



Clockwise from left: Funeral attendees join Janaza prayers with Sharif Osman Hadi's coffin placed before them. His body is then carried to the graveyard near Dhaka University Central Mosque. There, he was laid to rest beside National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Later, thousands march to Shahbagh intersection for a sit-in demanding justice for Hadi's killing. The photos were taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTOS: CA PRESS WING, STAR

AK Khandker, deputy commander of Liberation War, no more

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The following day, he met Liberation Army chief Ataul Gani Osmani and members of the government-in-exile, after which he was assigned the responsibility of deputy commander of the Liberation War.

He also played a leading role in forming the Bangladesh Air Force and was appointed coordinator of Operation Kilo Flight in late August 1971.

On December 16, during the surrender of Pakistani forces, he represented the Liberation Army in the absence of Colonel Osmani.

Following independence, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman appointed Khandker as the chief of the

reconstituted air force.

Khandker was appointed as the Bangladesh High Commissioner to Australia and served in the mission from 1976 to 1982. From 1982 to 1986, he was the Bangladesh High Commissioner in India.

In 1986, he was appointed adviser to the president, and thereafter he served as the planning minister until 1990. He was elected as a member of parliament in 1998 and 2009 from the Pabna-2 constituency.

In 2009, he was inducted as a full cabinet minister and given the charge of the planning ministry.

Born on January 1, 1930 in Rangpur, Khandker joined the

Pakistan Air Force in 1949.

He was survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus expressed deep sorrow at his death, describing Khandker as an unforgettable soldier of Bangladesh's struggle for independence.

In the Liberation War of 1971, he played an important role in achieving the country's independence by demonstrating courage, foresight and leadership qualities. His strategic decisions, organisational skills and unwavering patriotism as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Mukti Bahini further consolidated the struggle for independence, Yunus added.

The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists said it was alarmed by reports of crowds vandalising and setting fire to the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

"CPJ is monitoring the situation and urges Bangladeshi authorities to ensure the safety of news outlets and journalists, and to hold those responsible accountable."

UK-based rights body ARTICLE 19 said both newspapers have faced sustained threats from political, religious and cultural extremist groups in recent times.

The latest attacks, coming ahead of the February 12 election, reflect a deeply troubling escalation of hostility and violence against journalists and cultural practitioners, it said, noting that the attack on Chhayanaut mirrors a "broader surge in violence against cultural spaces and artists nationwide".

Such attacks, and the government's failure to prevent or respond effectively, stand in stark violation of Bangladesh's national and international commitments, ARTICLE 19 added.

The Broadcast Journalist Centre said the attacks on the two media

A sea of mourners bids Hadi farewell

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the funeral ground and surrounding areas were completely packed with mourners.

BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed and Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman were seen marching together to join the Janaza.

The South Plaza and the entire Manik Mia Avenue witnessed scenes of mixed emotions, as some chanted slogans against fascism and hegemony, and demanded a trial for Hadi's killing.

They chanted slogans such as "We will be Hadi for ages, we will fight" and "We will not let Hadi Bhai's blood go in vain".

Abbas Uddin, a 40-year-old businessman from Mirpur, said, "A single funeral is enough to show what kind of person Hadi was. I have never seen such a massive turnout at any funeral."

Many mourners described Hadi as outspoken, principled and firmly opposed to aggression, saying his honesty and moral clarity had drawn an unprecedented public response.

Many attendees termed Hadi's death an irreparable loss. Several noted that Hadi did not belong to, nor speak for, any political party — something they called his greatest

strength.

A man who came from Mohakhali with his toddler son said he had underestimated the crowd. At one point, he climbed a small tree inside the parliament premises so that his child could see the proceedings.

Despite the weekend, metro stations from Kazipara onward were overwhelmed. At least three metro trains were so crowded that many passengers could not board. At the Farmgate Station, congestion was so severe that authorities allowed passengers to exit without punching tickets.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) deployed a large number of personnel, with 1,000 of them carrying body-worn cameras, said Muhammad Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner of the DMP's Media and Public Relations Division.

