calculate how much you spend on food vs. commute vs. spontaneous impulse purchases. Introduce categories in your finances like mandatory, growth, and chaos, because you are not trying to become a finance bro; rather, you are trying to avoid crying at the end of each month. Your first job is less about earning money and more about learning how money behaves around you. And that lesson stays for life.

## JOBS SPOTLIGHT

**Danish Refugee Council (DRC)**  
Supply Chain Assistant



Deadline: December 23

#### Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree in a relevant field, such as Business Administration, Supply Chain Management, Management/ Finance/ Accounting/ Economics, or a related discipline.

Minimum experience: 1 year

**Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL)**

Senior Officer, Industrial & Energy Efficiency Finance



Deadline: December 30

#### Eligibility:

• BBA/ MBA(Finance)/ M.Sc. (Finance) with a minimum CGPA of 3.00. Prior work experience in the relevant sector required.

Minimum experience: 2-3 years

**Square Textiles Division**

Executive, HR & Admin



Deadline: December 31

#### Eligibility:

• Honours and Master's in HRM/ Management/Public Administration from any public or reputed private university. PGD in HRM will add preference.

Minimum experience: 5 years

**Huawei Technologies (Bangladesh) Ltd.**



Account Manager, Sales (Carrier Network)

Deadline: January 6

#### Eligibility:

• Graduation from any reputed university or institution. Graduation in EEE, CSE, ECE, & ETE will get preference.

Minimum experience: 5-8 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



## AI agent performance: more isn't always better, study finds

#### NEXT STEP DESK

It's long been assumed that if one AI agent is good, more must be better. But new research from Google Research, Google DeepMind, and MIT reveals that's not true. In fact, the study has found that adding AI agents can sometimes slash performance by up to 70%.

The finding comes from one of the largest controlled studies on AI agent systems to date. In a study, titled 'Towards a Science of Scaling Agent Systems', researchers tested 180 different setups across financial analysis, web search, game planning, and office tasks. They compared single-agent systems to multi-agent teams with different communication styles: independent workers, manager-led teams, peer discussion groups, and hybrid models.

What they found was striking: Multi-agent teams performed brilliantly on some tasks - improving financial analysis by over 80% - but failed dramatically on others, like

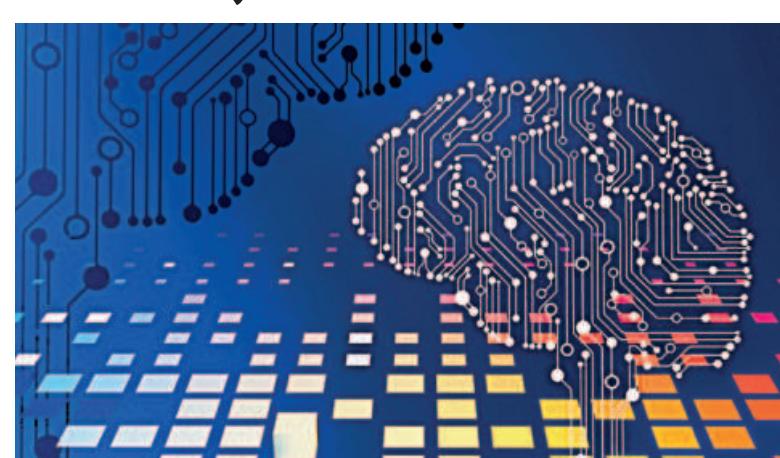


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

step-by-step game planning, where they performed 70% worse than a single agent.

The reason, as the study says, is "task fit". Tasks that can be split into parallel subtasks benefit from multiple agents. But tasks that require step-by-step logic get bogged down by communication overhead. The more complex the

tools involved, the worse multi-agent systems perform.

For AI developers and businesses, this changes a lot. Instead of defaulting to multi-agent setups, teams should now match the system to the task. This shift will lead to smarter, faster, and cheaper AI deployments, and a new era of precision in AI system design.

## Human typing speed is slowing AI progress: OpenAI executive

#### NEXT STEP DESK

Alexander Embiricos, Product Manager of OpenAI's Codex coding agent, has recently stated that a key bottleneck in developing advanced artificial intelligence is the speed at which humans can type.

