



THE SPOTLIGHT

দি স্পটলাইট



NEWSLETTER OF THE GLOBAL CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

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COVER STORY

Human Rights Violations and Abuses in Bangladesh Under the Rule of the Interim Government

A Report of the GCDG Research Wing
(Part 2)

Continued from Part 1 (SPOTLIGHT Vol 1 Issue 1)

4. According to a statement of Chief Adviser's Press Wing, 44 police personnel were killed across Bangladesh during the July-August student-led uprising (55). The highest number of casualties occurred at Enayetpur Police Station in Sirajganj, where 15 officers were killed. Additional fatalities included eight officers in Jatrabari and five in Uttara. The police headquarters released an official list of deceased officers (55). However, these numbers are severely underestimated, since there is extreme pressure on the press by the Interim Government to publish news of fatalities, atrocities and destruction committed by the supporters of this Government, on which they are heavily dependent to stay in power.
 5. In Sirajganj, additional violent attacks led to 27 deaths, including six people killed during an attack on an Awami League office in Raigonj Upazila (56). Further violence saw the homes of political figures targeted, with two bodies recovered after the residence of Sirajganj-2 MP, Jannat Ara, was torched (56).
 6. Even after nine months of the interim government, killing and atrocities are continuing at an alarming rate. On 17 April 2025, Bhabesh Chandra Roy, 58, of Basudebpur village under Shatagram Union, Dinajpur's Biral upazila was abducted from his home and beaten to death (69).
 7. During the anti-discrimination student movement and the subsequent interim government, thousands of leaders and activists belonging to Bangladesh Awami league were killed or maimed. It has proved very difficult to receive information on most of the killing because of unprecedented restriction on the newspapers and other media outlets by the interim government. A fraction of these killings was disclosed and documented. From 6 July 2024 to 10 April 2025 a total of 471 killings were confirmed and documented. The nature of these atrocities was very brutal and barbaric. It is beyond one's ability to describe in language; some victims were burned, some were hacked or beaten to death, some were shot, some were killed in prison custody, and some were killed in the custody of law enforcement authorities (72).
- Right to Education (Article 26 of UDHR)
The right to education states that everyone is entitled to education and is reflected in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
1. Until 9 April of the interim Government, more than 10,000 students have been detained without any due process; over 5,000 students have been expelled without any credible inquiry process or opportunity to be heard—flagrantly violating principles of natural justice. Alarming, upwards of 200,000 students have been barred from continuing their education based merely on presumed associations with the Bangladesh Chhatra League (Bangladesh Students' League), with no effort made to determine individual culpability or uphold the presumption of innocence (71).
- Rights to Freedom of Association and Peaceful Assembly (Article 20 of UDHR)
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions, the right to form or to join a political party or any other association or voluntary group.
1. RRAG identified serious violations of association and assembly, noting that more than 272,000 individuals — primarily political opponents — have

Human Rights Violations

[Continued from Page1]

- been implicated in 1,598 criminal cases within the first 100 days of Yunus' administration. By February 7, over 5,00,000 political opponents faced criminal cases (14).
- During January and February 2025, Ain O Shalis Kedra documented a total of 104 political violence killing 16 and injuring 1191 (15).
 - The Anti-discrimination Student Movement burnt down the headquarters of the Jatiya Party at Kakrail area in the heart of the capital Dhaka on the night of 31 October 2024 (37).
 - The Interim Government effectively banned the Awami League's political activities through banning of its students' wing, Chhatra League, on 24 October 2024. Chhatra League constitutes a large percentage of student population of the country (35).
 - The Interim Government seriously restricted the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly of indigenous peoples and religious minorities by (i) killing indigenous peoples, burning down their houses, properties and places of worship on 19-20 September in Khagrachari and Rangamati district (37).
 - The Anti-discrimination student Movement, Jamat e Islami and other Islamic fundamentalist attacked the Hindu minorities for organising a peaceful assembly on 22 November 2024 at Rangpur (38), violently attacked indigenous students who were protesting in Dhaka on 15 January 2025 against the removal of a graffiti with the word "Adivasi" (indigenous) (39). Further, the Interim Government continues to oppose bail to Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, who has been in jail since 25 November 2024 after being arrested in a trumped-up sedition case, sending a message to the religious minorities and indigenous peoples against exercising the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly (40).
 - The Interim Government brutally suppressed the "March For Identity" movement by "Sanghat O Boishamyo Birodhi Pahari Chhatra Andolan" (Anti Conflict & Discrimination Tribal Students Movement) organised on 18 September 2024. They demanded constitutional recognition of the identities of indigenous peoples. About 40,000 indigenous peoples, unseen in the history of indigenous peoples in the region, had participated in the protest (43). Bangladesh Army and the illegal plain settlers brutally suppressed their rightful demand under Operation Uttaran (44). Subsequently, the Army led organized assaults on indigenous peoples in Dighinala and Khagrachari Sadar under Khagrachari district on 19 September, followed by further attacks on Rangamati Sadar on 20 September, and Khagrachari district again on 1 October, targeting shops and other business establishments of indigenous peoples and Buddhist temples. In these attacks by the illegal plain settlers (45) and Bangladesh Army, at least four indigenous persons i.e. Mr Dhana Ranjan Chakma, Mr Junan Chakma, Mr Rubel Tripura, and Mr Anik Chakma were killed, at least 75 indigenous Jumma people were seriously injured while at least 142 houses, shops and other business establishments, properties, Buddhist temples that were looted, destroyed or set ablaze (46).
 - Suppression of the freedom of association and speech is unprecedented. Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested Shahe Alam Murad, an executive member of the Dhaka Metropolitan Awami League and former general secretary of the Dhaka Metropolitan South Awami League for leading a procession in the city on 17 April 2025 (59).
 - The daily newspaper Prothom Alo reported that pro-Awami lawyers were prevented from collecting nomination papers for the Chittagong District Bar Association elections. The incident occurred on Thursday afternoon. The Bar Association elections are scheduled to be held on April 16. Today was the last day to collect nomination forms (62).
 - Bangladesh Awami League has been prevented from all types of assembly, procession by the interim Government and their associates. It is of serious concern that the Adviser to the State Ministry, Mt Jahangir Alam, openly ordered the Police Department to prevent any procession by BAL (65). He even openly declares that severe action would be taken against the Police if they fail to prevent BAL from such activities (66)

