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## Civil admin still on edge

BAHARAM KHAN

Chaotic is the word that best describes the days at the Secretariat after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government of 15 years on August 5.

Those who were denied promotions for political reasons or poor track records; those who were given promotions but not their placement of choice; and those who are in good positions but were denied a big promotion for below-par performance are agitating – all at the same time.

Throughout last week, processions were seen every few hours. None of those were to press home demands for improved public services but for personal benefits.

"I have never seen such a situation in my 29 years of service – it is unimaginable that BCS cadres of the Secretariat can behave like this," said a secretary who asked not to be named to speak candidly on the issue.

It is a "chaotic" situation", he said, adding that such a situation has arisen due to a lack of qualified leadership.

"This administration is rotten. We have failed to set a good example in the administration," the secretary added.

So disorderly are things that the ministries housed in the Secretariat have not been able to do their normal work since August 5.

However, the ministries and departments that have new advisers or secretaries are returning to normalcy.

To avoid getting heckled, Mohammed Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, the senior secretary of the ministry of public

**"This administration is rotten. We have failed to set a good example."**

A secretary who asked not to be named



Policemen working in a charred room of Chattogram city's Kotwali Police Station yesterday. Hours after the ouster of the Awami League government on August 5, a mob attacked and torched the police station, causing extensive damage. The station resumed partial operations on August 10.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT Yunus pledges fair polls, inclusive democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser of the interim government Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the government is committed to ensuring a transition to inclusive and pluralistic democracy and creating an environment in which free, fair, and participatory elections can be held.

The young generation has impressed upon the people their aspirations for a revolutionary change and the restoration of all state institutions to ensure democracy and human rights through meaningful reform, he said in a speech delivered virtually during the "3rd Voice of Global South Summit 2024" hosted by India.

"Our task is now to carry

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



**"I invite you to visit Dhaka soon. Otherwise, you may miss something important. Much of Dhaka has turned into the graffiti capital of the world."**

## S Alam drains Janata branch dry

AM JAHID and MD MEHEDI HASAN

As much as 90 percent of the loans disbursed by a branch of state-run Janata Bank was for S Alam Group, in yet another instance of how the Chattogram-based business giant exerted its influence on the country's banking sector.

Janata's Sadharan Bima Bhaban Corporate Branch in Chattogram provided Tk 8,216 crore to S Alam Group, which is 167 percent more than the branch's single borrower exposure limit, according to the bank's documents.

The business conglomerate took another Tk 2,233.45 crore from Janata to take the tally to Tk 10,449.45 crore, which is 451.57 percent of the struggling state-run bank's paid-up capital.

As per law, a bank is not allowed to lend more than 25 percent of its paid-up capital to a single client. At the end of June this year, Janata's paid-up capital stood at Tk 2,314 crore.

The loans to S Alam, which has controlling stakes in as many as eight

banks, accounted for 10.7 percent of Janata's total disbursed loans of Tk 98,000 crore at the end of June.

As much as 49 percent of the bank's outstanding loans have turned bad, putting its financial health at risk.

Amid such a situation, the bank on June 25 rescheduled the Tk 1,844.60 crore loans taken by the six companies of S Alam Group for four years – by breaching rules but with special permission from the central bank.

Of the sum, Tk 1,038.75 crore was for S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, Tk 1,186.43 crore for S Alam Trading Company, Tk

696.42 crore for S Alam Vegetable Oil, Tk 221.13 crore for Global Trading Corporation and Tk 1,229.55 crore for S Alam Cold Rolled Steels.

The companies were given the rescheduling facility although S Alam Group had outstanding loans of Tk 8,895.91 crore.

As per banking rules, a fresh loan rescheduling facility can be granted for a client only if it is within the permitted limits.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## INJURED IN PROTEST They are to be treated at separate units in hospitals

STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

Separate specialised care units will be formed in all government hospitals nationwide to ensure better treatment for those injured during the Anti-discrimination Student Movement.

The decision was made during a meeting between two coordinators of the student movement and the authorities of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

At the meeting, it was decided that only doctors, nurses, and legal representatives of the patients would be allowed to enter these specialised units as many of the injured were in critical condition.

Besides, it is also required to prevent the spread of diseases, particularly during the post-operation period.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

administration, comes to the Secretariat occasionally. But he is struggling to handle the aspirants for promotion, The Daily Star has learnt with people familiar with the proceedings.

The chief adviser is at the helm of the ministry along with several other ministries. The ministry, the most important in state administration, does not have a dedicated adviser.

Besides, Cabinet Secretary Md Mahub Hossain is not coming to the Secretariat at all from August 6. He is discharging his duties by going to the office of the chief adviser of the interim government or the Bangabhaban.

The Daily Star spoke with a host of mid-level officials, who attributed the current state of general administration to two issues.

Firstly, the top brass of the current administration – the secretaries – have not been able to set an example of integrity in their work and leadership.

"This is why most of the secretaries did not join office after the fall of the Hasina government. As a result, subordinates do not respect them," said one of the officials.

During the past regime, the top officials have only spent their time taking various benefits including promotion, and contractual appointments, said a joint secretary of the public administration ministry on the condition of anonymity.

In the last decade and a half, no administrative reforms were done, and those who wanted to push for reforms were not allowed to work, he said.

"Despite having a lot of merit, some officers were cornered along with some corrupt ones. However, incompetent, corrupt and partisan officials were mostly promoted. As a result, many of the beneficiaries of the previous government are trying to destabilise the administration by claiming they have been deprived," the joint secretary added.

Those people with a view to safeguarding personal interests including transfer, appointment, promotion and change of designation exploited the vacuum in governance for the first three days after the fall of the Awami League government, officials said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## Hasina sued in two more murder cases

STAR REPORT

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina has been accused in two more murder cases.

With this, Hasina is now facing 10 cases, including seven for murder, one for abduction, and two for committing crimes against humanity and genocide.

In Narayanganj, Hasina, along with former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan and 46 others, was sued over the killing of a 20-year-old man during a clash between protesters and Awami League men on August 5.

Abul Bashar Anik, brother of the victim, Abul Hasan Sajan, 20, who was shot in the city's Chashara area, filed the case last night, said Abdus Sattar, officer in charge of Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station.

Former MP AKM Shamim Osman, his brother former MP AKM Selim Osman, son Imtihan

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A freight train waits at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday afternoon as necessary maintenance on the lines is going on ahead. During the nationwide protests and violence, train services had been suspended. Bangladesh Railway resumed operation of cargo trains on August 12 after nearly a month.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Star INTERVIEW

### 'Big defaulters won't be spared'

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed shares his plan to discipline rogues in banking sector

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed has vowed to mete out exemplary punishment to big loan defaulters as the interim government scrambles to fix the ailing banking sector of Bangladesh.

The new government has begun its journey with banks struggling to cope with a ballooning bad debt. At the end of March, delinquent loans increased to Tk 182,295 crore, the highest in the history of Bangladesh. That means 11.1 percent of the disbursed loans have soured. The amount is even higher if outstanding rescheduled loans and outstanding restructured written-off loans are taken into account.

"How did it happen?" said Salehuddin, who worked as the central bank governor from 2005 to 2009. He presided over the financial system during the army-

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2





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## LOCAL BODIES

### Govt now can remove elected representatives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government can now appoint administrators to the local administrations like city corporations, zilla and upazila parishads in special circumstances.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday approved the advisory council's recommendation to amend four related laws.

According to a gazette  
SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## TK 3.11CR RECOVERY

### Former senior secretary held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police last night arrested Shah Kamal, former senior secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

"DB arrested him in Mohakhali," said a DMP text message.

On Friday, DMP conducted a raid and recovered cash worth around Tk 3.11 crore, including local and foreign currencies, from an apartment, belonging to Kamal, in Mohammadpur. Kamal served as secretary from 2015 to 2019 and senior secretary from 2019 to 2020.

### Gun looted in Dhaka found in Noakhali

STAR REPORT

A youth was arrested early yesterday from Noakhali with a firearm looted from a police station in Dhaka during the August 5 violence.

Arrestee Monir Ahmad, 22, is from Senbagh, Noakhali.

In primary interrogation, Monir claimed his neighbour

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### Fake freedom fighters to be brought to book

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Fake freedom fighters will be brought to book, said Liberation War Affairs Adviser Farooq-e-Azam yesterday.

"Those who became freedom fighters with fake certificates will be brought under the law. They have enjoyed state allowance for so long. They would be punished for defrauding the state," said Farooq-e-Azam, a freedom fighter.

He said this while addressing a meeting in Chattogram the district's Circuit House.

Following the meeting, he visited the Kotwali Police Station, which was vandalised and torched on August 5.

## METRO SERVICE RESUMPTION

### Work abstention behind the delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Uncertainty looms over metro rail service resumption as a group of its employees vowed to continue their work abstention until all six of their demands are met.

Authorities will meet newly appointed adviser of the road transport and bridges ministry today to end the stalemate, said MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd.

Once the employees rejoin, operations can be resumed within five days, he said.

Operations of metro rail have remained suspended since July 18 after two stations were vandalised during the quota reform protests, which later turned into an uprising that toppled the Hasina-led government on August 5.

On July 19, attackers vandalised two



At least 169 first graders and their parents formed a human chain in front of the office of the chief adviser on Minto Road yesterday afternoon. A High Court verdict cancelled their admission to Vigarunnisa Noon School and College recently. So they are now demanding that they be allowed to attend school. After around 30 minutes, the press secretary came out of the office, spoke to the parents and assured that he will raise the issue with the education ministry.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DENGUE IN 2024

### August deadliest month so far

At least 18 dead; experts urge immediate action

HELEMUL ALAM

At least 18 dengue patients have died in the first 17 days of August, the highest monthly death toll in 2024 so far.

Meanwhile, 2,897 people have been admitted to hospitals during the same time, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Last year, Bangladesh recorded its highest-ever dengue toll since the first outbreak in 2000, with 1,709 deaths and 3,21,179 cases.

Experts warn that the number of cases could rise further in September if immediate action is not taken.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said inadequate response from local government bodies, and absence of any anti-mosquito drives during the recent political upheaval has contributed to the deteriorating dengue situation.

"Anti-mosquito drives across the country are not being conducted properly. Even in Dhaka, the efforts are insufficient," he said.

He urged for comprehensive measures to control the spread of the dengue virus nationwide.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said the number of patients with dengue shock syndromes has increased recently.

He urged everyone to remain wary of dengue warning signs, as early intervention can reduce fatalities.

The World Health Organization introduced the term "expanded dengue syndrome" in 2012 to describe patients exhibiting atypical

symptoms in vital organ systems, such as the cardiovascular, neurological, renal, gastrointestinal, and hematological systems. Dr Nazmul pointed out that a large number of patients last year were admitted with dengue shock, a critical stage of the disease.

"Many people do not realise they have symptoms and delay seeking medical

attention, increasing their risk of developing shock syndrome," he said.

Shock syndrome in dengue patients can be categorised into two types: compensated shock and decompensated shock.

In compensated shock, blood pressure may appear low or normal, with a narrow pulse pressure of 20 or less.

Decompensated shock, however, is more severe, with disorientation, cold clammy skin,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## DENGUE THIS YEAR

MONTH	DEATH	HOSPITALISED
August	18	2,897
July	12	2,669
June	8	798
May	12	644
April	2	504
March	5	311
February	3	339
January	14	1,055

### UK shouldn't offer asylum to Hasina

Says British MP  
Rupa Huq

DIPLOMATIC  
CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh origin British MP Rupa Huq has said it would be unwise for the UK to give refuge to Sheikh Hasina.

