

How Islami Bank was taken over 'at gunpoint'

Ex-MD recalls 'intimidation by DGFI' before S Alam's intrusion into the bank

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Islami Bank, the largest private bank by deposits in 2017, was a lucrative target for Sheikh Hasina's cronies when an influential business group with her blessing occupied it by force – a "perfect robbery" in Bangladesh's banking history.

On the morning of January 5, 2017, alleged operatives of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence or DGFI picked up the then chairman, a vice-chairman and the managing director of the Islami Bank from their homes and brought them to the agency's headquarters one by one.

They were forced to resign. Hours later, the bank's board, meeting under the noses of military officers at a Dhaka hotel, chose their replacements.

"It's very disappointing that a government security agency was used to serve the purpose of a private group"
Abdul Mannan, former MD, Islami Bank

Seven years later, the former managing director, Abdul Mannan, broke his silence over the takeover of the bank by S Alam Group in one of the worst episodes in the banking sector during Hasina's 15-year rule.

"It's very disappointing that a government security agency was used to serve the purpose of a private group. Unfortunately, the central bank seemed to be complicit in it," Mannan said in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

"I was taken into the DGFI chief Brig Gen Akbar Hossain's room. He first praised me, sought my suggestions about the economy and then asked me to resign," said Mannan.

Mannan politely refused to step down. "I have an emotional bond with Islami Bank and it was very difficult for me to resign from the post. I had been involved with the bank since its early days," Mannan said. "I don't know if the MD of any organisation in the world had to face such a stressful situation."

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Sitting on a makeshift platform in front of her home, Hosne Ara cooks on a stove yesterday as her home is flooded in Shakhchile village of Cumilla's Monoharganj upazila. Although floodwaters have started receding in the upazila, residents in the low-laying areas are still in difficulties. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: NAHID MAZHAR

We're working to bring about inclusive society
Student coordinators say at meeting with Editors' Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Discrimination Student Movement is working to build an inclusive society in Bangladesh, said Information and Broadcasting Adviser Nahid Islam.

He made the comment during a views exchange meeting between the

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WORKERS' PROTESTS Many pharmas forced to halt production

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Workers in as many as 20 pharmaceutical factories have been protesting for nine days to press home their 21-point demand, in a development that has compelled many factories to halt production.

The workers' demands include salary increase, job regularisation, and a two-day weekly holiday.

"Worker unrest in almost all big pharmaceutical factories all of a

sudden is a matter of concern. It is not a good sign for the pharmaceutical industry," said Abdul Muktedir, president of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries.

The pharmaceutical companies have urged the workers to suspend their agitation as it would not be possible to meet their demands at this moment.

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Vacuum looms as teachers being coerced to quit

MD ABBAS

MA Malek, principal of Munshirhat College in Chandpur's Matlab upazila, was on leave when he heard students were demonstrating for his resignation.

He did not believe it at first, but soon, the college chairman called him and asked him to come to the campus and resolve the matter through talks.

"It was August 15. I rushed to the college and was talking to some students and coordinators of the Students against Discriminations Movement.

"Around 2:30pm, a group of people and some

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A car wash and repair shop has been set up occupying the footpath of this road in the capital's Bhasantek. Rickshaws have also been parked on the sidewalk, obstructing the movement of pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

'Turn them in to police'

Says Fakhrul about those who extort in name of BNP

BSS, Cumilla

Claiming his party does not harbour extortionists, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fahrul Islam Alamgir yesterday urged people to hand over those to police if someone demands extortion in the name of BNP.

"If anyone in your area demands extortion money in the name of BNP, capture him first and then hand over him to police," he said at a gathering before distributing relief among flood-affected people in Chhoto Sharifpur area under Lalmai upazila in Cumilla.

"BNP will not take any responsibility for such heinous acts," he said, adding that extortion reports against party men published in different media outlets are tarnishing the image of BNP.

Fakhrul claimed that a vested quarter is trying to tarnish the victory achieved through the student-people uprising.

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Constitution must ensure checks and balances

Say speakers at a seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Changes in the constitution are imperative to ensure the will of people in the running of the country and to repair the democratic institutions of the state, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

Most of the discussants at the seminar titled "Democratic Reconstruction - On Constitution" were in favour of rewriting the constitution through forming a new constituent assembly while some were on the side of bringing in major amendments to the existing constitution.

The seminar was organised by the Centre for Governance Studies at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies in the capital.

"There should be checks and balances of power between the president and the prime minister – the existing constitution permits the PM to hold immense power," said Ali Riaz, distinguished professor of Illinois State University of USA.

The same person should not hold the positions of the prime minister (head of government), the leader of the parliament and the chief of the ruling party at once.

In South Asian countries, whenever a party had a two-thirds majority, they changed the constitution.

A proportional representation system and bicameral legislature are needed in the country to have checks and balances, he said.

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بنك الإسلامية
EBL Islamic Banking

ইবিএল ইসলামিক ব্যাংকিং
বিশ্বাসে হোক
সহজ ব্যাংকিং

শরীয়াহভিত্তিক আধুনিক ব্যাংকিং সেবা নিয়ে এলো ইস্টার্ন ব্যাংক



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus holds a views-exchange meeting with the leaders of Gonoforum at the State Guesthouse Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

QUOTA REFORMS PROTEST Police file final reports in 650 cases

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Police have dropped charges of committing violence and cybercrimes countrywide against all the accused in around 650 cases, said a high official at the Police Headquarters.

Several top BNP and Jamaat leaders were among the accused.

Most of these cases were filed between July 17 and August 5 during the quota reform protests, according to case documents.