Right to Freedom of Speech (Article 19 of UDHR)

- The Voice in its January 3 issue of 2025 published a bleak overview of the interim Government's crackdown on media and journalists. The report says more than 600 cases have been filed against 296 journalists, predominantly murder charges, 18 journalists arrested, only 2 have been granted bail, over a thousand journalists and media workers have

been dismissed or expelled from their positions, accreditation cards of 168 journalists, both within and outside Dhaka, have been revoked or suspended, six journalists have been killed, with countless others injured or publicly humiliated, more than fifty TV stations and magazine offices have been vandalized or attacked, except for a few, nearly all media outlets have been seized by forces aligned with the current regime. The report also noted Dismissal of about 100 staff from Bangladesh Television (BTV): 39 from Nagorik TV, 37 from Ekattor TV, 15 from DBC News, 8 from Somoy TV, affecting numerous other channels and newspapers. Nationwide, particularly outside Dhaka, with 64 district representatives from BTV laid off, alongside similar actions against staff from private channels and newspapers, totalling approximately a thousand job losses (16).

- The Interim Government is blatantly suppressing press freedom and using accreditation as a weapon. Press accreditation cards are required for access to the Secretariat (30). The government revoked press accreditation of at least 167 journalists for including revocation of accreditation of 20 journalists on 29 October (31), 30 on 3 November (32) and 118 on 7 November (33) thereby crippling press freedom. The Interim government completely barred journalists, which was condemned by the Editors Council (34), from entering the Secretariat on 29 December 2024 following a fire accident.
- Approximately 600 baseless lawsuits have been initiated against 296 journalists within the first 100 days of the Yunus Government, with a focus on murder charges. These cases span across various police stations and courts, including the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) (70).

Right to Freedom of Religion (Article 18 of UDHR)

- The daily newspaper, Prothom Alo, reported widespread attacks on Houses, places of worship, and business establishments of religious minorities at various places of the country after news about the resignation of the government broke out (17).
- Mrinal Kanti Chatterjee, 65, a former primary teacher of

[Continued on Page3]

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

১৫ বৈশাখ ১৪৩২

28 April 2025

I am pleased to note that the second issue of The Spotlight is going to be published today. We have a plan to publish this newsletter as a regular fortnightly publication of the GCDG, continuously trying to promote democracy, human rights, good governance, social justice, secularism, gender equality and freedom of press in Bangladesh. We seek your cooperation in this regard.

The first issue of The Spotlight, as a regular publication of GCDG, was published on 14 April 2025 (1 Baishakh 1432).

Deep gratitude and thanks to the Editor of The Spotlight and all the members of the editorial board for presenting the real situation of Bangladesh from an impartial position. Many thanks to those who enriched this newsletter with their writings and valuable comments.

My sincere thanks to everyone involved in the publication of The Spotlight.

Prof Dr Md Habibe Millat

MBBS, FRCS (Edin)

President

Global Center for Democratic Governance

Human Rights Violations

Cont'd from Page 2

- Madhudia Primary School, was killed and his wife Shefali Chatterjee, 60, and daughter Jhuma Rani Chatterjee, 35, were injured in the attacks on their house at Choto Paikpara of Rakhalgachi union in Sadar Upazila of Bagerhat. The injured were admitted to the Bagerhat Zila Hospital (18).
- In one of the similar incidents, 17 houses belonging to the Christian Tripura community in southeastern Bangladesh's Bandarban district were reportedly set on fire on Christmas Eve (19).
 - A United Nation report estimated 1400 killing and other human rights abuses against Hindus, Ahmediyya Muslims and indigenous minorities. The report mentioned widespread attacks on Hindu homes, businesses, places of worships aftermath of the fall of Sheikh Hasina Government (26)
 - To appease the Islamic fundamentalist groups and Bangladesh Jamat e Islami who form the key support system for Dr Yunus's government, the antagonism to indigenous peoples by Yunus Govt. has reached an unprecedented level since the country's independence. This intolerance can be exemplified by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh's decision to remove the image of a graffiti with the word "Adivasi" (indigenous) from the back cover of the ninth and tenth-grade Bangla Grammar and Composition

textbook on 12 January 2025 after facing protests from a group of Islamic students (41). When indigenous students went to protest against the decision of the NCTB in Dhaka on 15 January 2025, they were attacked by the Islamic fundamentalists, and at least 20 people were injured (42).