"As a British Bangladeshi MP, my inbox is a lightning rod for Bangladeshi issues worldwide. At the moment, pleading mails ask me to 'ban the butcher' and similar requests as it is rumoured London is her next destination," she wrote in an opinion column published by the Standard newspaper of UK on Friday.

"I personally think given the deep unpopularity of her bloodthirsty regime and political sensitivities around immigration, it'd be unwise for the UK to give refuge to such a high-profile asylum seeker who is subject of an International Criminal Court application," Huq opined.

Huq wrote that the recent student unrest, where hundreds of unarmed minors were



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Two former AL MPs held, four more sued

Cases filed against  
hundreds of party men

STAR REPORT

Two former Awami League lawmakers were arrested yesterday, while cases were filed against at least four other ex-parliamentarians in separate incidents across Chattogram, Dhaka, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Cox's Bazar and Rangpur.

In Chattogram, Md Abdul Latif, the former Awami League lawmaker from Chattogram-II, was placed on a three-day remand by a court in connection with a case involving the shooting and injuring of a protester during the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

Chattogram's Metropolitan Magistrate Jewel Deb granted the remand after police presented Latif with a 10-day remand prayer.

Latif was arrested in the Baizid Bostami area early yesterday, said Fazlul Quader Patwari, officer-in-charge of Double Mooring Police Station.

The arrest followed a case filed by Md Ershad, accusing Latif and others of opening fire on protesters on August 4.

The former MP was allegedly hiding at a relative's house in Madarbari before being picked up by the army on August 10.

## ARRESTED EX-MPS

**Md Abdul Latif (Ctg-11)**  
Charge: Firing on protesters  
on August 4

**Ramesh Chandra Sen**  
(Thakurgaon-1)  
Charge: Attack on students  
on July 16

## SUED EX-MPS

**Muhammad Saiful Islam**  
(Dhaka-19)  
**Talukder Tauhid Jang Murad**  
(Dhaka-19)

Charge: Death of student  
**Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury**  
(Dinajpur-1)

Charge: Attack on students  
**Shaimun Sarwar Komol**  
(Cox's Bazar-3)  
Charge: Attack on student  
demonstration

Meanwhile, in Thakurgaon, former Water Resources Minister and Thakurgaon-1 lawmaker Ramesh Chandra Sen, was detained at his ancestral home in Ruhea Ramnath village by a police team from Dhaka.

Officer-in-Charge Gullamul Islam Mandal reported that law enforcers from Police Headquarters claimed they were taking the political leader for his safety.

Sen's wife Anjali Rani Sen said police assured her they would bring him back within half an hour, despite her pleas not to take him due to his illness.

A photograph of the former lawmaker, tied with a ribbon or rope, soon went viral on social media.

The family insisted that, to their knowledge, no case had been filed against him.

He was later produced before a Thakurgaon court in a case filed over attack on protesters on July 16 by BCL activists.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

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SEE PAGE 4 COL 7





This divider has been painted with the message "Ghush Diben Nah, Niben Nah" (Don't give or take bribes). Since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government, people from across the country have called for the new Bangladesh to be free of all kinds of discrimination and illegal practices that have plagued past governments. The photo was taken in the capital's Mohakhali area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Administrative deadlock in Bagerhat

Residents struggle as most offices remain inactive

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

An administrative stagnation persists in Bagerhat due to suspended operations of union and municipal offices following the resignation of the Awami League-led government on August 5.

Bagerhat district comprises of nine upazilas, three municipalities, and 75 unions, employing a total of 1,041 public representatives, including mayors, councillors, upazila chairmen, vice chairmen, union parishad members, and female UP members, most of them being affiliated with the AL and its front organisations.

Since the fall of the government



following a mass upraising, most of these AL-affiliated public representatives have gone into hiding over security concerns.

Their prolonged absence has been disrupting services such as issuance

of birth and death registrations, citizenship certificates, trade licences, and inheritance certificates.

As such, residents are being deprived of essential services.

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## Bhashani univ bans politics on campus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The authorities of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU) in Tangail yesterday banned all forms of political activities for students, teachers, officials, and employees on the campus.

In addition, all the university dormitories have been reopened, and academic activities will resume today, said an office order, signed by the Registrar Dr Md Tauhidul Islam.

On August 5, following the fall of the then government, MBSTU Vice Chancellor Prof Farhad Hossain, along with six teachers, resigned.

## Ustad Mihir Lala no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ustad Mihir Lala, 83, the veteran singer of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, is no more. He passed away at his residence in the port city at 7:30am today.

He is survived by his wife, Jayanti Lala, a celebrated artist known for her performances in Nazrul Sangeet, as well as by their son and daughter.

Mihir Lala served as the principal of Ariya Sangeet Chattogram until his passing.

He was accorded state honours at the JM Sen Hall premises in the city, and his funeral took place at the Baluar Dighi Moha Shamshan in Chattogram.

Mihir Lala was born on January 4, 1941. Although he was born in Cox's Bazar, he grew up in Boalkhali.

Mihir Lala's deep passion for music blossomed early in his childhood. He began his musical journey under the guidance of Ustad Abu Bakr Siddiqui and later learned from some of the most revered maestros of the subcontinent.

He also studied under Ustad Amanat Ali Khan. Ultimately, it was under the tutelage of Pandit Barin Majumdar that he emerged as a prominent figure in the world of classical music.

During the Liberation War, he played an active role as a vocal artist for Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra.

He was honoured with the Shilpakala Padak in 2018.



Workers, along with fire service members, trying to salvage whatever they can after 200 tonnes of jute were burnt in a fire at a warehouse in Munshiganj yesterday. The reason behind the blaze is yet to be determined and no one was injured in the incident, said officials.

PHOTO: STAR

## Protect children and their rights

UN calls on interim govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A high official of the UN has called on the interim government to seize the current transition as an opportunity to address existing gaps in laws and methods to protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation, and from arbitrary detention.

The call comes as, according to the latest verified figures by Unicef, more than 65 children were killed during the crackdown on peaceful demonstrations leading to the fall of Awami League regime on August 5.

"Youth and children in Bangladesh have been at the forefront of the recent protests in the country. They have achieved a lot, but they have also paid a huge price," said Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, Najat Maalla M'jid, on Friday. "I add my voice to those of the UN Secretary-General and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights underscoring the need for a full, independent, impartial, and transparent investigation into all acts of violence.

"In particular, I would like to stress the importance of ensuring adequate safeguarding mechanisms for children and young people who have been victims of violence, arbitrary arrests and detention." Maalla M'jid encouraged the interim authorities to expand and strengthen institutions and social programme so that they are easily accessible to all children.

She recalled the critical importance of a child-friendly justice system, including independent courts for minors, even more so considering the high number of children and youth that were detained during the recent protests.

"I welcome that the release of children has begun, and call for the swift release of all children," she said. "It is critical that all charges against them are lifted, especially under the cybercrime and anti-terrorist legislation, and that there are guarantees of no further prosecution."

The UN official also called on the authorities to protect youth and children's right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

## Three die as microbus falls in canal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Three persons were killed and another was injured when a microbus hit a roadside tree and fell into a canal in Cumilla yesterday.

The accident occurred around noon at Madhaia in Chandina upazila as the driver of the microbus, traveling from Dhaka to Cox's Bazar, lost control of the vehicle, according to police.

Monjurul Alam, officer-in-charge of Eliotganj Highway Police Station, said, "The road was slippery due to rainfall, which led to the accident."

The three deceased – Mozammel, 42, Shakhawat, 40, and driver Tarek, 38, all employees of Trust Life Insurance Co Ltd – died on the spot, police said.

The injured was admitted to Chandina Upazila Health Complex.

The bodies will be handed over to the families after legal procedures.

## ATTACKS ON CTG POLICE ESTABLISHMENTS Damages worth Tk 23cr, 500 firearms looted

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

The spree of attacks on numerous police establishments in Chattogram district following the resignation of the Awami League-led government on August 5, caused infrastructural damages worth around Tk 23 crore, said police officials.

The estimated value of other damages, including those caused to vehicles, is still being assessed.

Also, at least 500 firearms of different types, including SMGs, shotguns, Chinese rifles, gas guns, rifles, pistols, and more than 15,000 rounds of ammunition were looted from police stations, raising concerns as only a few of those could be recovered so far.

According to Chattogram Metropolitan Police and Chattogram District Police sources, 12 of the 16 police stations in the district and 11 other police outposts sustained damages in the recent spate of attacks and violence. Of those, Kotwali,

Sadarghat, EPZ, Patenga and Lohagara police stations sustained significant damages after being set ablaze, while Hathazari and Raozan also came under mob attack and underwent considerable damage due to vandalism.



"My station, set up in an old building, was completely destroyed in the violence and is now unusable. We have begun setting up a new office in an outpost near the Karnaphuli Tunnel," said Md Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Patenga Police Station.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

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1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs/Public Security Division
2	Agency	Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka
3	Procuring entity name	Director (DIG), Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
4	Invitation for	Purchase of Office Equipment.
5	Invitation Ref No.	CPH/Tender-3/2024-2025/3447
6	Date	17/08/2024

#### KEY INFORMATION

7	Procurement method	OTM (Frame work)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
8	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB).

#### PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9	Tender publication date	18/08/2024.
10	Tender last selling date	02/09/2024
11	Tender submission date and time	At 12.00 Noon on 03/09/2024.
12	Tender opening date and time	12.30pm on 03/09/2024.
13	Name & address of the office	

Selling tender document	Office of the Director (DIG), Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Receiving tender document	Office of the Director (DIG), Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Opening tender document	Office of the Director (DIG), Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka

#### INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

14	Eligibility of tenderer	1. Photocopy of up-to-date trade license. 2. Up-to-date bank solvency certificate. 3. Photocopy of up-to-date Income tax certificate. 4. Photocopy of VAT certificate. 5. Original money receipt paid for purchasing tender document. 6. Photocopy of up-to-date bank statement certificate. 7. Experience certificate. 8. Other documents (as per Schedule).
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15	Brief description of goods			
	Name	Price of tender document	Tender security in Taka	Completion time in days
	a) Office Equipment.	Tk. 1000.00	3,50,000.00 (three lakh fifty thousand)	15 (fifteen) days.

#### PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

16	Name of official inviting tender	Dr. Md. Emdadul Haque
17	Designation of official inviting tender	Additional DIG (A & F)
18	Address of official inviting tender	Additional DIG (A & F), Central Police Hospital, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
19	Contact details of official inviting the tender	Tel: 88-02-8312075 Fax 88-02-9342297

#### Special instructions

- No tender will be received after the deadline for submission.
- The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceeding.
- Tender will be evaluated item by item basis.
- All items will be purses after allocation of budget.

- If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time same venue.
- The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any tender partly of fully and reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Dr. Md. Emdadul Haque  
Additional DIG (A & F)  
For-Director (DIG)  
Central Police Hospital  
Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka  
Phone: 8312075, Fax: 9342297

**PRAYER TIMING**  
AUGUST 18

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-25	12-45	4-45	6-38	8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-41	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION





Medical professionals hold posters amid a nationwide strike by doctors to condemn the rape and murder of a young medic from Kolkata, at a hospital in Bengaluru yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## DROUGHT IN AFRICA Nearly 68m suffering

REUTERS, Harare

About 68 million people in Southern Africa are suffering the effects of an El Nino-induced drought which has wiped out crops across the region, the regional bloc SADC said yesterday.