Investigators of these cases submitted the final reports to different courts over the last two weeks, praying them to relieve the accused of the charges, said the police official.

Mohammed Shah Jalal, additional deputy inspector general (crime range) of the PHQ, said they instructed all the police units to submit the final reports of those cases which were found to have been filed against innocent people.

"The investigation officers concerned will now submit the final reports after analysing the merits of the cases," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Regarding the murder cases, Shah Jalal said the IOs of those cases have been given similar instructions so that no innocent people face harassment.

"However, since murders have taken place, the IOs need to analyse and investigate why those crimes were committed and who were behind those."

"If the name of any accused was not included in the First Information Report, then the name should be included following an investigation. The IOs has jurisdiction over that," he said.

Of the 650 cases, 228 were filed at the police stations under Dhaka Metropolitan Police, according to court documents.

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TK 1,13,245CR LAUNDERING CID launches probe into S Alam, associates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has launched an inquiry into the alleged laundering of Tk 1,13,245 crore (approximately USD 10.7 billion) abroad by Saiful Alam, the owner of S Alam Group, and his associates.

The Financial Crimes Unit of the CID launched the investigation under the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012, according to a press release issued yesterday.

Since the ouster of the Awami League government, a slew of reports of corruption and money laundering have emerged against the S Alam group in the media.

According to CID, S Alam and his associates are accused of engaging in fraudulent activities, including invoice manipulation, under-invoicing, over-invoicing, and conducting illegal hundi transactions, leading to the illicit transfer of approximately Tk 1,13,245 crore abroad.

Citing various sources, the CID said the accused are suspected of laundering money from Bangladesh to countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Cyprus, and various parts of Europe. They are also accused of using these funds to purchase assets and operate businesses in their names and those of their associates.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE 155 people still missing Says Odhikar, most of them have no political links

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Odhikar has released a list of 155 people who still remain missing after being forcibly disappeared. Most of the victims are ordinary civilians.

Only 58 of them were identified to have links with politics.

The rights organisation has also logged 709 incidents of enforced disappearance that took place between 2009 and 2024.

Data released on Friday shows that

about 66 percent of the victims were returned alive, while 12 percent were killed. The bodies of the deceased were found later.

Among those 155 missing are 35 BNP leaders and activists, 18 Awami League men, four Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir activists, and a former Chhatra Union leader.

Profession-wise, students make up the largest group of the victims, with 36 of them still missing.

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How Islami Bank was taken over 'at gunpoint'

FROM PAGE 1

To Mannan, the DGFI office "felt like hell". When he said it was a difficult decision for him to resign, the DGFI chief said the "higher authorities" wanted Mannan to leave the bank.

"I felt so bad inside the DGFI office that they measured my blood pressure several times."

Mannan, who had been the bank's managing director since 2010, alleged that he was "taken hostage and forced to resign at gunpoint". And many top officials of the Bangladesh Bank had stayed in their offices until late at night to accept his resignation. It all happened on the then central bank governor Fazle Kabir's watch.

The debate over the ownership of the Shariah-based bank, which was formed in 1983, goes as far back as 2006 when law enforcers arrested terrorist group leader Siddiqui Islam aka Bangla Bhai. They found around 32 chequebooks from different banks, including the Islami Bank, in his possession. At the time, media reports focused sharply on the bank.

"A lot of reports tied Islami Bank to terror financing without facts and figures," said Mannan, who worked at times as a spokesman for the bank and responded to media queries.

Islami Bank suffered another major reputational damage in 2011 after the then state minister for home affairs Shamsul Hoque Tuku alleged that the bank had spent around 8 percent of its profit on terror financing.

"That was the most irresponsible statement from a very responsible person and I think the government should have sacked him for this comment."

"The minister realised his mistake and said it was a slip of the tongue when I visited his house," Mannan said. But the damage had already been done.

Tuku's accusation "hugely impacted" Islami Bank's ability to execute transactions through corresponding banking, an essential service in payments for global trade.

Pressure on the bank intensified again in 2013 when protesters campaigned at Shahbagh for the execution of Jamaat-e-Islami leaders for crimes against humanity in the 1971 Liberation War.

As protests continued, an economist alleged that up to Tk 1,700 crore funds were funnelled out of the bank for terror financing.

"All of them branded the Islami Bank as a Jamaat-e-Islami bank. And talk of a takeover spread far and wide," Mannan said.

In truth, 70 percent of the bank's shares were held by foreign investors, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), 15 percent by local investors, 5 percent by the government and 10 percent were floated as public shares, according to Mannan.

Mannan said Atiur Rahman, who served Bangladesh Bank as governor from 2009 to 2016, tried to shield the

bank from takeover. "That was a great support for us," he added.

The ownership of the bank started to change for the worse in 2016 when different groups piled pressure on the government to shut the bank or take it over.

Four independent directors had been appointed to the bank at the government's bidding, a telltale sign that the bank was quickly being taken over.

The four independent directors were Shamim Mohammad Afzal, former director general of the Islamic Foundation, Syed Ahsanul Alam, professor of Chattogram University, Helal Ahmed Chowdhury, former managing director of Pubali Bank, and Islami Bank's founding managing director M Azizul Haque.

That was the initial stage of a backdoor takeover of the bank by S Alam Group, sending an alarm to foreign investors.

"The shareholders from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were kept in the dark about the boardroom coup, and complained bitterly about it," the London-based Economist magazine reported in 2017.

One of them, the Jeddah-based IDB, pointed out that it was only given three days' notice of the board meeting in January 2017, and therefore was not able to send anyone to attend it. The IDB later sold all of its shares in the Islami Bank.