- Dhaka Tribune reported as many as 2010 communal violence incidents between August 4 and 20 carried out by Islamic fundamentalists or their militant groups (47). In another incident and a stark display of state-backed oppression, Hindu protesters in Bangladesh were met with brutal force and obstruction as they attempted to attend a rally in Rangpur organized by the "Sammilito Sanatani Jagran Manch". The rally, which sought to draw attention to the systematic persecution of Hindus under the authoritarian regime of Md Yunus, was aggressively disrupted by the police and radical Islamist groups (48).

Right to Justice (Article 1 of UDHR)

People's right to receive fair justice has been blatantly denied or severely restricted under the interim Government. Analysis of circumstances, the scale and pattern of destruction, killing atrocities etc. clearly indicate that these activities are happening under

direct or indirect support of the Yunus Government. It is beyond the scope of this short report to list or describe the thousands of examples and incidents happened after the fall of Sheikh Hasina Government on 5th August 2024. The following glaring examples/incidents will clarify this statement:

- Yunus has captured the judiciary, leading to an extremely biased justice system to serve his ill motives of punishing those who oppose him and rewarding those who support him. The current judicial system is completely useless to the public. Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and about 21 Supreme Court and High Court judges were forced to resign because of the protests by the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement. Moreover, these positions were filled mostly with supporters of BNP and Jamaat e Islami and people loyal to Law and Justice Adviser Asif Nazrul or Dr Yunus. Even a leader and a staunch supporter of Bangladesh Jamat e Islami, Mohammad Tajul Islam, has been appointed as the Chief Prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal (24) that the interim government is using for the trial of the AL officials and support-

To BE COCOMPLETED IN THE
NEXT ISSUE

NB: The numbers in brackets indicate references. The list of references will be published with the last part of the article.

Lead Story 1

Control of Media Freedom in Bangladesh: Call to the International Community to Safeguard Freedom of Expression

(Part 2)

M. Hossain

(Continued from Issue 1)

Kamalesh Roy, the editor of Daily Samoyer Alo, owned by the Amin Mohammad Group, has been replaced by Syed Shahnewaz Karim. Similarly, Shamim Siddiqui, who served as the acting editor of Daily Alokito Bangladesh, has also been dismissed.

Retired Major Sheikh Afizur Rahman has taken over as the Chief Executive Officer of Daily Jonokonotho after working at Daily Bangla. Kamal Uddin Shobuz has been appointed as the editor, succeeding Mostafa Mamun, the former editor of Daily Desh Rupantor, which the Rupayan Group owns. Shahid Muhammad Ali has been named the editor of Daily Samokal, a publication of the Ha-Meem Group. BNP leader Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anee influenced his selection and received the recommendation of Tarique Rahman, which led to approval from A.K. Azad. Previously, editor Almgeer Hossain was dismissed, and Chief News Editor Khairul Bashar Shamim left his position following Shahid Muhammad Ali's appointment.

The editor of Daily Bhorer Kagoj is in prison, leading to the newspaper's closure amid an attempted takeover. Authorities have now announced that the nearly 35-year-old publication will resume. Additionally, Miah Nuruddin Appu, the former personal assistant secretary of BNP leader Tarique Rahman, has acquired majority ownership of Daily Kalbela, and Rita Bhoumik has been dismissed from her position at Kalbela. Furthermore, Islamic extremists have been observed mobilizing against Prothom Alo and The Daily Star.

We will now analyze the landscape of online news portals in Bangladesh. Recently, Jewel Majhar was dismissed as the editor of Banglanews24.com, and Lutfor Rahman Himel has taken over as the new editor. Additionally, Golam Samdani has been appointed

the Head of News at Sarabangla.net. However, there have been significant dismissals, including Chief Editor Rafiqullah Romel, Chief News Editor Rahman Mustafiz, and reporters Azmal Haque Helal, Saikat Bhoumik, Nripendranath Roy, and Sandipan Basu. Furthermore, Fakhrul Shaheen has also been let go from NTV Online.

The online news landscape in Bangladesh is uncertain, making it challenging to determine which outlets are successful. Since August 5, about 600 journalists have faced serious, often baseless allegations. The climate of fear has led to attacks on over 50 media offices and the detention of around 28 journalists, raising concerns about the future of press freedom.

Ninety-two journalists have had their press club memberships revoked, leaving them isolated and vulnerable. The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) has requested financial records from 96 journalists, further instilling fear and harassment among them. Job losses among journalists may exceed a thousand, prompting some to consider leaving the country. Additionally, the government has revoked press accreditation for 168 journalists, tightening control over media outlets. New leaders in these organizations appear to operate without checks, often influenced by political groups such as the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and NCP. This situation reflects authoritarian tactics similar to those employed during Dr. Yunus's era, with respected institutions such as the Press Club and DRU facing significant challenges.