The drought, which started in early 2024, has hit crop and livestock production, causing food shortages and damaging the wider economies.

Heads of state from the 16-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) were meeting in Zimbabwe's capital Harare to discuss regional issues including food security.

Some 68 million people, or 17 percent of the region's population, are in need of aid, said Elias Magosi, SADC executive secretary.

"The 2024 rainy season has been a challenging one with most parts of the region experiencing negative effects of the El Nino phenomenon characterised by the late onset of rains," he said.

It is Southern Africa's worst drought in years, owing to a combination of naturally occurring El Nino - when abnormal warming of the waters in the eastern Pacific changes world weather patterns - and higher average temperatures produced by greenhouse gas emissions.

# Ukraine 'strengthening' positions in Russia

Says Zelensky; Germany to cut Ukraine military aid in 2025 budget

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday said his forces were "strengthening" their positions in Russia's Kursk region, where Kyiv has been mounting a major ground offensive for more than 11 days.

His comments came a day after Moscow accused Ukraine of destroying a key bridge over a river in the border region, as Kyiv seeks to disrupt supply routes and the movement of Moscow's troops in the area.

Ukrainian army chief Oleksandr Syrsky "reported on the strengthening of the positions of our forces in the Kursk region and the expansion of stabilised territory", Zelensky said in a post on Telegram.

"As of this morning, we have replenished the exchange fund for our country," Zelensky said, referring to Russian soldiers Ukraine has captured to be used in future prisoner swaps.

"I thank all the soldiers and commanders who are taking Russian soldiers prisoner and thus bringing the release of our soldiers and civilians held by Russia closer," Zelensky said.

Kyiv claims to have taken control of more than 80 settlements in the lightning incursion, which caught the



Kremlin off guard almost two and a half years into its full scale invasion of Ukraine.

The Russian defence ministry said on Saturday it had pushed back Ukrainian forces near three settlements in the Kursk region, and was searching for "mobile enemy groups" trying to pierce deeper into the country.

Russian officials on Friday accused Ukraine of striking a strategically important bridge just a couple dozen kilometres away from fighting in the Kursk region.

The region's governor, Alexei Smirnov, said on Friday evening

the bridge was in the Glushkovsky district, some 11 kilometres (seven miles) away from the border.

An aerial video published by Ukrainian air force commander Mykola Oleshchuk appeared to show the bridge being hit by a projectile at high speed before collapsing in a cloud of smoke.

"Ukrainian pilots are conducting precision strikes on enemy strongholds, equipment concentrations, as well as on enemy logistics centres and supply routes," he said on Telegram.

Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova

said the bridge was "completely destroyed" and that "volunteers providing assistance to the evacuated civilian population were killed".

"All those responsible for these inhumane acts will be severely punished," she said.

Russia yesterday also accused Ukraine of dropping an explosive charge on a road near the occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine.

The plant, which was seized by Russia's forces early in the war, has come under repeated attacks that both sides have accused each other of carrying out.

Russia meanwhile attacked at least four Ukrainian regions yesterday, according to officials, including the northeastern region of Kharkiv, where prosecutors said shelling killed a 49-year-old woman.

While the incursion has delivered a major morale boost to Kyiv, it appears to have had little impact on the larger battles raging in Russian-occupied parts of eastern Ukraine.

Zelensky yesterday said there had been "dozens of Russian assaults" on Ukrainian positions near the towns of Pokrovsk and Toretsk, where Moscow has made a string of advances in recent weeks.

## POST-COUP MYANMAR US pledges to expand support to opposition

REUTERS, Washington

US officials met virtually with members of Myanmar's opposition movement on Friday and pledged to expand direct support to help a transition to civilian government and agreeing on the need to maintain pressure on the military junta, the State Department said.

News of the meeting came after Washington's regional rival China urged neighbouring countries to help war-torn Myanmar advance its peace and reconciliation process when its foreign minister met counterparts from Laos, Myanmar and Thailand.

A US statement said Friday's meeting involved State Department Counselor Tom Sullivan, USAID Assistant Administrator Michael Schiffer and leading members of Myanmar's pro-democracy National Unity Government, the National Unity Consultative Council, and key resistance organisations, the Karen National Union, Karenni National Progressive Party, and the Chin National Front.

Myanmar's state media said on Thursday that China had promised technical support to conduct a census, followed by an election, signalling Beijing's backing to a junta cornered by an armed rebellion and steadily losing ground.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since 2021 when the military ousted an elected civilian government in a coup, abruptly ending the impoverished country's tentative steps towards becoming a full-fledged democracy.

## Thai ex-PM Thaksin gets royal pardon

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand's billionaire former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra received a royal pardon shortening his parole by two weeks, his lawyer said yesterday, a day after his daughter was elected premier by parliament.



Thaksin has been at the heart of a two-decade power struggle between the Shinawatra family and its allies on the one hand, and, on the other, a nexus of royalists, generals and old-money families that have long wielded influence over Thai governments and institutions.

After a dramatic return last August from self-exile to avoid jail time in the wake of his overthrow in a 2006 military coup, Thaksin served six months in hospital detention, due to health reasons, before being released on parole in February.

After his return, he was sentenced to eight years in prison for abuse of power and conflicts of interest during his time in office from 2001 to 2006. His sentence was commuted to one year by King Maha Vajiralongkorn last September.

"Thaksin is among the prisoners that received the royal pardon" for prisoners in honour of the king's birthday last month, his lawyer, Winyat Chartmontri, told Reuters. "It will take effect on Sunday."

Parole, granted in February, was due to end at the end of the month, but was shortened to Sunday as part of the royal pardon, Winyat said.

Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra, 37, was elected on Friday as Thailand's second female prime minister and the third Shinawatra to hold the office, winning with nearly two-thirds of the Thai parliament.

## US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

# Rivals to hold rallies in key state

AFP, Wilkes-Barre

Donald Trump and Kamala Harris are holding duelling campaign stops in the crucial battleground state of Pennsylvania this weekend, as new polling shows the US vice president making major gains ahead of her big moment at next week's Democratic National Convention.

Trump will hold a rally in the small town of Wilkes-Barre on Saturday, while Harris is taking her tour bus on several stops around Pittsburgh on Sunday before heading to the convention in Chicago.

The momentum in the White House race has shifted dramatically since President Joe Biden abruptly pulled out on July 21, with Harris's whirlwind entry energizing the Democratic Party base.

A survey by the New York Times and Siena College published Saturday had Harris storming back into contention in four critical battleground states that Trump had looked set to win comfortably against Biden.

The Republican has struggled to find an effective counter to the Harris surge, and the new poll will likely trigger further consternation in his campaign team, with the vice president now ahead in Arizona and North Carolina, and getting closer in Nevada and Georgia.

The stakes will be high for Trump to find some fresh impetus at Saturday's public rally, after a series of distinctly low-energy events held at his Florida resort home and a golf club he owns in New Jersey.



People look at animated kites soaring over the sky on the third day of the Tamil Nadu International Kite Festival on the outskirts of Chennai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

### Unearth all banking sector irregularities

Bring those involved in financial crimes to book

Since the fall of the Awami League government, increasingly alarming information about the banking sector has begun to surface. Most recently, it was reported in this daily that Tk 45,000 crore is tied up in dubious loans. In a questionable practice, eight banks have provided loans to directors of other banks, posing considerable risks to the entire sector. According to their financial reports, loans totalling Tk 25,000 crore were exchanged among these eight banks for their directors by the end of 2023. In addition, four of these lenders provided around Tk 20,000 crore to the relatives of the bank directors. This means the total reciprocal loans sanctioned for these directors and their relatives amounted to Tk 45,000 crore, with most of these loans changing hands over the last five years.

It has been known for some time that the banking sector experienced massive irregularities under the AL government. However, the true extent of these irregularities—despite various issues being regularly reported—seems to be beyond anyone's wildest imagination. For example, these eight banks were known for their questionable practices and were allegedly linked to the recently ousted AL government. During Hasina's 15 year rule, powerful business groups with banking assets, including S Alam, Beximco, Nassa, and Sikder Group, thrived on murky politics and routinely bent banking rules, exposing the entire financial sector to serious risks. The names of these business groups have once again surfaced in relation to the irregularities that have occurred at these eight banks.

What is further concerning is that the combined contribution of the eight bank directors to the lenders' paid-up capital is only Tk 2,400 crore, or about five percent of the Tk 45,000 crore in loans they have taken from each other. Since most of these groups would have been unable to secure loans if their business practices and financial health had been properly assessed, and given that central bank rules prohibit a bank from lending to its own directors, they engaged in reciprocal lending. Moreover, many of these loans were approved based on the direct orders of the directors, with bank officials playing a minimal role, according to some mid-level bank officials. In other words, the bank directors essentially made up the rules as they pleased, putting depositors' and national interests at risk in the process.

However, it is unlikely that they could have carried out such risky manoeuvres without "managing" the regulator in one way or another. This represents another disastrous outcome of the politicisation of our regulatory authorities. Therefore, it is essential that the interim government continues to uncover such irregularities and identify those responsible for these corrupt lending practices. The truth about the health of our banking sector needs to be revealed, and those responsible for financial irregularities must be held accountable. Additionally, steps must be taken to protect depositors' interests and recover these loans from politically connected businesses and individuals.

### When will Ctg elevated expressway open?

The CDA must answer for the delay

We are disappointed by the unexplained delay of the authorities in opening the much-anticipated elevated expressway in Chattogram, which is supposed to ease traffic congestion and boost the port city's economy. Even though eight months have passed since its inauguration by the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in November 2023 (when it was still incomplete), it remains uncertain when the elevated expressway will open to the public. The Chattogram Development Authority (CDA), which constructed the 16-kilometre-long expressway—from the port city's Lalkhan Bazar to Patenga—has remained silent about its opening. Although the project director hinted in March this year that the expressway would be partially opened to the public within two months, this did not happen. Now, in mid-August, the continued uncertainty about its opening has frustrated the people of Chattogram.

Unfortunately, like most other mega projects in the country, the Chattogram elevated expressway has also faced cost and time overruns. While the project was originally scheduled for completion by June 2020, its deadline has been extended twice—with its deadline set for June 2024 the last time. Naturally, this delay has significantly increased the project's cost, which rose from Tk 3,250 crore to Tk 4,298.95 crore. Moreover, a dispute over land acquisition among the CDA, Chattogram Port Authority, and railways further delayed the work. As a result, the CDA had to alter the expressway's original design.

We would like to ask: Why was the project hurriedly inaugurated if it couldn't be opened to the public? Why do such projects always face time and cost overruns? Why are issues like land acquisition not resolved before the start of the project? Why do we repeatedly encounter these questions about most such projects? We urge the interim government to take a strong stance to address these anomalies in project implementation.

Over the past few decades, a culture of inefficiency, incompetence and irregularities have plagued all our government institutions. And the CDA is no exception. It has a record of failure in many projects it undertook over the years—and it cannot continue in this manner. We urge the CDA to open the first elevated expressway in Chattogram as soon as possible. This will not only provide commuters with some relief from unbearable traffic congestion, but also reduce travel time and cost and hopefully usher in a new era of connectivity and trade in the port city.

#### THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### Pervez Musharraf resigns

On this day in 2008, facing possible impeachment, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf resigned from office.

# Can the new leadership save the economy?

OPEN SKY

Dr Birupaksha Paul is professor of economics at the State University of New York in Cortland, U.S.

BIRUPAKSHA PAUL



It is welcome news that Dr Ahsan H Mansur is going to lead Bangladesh Bank (BB). Former BB governor and current finance advisor to the interim government, Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, will serve as a knowledgeable advisor on finance and banking. The recent addition of a prominent economist like Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud as another new advisor has created a golden opportunity to correct the course of the economy, which is currently in disarray. It would be equally encouraging if the government appoints another expert to lead the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), to represent the country's capital market.

Finally, Dr Muhammad Yunus, head of the interim government and a globally recognised pro-poor growth economist, has the potential to create a powerful leadership team that can not only rescue the economy from a possible downturn, but also guide us toward recovery. Their first task is to address the three groups of looters: bank defaulters, tax dodgers, and money launderers—who have formed a "devil's triangle" and have been coddled by politicians in power, nearly ruining the country's institutions.

Never has this country seen such a scholarly leadership team for economic policymaking in its history. At times, BB governors were duly qualified, but often the finance ministers or leaders in the capital market were not. On other occasions, both governors and finance ministers were inadequately qualified, placing the wrong people in key positions. This situation weakened the leadership triangle and undermined the effectiveness of the economy.

We know that the leadership team during this interim period is likely to be short-lived, as pressure for new elections is mounting. However, people expect to see a series of reforms in recruitment policies to ensure that only qualified individuals can become BB governor, BSEC chair, or finance ministers—not merely those who curry favour with big-ticket bank looters or who are sycophantic to the regime. People hope that future elected governments will choose scholarly leaders, especially for key financial institutions, whom the public can respect and rely on.

Controlling inflation in the short term and addressing massive youth unemployment in the medium term are their two main challenges.

The previous two governors, who questionably held the leading position at the central bank, have made the task for the new governor significantly more difficult. The primary hurdle is to bring clarity and accuracy to the definition of defaulted loans, which were reported as much lower than their actual amount due to looter-friendly definitions. For example, a

with any business mafia, the governor will receive wholehearted support from Salehuddin Ahmed whenever corrective measures are undertaken.

Full transparency of information and data should be maintained within the pentagon of leaders to break the "devil's triangle." Governor Mansur is right to emphasise that he will take necessary steps to ensure that financial hooligans who siphoned off millions of dollars from the country face serious consequences. Since the interim government is not concerned with political popularity, it is crucial for it to reveal true figures on inflation, unemployment, defaulted loans, written-off loans, money trafficking, and revenue gaps. This transparency will aid other agencies and researchers in working effectively. Hiding data has caused serious damage to the

In other countries, defaulted loans rise when the economy performs poorly. Bangladesh's growth continued to rise until 2019, reaching nearly 8 percent. Growth has become lacklustre after Covid-19, not due to global factors but because of increased wilful defaults and rampant corruption across all sectors. Still, growth has hovered around 5 to 6 percent, which does not justify requests for loan rescheduling or default. The nature of defaulted loans varies widely based on ownership structure, indicating that they are primarily institutional and political in nature, rather than being related to the real economy.

The share of defaulted loans out of total outstanding loans is as low as 3.38 percent in foreign banks, while it is as high as 22 percent in private banks. The corresponding figure for public



VISUAL: REHNUMA PROSHOON

loan was considered "regular" if only 5 to 10 percent of it was repaid. This is a mockery, and the previous regime approved it easily, primarily so that these defaulters can participate in the one-sided election.

The parliament has largely become a club of corrupt businesspeople who occupy 61 percent of the seats, with the remainder filled by retired bureaucrats, elderly party stalwarts who still crave power, and a few promising youths. Politics has corrupted central bank policymaking. The finance minister from 2019 to 2023 orchestrated this definitional perversion to favour delinquents, and the past two governors merely complied with the finance minister's wishes without assessing any merit or ethics. The new governor will face resistance from the beneficiary groups when attempting to implement best global practices in loan administration. However, since the finance advisor is not affiliated

economy, though ministers adopted this tactic to remain politically expedient.

This is the time to abolish the Financial Institutions Division at the ministry. Its establishment after 2009 has caused more harm than good by weakening the central bank and empowering finance ministry officials who often served politically connected top-ranking oligarchs, including those who closely supported the former prime minister. Moral hazards have reached such a point that making a U-turn will be one of the toughest tasks for the interim government. It is also crucial to establish "Revenue" as an independent ministry, as it represents more than 10 percent of GDP. This is a significant weak point in Bangladesh's finance sector that has been long ignored. Leading such a crucial department with just non-expert bureaucrat has proven ineffective and will continue to do so.

banks is abnormally high at 38.56 percent, vindicating that the issue is primarily one of poor governance and political looting. The new governor is expected to address this problem. All boards of directors at both public and private banks must be reshuffled, and the directorship law should be revoked.

Professor Rehman Sobhan mentioned in a seminar on the banking sector on July 7 this year that Bangladesh Bank (BB) enjoyed a rich tradition of having scholars as governors, such as Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, Dr Fakruddin Ahmed, Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, and finally Dr Atiur Rahman. This tradition collapsed in 2016, leading to less favourable results in the banking industry. However, with the appointment of Ahsan H Mansur as governor, we hope that BB will regain its knowledge-based leadership and that subsequent regimes will uphold this standard, which is crucial for the economy to thrive.

## It could've been any one of us in Moumita's place

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BENAZIR ELAHEE MUNNI



In cases of being subjected to violence, being the woman in the story is difficult. She is constantly at risk of getting her narrative hijacked by the nit-pickers, power holders, so-called well-wishers, pacifiers, prestige-rescuers, and of course, men. As I had started writing this, I was still reeling from the news of Dr Moumita Debnath from the neighbouring country, who met her demise in the most gut-wrenchingly painful and inhumane way imaginable. Moumita was a trainee doctor on duty when she was brutally raped and murdered. Even in her final hours, she was denied the slightest ounce of decency. The pain they inflicted on her was put on display in cold blood, snipping some invisible wings here and there across borders, setting us back just a little further and serving us once again, a grotesque reminder of what awaits if we dare to "act too smart."

I don't think it is possible for the "dominant sex" to even begin to

fathom how deep such a piece of news can cut a woman. Women live their lives watching over their shoulders everywhere they go because their struggles have added layers, layers that can deeply wound them. They cannot show their fear because that makes them weak, they cannot assert their strength because that suggests they are "asking to be taught a lesson." They walk on eggshells which say, "You asked for independence, there you have it" or "That's equality for you."

Women, no matter how old or young, are always on somebody's radar. It's terrifying how anyone from any part of society can have almost the same power over a woman and her choices as the men in her life. That is only because they are women; viewed as prey first, humans later. Women seeking help on social media, a platform frequented by many supposedly "woke" individuals, are often met with curses and conspiracies that seek to invalidate their struggles.

Once a rumour starts spreading, the original incident is never viewed the same way again, and, ironically, in the end, women often find themselves apologising for the injustices done to them.

When it comes to providing a viable solution for women's safety, people are quick to prescribe home arrest, a change in the way they dress, and ultimately, fall back to despair over how the "system" functions. Animosity toward all matters feminine among the general public has always been critical, contributing to toxic masculinity and identity crises among many men who perhaps genuinely wanted to do the right thing. Returning to the idea that the tragic news of one woman can have a ripple effect, shaking every woman, if not every person, to the core, it's women who suffer the most in all of this. When they protest, it is easy to reduce them to noisy, opinionated, over-educated, and "feminist-type" clichés, what is not easy is to see past their demeanour and feel the pain it caused them. How their knees grow weak at the thought of that girl in whom every woman right now sees herself.

For every precautionary step a girl is taught to take before going out, every man should be trained to ensure that such precautions are never necessary for women. For every #MeToo statement, there should be 10 people who come forward pledging to protect

all women in need, not just the ones in their own families.

This message should have been written in Bangla, and, if possible, in regional dialects. It should have been printed as leaflets, and distributed among the masses, who often remain hidden and are only occasionally disturbed by a woman "who didn't know her place." Rural areas, quiet alleys, busy markets, and crowded vehicles should be covered with posters until the message has been received.

Some women have this idea that speaking out makes them a "bad" girl, it makes them an accomplice to the rebel. This tendency has been an ancient tactic used to control the womenfolk. It has earned women the notorious labels of being prone to "cat-fights" or "being their own worst enemies." A "good" girl gets the degree, a "good" girl has a great husband, and a "good" girl is put on a pedestal because she said nothing. A "good" girl basically can have everything as long as she never questions anything. Were these "good" girls never victims of abuse? The answer is, almost every single one of them has had such an experience.

Perhaps we are still far away from freeing our stories from the grasp of patriarchy. However, our right to live an equal life, free of gender-based violence has been overdue for a long time. The next best time to advocate for it is now.





VISUAL: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

## Canards of a prejudiced neighbour



ON THE SHORES OF  
(IN) JUSTICE

Dr CR Abrar  
is an academic with an interest in  
human rights issues.

C R ABRAR

The July massacre and the consequent second liberation of Bangladeshis have taken the world by surprise. At a time when millions in Bangladesh are celebrating the overthrow of Hasina's brutal dictatorship, when several hundred families including those of Abu Sayed, Mugdho, and Faiyaz, are beginning to sense that the wheels of justice have begun to roll, when various countries, international development and rights bodies, civil society organisations and the global media are beginning to absorb and appreciate the courage, tenacity, and commitment of the young heroes, various actors in Bangladesh's next door neighbour (political leadership and the mainstream media, in particular) are busy crafting a narrative denying and undermining the magnificent achievements of the new generation of "freedom fighters."

In the final days of Hasina's regime, the decision to unleash armed Awami goons on the defenceless protesters and the subsequent mobilisation of the security forces with the order to "shoot on sight" (duly executed on a number of occasions, killing scores of people), and the indiscriminate use of tear gas, sound grenade, armoured personnel carriers and helicopters to disperse and terrorise the protesters made it amply clear to the people of Bangladesh and discerning international observers that the Awami regime has reached its nadir. The state's myopic policy of resorting to intimidation and brute force only contributed to further hardening the resolve of the protestors. By August 3, their nine-point demand coalesced into one-point, the unconditional resignation of the government.

On the fateful day of August 5, the students' Dhaka siege programme in realisation of the one-point demand was countered by the state by imposing a stringent curfew backed by the threat of using lethal force. When the former prime minister ordered the siege be quashed "by any means," the armed forces' decision not to open fire on the unarmed protestors sealed the fate of the regime, leading Hasina to flee the country. While her departure triggered joyous celebrations all over the land, the news of killing of more than 100 people on the final two days let loose frenzied outrage, resulting in ransacking of the prime ministerial office and residence in Dhaka, and attacking and, in some instances, torching of the offices of the Awami League and homes and facilities of its leaders.

The violence that ensued was the result of a combination of outrage at the indiscriminate killing of fellow protestors and the venting of a long-drawn pent up frustration of a repressed, disenfranchised populace, who were left out of the "economic miracle" conjured by the regime and subjected to denial of fundamental rights including those of assembly, expression and dissent and also ill treatment, seizure of properties, denial of justice and humiliation by the ruling elite in cahoots with the state agencies.