With the takeover completed that month, Arastoo Khan, regarded as

one of the country's most effective bureaucrats, was appointed as the chairman of the bank. His reign lasted a little more than one year. His sudden departure shocked other directors and employees, with one director saying more changes were afoot.

Before the "boardroom coup" by S Alam, the bank held a third of Bangladesh's Islamic banking assets. With a balance sheet of \$10 billion, it handled more than a quarter of the inward remittances. All came as a big appeal to S Alam.

The Chattogram-based conglomerate deployed various proxy investors to buy a large number of shares and build stakes in the Islami Bank.

"We realised that S Alam Group was going to take over the largest private sector bank. Previously, we were not familiar with the companies that were buying a large number of shares of Islami Bank," Mannan said.

Since 2016, the bank's classified loans have increased by 193 percent to Tk 6,918 crore (\$578.9 million). In the stock market, it lost the top spot as the most valued company.

After taking control of the board, the Chattogram-based conglomerate, owned by Mohammed Saiful Alam, and its associated companies took Tk 74,900 crore loans from the bank, which is 47 percent of Islami Bank's total outstanding loans as of March this year, according to documents of the bank.

Many pharmas forced to halt production

FROM PAGE 1

"But the workers are in no mood to listen to us. Rather, they want to force us to fulfil their demand," said Mukhtar, also chairman and managing director of Incepta Pharmaceuticals.

As a result, production had to be stopped in big factories in the Gazipur area, he added.

"They gave us just 24 hours to fulfil their demands," said M Mohibuz Zaman, managing director at ACI Healthcare.

The contractual workers are leading the movement in a bid to make their jobs permanent, while the permanent workers are demanding a pay rise.

ACI fulfilled the logical demand of the permanent workers and increased their salaries significantly.

But the company had to meet the demands of its 550 contractual workers.

Since pharmaceuticals is a specialised industry, a certain level of knowledge is required. Until the workers reach that level, they have to work on contract, Zaman said.

"The work of the pharma industry is critical. We make life-saving drugs," said Mohammad Ali Nawaz, chief financial officer of Beximco Pharma.

At least a secondary school certificate is required for workers in the pharmaceuticals sector so that

they can read labels and have some basic knowledge of pharmaceuticals, he said.

Around 2,000 contractual workers out of the total workforce of 10,000 at Beximco Pharma's factories are involved in the movement.

The permanent workers demanded a 30 percent increment on their basic salaries every two years and two days off every week, which the company cannot meet, he said.

Subsequently, Beximco Pharma's factory has been shut for two days.

The factory management was later able to convince the workers through discussions to go back to the work.

"We fulfilled their logical demand," Nawaz added.

Razekuzzaman Ratan, president of the Socialist Labour Front, said he observed the workers' movement in the pharmaceuticals sector for over a week.

"The workers in this sector thought demands could always be realised through movement, and they assumed their wishes would materialise. It is unwise to leave no room for discussion when they raise their demands suddenly. It does not bring good results for the industry."

Ratan suggested holding a discussion between the workers and owners.

We're working

FROM PAGE 1

Editors' Council and the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement (ADSM) at The Daily Star Centre on August 29.

The Liaison Committee of the ADSM and representatives of its coordination committee attended the meeting, according to a press statement issued by the Editors' Council yesterday.

During the discussion, Nahid, in the meeting, detailed how the movement was named and carried out.

He said the students, who took part in the movement, are now working to build an inclusive Bangladesh.

Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud, another leader of ADSM, lauded the role of the print media during the "tough days" of the student movement when the television stations were "not broadcasting correct information".

"It was the print media that we could rely on," he said.

Chief Adviser's Special Assistant and ADSM Liaison Committee Coordinator Mahfuj Alam said the mass upsurge was a combined effort.

He said people's aspirations had been crushed since the political arrangement reached in 1990 collapsed on January 11, 2007 -- the episode known as 1/11 in Bangladesh's politics.

People from all spheres of the society took part in the movement against the fascist regime, he added.

Pointing to the diversity in Bangladesh's population, he said the malpractice of bringing these diversified people into one political sphere led to fascism.

"Now, the focus of the discussion is how to make space for all people in the new Bangladesh," he said.

Urging all to find out how Bangladeshi nationalism gave birth to fascism, he opined that the country has to go through a "civilisational transformation".

"The fascist system is still present," he said, stressing the need for a new political arrangement.

Editors' Council President Mahfuz Anam said it is important for the interim government to demonstrate its efficiency.

"At the same time, the new nation's vision should be made clear. There needs to be a strong connection between the government and the people. Mass media can play the role of a bridge here," he said.

Highlighting the importance of free and independent media, Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, assured the student leaders that the media also want to take part in the reforms and contribute to the new nation-building process.

He also urged the authorities to withdraw all cases on false charges aimed at harassing people.

"The Editors' Council wants to be a part of the country's transformational journey," he added.

ADSM Liaison Committee's Nasir Abdullah, Akram Hossain, Bhuiyan Asaduzzaman, Mamun Abdullahi, and Ariful Islam Adeb, and ADSM coordinators Sarjis Alam and Hasnat Abdullah were present at the discussion. Samanta Sharmeen from the Nagorik Committee was also present.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, Daily Ittefaq Editor Tasmira Hossain, New Age Editor Nurul Kabir, Jugantor Editor Saiful Alam, Dhaka Tribune Editor Zafar Sobhan, The Sangbad Editor Altamash Kabir, its Executive Editor Shahriar Karim, Desh Rupantor Editor Mustafa Mamun, Naya Diganta Editor Alamgir Mohiuddin, Samakal Editor Alamgir Hossain, Protidiner Bangladesh Editor Mustafiz Shafi, The Financial Express Editor Shamsul Huq Zahid also spoke at the event moderated by Bonik Barta Editor Dewan Hanif Mahmud, general secretary of the Editors' Council.