After Sheikh Hasina's government fell, journalists faced serious challenges, including violent attacks on eight TV channels and three newspapers in Dhaka. On August 14-15, violence peaked, injuring 20 journalists at the Chattogram Press Club and resulting

in more assaults in Pirojpur. BNP member Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu even threatened to burn media houses that published photos of Sheikh Hasina.

Hope emerges as ordinary people speak out against human rights abuses. However, vigilance is crucial; all political factions must be held accountable. The interim government must act swiftly to prevent further injustices against journalists.

ARTICLE 19 has made key recommendations to the Bangladesh Media Reform Commission to enhance press freedom. Despite a diverse media landscape, significant challenges remain due to weak legal protections, politically influenced media ownership and widespread self-censorship. We call on the interim government to amend oppressive laws, such as the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Bangladesh Television Authority Act, and the Official Secrets Act, which hinder journalistic expression. The new Cybersecurity Act of 2023 also poses a threat to online discussions.

To improve journalists' safety, revisions to the Telecommunications Act and the ICT Act of 2006 are necessary. A national action plan is crucial for protecting female journalists and ensuring the free flow of information. Fair wages, better working conditions, and access to healthcare are essential for supporting journalists. Strong legal protections are needed to defend against harassment and frivolous lawsuits. The government must uphold journalists' rights, aligning with Article 39 of the Bangladeshi Constitution, which guarantees press freedom. It is time to prioritize a media landscape that supports democracy and human rights in Bangladesh.

OP-ED

OPINION

Muhammad Yunus' Interview with Al Jazeera: Significant Inconsistencies, Oversimplifications, and Debatable Claims

Dr Zahir Ahmed

Editor's Note

We are delighted to have delivered the second issue of Spotlight to our readers on time. This achievement is due to all the well-wishers, writers, readers, and members of GCDG. The articles in this issue are as important to us as ever. We hope the articles, along with references, that keep a sharp eye on recent and past events, will capture the readers' attention.

We welcome our new writers to this issue. We are always interested in articles faithful to the truth, based on accurate information and references.

I have a good news to share: Spotlight has obtained an ISSN number, a QR code is also active now.

I wish the readers a pleasant reading.

স্পটলাইটের দ্বিতীয় সংখ্যাটি সময়মতো পাঠকদের হাতে তুলে দিতে পেরে আমরা আনন্দিত। এই কৃতিত্ব স্পটলাইটের সকল শুভানুধ্যায়ী, লেখক পাঠক এবং জিসিডিজির সদস্যবৃন্দের। এই সংখ্যার লেখাগুলি আমাদের কাছে আগের মতই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিবেচিত হয়েছে। আশা করি রেফারেন্স সহ তথ্যভিত্তিক সম্প্রতিক এবং অতীত ঘটনাবলীর উপর তীক্ষ্ণ নজর রাখা প্রকাশিত বিষয়গুলো পাঠকদের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণে সমর্থ হবে।

এ সংখ্যায় কয়েকজন নতুন লেখক যুক্ত হয়েছেন, আমরা তাঁদেরকে স্বাগত জানাই। প্রিয় পাঠক, আপনারাও লিখুন। সঠিক তথ্য এবং রেফারেন্স সহ সত্যের প্রতি বিশ্বস্ত লেখার প্রতি আমাদের আগ্রহ নিরন্তর।

একটি সুখবর দিয়ে শেষ করছি: স্পটলাইট একটি ISSN নম্বর পেয়েছে, একটি QR কোডও এখন সক্রিয়।

পাঠকদের জন্য আনন্দময় পাঠ কামনা করছি।

THE SPOTLIGHT Editorial Policy:

- Ensure that all reporting in THE SPOTLIGHT is accurate and not misleading or false. If errors arise, they will be corrected promptly and appropriately.
- Authors should be bound by accuracy, fairness and balance, should not deliberately mislead or misinform readers by commission or omission, and should be respectful to the privacy of persons, space and personal information.
- Distinction should be drawn between factual information and comment or opinion, which should be accurate and should be presented as such.
- Letters for publication should be guided by fairness, balance, and public interest.
- Headlines, sub-headings, and captions should accurately and fairly convey the substance or a key element of the article they are designed to cover.
- The authors are to avoid overstepping the bounds of good taste and decency, and the use of offensive language, in a way that is likely to cause significant offense to people.
- We encourage debate around current issues, however, we do not encourage or condone illegal activity.
- Authors must be cautious not to defame any individual, group or organisation.
- We value truthfulness, honest opinion (based on stated facts), and Public interest.
- Contributors may have their content published anonymously or by using a fake name (but the true name is disclosed to the editors) in situations where the publication of their name may cause personal harm.
- All articles and other submissions should be grammar-checked and submitted in Microsoft Word (.docs) or pure text (txt) format. Pictures and diagrams should be separately attached. For reference, APA or, in case of a technical article, IEEE guidelines should be followed.
- Views expressed in their articles are the authors' own

In his interview with Al Jazeera on 27 April 2025, Dr Muhammad Yunus revealed significant inconsistencies, oversimplifications, and debatable claims. While he presented himself as a transitional leader committed to reform, a closer analysis raises serious questions about the coherence, transparency, and feasibility of his arguments.