The glorious struggle of the youth of Bangladesh that culminated in the overthrow of a despot through sacrificing several hundred lives received widespread felicitations from all over the world. Unity, resilience,

and creativity demonstrated by the student leadership in steering through the movement against all odds became the topic for discussion in every quarter that value justice, freedom, and liberty, both at home and abroad. In contrast to such a dispensation of triumph and positive image of Bangladesh's new found freedom, the dominant and influential sections of Indian commentators (diplomats, strategic experts, and "Bangladesh observers") and that of the media conjured up a conspiracy theory claiming that the students' movement was being "manipulated," if not "steered" by opposition political parties, such as the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami. Nothing can be further from the truth.

The quota reform movement was an autonomous, organic movement of the students. Though it was initiated by the students of public universities, the atrocities committed against them by the ruling party thugs, blatantly aided by the members of law enforcement agencies, galvanised the students of schools, madrasas, colleges and private universities to join the ranks. As the casualties mounted as a result of trigger-happy response of the state, siblings, parents, guardians and mass people from all walks of life joined the students, swelling the ranks of the protesters. By then they had overcome the fear to face live ammunition. All along there was conscious effort by the student "coordinators" (leaders) not to provide the government any pretext to brand the movement as proxy of the opposition parties. During this entire episode, being mindful of likely public backlash for usurping the movement, political parties such as the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami had little option but to maintain a low profile, let alone had any opportunity to direct or manipulate it, as claimed by Delhi and Kolkata based pundits.

Some Indian observers also beat the drum that the Pakistani spy agency, ISI, had a hand in orchestrating the protests to dislodge the Hasina government. Others have pointed fingers at China. If indeed such collusion existed, is it not incumbent on those observers to furnish credible evidence to establish the veracity of such claims?

Collective leadership with designated coordinators in major educational institutions and districts was a distinguishing feature of the movement. As and when top leaders got arrested, detained, or were forced to hide, the next tier of coordinators assumed the role and steered the struggle, often by declaring programmes that ensured the continued engagement of the masses. The unflinching commitment to unity and resilience frustrated all efforts (detention, abduction, and torture) of the state agencies to bring about a fissure in the leadership. After the state violence reached its zenith, the one-point demand for the resignation of the government was taken by the students and the students alone. Therefore, to ascribe the success of the protest movement to opposition political parties or external elements not only reflects the stark failure to recognise the depth of the students' agency and ingenuity, it also manifests the wretched level of

understanding of the "Bangladesh observers" of India as to the ground realities of Bangladesh politics.

The claims of widespread violence targeting the Hindu minority were another issue of concern of the prejudiced Indian media and the intellectual elite. The matter also featured in the Indian prime minister's message to the newly installed chief adviser of Bangladesh. It is true, that public backlash against the Awami League leaders and activists engaged in excesses during the party's 15-year rule did impact on some members of the Hindu community. On August 9, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad reported that 205 cases of persecution, which includes the burning of temples, sexual assault, and even murders, on minority communities took place in 52 districts since the former prime minister's resignation occurred four days prior.

However, there is also burgeoning evidence that the issue was blown out of proportion by the vested quarters. Images of a prominent Hindu cricketer's home being torched, of Hindu women being gang raped and killed; of Hindu community members trying to cross the border en masse to escape engulfing violence that was rife in the social media were subsequently proven to be fake.

Fact checkers have found that many of the fake posts on social media about "widespread persecution" of Hindus in Bangladesh were posted from various Indian accounts. They noted, "While some attacks on Hindus did occur, houses were also vandalised and burned in Muslim communities." Instead of viewing them as incidents of "communal violence" the attacks were targeted at Awami League leaders and supporters rather than at individuals based on their religious identity. For political expediency "these events were given a communal colour rather than being portrayed as politically motivated." After reaching out to sources in some of the affected districts, Al Jazeera "discovered that the attacks on Hindu households were not driven by religious identity but by political affiliations." The BBC's fact-checking unit, BBC Verify, also arrived at a similar conclusion.

The prejudiced Indian intellectual elite and the media outlets' hypocrisy is palpable by their collective silence about the atrocities committed by the Awami League goons and members of the law enforcement agencies. From their interventions in the TV talks shows, opinion pieces and statements, it is obvious that the killing of hundreds of unarmed youths by illegal use of firearms by Hasina government and injury of several thousand have hardly been reported and thus far failed to stir the conscience of these champions of liberalism who interestingly have passionately condemned the mob vandalism of private and state property, including statues of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Such insensitive and undesirable reaction by the mainstream Indian intellectual elite and its cohort media to the July massacre should not come as a surprise to ordinary Bangladeshis. They are well aware that it was the Indian government that continued to provide critical support to a regime that usurped power by conducting three sham exercises (falsely dubbed as general elections) in 2014, 2019, and 2024. Time has come for the Indian political establishment to discard its myopic policy of trying to shore up the fallen regime that was overthrown by a popular revolution of freedom loving Bangladeshis, particularly the young people, who aspire to be treated with dignity and respect by its neighbour.

## The tasks ahead for Bangladesh



Selim Jahan  
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SELIM JAHAN

As Bangladesh is settling after the unprecedented events over the past weeks—the mass movement, hundreds of lives lost, the overthrow of Awami League government—one of the critical questions before us is what next. What needs to be done in today's Bangladesh, as the country is trying to move forward? The actions needed has an immediate perspective, a short-run one, as well as a medium-term and a long-term context.

Immediately, the broken structure of the law and order-enforcing police administration must be restored. No doubt increasing politicisation of the police force over time, and the recent police actions led to much anger and hostility of the common mass against the police. As a result, the police force is in a state of fear.

Second, social resistance to all kinds of violence must be ensured and legal actions taken. One aspect of this violence is the destruction of public property and buildings, which is not desirable because they belong to people. Measures must be taken to avoid all kinds of revengeful acts and looting. The other kind of violence manifests in the attacks on the lives and properties of minorities, especially religious minorities, and their places of worship. It is gratifying to observe that the collective and concerted efforts of student-public alliances are ensuring the safety of minorities and the protection of their properties and places of worship. Such efforts

as should the future parliament of Bangladesh have two houses; should there be proportional representation in it; should there be term limits on government, etc. There can be public debates in the context of constitutional reforms as well—issues of reverting to the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh or formulating a new constitution, reflective of the hopes and aspirations of the new generation. The latter issue, however, would require a constituent assembly.

Economic issues may constitute the second aspect of the public debate. The LDC graduation of Bangladesh would possibly be finalised during the tenure of the interim government, and as a result, some of its determinants would be relevant for them. Therefore, the interim government has to confront, in the scenario of changed realities, the issue of Bangladesh's readiness for the graduation, the negotiations with our trading partners, and formulation of a blueprint for protecting the interests of the country.

Issues of social harmony, human rights, social inequities, social violence and terrorism may be at the core of the third aspect of public debates. Dialogues on poverty, deprivation and issues of marginalisation may represent the major part of the social inequities. There should be an open and honest discussion on communal harmony, issues of minority insecurities, and

would need multidimensional reforms. It is well known that the political and economic institutions of the country have been increasingly suffering from fundamental institutional weaknesses due to years of neglect and politicisation of the system, making these institutions less and less effective. An important mandate of the post-election representative government will be institutional reforms in the country.

The scope of the reforms will have to be widespread. On one hand, such reforms would encompass the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law, and various aspects of public administration, e.g. law and order enforcing institutions, the Public Service Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission. On the other hand, they would also be in different economic and social areas. The economic sector would include the banking system, monetary and fiscal policies, the tax structure etc. Reforms are also necessary in economic institutions such as the Bangladesh Bank and the Planning Commission. Ensuring a structure and a culture of transparency and accountability should be at the core of the reform so the evils of nepotism and corruption can be combated. In the social sector, reforms have to happen in the education and health sectors.

One critical aspect of the mass movement is the focus on a disparity-free Bangladesh. In our society, disparities have many faces and exist not only in outcomes among various socioeconomic groups and regions but are present in opportunities, in education, health and in employment. In fact, disparities in employment were one of the major complaints of young people. In the medium-term, different reformatory measures are essential to reduce the multidimensional disparities in Bangladesh.



One of the critical questions before us is what next.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

need to be consolidated.

Third, the destruction of historic national symbols, such as pictures and photos, paintings, sculptures, and museums, can never be beneficial. They are part of national heritage and identity. To understand where we want to go as a nation it is essential to know where we have come from. Setting fire to the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi Road Number 32, the desecration of sculptures of the Father of the Nation, and other notable figures represent the destruction of our historical journey as a nation. These are unpardonable crime, which deserves due punishment.

One immediate task of the interim government would be to undertake an objective inquiry into the killings over the past weeks, to bring them to justice and punish them. Similarly, actions should be taken against those who are responsible for the destruction of public properties, symbols of national history and national heritage.

After the immediate actions, the first task to be undertaken in the short-term involves the creation of a democratic, transparent and participatory platform for citizens' dialogue. In such dialogues, there has to be an effective representation of all groups in the society—women, young people, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, people of third gender, etc.

Those dialogues may have three aspects: one, a political dialogue which should raise questions such

the responsibilities of the majority.

While short-term reforms are required in various areas, they must align with the future medium-term reforms. One critical reform in the short-term should be in police administration so that even in the short-term, an apolitical, people-friendly, public service-oriented police force can be constituted. The other necessary short-term institutional reform is required in such entities as the election commission. The independence and neutrality of the commission must be enhanced to the highest level so that it can duly perform the mandates bestowed on it. Three, in the financial sector, short-term reformatory measures may be undertaken to combat money laundering and wealth exodus, which would increase the country's resource base.

Because of the changed realities, there may be a need for reconstructing the collaborative and trusting relationship with various countries and international organisations. The interim government will have to perform these tasks in the short-term.

The most important task in the short-term will be to organise, on the basis of public debates and dialogues mentioned earlier, a free, fair, neutral and participatory election. In fact, this would be the prime responsibility of the interim government, which should delegate the reformed election commission this responsibility and oversee the election process.

In the medium-term, Bangladesh

One of the most important tasks in the medium-term would be formulating a long-term vision for Bangladesh, which would identify the path for tomorrow's Bangladesh. Today's youth would be the main architect of that vision, which would motivate and guide the future of Bangladesh. Today's young people would no longer remain the "future of the country," rather they would be the "present of the country."

Let us conclude with three observations. First, an interim government cannot be an alternative to an elected government. In that context, the tenure, mandate and scope of the work of an interim government must be limited and must be duly defined. A large part of the citizens of Bangladesh feel that the tenure of an effective interim government should not be more than two years.

Two, whether election first and reform second or whether it should be the other way round is an unproductive question. Since the fundamental reforms are to be undertaken by the elected representatives of the people, election should precede fundamental reforms. This is because, without the approval of an elected government, fundamental reforms would not receive the required political legitimacy.

Finally, there are some interim proposals for reforms and actions as Bangladesh moves forward. There should be more dialogues, debates and discussions on such proposals. The intention of this article is to initiate that process.

## A lifeline for global health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is taking bold steps to tackle global health challenges with the launch of its first-ever investment round. This innovative approach aims to secure steady and flexible funding for WHO's core work from 2025 to 2028.

Supported by a coalition of nations, including France, Germany, Norway, Brazil, and South Africa, this initiative highlights the critical need for fully funding WHO's efforts. The investment round is not just about raising funds—it is about ensuring that these resources are used efficiently to make a tangible impact on global health.