Cops tell family

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Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association (BARVIDA), of which Aslam is a vice-president, said they believed enforced disappearances ended with the fall of the previous regime, but Aslam's "abduction in a similar manner" shocked them.

Aslam is the owner of Car Selection, an automobile importer and dealer, and he has been recognised as a Commercially Important Person (CIP) several times.

Regarding the incident, Pallabi Police Station OC Mohammad Nazrul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday that they heard Cantonment Police had "recovered" Aslam and they could provide information.

Complainant Tarek told this newspaper that Cantonment Police Station OC Abdul Alim told him that they had information about Aslam and asked Tarek "not to worry".

Turn them

FROM PAGE 1

"So, the people across the country have to remain cautious and alert against such moves," he added.

The BNP secretary general once again said his party would give the interim government a "logical time" to create an atmosphere for holding a free and fair.

"The interim government has only sworn in 20-22 days ago. We're holding discussions with the government. They are trying to create a conducive environment to hold a fair national polls. We have to give them time.... If we can hold a good election and can hand over power to the government elected by the people, the trust of the people in government mechanism will return," he said.

BNP chairperson's adviser and former lawmaker Md Monirul Haque Chowdhury presided over the function.

Constitution must ensure checks and balances

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"There is no alternative to rewriting the constitution -- around one-third of the clauses relating to the basic structures of the constitution are not amendable," Riaz added.

Amending the constitution or formulating a new one is subject to discussion that would ultimately lead to democratic reforms, said AF Hassan Arif, an adviser to the interim government. Arif participated in the discussion in his capacity as a Supreme Court advocate.

"The constitution is a living document -- not a dead one -- and various strategies can be adopted to improve its health," he said, adding that discussions will help the democratic reconstruction of the country.

The constitution should be amended but not scrapped altogether, said ZIKhan Panna, chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra.

"If we cancel it now, after 10 or 20 years there can be another call for cancellation of the constitution," he said, while calling for amending the laws that have existed since the colonial period.

Only the parliament has the power to amend any provision of the constitution, said Borhan Uddin Khan, a professor at the University of Dhaka's law department.

"There is emotion and logic regarding the 1972 constitution but that doesn't mean that we will not be dynamic. We have to save the state. There is now a will to change the constitution," he added.

The 1972 constitution was progressive for that time, said Manzoor Hasan, executive director of the Centre for Peace and Justice at the BRAC University.

"But it became unworkable and difficult to implement due to different amendments over the last five decades. Amendment has undermined the spirit that the constitution is the solemn expression of the will of the people."

Rather, it has become the will of a small coterie of politicians.

The constitution should incorporate the will of the people and the spirit of the mass uprising.

"If needed we can form a new constituent assembly. If this happens in a consultative manner and it is inclusive, it will avoid any kind of debate," Hasan added.

There is already a consensus in society that there should be checks and balances in the power of the president and the PM and limiting the PM's tenure, said Nurul Kabir, editor of the English daily New Age.

"If a constitution empowers one person to enjoy so much power, then even the most democratic person in the world will become tyrants over time. If the judiciary remains 10,000 percent neutral, they will be bound to listen to that person."

There are loopholes in the constitution as it talks about equality but there is an absence of legal compulsion to enforce that.

"We have seen the manifestation of partisan thought in the constitution in the name of making a nation into a state," he said, adding that the interim government should keep in mind that power is not infinite and for an indefinite period.

More constitution experts will need to get involved in the discussion on the constitution, said Sara Hossain, a Supreme Court advocate.

"It is easy to destroy anything but it is difficult to make a new thing," she said.

The interim government should take the decision on whether there will be amendments to the constitution or a constituent assembly will be formed to create the new constitution, said Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik.

The current constitution is static and a new constitution is a "must", said Habibur Rahman, a former student of DU.

The new constitution can be made in two ways. One is through a national convention composed of political parties and other stakeholders who supported the student-led mass upsurge and a referendum can be held on that.

The other way is through an election to elect the constituent assembly, he added.

The creation of a new constitution through constituent assembly can take a long time, said Dilara Chowdhury, a former professor of Jahangirnagar University.

"If it is done through national convention, it will require less time," she added.

Non-recognition of indigenous people forced them to walk out from the constituent assembly in 1972, said Raja Devasish Roy, chief of the Chakma Circle.

"New Bangladesh should accommodate all indigenous groups, minorities and others to be a truly democratic country," he said.

There is not much difference between the will of the people in 1971 and 2024, said Mahfuj Alam, special assistant to the chief adviser of the interim government.

"If the constitution has to be rewritten, you should do it as a continuation of the people's will in 1971 and the proclamation of independence. The stories of people from different sections of the society should be heard while doing that."

If the will of the people is not reflected in the constitution, then there is no need to rewrite the constitution just by changing a few things, he added.

Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association President Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Fair Election Monitoring Alliance Chair Munira Khan, former judge Ikteer Ahmed, lawyer Dilruba Shormin, and others spoke at the programme.

CGS executive director Zillur Rahman conducted the discussion.

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The Daily Star organised the first part of a series of discussions titled "Mass-Student Movement and Constitution Reform Outline" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Reform constitution based on equality and social justice'

Speakers call for change in line with Liberation War, July revolution principles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday called for reforms to certain clauses of the constitution in line with the principles of equality, human dignity, and social justice – key tenets of the Liberation War and the July revolution.

They argued that political and constitutional reforms should be implemented in a way that prevents any future autocratic rule.