(1) Dr Yunus' sweeping description of Bangladesh's situation as a "second liberation" disregards the complex origins of the recent political movement. He claimed, "Bangladesh came to a stage where corruption and violations of all norms, destruction of all the institutions, were going absolutely at the 100% level... So they raised this issue, we have to go and march on the street together. And made it happen on the Fifth of August... So that was a kind of emergence of a new Bangladesh." He later added, "It's amazing thing what the July Revolution has done... brought everybody together... It happened in hours' notice, not months' notice." However, the protests initially began over quota reforms, not as an outright political revolution. For example, Mugdho's post just before he was shot (see in comments) clearly indicated the motive of the non-political protests that focused on ending the job reservation system, not regime change. Branding the movement as a unified national uprising against dictatorship is an oversimplification that neglects the diverse and often conflicting motivations of its participants.

(2) Dr Yunus' emphasis on achieving consensus through a "July Charter" also raises concerns. He asserted that "all parties agree, and all parties sign on this document," but he failed to explain what would happen if a consensus was not reached. In a deeply polarised environment like Bangladesh, expecting full agreement on reforms is unrealistic. The drive for complete consensus also risks suppressing ideological diversity, undermining the very foundation of democratic plurality where disagreement is a legitimate and necessary feature.

(3) A notable concern is Yunus' implicit bias toward the student-formed political party. He remarked, "Luckily, those young people that you mentioned, they form a political party itself," revealing a troubling preference. For a transitional leader, maintaining neutrality is essential. Publicly endorsing a particular political group not only questions his impartiality but also damages the credibility of the entire interim process.

(4) His proposed election timeline reflects problematic reasoning. Yunus stated, "If the consensus is you have larger number of items that we can agree on and we want to implement before the election, then we take a longer time... If they are not in a hurry, we have an early election in December. If it takes longer, we go up to June." However, if Yunus himself accepts that "some of the implementation will come before the election, some of the implementation will come after the election," then there is no logical reason to delay elections unless there are hidden political motives. Political parties' reluctance to grant him six additional months suggests a fundamental lack of trust in his government's intentions.

(5) Contradictions appeared when Yunus discussed participation rights in the upcoming election. He gave in-

[\[Continued on Page 6\]](#)

OPINION

Muhammad Yunus' Interview with Al Jazeera: Significant Inconsistencies, Oversimplifications, and Debatable Claims

Continued from Page 5]

consistent answers when asked about Awami League's eligibility to contest: "It's up to them (Awami League)," "It's up to the Election Commission," and later, "there are other parties who may say under this law they cannot participate." Such ambiguous responses seriously undermine confidence in the fairness of the election process. In any democratic setting, the right to participate must be clearly and unequivocally protected, not left to ambiguous interpretation. If individuals are culprits, they should be brought to justice and punished after due process. But without due diligence, the way he responded indicated his ill motives of taking revenge on certain people or parties.

(6) Another concerning aspect was Yunus' comment about the tenure of the interim government. He said, "Whether honeymoon period is over or not... People think interim government is still the good answer for them... Nobody said, let the interim government go." This directly contradicts his earlier commitment to hold elections by June at the latest. Questions have been raised that interim governments often overstay their mandates under the pretext of public support, ignoring democratic norms and encouraging authoritarian drift.

(7) When questioned about the Rohingya crisis, Yunus vaguely mentioned that Bangladesh was "working with the United Nations and Myanmar," without providing any concrete strategy. Given Myanmar's military government's history of ignoring repatriation efforts, such vague assurances sound either naive or evasive. Also, Bangladesh's recent decision to offer corridor access to Arakan rebel groups could create serious problems for its stability and that of the broader region, yet Yunus did not address this sensitive issue properly.

(8) The weakness of Bangladesh's diplomatic position under Yunus's leadership became even clearer when he admitted, "I tried to go to India. Didn't respond to it," and regarding Hasina's extradition, he said, "I don't know what the law says." Such admissions show not only a lack of international support but also a failure to establish basic diplomatic strength with a key neighbour, which is risky for a country that depends heavily on re-

gional cooperation and trade routes.

(9) On issues of personal political involvement, Yunus was also evasive. When asked about his donation to Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, he neither denied nor clarified it, simply saying, "We have good relations with the Trump administration." This avoidance leaves open the interpretation that his political activities abroad contradict his image as a neutral figure. Also, no visible sign has appeared that his government's relationship with the US has significantly improved, raising questions about the practical outcomes of his diplomacy.