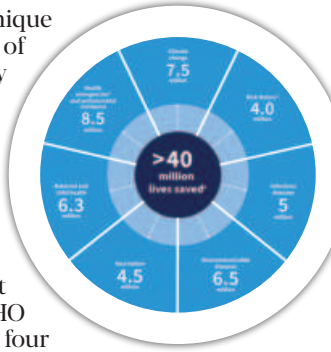
Through the strategy for the next four years (2025-2028), the Fourteenth General Programme of Work (GPW 14), WHO will catalyse action to deliver results in the final push to the health-related SDGs, addressing global health challenges, setting the agenda on access and innovation, accelerating universal health coverage through a primary health approach, and better supporting countries in their differentiated needs based on the world's best standards.

WHO's unique infrastructure of country coordination, and priority-setting provides the conditions for global and regional health partnerships to set and drive investment and progress. WHO will, over the next four years, save at least 40 million lives through concrete actions, including:

- » increasing the number of vaccines delivered to priority countries;
- » providing access to health services to more than 150 million people in humanitarian settings in 30 countries;
- » bringing solar electrification to 10,000 health facilities;
- » supporting 55 countries in educating and employing 3.2 million health workers;
- » helping 84 countries reach targets for eliminating malaria, mother-to-child HIV transmission, and other diseases;
- » strengthening access to timely and reliable health data; and
- » prequalifying 400 health products per year

With a fully and sustainably funded WHO, decisive steps can be taken in the next 4 years to tackle emergencies and outbreaks that threaten lives and jeopardise global health security, to reduce disease, and to continue working to improve well-being for everyone, especially for the most vulnerable.

Source: World Health Organisation



## Global health emergency declared for Mpox

### STAR HEALTH DESK

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has determined that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR).

Dr Tedros's declaration came on the advice of an IHR Emergency Committee of independent experts who met earlier in the day to review data presented by experts from WHO and affected countries. The Committee informed the Director-General that it considers the upsurge of mpox to be a PHEIC, with potential to spread further across countries in Africa and possibly outside the continent.

In declaring the PHEIC, Dr Tedros said, "The emergence of a new clade of mpox, its rapid spread in the eastern DRC, and the reporting of cases in several neighbouring countries are very worrying. On top of outbreaks of other mpox clades in the DRC and other countries in Africa, it is clear that a coordinated international response is needed to stop these outbreaks and save lives."

This PHEIC determination is the

second in two years relating to mpox. Caused by an orthopoxvirus, mpox was first detected in humans in 1970, in the DRC. The disease is considered endemic to countries in central and west Africa.

In July 2022, the multi-country outbreak of mpox was declared a PHEIC as it spread rapidly via sexual contact across a range of countries where the virus had not been seen before. That PHEIC was declared over in May 2023 after there had been a sustained decline in global cases.

Mpox has been reported in the DRC for more than a decade, and the number of cases reported each year has increased steadily over that period. Last year, reported cases increased significantly, and already the number of cases reported so far this year has exceeded last year's total, with more than 15,600 cases and 537 deaths.

The emergence last year and rapid spread of a new virus strain in the DRC, clade 1b, which appears to be spreading mainly through sexual networks, and its detection in countries neighbouring the DRC is especially concerning and one of the main reasons for the declaration of the PHEIC.

Several outbreaks of different clades of mpox have occurred in different countries, with different modes of transmission and different

levels of risk.

The two vaccines currently in use for mpox are recommended by WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunisation and are also approved by WHO-listed national regulatory authorities, as well as by individual countries including Nigeria and the DRC.

The Director-General triggered the process for emergency use listing for mpox vaccines, which will accelerate vaccine access for lower-income countries that have not yet issued their own national regulatory approval. Emergency Use Listing also enables partners, including Gavi and UNICEF, to procure vaccines for distribution.

WHO is working with countries and vaccine manufacturers on potential vaccine donations and coordinating with partners through the interim Medical Countermeasures Network to facilitate equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other tools.

To allow for an immediate scale-up, WHO has released US\$ 1.45 million from the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies and may need to release more in the coming days. The organisation appeals to donors to fund the full extent of the needs of the MPOX response.

Source: World Health Organisation

## New HIV prevention breakthrough

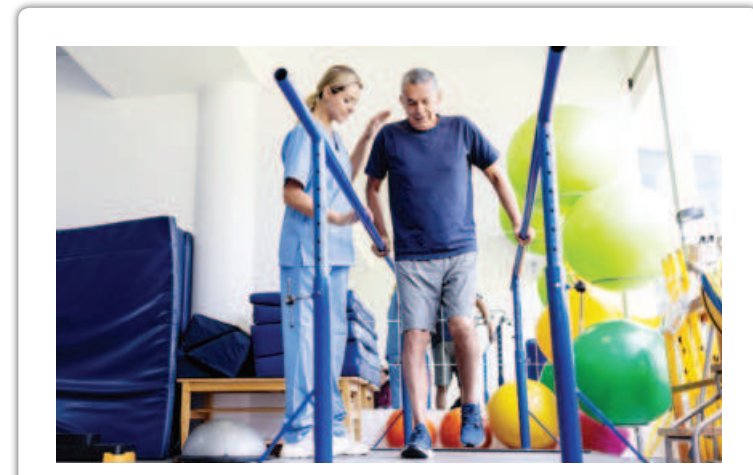
Globally, women account for nearly half of all HIV infections, yet they remain under-represented among those using pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). A recent study published in The New England Journal of Medicine, PURPOSE-1, sheds light on a promising new approach to HIV prevention: twice-yearly lenacapavir.

In this manufacturer-sponsored study, nearly 5,340 sexually active cisgender women in sub-Saharan Africa were divided into three groups: one received lenacapavir injections every six months, while the others took daily oral PrEP medications—FTC-tenofovir alafenamide (FTC/TAF) or FTC-tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (FTC/TDF).

The results are striking. The incidence of HIV among those receiving lenacapavir was zero, in stark contrast to the background rate of 2.41 per 100 person-years and the rates in the FTC/TAF (2.0) and FTC/TDF (1.7) groups. Adherence to oral PrEP was notably low, as many who contracted HIV were not using these daily medications.

Individuals who acquire HIV while on long-acting cabotegravir may exhibit a delayed immune response and low viral loads—a phenomenon known as long-acting early viral inhibition (LEVI). Some of these individuals develop resistance to cabotegravir.

The impressive results of lenacapavir could signal a new era in HIV prevention. If it proves effective in other populations, it may soon be approved by the U.S. FDA for PrEP. With broad and affordable access, this breakthrough could be pivotal in ending the HIV epidemic.



## Stroke rehabilitation by occupational therapy

### RABEYA FERDOUS

Stroke is the second leading cause of death in the world. After stroke, patients face different challenges to cope with the new situation. Stroke rehabilitation is the crucial part of treating the patient appropriately.

A group of healthcare professionals like neurologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech and language therapists, social workers, acupressure specialist, and nurses work for it.

Occupational therapy is a client-centred health profession that involves ongoing assessments to understand what activities you can do (and those you want to do), including any current limitations, your goals/motivations, and also to offer advice/techniques about how to do something more easily and safely.

Stroke is nearly linked with proper care and supervision. According to a study, about 43% of adults with strokes have neurological deficits. Rehabilitation after stroke is very crucial to minimise the disability. Early rehabilitation after stroke improves the limitations in performing activities of daily living (ADLs).

So, rehabilitation is not possible without occupational therapy. The vital aim of an occupational therapist is to prepare the disabled people to work in different ways. According to duration

and patient's condition, the occupational therapist provides treatment in the following phase:

1. **Acute Phase**
  - » Positioning
  - » Maintaining joint range of motion
  - » Pressure care
  - » Splinting
2. **Active phase**
  - » Bed mobility
  - » Bed sitting
  - » Lying, sitting
  - » Transferring practice
3. **Rehab phase**
  - » Retraining ADL's
  - » W/C skills (if needed)
  - » Functional mobility
  - » Advance transferring
  - » Follow up on the role and responsibilities
  - » Career education and training

When occupational therapy is needed, it depends on the severity of the stroke. The overall goal of this therapy is to relearn everyday activities that have been lost after stroke. Most of the patients receive physiotherapy, but they do not take occupational therapy. That is why their improvement in daily activities may hamper.

When any patient have difficulty doing daily activities after stroke, then contact a qualified occupational therapist.

The writer is an occupational therapist at the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the National Institute of Neurosciences and Hospitals (NINS&H). Email: rabeya1988@gmail.com

## Aiming to bridge the global health equity gap

The health equity gap remains a pressing issue, particularly affecting people in lower-income countries. These nations, despite shouldering 70% of the world's disease burden, receive only a fraction of global health investments. The consequences are dire, with reduced access to quality medicines and care leading to over 5 million deaths annually in low- and middle-income countries.

In response to this critical issue, Pfizer has launched the Accord for a Healthier World, an initiative designed to tackle these disparities. Through the accord, Pfizer pledges to provide its entire portfolio of medicines and vaccines on a not-for-profit basis to 45 lower-income countries. This



commitment is a significant step towards improving access to essential health resources where they are most needed.

To ensure these resources effectively reach those in need, the accord involves collaboration with governments and stakeholders in eligible countries. The focus is on exploring comprehensive solutions to overcome system-level barriers that hinder patient access. This includes pursuing more efficient regulatory pathways, enhancing supply chain logistics, and advancing health workforce training and development.

The ultimate goal of Pfizer's Accord for a Healthier World is to address the multifaceted challenges that limit access to care and to align with each country's national health priorities. By addressing these barriers, Pfizer aims to significantly improve patient access and contribute to closing the global health equity gap.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Are schools meeting students' dietary needs?

#### FARAH DIBA

You are what you eat! The age-old phrase holds the idea that health, happiness, well-being, and a sense of contentment are inseparably interconnected with what we eat.

Modern people lack a strong relationship with food. Children are now consuming food that is unhealthy and comes with minimal to zero nutrition. In other words, we have made a recipe for disaster for children's health.

The Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2022 found that about 50% of children aged 6-23 months consume unhealthy foods like soft drinks and processed foods high in salt and sugar. This means over 2.3 million children in this age group eat unhealthy foods.

When these children transition to schools, they are further bombarded with unhealthy foods, as most schools offer third-party-sourced food items that lack the right nutrition blend for students. The shift towards more processed and fast foods over traditional healthy options indicates that school canteens are failing to meet the nutritional needs of students as well as potentially hindering their educational outcomes and long-term health. What children consume affects their physical health, mental development, mood, and learning capabilities. Eating habits that are built at a young age become a lifestyle well into adulthood.

The ideal calorie intake of students aged 2-16 is around 1,400-1,600 (age 2-4), 1,500-1,700 (age 5-10), and 1,400-2,400 overall (age 2-16). Calorie need varies based on a child's age, sex, and activity level. To meet the calorie and nutrient requirements, children need to eat a



range of foods daily in the recommended amounts from each of the five food groups: vegetables, fruit, cereals, poultry, and dairy products. School meals are a major source of daily calorie and nutrient intake for students, and that is why schools must monitor the nutritional quality of these meals to ensure students receive the necessary vitamins, minerals, and macronutrients.

In addition to teaching about the value of nutrition in the classroom, schools are responsible for providing nutritious food in the canteen.