In a podcast interview, OpenAI senior executive Embiricos argued that progress toward artificial general intelligence (AGI) is limited by the human role in the process. He explained that current systems require people to write detailed instructions, or prompts, and to manually review the AI's work, which creates a slowdown.

Embiricos also said the "current underappreciated limiting factor" is "human typing speed" or the speed at which people can multitask to create prompts. He suggested the next step is to build systems where AI agents can autonomously validate their own work, removing the need for constant human oversight.

His view is that when AI can operate and self-correct without waiting for human input, it will lead to explosive "hockey stick" growth in productivity. Embiricos predicted that early adopters will begin seeing this surge in efficiency starting next year, with larger companies following in subsequent years.



## AI might be weakening core coding skills, Anthropic study finds

#### NEXT STEP DESK

A new internal study at AI company Anthropic has found that engineers using its Claude AI are concerned about the decline of their fundamental programming skills, even as their productivity increases.

The research, based on a survey of 132 engineers and 53 interviews, revealed a significant tension. While employees reported using Claude for nearly 60% of their

work with a 50% productivity gain, a notable concern emerged about skill retention. Engineers specifically worry that over-reliance on AI assistants leads to the weakening of the deep, hands-on coding abilities developed through manual problem solving.

This decline in skills is considered problematic because effectively using AI requires strong supervision and validation of its output, a task that depends on the very expertise that may be

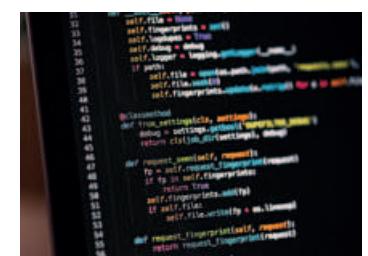


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

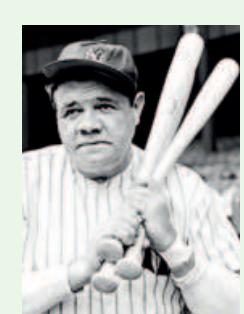
diminishing. In the study, some engineers reported deliberately practising tasks without AI to

maintain their proficiency.

The study also found that Claude enables engineers to complete 27% more work, often in areas outside their primary expertise, making them more "full-stack." However, this broadening of capabilities exists alongside the anxiety about losing foundational coding skills. The research from the AI developer suggests these professional challenges may foreshadow similar shifts across the tech industry.

**"Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game."**

BABE RUTH



## Kings-MSC match deferred

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) Professional League Management Committee has backed off on its decision to stage Tuesday's high-profile Federation Cup clash between holders Bashundhara Kings and Mohammedan behind closed doors at the National Stadium.

The heavyweight encounter has now been deferred by one week and will be played on December 23 at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla, while other Federation Cup fixtures have been rescheduled accordingly. Meanwhile, Tuesday's other match between Fortis FC and Arambagh KS will go ahead as planned at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

The committee had earlier opted for a closed-door fixture at the National Stadium after failing to secure police clearance. The situation arose due to the unavailability of the Cumilla venue, which will host the district administration's Victory Day programme.

However, Mohammedan formally requested the BFF on December 14 to shift the match to another date, stating their refusal to play the crucial fixture without spectators -- a stance that ultimately prompted the committee to revise its decision.



Former Bangladesh national women's football team captain Sabina Khatun tries to skip past a teammate during a futsal training session at an indoor facility in Dhaka yesterday. Sabina, along with 17 other football stars who have been ignored for the football team in recent times, were taken through the paces by the national futsal team coach Saeid Khodarahmi during the half-hour training session. The team will be taking part in the inaugural SAFF Women's Futsal Championship, scheduled to take place in Bangkok from January 3 to 25 next year.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## A new setting, honest reflection and a comeback plan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Test captain Najmul Hossain Shanto and ODI skipper Mehidy Hasan Miraz faced the media in Mirpur on Monday morning, something they have done countless times, and yet, it was a brand-new experience for both of them.

Usually, the media follow the Tigers in Mirpur, hovering around the ground and stadium premises for a byte or two, or firing questions at them at the press conference room.

But on Monday, it was the captains who made their way into the press box of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium for the very first time, and faced the media together.