Advocate Arif Khan, a constitutional specialist, suggested that a party chief should not become the prime minister, and that a prime minister should not serve more than twice.

The Daily Star organised the first part of a series of discussions titled "Mass Student Movement and Constitution Reform Outline" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Khan said since the Liberation War, people have distanced themselves from political parties due to their disregard for the constitution, resulting in a failure to

secure the rights promised within it.

He highlighted four key areas for amendment to improve the political environment: balancing power between the president and prime minister; ensuring the Election Commission's financial independence; revising Article 70 to allow MPs to vote against their party's decisions; and completely separating the judiciary.

Prof Ahmad Mostofa Kamal of Independent University said changing the constitution alone will not alter the nation's fate; rather, those who implement it must also change.

Ali Ar Raji, assistant professor at Chittagong University's Communication and Journalism department, emphasised that constitutional changes should reflect cultural and traditional values rather than being imposed from above.

Tamanna Akhter, a Dhaka University student, advocated for setting educational qualifications for parliamentary candidates and reinstating the caretaker government system.

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1.94 lakh sued in 268 cases since AL govt fall: MSF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, at least 268 cases have been filed against 1.94 lakh people, mostly targeting AL leaders and activists including party President Sheikh Hasina.

Of them, 26,268 people were named and around 1.68 lakh others were unnamed, said Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF) in a report yesterday.

Around 100 of the cases were filed against former prime minister Hasina, mostly over the killings of protesters, said the rights organisation led by Sultana Kamal.

MSF came up with the finding by analysing media reports and collecting inputs from local human rights defenders.

It said at least 809 persons were killed and over 33,000 others injured between July and August due to the violent clashes and indiscriminate firing by members of law enforcement agencies.

As the protest turned into a one-point demand, which was the resignation of Hasina, the law enforcers, as well as the activists of the AL and its front

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STREET CHILDREN REHAB PROGRAMME Staff accuse govt high-ups of graft

NILIMA JAHAN

Serious allegations of corruption, negligence, and irregularities have surfaced against the Street Children Rehabilitation Programme under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

Last week, employees of the programme sent a letter to the MoWCA secretary, stating such issues are harming the street children's overall development and wellbeing.

According to the letter, there has been gross negligence in providing medical treatment to the children.

Despite the available allocated funds, employees claim they are forced to cover medical expenses from their pockets. When they request funds for treatment, the programme's accountant, Md Toufiqul Islam, allegedly responds with rude and dismissive behaviour.

"Even though there is a vehicle allocated for the programme, it is not available in times of emergency hospitalisation and the staff have

to pay for CNG (auto-rickshaw) fare out of their own pockets," the letter added.

Kamrunnihar Ratna, resident rehabilitation consultant of the Kamlapur centre, told The Daily Star that on August 5, a child required immediate medical treatment due to prolonged fever and fatigue.

However, when they approached the authority for hospitalisation, assistant project director Abul Kalam Azad behaved rudely, saying the programme lacked proper budget for such activities.

"We send him prescriptions of children who need immediate medical treatment, but most of the time, he remains silent and does not direct us to take any action," she added.

"If the children die without treatment, who will be responsible?" she asked.

The letter to the secretary also mentioned that the programme fails to provide the necessary educational materials. No vocational

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Staff cover medical costs from their own pockets

Children lack materials and training

Embezzlement, nepotism harm programme's integrity

BNP's 46th founding anniv today

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP is set to celebrate its 46th founding anniversary across the country today with limited programmes.

While the party is in high spirits this year, buoyed by the decline of its longtime rival, the Awami League, after nearly 16 years in power, the BNP has chosen to mark its founding anniversary in a restrained manner.

The party has shortened its previously announced elaborate programmes due to the severe flooding affecting the country's eastern region.

On September 1, 1978, the late President Ziaur Rahman founded the party with a 19-point programme aimed at building a self-reliant Bangladesh.

Under the revised programme, the BNP

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE Dhaka submits treaty to UN

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has officially acceded to the International Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, Ambassador Muhammad A Muhith, deposited the Instrument of Accession to the International Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) to the UN Secretary General's Office on Friday.

David K Nanopoulos, chief of the Treaty Section at the UN, received the copy on behalf of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, according to a statement.

During the handover, Ambassador Muhith stated that the current interim government in Bangladesh, led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, is deeply committed to upholding all human rights and fundamental freedoms of the country's people.

"The government's commitment is aptly demonstrated in the fact that, within 20 days of installation, the government completed all internal procedures for accession to this important human rights treaty," he said.

Nanopoulos congratulated Bangladesh on this historic occasion and informed that the UN will immediately issue all necessary notifications on Bangladesh's accession to the ICPPED.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Hatirjheel lake, scenic spot or a crime scene?

At least 36 bodies recovered in last 5-6 years; locals point at inadequate security

RAFUL ISLAM

A master's student of International Islamic University Chittagong, Azizul Islam Mehedi, came to Dhaka on October 10, 2020 to attend a job interview.

Two days later, his body was found in Hatirjheel lake with his hands and legs tied to his neck.

Police later found that a childhood friend called him to Dhaka over financial issues, murdered him in Khilkhet and dumped the body in the lake at night.

This event is not an isolated case. Over the past five to six years, at least 36 bodies have been recovered from the Hatirjheel lake area, due to inadequate security and vigilance in the area.

On Wednesday, the body of 32-year-old Rahanuma Sarah, a newsroom editor at the private TV channel GTV, was found floating in the same lake.

Police suspect many of these cases are suicides. Meanwhile, the insufficient lighting around the lake only exacerbates its vulnerability to criminal activities.