Schools need to emphasise providing an energy-focused breakfast to fuel students for the day ahead and a protein, vitamin, and mineral-rich lunch for brain, concentration, and memory development. Most importantly, as one of the biggest contributors to a child's growth, schools should be mindful of students' allergies, removing mushrooms, beef, brinjal, nuts, shrimp, etc., which are known to be common allergens.

The government of Bangladesh is planning to reintroduce midday meals at primary schools in 150 upazilas after a gap of 2 years, aimed at supporting the physical and cognitive development of underprivileged students. The commendable initiative will provide nutritious meals, guaranteeing these children receive the essential nutrients they need to thrive.

Taking inspiration from the government, private schools can also partner with nutritionists who will give guidance on meal choices and nutritional values, helping to create a comprehensive nutrition policy for each school. This policy should be strictly followed to ensure that students receive well-balanced, nutrient-rich meals. After all, a clean and nutrient-rich diet comprising whole foods helps students build cells that work, learn, and live better. For students to feel healthy, they must eat healthy.

The writer is a nutritionist at the Glenrich International School.

## Unveiling hidden risks: Maternal obesity and sudden infant death



In the quest to safeguard infant health, uncovering hidden risks is paramount. One significant concern that has emerged is the impact of maternal obesity on infant outcomes. As obesity rates among expectant mothers rise, understanding its implications for infant health becomes increasingly important.

A recent nationwide study in the US sheds light on this critical issue. Utilising data from the CDC's National Centre for Health Statistics, researchers explored the connection between maternal obesity and sudden unexpected infant death (SUID).

The study, published in JAMA Paediatrics, covering birth cohorts from 2015 to 2019, provides compelling insights into how varying degrees of maternal obesity can affect infant risk.

The findings reveal that infants born to mothers with higher levels of obesity face a greater risk of SUID. This risk escalates with more severe obesity.

These findings underscore the importance of addressing maternal obesity as a critical factor in preventing SUID. The research highlights a need for targeted interventions and support for expectant mothers.

## Mushfiqur prepares for a new experience in Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

In a Test career spanning over 19 years, Mushfiqur Rahim has accomplished more in the red-ball format than most Bangladeshis.

In his long career, which began in May of 2005 at the age of 18, the wicketkeeper-batter has emerged as the country's greatest accumulator of runs in Tests (5676 runs), has featured in the highest number of Test matches (88) and has Test centuries in five countries, most by a Bangladeshi.

At 37, well into the twilight stage of his career, Mushfiqur's chances of experiencing new challenges in Test cricket are slimmer compared to younger players like Zakir Hasan or Shadman Islam.

But in one sense, the veteran batter and the two youngsters mentioned above are on equal terms. Just like Zakir and Shadman, Mushfiqur is right now in Pakistan for the first time as part of the Bangladesh squad for the two-Test

series, beginning with the first Test in Rawalpindi on August 21.

"This is my first time in Islamabad. It is beautiful. The facilities are also quite great," Mushfiqur said in a clip sent by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday.

Mushfiqur has played Tests in eight countries including Bangladesh. The two notable omissions in his resume are Australia and Pakistan.

Not having played a Test in Australia is a common feature in the careers of all active Bangladeshi cricketers barring Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, as the Tigers have not toured Down Under for a Test series since 2003.

Mushfiqur did have an opportunity to play Tests in Pakistan

in 2020 when the Tigers last toured the country.

However, at that time the wicketkeeper-batter had opted out of the series, citing concerns over safety. He was the only Bangladeshi player who refused that tour.

Mushfiqur, however, has played white-ball matches for Bangladesh in Pakistan before, having taken part in the 2008 and 2023 editions of the Asia Cup, playing a total of seven ODIs.

Mushfiqur was among the five players of the 16-member Test squad that went to Pakistan ahead of time to take part in Bangladesh 'A' team's first four-day match against Pakistan Shaheens in Islamabad, which

ended in a draw on Friday, as part of preparation for the upcoming series.

However, those plans got dented a bit owing to poor weather during the four-day game and to make matters worse, the right-hander also copped a blow on his finger in a net session, which kept him from batting in the second innings.

Limited involvement in the build-up to the series seems to have only made Mushfiqur more eager to make his first Test experience in Pakistan more memorable.

"We wanted to come here and have some sessions before the rest of the Test side comes... The training was interrupted due to a couple of rainy days. So, we couldn't properly practise. In the first couple of days, we only had one net session and it was also not a proper one.

"I tried my level best [in the match], but the first innings it didn't go our way. I hurt my fingers in the nets so I didn't bat in the second innings. Hopefully, I will recover very soon and will play the first Test," he added.



## Rabby guides HP into semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahfuzur Rahman Rabby's unbeaten 13-ball 32 blitz powered Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) High Performance to a three-wicket win over Perth Scorchers and sealed them a place in the semifinal of the nine-team Top End T20 series in Darwin, Australia yesterday.

Rabby's knock, which included a couple of fours and sixes each, was supported by skipper Akbar Ali's 35 off 33 balls and opener Jishan Alam's run-a-ball 26, which helped their side reach 130-7 in 19.3 overs.

Perth pacer Matthew Kelly had rocked HP with early strikes and finished with figures of three for eight from his four overs, however, he could not eke out a victory for his side.

Earlier, fielding first, the HP restricted Perth to 129-5 with Ripon Mondol and Rakibul Hasan claiming two wickets each.

Perth opener Teague Wylie hit the lone half-century of the match, making a run-a-ball 56.

Chasing 130, the HP were reduced to 15-3 in 5.4 overs after Kelly removed Tanzid Tamim (one), Parvez Hossain Emon (0) and Ariful Islam (two) in quick successions.

HP were staring at defeat when Rabby came to the middle as the eighth batter of the innings, with his side needing 41 runs off 23 balls. He smacked 20 runs in the 18th over and hit a four in the next to guide his side home.

HP will face Northern Territory in the first semifinal today.

## Travel warning puts WC hosting in jeopardy

SPORTS REPORTER

The chance for Bangladesh to host the Women's T20 World Cup in October this year hinges on the withdrawal of travel advisories from four participating teams: India, Australia, England, and New Zealand.

"Being the host nation, we are regularly communicating with the ICC [International Cricket Council] regarding this issue, and even in our last communication yesterday [Friday], they expressed concern over the travel advisories from four participating nations," said a BCB official, who is maintaining the communication, on condition of anonymity.

These four countries issued travel advisories following a massive student-led movement, which ultimately resulted in the resignation of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"See, if these countries don't withdraw their travel advisories, there is no chance for us to host this event. While Australia initially advised reconsidering travel plans to Bangladesh, it now suggests 'do not travel to Bangladesh.' So, you can understand the situation," he said.

"Time is running out, and the ICC will not wait long because there is a huge risk of financial setbacks if we ultimately fail to host the tournament due to security reasons."

A final decision is expected to be made by the ICC board on August 20.

According to the cricket website ESPNcricinfo, Zimbabwe has emerged as one of two options being considered to host the event, which is due to start on October 3. The UAE is the other option being considered, after India ruled itself out.

"Actually, the ICC always selects an alternative host nation for any global event, but unfortunately, that's not the case for this tournament, and that's the reason they are now searching for a host country," informed a BCB director.

## Footballers demand BPL with all clubs

SPORTS REPORTER

A significant number of footballers from various clubs, including those at risk of missing the upcoming season, urged the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday to convince clubs to form squads.

Nearly 50 players from top-tier clubs, under the banner of "Professional Football Players," held a press briefing at the BFF House and presented a seven-point demand list to general secretary Emran Hossain Tushar.

Their demands include deferring the transfer window, holding the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) with all clubs participating and without foreign players, and arranging a meeting with the sports adviser of the interim government as soon as possible.

While none of the 12 clubs slated to join the BPL have officially notified the BFF of their intent to withdraw, insiders from at least two clubs remain pessimistic about participation. Several clubs had requested the BFF to defer the August 19 cut-off date for pre-season transfers, citing difficulties in securing funds due to a lack of sponsors following the ouster of the Awami League-led government on August 5.

After repeated requests, the world football governing body, FIFA, agreed to extend the cut-off date to August 22.

However, with only four days left until the extended deadline and with most clubs far from securing their squads, it is highly unlikely that the BPL will feature all 12 teams in the upcoming season. That is why the players have urged authorities to ensure that all the clubs participate.

Former national team goalkeeper Ashrafur Islam Rana, who played for Chittagong Abahani last season, said they are "willing to play even with a cut in wages" while urging sponsors not to back out.

Raihan Hasan asked what will happen to "100-120 players as three or four clubs don't want to form teams."

When contacted, Chittagong Abahani manager Arman Aziz told The Daily Star that he had called the club president, Shamsul Alam Chowdhury, yesterday, but the call was not picked up. The former national team footballer also said that he heard the club president had picked up a call from the BFF in the afternoon,

saying they were still willing to participate in the league. Shamsul, however, could not be reached by The Daily Star for a comment on the issue.

While there is still hope for Chittagong Abahani, the fate of Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, and the players who were in the process of going to these clubs, hangs in the balance.

A source inside Sheikh Russel said that despite the withdrawal of their chief sponsors, they were intent on forming a squad, but the

main roadblock is political. He added that it is highly unlikely the club could participate in the league under its current name, the change of which would be a long and arduous process.

BFF general secretary Emran gave the footballers some assurance, saying he would forward the letter to the professional league committee to decide on a course of action. He also said they would try to arrange a meeting by today with Asif Mahmud, the sports adviser to the interim government, where representatives of the players would be present.



## Need to help Mbappe adapt: Ancelotti

AFP, Madrid



With Kylian Mbappe set to make his La Liga debut for Real Madrid on Sunday against Real Mallorca, coach Carlo Ancelotti said the superstar needs to adapt to his new club.

The France captain scored on his long-awaited first Madrid appearance as Los Blancos beat Atalanta to win the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old striker, who arrived at the end of his PSG contract, was not at his best but finished lethally after Fede Valverde sent the reigning Spanish and European champions ahead.

"Mbappe is an extraordinary talent, we have to help him adapt as quickly as possible," Ancelotti told a news conference Saturday ahead of the team's opening La Liga clash.

"He has started well in the dressing room, very focussed, with humility."

Mbappe was asked if he was planning to score 50 goals this season after the Super Cup triumph and the forward said there was "no limit" to what he might achieve.

Ancelotti said he was avoiding setting a target for the former PSG hitman, whose arrival at his dream club Madrid was years in the making.

"I will never tell a player how many goals he has to score, what I ask of them is to give everything they have for the team, nothing more," added the Italian coach. "Everybody has their qualities, whether they are technical, tactical or motivational, and have to harness them for the team."

## City's unprecedented quest begins at chaotic Chelsea

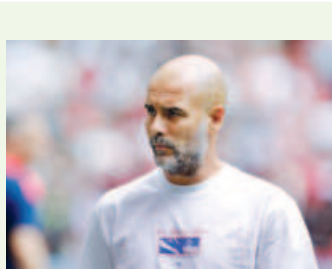
AGENCIES

As it has been the case for a number of years in recent history, Manchester City remain the team to beat as Pep Guardiola's men begin their quest for an unprecedented fifth straight Premier League title on Sunday afternoon when they travel to Stamford Bridge to face Chelsea in their opening fixture of the season.