The reason behind this unique meetup was the Bangladesh All Stars match, set to place today in Mirpur at 5:30pm. The match has been arranged by the Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) and will feature two teams -- 'Oparajeyo' and 'Odommyo' -- which will be led by Shanto and Miraz respectively.

Several national team stars and some up-and-coming cricketers will feature in this exhibition match commemorating Bangladesh's Victory Day and funds from the game will be used for the welfare of cricketers.

The session started in a jovial mood but in between the friendly fire of the All Stars match, questions gradually shifted to more serious topics concerning the national team and the captains.

Since taking over the ODI captaincy from Shanto, Miraz has had a torrid time in



the hot seat, winning three of nine matches as skipper.

A number of issues are plaguing the ODI side at the moment, one of which is finding a fixed spot for Miraz in the batting order.

"I am a player who has batted in every position -- from one to nine -- for Bangladesh," the all-rounder said on Monday. As captain in 2025, he has batted five times at No. 5, thrice at No. 6 and once at No. 9.

Going by his career average in different positions, the top order is the best place for him as he averages over 43 at No. 1-3, while batting lower down he averages in the 20s.

Still, the ODI skipper claimed he was keen on batting lower down the order in the future due to the impact he has helped create.

"I feel I played more impactful knocks when I batted at No.8 for Bangladesh, when I bat with bowlers," he said.

"I have realised that if I bat at No.6, I would be batting with at least two batters and can also support the tail. I would be able

to win more matches for the team... When I bat at the top, I can score runs but I can't guarantee we will win since I already scored runs at No.4 but we didn't win. At the end of the day, winning is the most important as captain," he added.

Meanwhile, Test skipper Shanto, who is currently not a part of the T20I setup, was asked if he was planning to script a comeback into the shortest format with runs in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

Shanto, who will play for Rajshahi Warriors, is hoping to make it happen through impactful knocks.

"I feel this BPL is very important for me... If the opportunity comes, I will try to do well so that I can get a chance [in T20Is] again," Shanto said.

"It's very important to leave an impact in T20s. Even if I score big runs [in BPL], the main thing is what kind of impact I am making. That would be my goal in every match," he said.

## Lyon ready to roar again in third Ashes Test

AFP, Adelaide

Nathan Lyon made clear his disappointment at being dropped for a home Test for the first time in 14 years in Brisbane two weeks ago, but the Australian spinner is only looking forward before the third Test at a ground he knows very well.

The 38-year-old and skipper Pat Cummins are expected to come back into the home side on Wednesday at Adelaide Oval, where Lyon was part of the ground staff before becoming Australia's most successful Test off-spinner.

"Every opportunity that there's a Test match on, I want to be a part of, I love playing cricket," Lyon told reporters after being added to the stadium's "Avenue of Honour" on Monday.

"So there was a lot of disappointment, but there's no point looking back now, we're looking forward and moving on, and looking at what my role looks like this week."

Australia are 2-0 up in the series, but Lyon has only bowled two overs so far.

"I haven't really had the opportunity to get my teeth into this Test series yet, but that opportunity will hopefully come soon, and we'll put it into play," he added.



His old boss on the tractors at Adelaide Oval, head groundsman Damian Hough, suggested the pitch he has prepared for the match will offer something for Lyon.

"Spin needs to play a part here. It always has. Even last year when (Nathan) didn't bowl a lot of overs, I felt that the pitch would have spun," Hough said on Monday.

"Spin needs to play a part in pitches around Australia, and we want it to play a part."

Lyon's lack of recent action has left him stalled on 562 wickets, one shy of Glenn McGrath's tally in the list of most prolific Australian Test wicket takers.

Despite his age, Lyon has long made it clear that he has no intention of retiring any time soon and believes his record speaks for itself.

"I've played 140 Test matches. I feel like I don't have a point to prove to anyone," Lyon said.

"I'm very clear on my role within this Australian cricket team. I love playing with everyone in that change room and love representing Australia."

"If I get that opportunity again, I'll keep doing that. My dream is to continue to play cricket for Australia."