(10) Yunus' attempt to explain a vision for economic reform was equally disappointing. He said, "Essentially, the seat of self-destruction is in the system. So we have to bring it out. We have to create a new civilization" yet he failed to present a clear model. His vague distinction between "profit-maximizing businesses" and "social businesses" does not properly address real-world complexities where profit and social goals often coexist. Moreover, questions remain about the real impact and transparency of Grameen-partnered ventures like Grameen Danone

Foods, which have not published any sustainability, social, or impact reports for the last several years. Therefore, claims of their social contributions are yet to be verified.

(11) Yunus' portrayal of his role in the regime change appears misleading. He claimed he was reluctant: "I said no, not me... They called me again and again... despite my reluctance, I accepted." However, multiple sources, including student leader Masud and blogger Pinaki Bhattacharya, confirm that Yunus was actively engaged in communications with protest organisers during the uprising. Therefore, his narrative of being "reluctantly drawn in" seems at best questionable and at worst intentionally misleading. ☐



Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus attends Talk to Al Jazeera show with host Nick Clark. – Screenshot

<https://www.jagonews24.com/en/politics/news/78440>

Lead Story 2

The Significance of April 1971 in Bangladesh: A Historical Perspective

Mirza Rakib

On the night of 25 March 1971, when the Pakistan army undertook the brutal genocide in history, Operation Searchlight [1], as reported by Simon Dring under the caption 'Dateline Dacca' [2], Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Bangladesh's independence [3] in the early hour of 26 March 1971 using an EPR transmitter, just before his arrest by the Pakistani military. Despite knowing he would be arrested, he stayed behind to avoid being seen as a separatist leader and to prevent further violence. He also feared that his death could be used to discredit the independence movement. Bangabandhu instructed party leaders to seek refuge and continue the fight for liberation.

March 31st, Tajuddin Ahmad and Barrister Amirul Islam, like many other Bengalis were to start a freedom struggle, waited near the Meherpur border to seek refuge in India after enduring hardship. With assistance from Taufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury (Meherpur sub-divisional officer) and Mahbub Uddin

Gandhi. Golok Majumdar and Rustamji worked to arrange the meeting [4].

April 2nd, Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny sent a letter to Yahya Khan, expressing deep concern over the armed repression in East Pakistan—this was the first high-level message of its kind [5]. In Delhi, massive protests erupted against Pakistan in response to the genocide [6].

On April 4, Tajuddin Ahmad met Indira Gandhi in Delhi to seek support for Bangladesh. Her first question was about Sheikh Mujib's well-being, to which Tajuddin replied that they hadn't been able to contact him since March 25 [4]. Meanwhile, Professors Rehman Sobhan and Anisur Rahman were also in Delhi, working on the cause [7]. On the same day, a crucial meeting in the Teliapara Tea Garden, chaired by Colonel (Retd.) MAG Osmani decided to divide Bangladesh into 11 sectors for a coordinated Liberation War strategy [7].



Ahmed (SDPO of Jhenaidah), they contacted Golok Majumdar, the Inspector General of India's Border Security Force. K.F. Rustamji, the BSF Director General, received them as senior representatives of the Bangladesh government and ensured their safe passage into India [4].

On April 1, the editorial of India's *Jugantar* newspaper stated, "Pakistan has been divided into two: one is independent and sovereign Bangladesh, and the other is the military regime of West Pakistan." Sweden's *Expressen Stockholm* wrote, "Genocide in Bengal." The *New York Times* reported mass killings in Dhaka [5]. That very day, Tajuddin Ahmad and Barrister Amirul Islam, along with Golok Majumdar, flew on a military cargo plane to Delhi to meet Prime Minister Indira

On April 5, *Newsweek* wrote, "Fluent in Urdu, Bengali, and English, Sheikh Mujib never pretended to be a fundamental thinker. He was no engineer but a poet of politics. He was more drawn to art than technology, and that style suited his need to unite people of all classes and ideologies." *The Baltimore Sun's* John E. Woodruff wrote, "Pakistani troops are wiping out the Bengalis [7]."

On April 6, Tajuddin Ahmad arrived in Agartala, where he was welcomed as Prime Minister after the success of the Delhi mission. That day, the UK House of Commons urged Pakistan to end hostilities in East Bengal. British Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas-Home emphasized a peaceful resolution without interfering in

[\[Continued on Page 8\]](#)

Lead Story 2

The Significance of April 1971 in Bangladesh: A Historical Perspective

[Continued from Page 7]

Pakistan's internal matters [7]. US expressed concern over the use of American weapons in the conflict, and Archer Blood, US Consul General in Dhaka, sent the famous Blood Telegram condemning the US for not denouncing the suppression of democracy and atrocities [8].

April 7th, *The New York Times* published a powerful article by Sydney H. Schanberg titled "Foreign Evacuees from East Pakistan Tell of Grim Fight," one of the first major Western media reports to shed light on the barbarity in East Pakistan [8].

On April 8, Tajuddin Ahmad's statement about the formation of the government was recorded in New Delhi and broadcast by All India Radio on April 10, gaining global attention [4].