It will definitely be a tough task for the reigning Premier League champions, but more so because of the unpredictability that surrounds a Chelsea squad that have more than 40 players at their disposal - something that will also be a headache for Chelsea's new coach Enzo Maresca.

As Maresca attempts to solve the jigsaw puzzle of whom to stick with for the starting eleven, some clues might be on offer today when Chelsea players emerge from the tunnel with their first competitive line-up after yet another summer of mind-boggling spending.

Around 160 million pounds (\$205.10 million) has been splashed out on players such as winger Pedro Neto from Wolverhampton Wanderers, midfielder Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall from Leicester City and goalkeeper Filip Jorgenson from Villarreal.



Directing a huge squad proved beyond Mauricio Pochettino for the majority of last season before an impressive end to the campaign hinted at the identity he had been seeking to forge.

But then Pochettino was replaced by Italian Maresca and Chelsea fans will hope that things fall into place quicker this time.

"At the moment if I start to think I

have 43 players it is not a good thing," Maresca said on Friday.

Sunday's game is quite the baptism of fire for Maresca, a former Man City assistant under Guardiola who takes charge of a Chelsea side seeking to end a six-game winless run against the Citizens. The Blues have, however, picked up more points (67) than any other Premier League club from their opening matches of a new season.

Tasked with managing such a huge squad in his very first season, Maresca could be calmed by the words of his former boss.

"All the managers need time," said Guardiola on Friday.

"I don't know if Chelsea is the place to do this but give him time and it will work."

Meanwhile, Guardiola also has headaches of his own ahead of the crucial fixture as key midfielder Rodri and Norwegian forward Oscar Bobb, who set up the only goal in City's tiebreaker win over Manchester United in the Community Shield, will be sitting out due to injuries.

Bobb could miss up to four months after breaking his leg in training while Rodri is still recovering from an injury sustained at Euro 2024.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (c) celebrates scoring their second goal with Luis Diaz and Diogo Jota, who netted the opener, during their 2-0 win over newly promoted Ipswich Town in a Premier League fixture at Portman Road yesterday, marking a strong start to their season in the post-Juergen Klopp era under the leadership of Arne Slot.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Public univs 'reopen' today

### 20 VC, 10 pro-VC posts remain vacant

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Public universities are set to reopen today amid a vacuum in the administrations after the resignation of at least 20 vice-chancellors, 10 pro-vice-chancellors, and many other officials.

Classes and other academic activities have been disrupted for more than one and a half months. When the universities reopen, academic activities may not be at full swing due to the vacancies at key posts.

The wave of resignations in different institutions in the wake of the fall of Hasina-led government has put the interim government in a challenging situation.

"I hope academic activities will fully resume later this week or early next week," said Prof Muhammed Alamgir, acting chairman of the University Grants Commission, adding that discussions with students will be needed to fully resume the academic activities.

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Traders have set up tin-roofed shops encroaching upon the Shubhadya canal in Keraniganj's Purbapara area. The canal has become clogged with waste and construction debris. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 5 secretaries appointed on contract

### They were earlier forced into retirement; existing contracts of many scrapped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five additional secretaries, who were forced to resign during the Awami League government, were appointed as secretaries yesterday on a contractual basis.

The new administration, which took charge after the student-led uprising earlier this month, also terminated several top officials who had been appointed contractually by the ousted Sheikh Hasina administration.

All the newly appointed secretaries are from the 1982 batch (regular) of the admin cadre, said sources in the public administration.

The Ministry of Public Administration issued circulars on these appointments.

Dr Mohammad Abdul Momen has been appointed secretary to the Public Security Division under the home ministry.

Md Mokabbir Hossain, who was appointed as the senior secretary to the division just three days ago, was transferred to the science and technology ministry.

Dr Momen had reportedly been sent on compulsory retirement on June 6, 2013, after he completed 25 years in

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## DGHS issues guidelines for mpox

### Asks people with symptoms to contact 16263 or 10655

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days after the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the mpox outbreak a global public health emergency, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday issued a guideline to control the disease.

It detailed the dos and don'ts of preventing mpox. It also described the symptoms and treatment of the disease.

The DGHS also advised people to contact 16263 or 10655 immediately, if any symptoms of mpox appear. However, no mpox patient has been found in Bangladesh so far.

Meanwhile, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) yesterday started screening the temperature of the passengers who arrived from abroad.

Mpox was first identified in monkeys in Denmark in 1958. WHO said that the disease has already spread to Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, Sweden and Kenya. Mpox was also detected in Pakistan for the first time on Thursday.

WHO declared a state of emergency for the disease twice in the last two years. Last Wednesday, it declared mpox a global public health emergency over the upsurge of the disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa.

Regarding the spread of the animal-borne disease, DGHS said that mpox virus was initially transmitted from animals to humans. But now it is being transmitted from person to person. Mpox belongs to the same class of viruses responsible for smallpox, but it is much less harmful than smallpox.

Mpox's typical symptoms include fever, headache,

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## Gaza truce an 'illusion'

### Says Hamas as US president says deal closer than ever; death toll in Palestinian territory crosses 40,000 mark

AGENCIES

A senior Hamas official yesterday dismissed optimistic talk by US President Joe Biden that a Gaza truce is nearer after negotiations in the Gulf emirate of Qatar.

"To say that we are getting close to a deal is an illusion," Hamas political bureau member Sami Abu Zuhri told AFP. "We are not facing a deal or real negotiations, but rather the imposing of American diktats."

He was responding to Biden's comment on Friday that, "We are closer than we have ever been."

Biden spoke after two days of talks in Qatar where Washington tried to bridge differences between Israel and Palestinian Hamas militants. The two sides have been at war for more than 10 months in the Gaza Strip.

Previous optimism during months of on-off truce talks has so far proven futile. But the stakes have significantly risen since the killings in quick succession in late July of Fuad Shukur, a top operations chief of Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement, and Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh.

Their deaths led to vows of vengeance from Hezbollah, Iran and other Tehran-backed groups in the region which blamed Israel.

Western and Arab diplomats have been shuttling around the Middle East to push for a Gaza deal which they say could help avert a wider regional conflagration.

Biden's secretary of state, Antony Blinken, was scheduled to head to Israel yesterday in a bid to finalise an agreement.

As efforts towards a truce continued,

so did the killing on Saturday in Gaza and Lebanon.

Lebanon's health ministry said an Israeli air strike in southern Lebanon killed 10 people including a Syrian woman and her two children.

The strike was among the deadliest in southern Lebanon since the onset of near-daily exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah following the start of the Gaza war in October.

- Hamas rejects 'new' Gaza truce conditions
- Israeli strike in south Lebanon kills 10
- Gaza rescuers say Israeli strike kills 15 from same family
- First polio case recorded in Gaza in 25 years

Israel's military said it struck a Hezbollah weapons storage facility.

In Hamas-run Gaza, civil defence rescuers said an Israeli air strike killed 15 people from a single Palestinian family. The fatalities in Al-Zawaida helped push the Gaza health ministry's war death toll to 40,074.

"We are in the morgue seeing indescribable scenes of limbs and severed

heads and children who are dismembered," said Omar al-Dreemli, a relative.

The Gaza war has displaced most of the territory's population, destroyed much of the housing and other infrastructure, and left diseases spreading.

The United Nations on Friday appealed for seven-day pauses in the fighting so it could vaccinate children against polio, after the Palestinian health ministry reported Gaza's first polio case in 25 years.

Israel claimed the killing of Shukur, in a strike in south Beirut, but has not commented directly on the killing of Haniyeh while he visited Tehran.

On Friday Hezbollah released a polished video appearing to show its fighters trucking large missiles through tunnels at an underground facility.

On his visit to Israel, Blinken will seek to "conclude the agreement for a ceasefire and release of hostages and detainees", the State Department said.

Egyptian, Qatari and US mediators are working to finalise details of a framework agreement initially outlined by Biden in May. He said Israel had proposed it.

In a joint statement after two days of talks in Qatar, the mediators said they presented both sides with a proposal that "bridges remaining gaps".

Talks aiming to secure a deal are to resume in Cairo "before the end of next week", they said.

Hamas did not attend the Doha talks. An official of the Islamist movement, Osama Hamdan, had told AFP the group would join if the meeting set a timetable for implementing what Hamas had already agreed to.

## BDR CARNAGE

### Make all probe reports public

### Victims' families demand, call for independent probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The families of the victims of the 2009 Pilkhana carnage demanded that all investigation reports related to the tragedy be made public and that an inquiry commission be formed to uncover the truth behind the brutal killings.

At a press conference held yesterday at Skyline Restaurant in Dhaka's Mohakhali, the families of those killed presented a series of demands, seeking justice and transparency, urging the interim government to take decisive action to this effect.

They claimed that a neighbouring state was involved in the massacre. They also said that the narrative of a dispute over "Operation Dal-Bhat" led to the killings is false, adding that it was spread with the intention of diverting attention away from the actual motives behind the massacre.

Rakin Ahmed Bhuiyan, son of Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed and Naznin Ahmed, both of whom were murdered during the carnage, made accusations against prominent political figures of the Awami League, including the former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

"Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Fazle

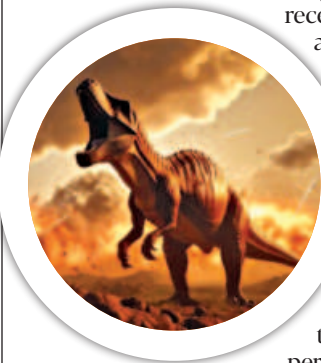
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## Scientists find origin of asteroid that wiped out dinosaurs

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists may have finally found where the object that wiped out the dinosaurs came from.

The mass extinction event that occurred 66 million years ago - the most recent on Earth - came about when a rare kind of asteroid collided with Earth, researchers say.



In that incident, about 60 per cent of the Earth's species including all of its non-avian dinosaurs were wiped out. Researchers believe that it led to a horrific period in the planet's history, during which its planets were lit on fire, the Earth was covered in ash and the climate would have turned deadly.

And it all began in the distant outer solar system, beyond Jupiter. There, a C-type asteroid formed that would give rise to what scientists call the Chicxulub impactor, which crashed into Earth and left the vast crater after which it is named.

Scientists say the discovery should help solve long arguments about the history of the Earth, as well as the objects that have collided with it from elsewhere in space.



While the Karwan Bazar wholesale fish market is overflowing with various types of fish, including hilsa, prices have not dropped at the local markets as one would expect. The photo was taken yesterday around 7:00am.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## COLLEAGUE'S RAPE, MURDER

### Indian doctors go on strike

AFP, New Delhi

Indian doctors held a nationwide strike yesterday, escalating protests after the "barbaric" rape and murder of their colleague that has channelled outrage at the chronic issue of violence against women.

The discovery of the 31-year-old doctor's bloodied body at a state-run hospital in the eastern city of Kolkata on August 9 sparked furious protests in several cities across the country.

Many have been led by doctors and other healthcare workers but also joined by tens of thousands of ordinary Indians demanding action.

In Kolkata, thousands held a candle-lit vigil into the early hours of Saturday morning.

"Hands that heal shouldn't bleed," read one sign held by a protester in the eastern city.

"Enough is enough," read another at a rally by doctors in the capital New Delhi.

"Hang the rapist," another said.

The murdered doctor was found in the teaching hospital's seminar hall, suggesting she had gone there for a rest during a 36-hour shift.

An autopsy confirmed sexual assault and, in a petition to the court, the victim's parents said they suspected

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