Members of the Bangladesh men's U-21 hockey team and their coaching staff are felicitated during a reception programme at Shaheen Dwip Resort in the Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, as a Tk 60 lakh cash award is announced for their Challenger Trophy triumph courtesy of a 17th-place finish at the recently concluded FIH Hockey Junior World Cup in India. The Bangladesh women's U-18 side, too, received a cash award, Tk 10 lakh, following their bronze-winning campaign at the AHF Junior Women's Asia Cup.

## ACC U-19 ASIA CUP

### Junior Tigers seal semifinal spot

STAR SPORTS DESK

Zawad Abrar scored his second half-century in two matches as Bangladesh notched their second victory of the ACC U-19 Asia Cup, sealing a last-four berth, with a seven-wicket win over Nepal in Dubai on Monday.

Zawad remained unbeaten on 70 off 68 deliveries. Bangladesh chased down Nepal's 130-run total with seven wickets in hand and 25.1 overs to spare.

The Junior Tigers had beaten Afghanistan by three wickets in their opening game, with Zawad scoring a team-high 96 in that match.

Earlier, Mohammad Sobuj had taken three wickets while Saad Islam, Shahriar Ahmed and Azizul Hakim had chipped in with two wickets each as Bangladesh bowled out Nepal for 130 in 31.1 overs after opting to bowl first.

A two-wicket victory for Sri Lanka against Afghanistan later in the day meant both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka went through to the semifinals. The two sides will meet on Wednesday in the last Group B fixture, a match that will decide who claim the top spot in the group. Sri Lanka are ahead of Bangladesh on net run-rate.

## SHORT CORNER

### FIDE reinstates Russian and Belarusian teams in official contests

The International Chess Federation (FIDE) has voted to allow teams from Russia and Belarus to return to official competitions and fully restored the rights of youth players from both countries, while postponing a final decision on the use of national flags and anthems in adult team events.

### Women's BCL gets underway

Central Zone and East Zone picked up wins on the opening day of the Women's Bangladesh Cricket League (WBCL) at Rajshahi Divisional Stadium today in Rajshahi.

### Shoaib Akhtar backs Bangladesh to go deep in T20 World Cup

Pakistan's legendary fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar believes Bangladesh have the potential to go deep in the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in India and Sri Lanka from February 7, citing the steady improvement of their pace unit in recent years.

### Four more first division clubs relegated after no-show

Four more clubs in the ongoing Dhaka First Division Cricket League 2025-26 were relegated on Monday after failing to show up for their respective first-round matches at four different venues.

\*\* Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



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**'I don't know what mistake I have made'**  
**Journo Anis arrested in anti-terrorism case, put on 5-day remand**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist Anis Alamgir was arrested and put on remand in an anti-terrorism case yesterday, a day after he was picked up from Dhaka's Dhamrai area.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jashita Islam placed him on a five day remand after police produced him before the court with a seven day remand prayer, said state lawyer Shamsuddoha Sumon.

The journalist was escorted to the court amid tight security around 5:30pm from the court's lockup.

During the hearing, Anis was allowed to speak after the prosecution submitted their arguments in favour of remand.

Anis told the court that he is a journalist, and questioning those in power is his job.

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The shooting of Dhaka 8 aspiring candidate Sharif Osman Hadi was part of a conspiracy to disrupt the upcoming election, BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman said yesterday.

He said a vested group against Bangladesh's interests is repeatedly trying to obstruct the polls by using various excuses.

Calling on people to stay united, Tarique said there is no reason to fear and that the election would be held on time. "We have to stay alert. The conspiracy has not stopped yet. Osman Hadi is a brave son who stands for democracy, and the incident in which he was shot is also part of that conspiracy," he said while speaking virtually at a discussion marking Victory Day, organised by BNP at the city's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Asking what Hadi's crime was, Tarique raised three questions and said he thought the answers would make the attackers' character clear.

"First, if the interim government can be made to fail, who will be happy? Second, if the current interim government can be kept in place without an election, who will benefit? Third, if a people's government is not formed through the people's votes, who will gain?" he asked.

"I believe the identity of the attackers of Hadi are hidden in the answers to these questions," he said.

Referring to the election, Tarique said, "After more than one and a half decades, the Election Commission has finally announced the date of that long-awaited national election."