In some instances, criminals have used Hatirjheel lake as a dumping ground for bodies, as was the case with Mehedi.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) on July 1 this

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Winners of the 3rd "Climate Justice Idea Competition 2024" along with judges and dignitaries at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The winning teams -- Atlas, Unanimous, and Swaccha -- received awards for working in three critical areas: Circular Economy, Water Rights, and Energy Transition. The grand finale of the competition was held at The Daily Star Centre, jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star. Out of 156 teams from across the country, nine finalists were selected to present their ideas at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

CLIMATE JUSTICE IDEA COMPETITION Three teams emerge victorious

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three young teams won the 3rd "Climate Justice Idea Competition 2024," yesterday for presenting innovative solutions to the ongoing climate crisis.

The grand finale of the competition was held at The Daily Star Centre, jointly organised by ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star.

The winning teams -- Atlas, Unanimous, and Swaccha -- received awards for working in three critical areas: Circular Economy, Water Rights, and Energy Transition.

Out of 156 teams from across the country, nine finalists were selected to present their ideas at the event.

Team Atlas was awarded for their innovative IT-enabled robotics system, "Agrover," designed to enhance efficient and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Death anniversary of Nurjahan Murshid today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 21st death anniversary of Nurjahan Murshid, a women's rights activist,



renowned politician and organisers of the 1971 Liberation War, said a press release.

Marking the day, wreaths will be placed at her grave around 11:00am at Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital today. Besides, food items will be distributed among the destitute.

Her family members, Nurjahan Murshid Sangskritik Kendra and Broti sought prayers from the country's people for her eternal peace.

In 1954, Nurjahan Murshid won as a member of the Provincial Council as a candidate of the Juktfront. She played an active role in the six-point movement in 1966 and the mass movement of 1968-69. She won the 1970 election as a candidate of Awami League.

In independent Bangladesh, she was appointed in 1972 as state minister for health and social welfare.

Nurjahan died in Dhaka on September 1, 2003.

She played a significant role in different democratic movements. She was amongst a very small number of Muslim women who entered higher education and obtained her Master's degree in History from Calcutta University in the mid 1940s.

MINORITY COMMUNITIES 49 teachers forced to resign since Aug 5

STAR REPORT

At least 49 teachers belonging to the minority communities were forced to resign across the country after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina led government amid a student-led peoples' uprising on August 5, a minority organisation said yesterday.

Sajib Sarkar, coordinator of the organisation, said following the fall of the Hasina led government religious and ethnic minorities have faced attacks, looting, assault on women, vandalism of temples, arson attacks on homes and businesses, and killings.

In addition, minority teachers across the country have been physically assaulted and at least 49 of them were forced to resign till August 30.

However, 19 of them have been reinstated later, he said. Dipankar Chandra Shil and Mithun Bhattacharya, leaders of the organisation, also spoke at the press conference.

Reform constitution

FROM PAGE 3

Akram Hussain, a Dhaka University student and member of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement's liaison committee, proposed that a political party or alliance should only form a government if it secures at least 51 percent of the vote.

Mehedi Sajib, a co-coordinator of the quota reform movement from Rajshahi University, suggested that the constitution should be made more accessible to help people understand their rights and powers.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, underscored the need for both political and constitutional reforms.

He said one of the major reasons for the downfall of Sheikh Hasina is her arrogance.

He thanked students

who were involved in the mass uprising, and said, "You have brought about a great revolution. Let there be no arrogance among you. Humility should be embedded in your character. The nation will always salute you for your contribution."

The discussion, conducted by The Daily Star journalist Imran Mahfuz, also featured contributions from Jahangirnagar University's Prof Shamima Sultana, Prof Mohammad Golam Rabbani, student Malih Mannan, and academics and students from various institutions including Jagannath University, Prime Asia University, Dhaka College, Rajshahi Medical College, Darun Najat Madrasa, Independent University, United International University, BRAC University, and North South University.

1.94 lakh sued in 268

FROM PAGE 3 organisations, carried out barbaric attacks on students to suppress the movement.

As the number of casualties continued to increase, government vehicles and property were vandalised and set on fire, to divert attention from the deaths, the rights body said, adding that the victims were accused for such arson and attacks.

The MSF said after the arrest of an accused, it is the responsibility of the members of the law enforcement agencies to protect them, but they are failing to do their responsibility.

Mentioning the attacks on Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik, former law minister Anisul Huq and some other accused in the courts, the MSF said such behaviour is undesirable in the courtroom.

In August, at least 204 people were victims of 23 incidents of political violence. Nine of them were killed and 195 were injured. Of the 23 incidents of violence, 12 were due to infighting in BNP, 9 between AL and BNP, one

in AL infighting, and one between Jamaat and BNP. Among the dead, five were BNP and three were AL activists.

The rights body said at least eight cases including three with murder charges were filed against journalists after August 5.

Of the accused, former head of news of Ekattor Television Shakil Ahmed and its principal correspondent Farzana Rupa have been arrested so far.

Mozammel Haque Babu, managing director and editor-in-chief of Ekattor TV; Syed Ishtiaque Reza, former chief news editor (CNE) of Ekattor TV; Ahmed Jobaer, a director of Somoy TV; Munni Saha, former CNE of ATN News; and Nayeemul Islam Khan, the former PM's press secretary, are among the other accused. MSF said the way journalists are being prevented from performing their professional duties is not only undesirable but also an attack on transparency, democracy, freedom of speech, and media freedom, as well as suppressing the voice of objective and honest journalism.

Dhaka submits

FROM PAGE 3

"The instrument has been deposited on a very special day, on August 30, which is observed globally as the International Day for Victims of Enforced Disappearance. Our action today manifests our solidarity to the countless victims who have been subjected to such heinous crimes and their families," added Ambassador Muhih while handing over the

instrument to the UN.