Twenty platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) were also deployed across the capital, confirmed Md Shariful Islam, the public relations officer of the paramilitary force.

Equipped with body-worn cameras and riot control gear, they were stationed at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and other key locations in the city.

Hadi, spokesperson for Inqilab Moncho, was laid to rest beside national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam near the Dhaka University Central Mosque.

A prayer was offered at the graveside.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan, Pro-VC Prof Mamun Ahmed, Daily Amar Desh Editor Mahmudur Rahman, Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) Vice-President Abu Shadik Kayem, Inqilab Moncho leader Abdullah Al Jaber, National Citizen Party (NCP) Member Secretary Akhter Hossen and Chief Coordinator (South) Hasnat Abdullah, among others, were present at that time.

He described Hadi as "the people's voice" and "a symbol of Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty."

He urged supporters to remain calm and avoid vandalism.

Earlier in the day, Sharif Osman

Condemnations pour in from home, abroad

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Calling the interim government's limitations in protecting constitutional rights "regrettable", ASK warned, "If this cycle of violence is not stopped, it may result in a permanent crisis for human rights and the democratic space for future generations."

Amnesty International, in a post on X, urged the interim government to ensure prompt investigations into Hadi's killing and the subsequent mob violence, and to hold perpetrators accountable through fair trials, without resorting to the death penalty.

It also expressed alarm over the lynching of Hindu garment worker Dipu Chandra Das following allegations of blasphemy.

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Such attacks, and the government's failure to prevent or respond effectively, stand in stark violation of Bangladesh's national and international commitments, ARTICLE 19 added.

The Broadcast Journalist Centre said the attacks on the two media

houses and the harassment of Nurul Kabir marked a severe deterioration in law and order and dealt a major blow to freedom of expression and independent journalism. "Such steps are reintroducing a culture of fear that shrinks the space for independent journalism," the statement said.

Meanwhile, Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur termed the attacks on media houses a "bad omen" for democracy. Visiting the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, he called for resistance against those, at home and abroad, who instigated the violence.

Exploiting our emotion and sentiment regarding the death of our struggling Osman Hadi, a group of misguided people carried out sabotage at several places, including the offices of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star," he said, alleging that the attacks were aimed at creating anarchy and instability to benefit a "third party".

Warning that government failure to prevent such incidents could delay the election, he added, "Without an elected government, it will not be possible to bring the country back on the right track." He also urged youths not to create unrest at anyone's provocation.

Bangladesh Sammilita Peshajibi Parishad, Chattogram, described the attacks on the media as "utterly unacceptable" and a direct blow to press freedom and the public's right to information, urging authorities to identify those involved, bring them to justice and ensure journalists' safety.

Chittagong University Journalists' Association said those who burn media offices and attack editors cannot claim even the minimum values of democracy.

Bangladeshi Journalists in International Media demanded immediate action. "Anything less will embolden further attacks and deepen

the culture of impunity," it said.

The Bashundhara Group also expressed deep concern and condemnation over the attacks. In a press release issued on behalf of Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, it said attacking journalists on duty is entirely unacceptable and contrary to freedom of expression and democratic principles. He demanded an immediate, fair and impartial investigation and exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Rights organisation Odhikar described the violence as an "attempt to sabotage the upcoming election through killings and vandalism", warning of a "bleak picture of a severe deterioration of the law and order situation" and an emerging culture of impunity.

It said that immediately after news of Hadi's death broke, certain individuals and groups carried out arson and vandalism at the offices of the two newspapers, Chhayanaut and Udichi, branding them parts of Indian hegemony. Odhikar also cited the assault on Nurul Kabir, the lynching of a Hindu garment worker, and the arson attack on the residence of International Crimes Tribunal prosecutor Tanvir Hasan Zoha.