A fallen and fugitive group has for a long time distorted the history of Bangladesh's independence and the Liberation War for its own interests and attempted to politicise history, he said.

"As a continuation of this attempt, the defeated forces



Police obstruct a procession from the Dhaka University campus as it heads to besiege the home ministry to protest the shooting of Sharif Osman Hadi and demand the resignation of the home adviser. The photo was taken near the Abdul Gani road yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

**'Polls will be held on time defying conspiracies'**

**Tarique urges all to be vigilant**

**Trader chased down, hacked to death in the capital**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A local trader was hacked to death by unidentified miscreants in Dhaka's Dakkhinkhan last night.

The deceased was identified as Shahjahan Dealer, 45, a resident of the Ashkona Panir Pump area. He provided cable TV service in the area.

Police and local sources said he was a member of the local Jubo League.

A witness said four men armed with sharp weapons chased Shahjahan before attacking him. They described the assault as "barbaric", saying the attackers struck the victim's head indiscriminately.

Dakkhinkhan Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shoriful Islam said the incident occurred around 9:00pm when Shahjahan went to Noddapara's Taltola area for business purposes.

Miscreants attacked him when he was standing next to a roadside phone top-up shop, he said.

Police said they are collecting and reviewing CCTV footage from the area to identify and arrest those involved in the murder.

Dakkhinkhan Police Station Sub-Inspector Saiful Islam said no one had been arrested as of midnight, but the operation was ongoing.

The motive is not immediately clear. The body will be taken to a hospital morgue for autopsy."



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**Clarify your remarks on Hadi**

**Jamaat ameer asks CEC**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman has demanded an explanation from Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin over his remarks regarding the shooting of Osman Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho.

The Jamaat chief said CEC's statement has deeply hurt the nation.

"Because of this painful and cowardly attack on Osman Hadi, the whole nation is deeply shocked. Everyone is expressing sympathy. At such a time, a person holding a very responsible position, the head of the Election Commission, which will effectively oversee the country in the coming days, made a statement that, I believe, has hurt people like me and many others."

He made the remarks yesterday while speaking as the chief guest at a Victory Day discussion organised by Jamaat-e-Islami Dhaka South at the Jatiya Press Club.

Earlier in the day, CEC Nasir said the country's law and order situation has not deteriorated, describing the recent shooting of Hadi as an isolated incident.

"I would politely request him [CEC] to explain his statement without delay... He must prove that he is fit to hold such a sensitive and responsible position. Then, if the nation's pain is eased, that is one outcome; otherwise, the nation will decide for itself. It will be one of the two."

He continued, "If '24 had not happened, the Chief Election Commissioner... would not be here today. If '24 had not happened, many of those serving in the current interim government would have been in jail... Respecting '24 means respecting Bangladesh and its people. I humbly request everyone to respect '71, and in the same way, to respect '24 as well."

"If we are elected with the love of the people of this country, we will build a united nation by including everyone. We will invite all to join us in forming the



SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

**Australia mourns victims of mass shooting**

Vows stricter gun laws as toll rises to 15; police accuse father, son duo; Bondi 'hero' who disarmed gunman recovering



People gather in front of a floral tribute near Bondi Pavilion following a shooting at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia vowed stricter gun laws yesterday as it began mourning victims of its worst mass shooting in almost 30 years, in which police accused a father-and-son duo of killing 15 people at a Jewish celebration at Sydney's famed Bondi Beach.

The incident has raised questions whether Australia's gun laws, among the toughest in the world, need overhaul, with police saying the older suspect had held a firearms license since 2015, along with six registered weapons.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said his cabinet agreed to strengthen gun laws and work on a national firearms register to tackle aspects such as the number of weapons permitted by gun licences, and how long the latter are valid.

"People's circumstances can change," he had told reporters before the cabinet met. "People can be radicalised over a period of time. Licences should not be in perpetuity."

Of the two gunmen, the 50 year-old father was killed at the scene, taking the

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**১৬ ডিসেম্বর  
মহান বিজয় দিবস ২০২৫**  
বিজয়ের মহিমামূল্য প্রহরে  
লাল সুজের গৌরবময় চেতনায় সকলকে জানাই  
আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা

