



Mob sets the building of The Daily Star on fire after vandalising and looting it on the night of December 18.

PHOTO: STAR

Mob attacks on Star, Prothom Alo scripted

Interim govt, Meta failed to act on long-running online incitement

The Daily Star and Dismislab, a fact-checking organisation, analysed 3,064 Facebook posts circulating before, during, and after the attacks and found that the assaults on the two media outlets last December were anything but sudden. Rather, the threats had been building in plain sight on social media for hours, days and even months. However, this is not just a story about the attacks themselves. This is a story about a predictable chain of events in which online incitement escalated into real-world violence, as monitoring systems, harmful-content moderation, and violence-prevention protocols failed to activate in time.

Star-DISMISLAB ANALYSIS

On the night of December 18, 2025, coordinated mobs attacked and set fire to the offices of two of Bangladesh's leading newspapers -- The Daily Star and Prothom Alo -- and the cultural institution Chhayanaut in Dhaka. The following evening, on December 19, the central office of Udichi Shilpigosthi, another cultural organisation, was also attacked and burned.

The Daily Star and Dismislab analysed 3,064 Facebook posts published between December 13 and 19 and found a clear link between online incitement and real-world violence.

Over several days, hostile narratives against the two newspapers were built up by influencers and right-wing activists. It then escalated into direct calls to burn and attack buildings at named locations across Dhaka.

Crowds later gathered, carried out attacks, and moved from one target to another in line with what was being posted on Facebook in real time.

The evidence indicates that law enforcement



Mobs set ablaze the Prothom Alo office on December 18, 2025.

PHOTO: STAR

agencies and Meta did not act on visible threats circulating on Facebook for more than 20 hours, even as the violence was being livestreamed. Phrases such as "Tonight", "Right now", and "Joy Bangla kore dite hobe [must be destroyed]" spread widely on Facebook, falsely describing the two newspapers as "Indian agents" and "anti-national forces".

Calls for violence continued through the night, undetected and unaddressed -- revealing sheer weaknesses in the monitoring

and response capacity of the Bangladesh authorities, as well as in Meta's ability to detect and moderate content that posed an imminent risk of harm.

THE INCITEMENT

Among the posts analysed, the first widely shared call for violence appeared on December 15, 2025, in a public Facebook group by a user based in Cox's Bazar. The group called "Bharot Birodhi Churanto Andolon [Ultimate Anti-India Movement]" has 68,000 members.

The post, containing a photo of the Prothom

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Govt to review 'harassment' cases filed after August 5

Salahuddin says falsely implicated individuals must not suffer

- ➔ New commission to reinvestigate the 2009 BDR carnage
- ➔ 2,701 constables to be recruited; past constable hiring to be reviewed
- ➔ Reinstatement process for 650 disqualified sub-inspectors and sergeants
- ➔ Lottery-based posting system for OCs and SPs scrapped
- ➔ Firearms licences issued over 17 years to be reviewed; 10,000 guns already illegal after non-deposit
- ➔ 'Enlisted assistants' proposed at passport offices to curb brokers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed has directed police to review cases filed after August 5 in which prominent businesspeople and other well-known members of society were named as accused and are allegedly facing harassment, and to take necessary steps.

He issued the directive at a meeting yesterday with the heads of all departments and law enforcement agencies under the home ministry.

Salahuddin also outlined government plans for fresh recruitment of police constables, the formation of a new commission to reinvestigate the BDR carnage, and efforts to end "mob culture" in the country.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, he said, "Taking advantage of the [post-August 5] situation, some opportunist groups have filed cases naming many people as accused to harass them, despite there being no question

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New ICT chief prosecutor vows sincerity, justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Chief Prosecutor Aminul Islam yesterday said he would move cases at the International Crimes Tribunal forward with sincerity, speed, and in accordance with the law. He promised to ensure justice for the people who were killed or injured during the July uprising.

Aminul made the remarks after assuming office in the afternoon, following a



Aminul Islam

gazette notification issued by the law ministry earlier in the day. He replaced Tajul Islam, who was appointed the ICT chief prosecutor by the interim government on September 7, 2024.

"I have taken on a crucial responsibility. I will strive to discharge my duties in line with the aspirations of those who were martyred and injured during the July uprising," Aminul said. "I will do my utmost to ensure that ongoing trials, as well as those to come, are conducted with sincerity, efficiency, and fairness."

He stressed that prosecutions would strictly

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Stay on message, avoid making stray remarks

Tarique instructs his cabinet; Family Card pilot launch likely on Mar 10

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and BAHARAM KHAN

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday directed ministers and state ministers to refrain from making unwarranted remarks that could trigger controversy or undermine the government's image.

At a meeting held at the Secretariat, he asked cabinet members to be cautious when speaking to the media, avoid making unnecessary comments, and share only verified and policy-based information so that the government's message remains clear and consistent to the people.

The directive comes after a few ministers made statements that were met with bewilderment, criticism, and ridicule.

For instance, Road Transport and Bridges, Railways and Shipping Minister Sheikh Rabiul Alam's comment on extortion on February 19 drew widespread criticism and debate on social media.

"The prime minister asked us not to speak on issues related to other ministries and to share only updates and developments concerning our own respective ministries," said a cabinet member on the condition

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Makeshift shops line the railway tracks at Jurain railgate in the capital yesterday as trains pass through the narrow corridor, putting vendors and customers at serious risk. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

BANGLA ACADEMY Literary Award 2025 winners announced

A&E DESK

Bangla Academy yesterday announced the recipients of the Bangla Academy Literary Award 2025 for their contributions in eight categories.

The names were disclosed through a press release, which also said that the awards will be formally conferred at the inaugural ceremony of the Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela 2026 on February 26 (Thursday). It added that the awards will be conferred by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman.

The names announced

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS & BEST WISHES

to

TARIQUE RAHMAN, MP

Chairman Bangladesh Nationalist Party - BNP on assuming office as **Honourable Prime Minister** of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh after securing absolute majority in the **13th National Parliament Election.**

SAYEED AHMED, MP
President
&
Executive Committee Members

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