On April 10th, the provisional cabinet formed in Kolkata on April 10 was the implementation of the decision Bangabandhu had made regarding the formation of a future cabinet with party leaders following the victory in the 1970 general elections. The draft Declaration of Independence, prepared by Barrister Amirul Islam and shown to lawyer Subrata Chowdhury (Famous Lawyer, Kolkata High Court), Professor Rehman Sobhan, was hailed as exceptional and accepted by key leaders. The declaration, which recognized Bangabandhu as president and his March 26 declaration of independence as legitimate, was first broadcast on April 10 from Mujibnagar and officially read on April 17 at Baidyanathtala [4].

On April 11, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad, in his speech, praised the bravery of the sector commanders leading the military efforts. He also mentioned commanders from other sectors as well [9].

April 12th, General MAG Osmani was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the

Armed Forces, and the Provisional Government's cabinet was announced [10]. *Time* magazine described the situation as a "bloodbath," comparing the Pakistani army's actions to those of Genghis Khan, as tanks rolled through Dhaka and homes were destroyed [10]. On that day in Balar Khail, the Pakistani military killed 150 intellectuals from Saidpur, Nilphamari. This massacre was a cold, calculated attempt to wipe out the nation's thinkers. It marked the beginning of such brutal acts during the Liberation War [10].

On April 17, preparations for Bangladesh's first government swearing-in ceremony were in progress, held in Baidyanathtala's mango orchard. The new administration was taking shape, with people from various backgrounds joining the liberation war and receiving guerrilla training within Bangladesh and in India. Local political leadership organized sectors and sub-sectors, while professionals from diverse fields gathered in Kolkata to support the cause. Professor Md. Yusuf Ali read the Declaration of Independence of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. In the absence of Bangabandhu, Vice President Syed Nazrul Islam took oath as the Acting President, Tajuddin Ahmad as the Prime Minister, along with all the ministers and responsible officials [4].

On April 19, the Provisional Government of Bangladesh issued 18 directives for the citizens of Bangladesh. On that day, global media amplified reports of the genocide and Mukti Bahini's resistance. *Time* covered the Battle of Darshana, and Sweden's *Expressen* stated reunification was impossible. UK journalist Nicholas Tomalin also exposed the crisis in an editorial detailing the military-led genocide [11].

Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury was appointed Special Representative of Bangladesh at the UN on April 21 [8].

The Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra in Mujibnagar started broadcasting from April 25 [7].

On April 28, British Labour MP Bruce Douglas-Mann, having just returned from a one-week visit to East Pakistan, stated in London that there was clear evidence of widespread violence. At this time, Henry Kissinger's memorandum to President Nixon made it clear that Washington understood this as a transitional period from demands for autonomy to eventual independence [5].

April 1971 marked a pivotal moment in Bangladesh's liberation struggle. The formation of the provisional Government gave the movement legitimate leadership. Diplomatic efforts, military planning, and media coverage increased, laying the groundwork for a structured national resistance and drawing global attention to the conflict.

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Lead Story 3

Teachers Tortured After 5 August 2024 Regime Change: A Despicable and Shameful Chapter in Bangladesh

R Islam

After Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left the country on August 5, 2024, various incidents of violence occurred across the country. People from various classes and professions, including the minority Hindu community, the Ahmadiyya community, Awami League activists and supporters, government officials, school and college teachers, law enforcement officers, and people from various walks of life, were subjected to heinous and infernal violence.

Incidents of attacks, vandalism, and murders occurred at homes, businesses, and places of worship belonging to the minority Hindu community.

Numerous sculptures and monuments were vandalized across the country, and numerous incidents such as violence, arson, looting, rape, looting of police stations, breaking into prisons and kidnapping convicted criminals, organized robberies, and mob killings continued to occur.

Such oppressive, violent incidents have been occurring since August 5, 2024, to this day, little of which has been

publicly reported through the media.

All these violent incidents have brought Bangladesh's existing society, culture, values, and state system to the brink of



destruction.

The exact statistics of the number of people from different walks of life who have been victims of violence and have lost their lives, livelihoods, property, and dignity may never be known to the people of Bangladesh. In this context, today's short article presents some information about the types of violence that teachers have been subjected to in various schools, colleges, and universities since August 5.

Throughout the present era, the customs, values, and values of Bangladesh have treated teachers and the teaching profession with respect, honor, and importance. Various analogies about the dignity and honor of teachers are universally recognized. After the fall of the government on August 5, 2024, this belief and custom were destroyed, and violent attacks on teachers from elementary schools to universities were carried out for no reason other than political purposes, sometimes to establish local group dominance.

There have been numerous incidents of office vandalism, house looting, physical assault, forced resignation, holding ears and public acts of humiliation, being locked up in offices or homes, tying up, forcibly cutting hair and beards, beheading, and murder. Numerous videos of teacher abuse

have also gone viral on social media.

In terms of teachers' abuse, teachers from the minority Hindu community have been subjected to relatively more violence. A report shows that in August 2024 alone, 49 minority community teachers were forced to resign (Prothom Alo 31 August 2024).

Kranti Lal Acharya, the acting headmaster of Bhatiari Haji Tomarak Ali Chowdhury High School in Sitakunda, Chittagong, was humiliated and forced to sign a resignation letter. Mr. Acharya had been teaching at the school with a good reputation for the past 35 years. On April 17, a group of unruly people and students surrounded his office, humiliated him and forced him to resign, he fell ill (Prothom Alo, April 18, 2025).