"Odhikar believes that these killings, acts of sabotage and threats are deliberate attempts to derail the upcoming election," the group said.

It recommended arresting those involved in the murders of Hadi and the garment worker, pressing India to return the accused killers of Hadi, ensuring the safety of journalists, media outlets and dissenting voices, providing security to election candidates and July uprising leaders, strengthening intelligence activities and improving overall law and order.

"The government must remain extremely vigilant to ensure that no killings or acts of sabotage take place under the guise of violent extremism."

Hadi, you will be forever in our hearts

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in the hearts of all Bangladeshis. Insha'Allah, no one can remove you from there."

Describing Hadi's message from National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's "Bidrohi" — "Bolo Bir, chiro unnoto momo shir!" (Say, O brave one, my head is held ever high!) — as a lasting mantra for the nation, Prof Yunus said, "You have given us a mantra the nation will never forget. It will echo in our ears forever. With this mantra, we will prove ourselves in all our work. We will walk before the world with our heads held high. We will not bow before anyone."

"Millions of people have gathered here today [yesterday], more are coming in waves, while crores across Bangladesh and Bangladeshis living abroad are waiting for this moment to hear words spoken for and about Hadi."

Stressing that the gathering was not a farewell but a pledge, he said, "We have come to make a promise to you, Hadi — we will fulfil what you have said."

He said the promise would not be limited to those present, but would be

carried forward across generations.

Recalling Hadi's values, the chief adviser said, "Your love for humanity, your way of living and interacting with people, and your political outlook are being praised by everyone. We are instilling them in our hearts and minds."

"You wanted to participate in the election and, in doing so, showed us how an election campaign should be conducted."

He noted that Hadi had demonstrated how to reach people respectfully, how to express views without infringing on the rights of others, and how to engage with dignity. "Today, we entrust you to Allah. Always remembering your words, we shall continue on the path of the nation's progress."

Hadi's brother Mawlana Dr Abu Bakar Siddique, who administered the final prayers, narrated how he chose the name of Hadi's son, now eight months old and left without a father.

"When his child was born, he told me, 'Brother, choose a name for my child that speaks of the

spirit of revolution, a name that bears the identity of courage.' After much deliberation, I named his child 'Firnas', meaning brave and revolutionary."

"Today, one cannot bear to look at his child's face."

Dr Siddique expressed his sole demand: that the trial of Hadi's assassins take place on Bangladeshi soil. "It has been seven to eight days [since the attack on Hadi]. If a murderer can shoot openly in broad daylight in the capital after Friday prayers and get away with it, there is nothing more shameful than this. If they crossed the border, how did they pass through during those five to seven hours? I leave this question to the nation."

Hadi was the youngest of his six siblings. "Osman, you have not died; you have left us driven to madness," cried his grieving brother.

Abdullah Ali Jaber, member secretary of Inqilab Moncho, founded by Hadi, said, "How we come here to weep? What have we come here for? We have stood at this funeral today to take revenge for our brother's blood."

Arrest the killers or face indefinite blockade at Shahbagh

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Alam Chowdhury and Special Assistant to the

Chowdhury within 24 hours if they fail to clarify government action on the case.

Jaber outlined two demands: the arrest of all individuals involved in Hadi's murder, and the detention of alleged civil military intelligence associates linked to the Awami League. He said the killing was the work of a syndicate and urged authorities to act immediately.

He claimed Hadi was not killed by one person. "There is an entire syndicate behind this. We do not view any political party with suspicion, but no political parties are beyond

suspicion. The struggle of Hadi is not only problematic for only Awami League, but several other political parties have problems with it."

He warned against defending the perpetrators and said those supporting them publicly must also face justice.

Jaber further alleged that conspiracies were underway to disrupt upcoming elections and ensure the Awami League's return to power.

He described Hadi as "the people's voice" and "a symbol of Bangladesh's independence and sovereignty."

He urged supporters to remain calm and avoid vandalism.

Earlier in the day, Sharif Osman