



## Law and order failure led to Khuda Baksh's resignation

Say officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khuda Baksh Chowdhury resigned from his post as special assistant to the chief adviser amid growing concerns within the government over his handling of law and order ahead of the February 12 national election, officials said.

Several senior government officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Khuda Baksh was appointed special assistant on November 10, 2024, following the July mass uprising, with the expectation that he would play a pivotal role in restoring discipline and boosting morale within law enforcement agencies,

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A man collects date tree sap in the chilly morning in Daulatpur of Khulna yesterday. Many like him have no other option but to work during this cold spell that has affected several parts of the country.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Cold, dense fog disrupt daily life

Rajshahi records lowest 10.2 degrees Celsius

STAR REPORT

A shivering cold coupled with dense fog yesterday disrupted daily life across the country, particularly for people from low-income groups.

In Dhaka, residents experienced severe cold, with low-income and homeless people bearing the brunt.

"We are homeless and have been living on the streets, but it is difficult to sleep at night due to the severe cold," said Rahman Miah, who lives in the Palashi area.

In Rajshahi, the intensity of the cold increased sharply, with the district recording the country's lowest temperature of the current season at 10.2 degrees Celsius yesterday morning, said Rajshahi Meteorological Office assistant Tarek Aziz.

He warned that the temperature may drop further over the next few days, intensifying the cold spell.

Due to dense fog, vehicles were seen moving cautiously on roads with fog lights turned on.

Low- and middle-income people, particularly daily wage earners, faced severe hardship as they were forced to go to work early in the morning amid the fog and cold to sustain their livelihoods.

"Driving in this weather is very hard, but we still have to go out every day to earn a living," said Mohammad Yusuf, an auto-rickshaw driver in Rajshahi city.

Rafiqul Islam, a tea-stall owner at the city's Talaimari intersection, said the weather had turned noticeably harsher compared to previous days. "Very few people

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## MOGHBAZAR BLAST Grieving father returns home with son's coffin

TOUSIF KAIUM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Ali Akbar Majumder brought his family to Dhaka from Khulna four years ago, carrying the modest hope that hard work might bend fate in their favour.

That hope was extinguished in a single, violent moment on Wednesday, when his 21-year-old son Siam Majumder, was killed in a crude bomb attack in Moghbazar.

"Now I am returning home with my son's coffin," Akbar said yesterday outside the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue, his voice breaking.

The bomb, hurled from a flyover in front of the Muktiyoddha Sangsad Central Command Council, struck motor parts shop worker Siam as he was having tea at a roadside stall. He died on the spot, the cup unfinished.

"The state failed to protect my boy. I don't want anything else -- I just want justice," the grieving father said.

An auto-rickshaw driver, Akbar spoke of the long road his family had travelled to escape poverty. Burdened by a loan of Tk 5 lakh, he moved to Dhaka with his wife and two sons four years ago. Years of relentless labour had nearly cleared the debt.

"We were saving every penny to send Siam abroad for a better life. But he wanted to stay, start a small business, and change our fortune here," Akbar said, his words trailing off as a vehicle arrived to take the body to Eskaton for the first funeral prayer.

From there, the final journey would begin, back to Khulna, where Siam will be laid to rest.

When this correspondent visited the scene yesterday, the usually bustling area near the Muktiyoddha Sangsad stood eerily still. Tea stalls were shuttered, ropes cordoned

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## NCP's Ctg-16 nominee Arshadul quits party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

National Citizen Party's nominee for the Chattogram-16 (Banshkhali) constituency, Mir Arshadul Haque, has resigned from the party ahead of the upcoming election.

Arshadul, also the chief coordinator of NCP's Chattogram city unit, announced in a Facebook post yesterday that he had withdrawn from all positions within the party and would not contest the election from Chattogram-16 on its behalf.

NCP's Chattogram city unit joint coordinator Arif Moinuddin confirmed Arshadul's resignation.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Arshadul said the expectations that had led him to join NCP were not fulfilled due to what he described as the party's deviation from its promised political path.