With the handover of the Instrument of Accession, Bangladesh has now completed all procedures for becoming the 76th party to ICPPED.

According to the provision of the convention, it will enter into force for Bangladesh on September 29, on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of the instrument of accession.

Three teams emerge

FROM PAGE 3

sustainable agriculture by automating tasks such as sowing seeds, planting, spraying fertilisers, and weeding, while also gathering crucial data on pH levels, temperature, sunlight, and more.

Team Unanimous was recognised for addressing severe waterlogging issues with concrete pavements that allow water to pass through, while Team Swaccha was awarded for proposing a biodegradable toothbrush aimed at reducing plastic use and pollution. The winning teams received crests and cheques of Tk 50,000, while the other finalists received certifications.

Each team pitched their ideas to a jury panel that included Anowarul Amin, director of public affairs, communications, and sustainability at Coca-Cola Bangladesh Beverages; Cezanne Mujibul Hasan, country director of Swisscontact Bangladesh; Galib Bin Mohammad, CMO and senior executive director at Walton; Jahrat Adib Chowdhury, chief legal officer and company secretary at Banglalink Digital Communications Ltd; and Nazmul Ahsan, manager of young people

at ActionAid Bangladesh. Ibrahim Al-Zayad, chair of the executive board at ActionAid International Bangladesh Society, announced plans to develop a "museum of ideas" where the 147 unimplemented concepts could be revisited and advanced by others.

Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh, emphasised in her welcome speech that while many new and innovative ideas emerge from youth competitions each year, they often fade due to a lack of proper funding and promotion. She urged the corporate sector and media to provide the necessary support to sustain and promote these ideas.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, congratulated all participating teams, emphasising on the large number of entries.

He criticised the government's negligence on climate change, warning that once tipping points are reached, there's no turning back.

"These innovative ideas can bring change, and we will work to bring them more into the public eye," he said of the solutions provided by the 156 participating teams.

Grabbers erase last

FROM PAGE 5

Contacted, Waheed denied the allegations, claiming the structures collapsed due to recent heavy rains. He stated that he had informed Jitu Mia, a local union parishad member, about the incident.

However, Jitu Mia contradicted Waheed's

claim, saying although the structures were old, they were not on the verge of collapse.

Prabhangshu Shom Mohan, the acting deputy commissioner and district magistrate of Habiganj, assured that legal action will be taken regarding the matter.



The participants with guests at a programme marking the 17th Scholarship Awarding Ceremony of the Education Support Programme initiated by Prime Bank Foundation, at Golf Garden, Army Golf Club in Dhaka yesterday. Azam J Chowdhury, chairman of Prime Bank Foundation, was present as the chief guest and Rasheda K Chowdhury, member, advisory committee, Education Support Programme, was the special guest. Among others, Tanjil Chowdhury, chairman of Prime Bank PLC; Hassan O Rashid, CEO of Prime Bank PLC; and Maj Gen (retd) Dr Md Nayeem Ashfaq Chowdhury, CEO of Prime Bank Foundation, attended the event. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Address discrimination

FROM PAGE 5

to various positions within departments or directorates of other cadres.

The council also proposed that events at the upazila, district, and divisional levels should be presided over by representatives from the organising institution to improve the focus

on development and monitoring activities.

They also called for granting cadres the authority to conduct mobile courts within their jurisdictions and for the reorganisation of administrative positions to address current inefficiencies.

The council also urged the interim government

to take appropriate measures to address these disparities and promote a more people-friendly and efficient governance system.

Among others, Mohammad Omar Faruque Dewan, a senior information officer, and ASM Zahid, additional director general (news) of Bangladesh Betar, were present at the programme.

BNP's 46th founding anniv today

FROM PAGE 3

will hold a doa mahfil at its Nayapaltn central office this afternoon. The programme will seek divine blessings for those affected by the floods, for those killed and injured in the recent student-led mass movement, and for the swift recovery of Khaleda Zia, the widow of Ziaur Rahman.

At a recent meeting, the BNP's standing committee cancelled the five-day programmes and allocated the funds intended for these events to the party's relief fund, which will be used to assist flood victims.

BNP's associate bodies and all their units across the

country will mark the day with due respect by holding doa mahfils, discussions, and distributing relief in flood-hit areas.

In its 45-year journey, the BNP has held power several times and served on the opposition bench twice. However, the party has been out of power for nearly 18 years since the 1/11 political changeover. BNP acting Chairman Tarique Rahman and Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, in separate messages, congratulated the people of the country, as well as the party's leaders, activists, and well-wishers, on this occasion.

Hatirjheel lake, scenic spot

FROM PAGE 3

year handed over the responsibility of Hatirjheel's security to Ansar forces.

Apart from the law enforcement agencies, 118 Ansar members will monitor the area, taking over from a private security agency.

On January 8, 2022, the body of Abdul Bari, a senior production executive at DBC News, was found in the lake with stab wounds to the chest and throat. After a six-month investigation, the detective branch of the police concluded that Bari had taken his own life, using the lake's secluded environment to do so.

The Hatirjheel lake and its surroundings fall under the jurisdictions of Hatirjheel, Gulshan, and Badda police stations,

with the majority under Hatirjheel Police Station.

Former officer-in-charge of Hatirjheel Police Station Shah Md Awlad Hossain said his station alone recovered 27 bodies from the lake in the last five years. Of these, one was confirmed as a murder, another initially suspected to be a suicide was later reclassified as a murder, and the remaining 25 were determined to be suicides.