The principal of Victoria Zuberi Government High School in Chuadanga was slapped and forced to resign (Education News, 30 August 2024).

On August 29, 2024, a group of miscreants, disguised as students, humiliated and forced the principal of Bakerganj Government College, Shukla Rani Halder, in a terrorist manner and forced her to resign (August 31, 2024, Prothom Alo).

The principal of Reditla Academy in Naogaon district and her husband were tied up in a classroom and tortured by some students and guardians for a whole day, leaving them with injuries and bruises on their bodies. Later, they forced her to resign (Ajaker Patrika, September 14, 2024).

On 18 August 2024, Zohra Begum, the headmistress of Udayan High School, Dhaka University Campus, Dhaka, was humiliated and forced to perform ablution.

Similarly, Gitanjali Barua, the principal of Azimpur Government Girls School and College, was tortured and forced to resign (Prothom Alo, August 19, 2024).

Keka Roy Chowdhury, the principal of Viqarunnesa Noon School and College, was humiliated and forced to sign a resignation letter (August 12, 2024, Bangladesh Pratidin).

There are ongoing incidents of harassment of teachers of various schools, colleges, and universities across Bangladesh by filing false cases against them.

In this case, teachers of Dhaka University, the country's highest educational institution, have also been subjected to brutal torture and false cases. On April 12, a case was filed against five Dhaka University teachers for burning lanterns under construction for the celebration of Pohela Baishakh on the Fine Arts campus, who were unaware of the incident.



THE BACK PAGE শেষের পাতা

Destruction of Bangladesh's Cultural and Historical Heritage by the Yunus Regime: Violation of Human Rights

Latiful Kabir

Since the regime change of August 5, 2024, the interim government led by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus has faced mounting criticism for its direct and indirect role in a wave of cultural repression and destruction across Bangladesh. While much of the focus has been on political realignments, a more insidious campaign has unfolded quietly: the systematic dismantling of Bangladesh's artistic, cultural, and historical legacy.

In recent months, the country has witnessed a disturbing series of incidents targeting iconic symbols of national identity and memory:



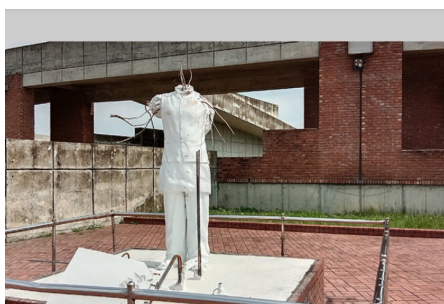
The destruction of the historic residence at 32 Dhanmondi, the home of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—a site central to the country's liberation narrative.

The demolition or defacement of sculptures depicting Bangabandhu, Rabindranath Tagore, Jainal Abedin and the Seven Bir Sreshtho—heroes of the 1971 Liberation War. A systematic destruction had happened across the country, for which the interim government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus did not even conduct any investigation.

Vandalism at the Mujibnagar Memorial Complex—a sacred site where Bangladesh's first government took oath on April 17, 1971. A systematic destruction had happened along with others across the country, for which the interim government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus did not even conduct any investigation.

While in none of these cases has the government issued a direct order or accepted responsibility, the public perceives a pattern of deliberate neglect. In each instance, the state has failed to

prevent mob violence, refused to condemn the acts, and has not held a single perpetrator accountable. The government's silence and inaction have been



<https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/over-600-sculptures-damaged-in-attack-on-mujibnagar-memorial-complex>

widely interpreted as tacit approval, if not outright encouragement.

Such acts of cultural vandalism are not merely political offences—they constitute violations of international human rights norms. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ([Article 27](#)) asserts that everyone has the right to participate in cultural life and enjoy the arts. Likewise, [UNESCO's conventions](#) recognize cultural heritage as part of the collective human identity and its protection as a



<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/new/cultural-heritage-under-attack-3671896>

Three students carry a bust for preservation after the Shadhinata Sangram Bhaskarjo on Fuller Road was vandalised on Monday. The photo was taken at Dhaka University yesterday. Photo: Star

moral and legal obligation.

Suppressing a nation's cultural symbols is a form of identity erasure. In the context of Bangladesh, whose history of liberation is inseparable from its language, literature, music, and collective memory, the destruction of these symbols is not just an attack on history—it is an attack on the people's dignity, values, and freedom of expression.

Moreover, the failure to investigate or prosecute these acts sends a dangerous message: that historical revisionism and ideological cleansing will be tolerated, or even rewarded. This deliberate abdication of responsibility by the state com-

pounds the original violation and undermines public trust in democratic institutions.

As public outrage grows, the Yunus regime's indifference to cultural preservation is being increasingly viewed as part of a broader agenda—one that seeks to reshape national identity through erasure rather than inclusion, control rather than celebration.

International human rights organizations, cultural watchdogs, and the global Bangladeshi diaspora must respond with urgency. The protection of cultural heritage is not a secondary issue; it is central to the human right to belong, to remember, and to resist.

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