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## Focus on 'quarantine' of Venezuela oil

White House orders military; Russia compares US blockade to piracy

REUTERS, Washington

The White House has ordered US military forces to focus almost exclusively on enforcing a "quarantine" of Venezuelan oil for at least the next two months, a US official told Reuters, indicating Washington is currently more interested in using economic rather than military means to pressure Caracas.

"While military options still exist, the focus is to first use economic pressure by enforcing sanctions to reach the outcome the White House is looking (for)," the official said on Wednesday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

While President Donald Trump has been publicly coy about his precise aims regarding Venezuela, he has privately pressured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to flee the nation, Reuters has reported. Trump said on Monday it would be smart for Maduro to leave power.

"The efforts so far have put tremendous pressure on Maduro, and the belief is that by late January, Venezuela will be facing an economic calamity unless it agrees to make significant concessions to the US," the official said.

Trump has accused the South American country of flooding the US with drugs, and his administration has for months been bombing boats originating in South America that it alleges were carrying drugs. Many nations have condemned the attacks as extrajudicial killings.

Trump has also frequently threatened to start bombing drug infrastructure on land, and has authorised covert CIA activity directed at

Caracas.

So far this month, the US Coast Guard has intercepted two tankers in the Caribbean Sea, both fully loaded with Venezuelan crude. The comments by the White House official on Wednesday come after Reuters reported that the Coast Guard was waiting for additional forces to carry out a third seizure, first attempted on Sunday, against an empty sanctioned vessel

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known as the Bella-1.

Venezuela's UN Ambassador Samuel Moncada said on Tuesday: "The threat is not Venezuela. The threat is the US government."

Meanwhile, Russia's foreign ministry said yesterday that the United States was reviving piracy and banditry in the Caribbean Sea by blockading Venezuela and said it hoped that US President Donald Trump's pragmatism would help avoid a disaster.

"Today we are witnessing complete lawlessness

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## One killed in mob beating over extortion allegation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A man was beaten to death by a mob in Rajbari's Pangsha upazila on Wednesday night over an extortion allegation, police said.

The incident took place around 11:00pm at Hosendanga village of Kalimohor union, Assistant Superintendent of Police (Pangsha Circle) Debrata Sarkar told reporters yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Amrit Mondal, also known as Samrat, a resident of the village.

During the incident, police arrested one of his associates, Mohammad Selim, and recovered two firearms from his possession.

The ASP said police rushed to the spot upon receiving information and rescued Samrat in a critical condition. He was taken to Pangsha Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead around 2:00am.

Police later recovered a pistol and one-shooter gun from Selim and took him into custody. Samrat's body was sent to Rajbari Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy, the ASP added.

He also said Samrat had at least two cases filed against him with Pangsha Police Station, including a murder case.

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## X-mas celebrated amid festivity

STAR REPORT

Christmas, the biggest religious festival of the Christian community, was celebrated yesterday across the country with religious fervour and festivity. Churches were illuminated and special prayers were offered at mission centres and homes to mark the birth of Jesus Christ.

On the occasion, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus exchanged greetings with representatives of the Christian community at the State Guest House Jamuna.

Wishing everyone on the occasion of Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Prof Yunus said, "You are a reflection of society. By looking at you, we can understand whether everything is in order."

"We want to build a healthy society. For that reason, the July charter has been prepared to uphold the spirit of the mass uprising," the chief adviser said, adding that through a referendum on this charter, the country would move one step forward.

He called upon religious leaders to play a role in raising public awareness about the upcoming election and referendum.

In their welcome address, Christian leaders highlighted the chief adviser's global reputation and his role in improving the country's economy and overall condition.

Religious Affairs Adviser AFM Khalid Hossain, Archbishop Bejoy N D'Cruze, Bishop Philip P Adhikary, Benedict Alo D'Rozario, Christopher Adhikari, and other community leaders were present at the meeting, according to the chief adviser's press wing.

CELEBRATIONS

In the capital and elsewhere, senior members of the

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Children offer Christmas prayers building a small platform with figurines of the baby Jesus, Mary, and the three wise men at Darusha Christian Para in Rajshahi's Paba upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

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