In the past seven to eight months, police have rescued four to five individuals attempting suicide in the area.

Despite these interventions, the lake remains a hotspot for crime, including mugging, drug peddling, and sexual harassment, largely due to inadequate security measures, alleged locals.

"I avoid traveling through the Hatirjheel lake while going to Karwan Bazar from Modhubagh at night due to fear of being mugged," said Shafiqul Islam, an employee at the wholesale kitchen market in Karwan Bazar.

Law enforcement agencies have set up round-the-clock patrols, but the open area allows criminals to escape easily.

The existing CCTV cameras are positioned too high to capture clear footage, making it difficult to control the rising crime rate.

Police official Awlad Hossain said they have increased vigilance and regularly arrest criminals. The issues with the cameras have been reported to Rajuk, who plan to reposition them soo, he added.

Staff accuse govt high-ups

FROM PAGE 3

training has been provided to the children for over three years.

Additionally, there is no effort to reunite the children with their families, essentially keeping them detained unlawfully.

"We have two students who completed their 8th grade this year, but the authorities did not enroll them in school," said Rima Khatun, a teacher providing non formal education at the Kamlapur centre. "What's the point of educating them if they have to drop out after class 8?" she asked.

Concerns have also been raised about the insufficient provision of essential hygiene supplies.

The accountant reportedly pressures workers to distribute fewer supplies than needed, compromising the children's health and hygiene, the letter mentioned.

"For example, last month, when the toothpaste ran out, the children used sand from the broken floor to brush their teeth, leading to infections. There was also no water supply for almost a month in July, and the children had to use towels to clean bodily waste,"

Rima added.

Furthermore, the rehabilitation centres and outreach schools, which require urgent repairs and maintenance, are reportedly being neglected by the authorities.

"Most of the bathrooms don't even have doors. The fans are not functioning, forcing the children to endure unbearable heat," said Rima.

There are also allegations of severe financial mismanagement, including the embezzlement of funds meant for employee salaries and the manipulation of purchases through a syndicate.

According to the employees, bills processed are subjected to arbitrary surcharges under the pretext of VAT/tax, and the accountant refuses to explain these deductions.

They also alleged nepotism, particularly the appointment of Afroza Akhtar as the manager of the Karwan Bazar Rehabilitation Centre.

"She lacks relevant experience and qualifications but was appointed due to her connections with the former project director Rezaul Kabir," said Ratna. The letter also included

employees facing verbal abuse and threats of dismissal if they protest against these irregularities.

"At least 16 staff members have signed the letter, and as a result, we have been threatened with violence by the quota reform coordinators for raising our concerns," claimed Rima.

The employees called for adequate medical and educational services, proper maintenance of facilities, transparency in fund allocation, an end to all forms of financial irregularities and corruption, and the elimination of nepotism.

They also demanded the prompt removal of the accountant and other individuals involved in corrupt practices.

Md Mahbubur Rahman Bhuiyan, the project director, said he has already met with the employees to address their concerns.

He mentioned that he took charge on July 15 and will now focus on budget utilisation and necessary arrangements.

On the treatment issue, he explained that due to a lack of funds, employees must initially cover treatment costs themselves and submit bills for reimbursement.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Local Government Engineering Department
Khaliajuri, Netrakona
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7238.000.99.99.24.253 Date: 29/08/2024

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice: 01/2024-25 (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works, details are given below.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	Tender publication date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing and opening date & time
01	770309	e-Tender/PEDP4/NET/KHA/2022-2023/W14-01778	Construction of Boundary Wall including Gate of Ichhapur Govt. Primary School, Khaliajuri, Netrakona	29-08-2024 1.00pm	23-09-2024 17:00pm	24-09-2024 14:00pm
02	929894	e-Tender/PEDP4/NET/KHA/2022-2023/W17-01365	Major maintenance of Mrittonjoy Permoda, Krishnopur Com Pry & Khaliajuri Model GPS under PEDP4	29-08-2024 1.00pm	23-09-2024 17:00pm	24-09-2024 14:00pm
03	929895	e-Tender/PEDP4/NET/KHA/2022-2023/W2-05296	Construction of additional classroom Najipur GPS under PEDP4	29-08-2024 1.00pm	23-09-2024 17:00pm	24-09-2024 14:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to 24-September-2024, 13:00pm.

MD. Aulad Hossain
Upazila Engineer
Khaliajuri, Netrakona
Phone: 09526-56032
Email: uc.khaliajuri@lged.gov.bd

GD-302

UTTARA BANK PLC.
PURCHASE & PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT,
HEAD OFFICE, DHAKA

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Quotations are hereby invited from bonafied & experienced firms for **Consultancy, Implementation and Recertification of Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCIDSS) for Card Operation of Uttara Bank PLC. for next 3 (Three) years.** Please visit www.uttarabank-bd.com/home/tender for details.

General Manager

Eastern Bank PLC.
HEAD OFFICE, 100 GULSHAN AVENUE, DHAKA-1212

TENDER NOTICE

Eastern Bank PLC. (EBL) invites sealed bids from bona fide/eligible suppliers for the following services/items:

Lot 1: Laptop and Desktop Computers
Lot 2: MS SQL Database Server Licenses
Lot 3: Enterprise Agreement renewal/equivalent subscription-based Microsoft licenses
Lot 4: Microsoft Product Licenses (MS Office, Windows Server CAL, Exchange Server CAL)

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending an email from their official email address to bidit@ebl-bd.com mentioning lot & item names, name of the company and the authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before Thursday, 5 September 2024. Queries to be mailed by Tuesday, 10 September 2024.

Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document must be submitted in two separate envelopes, clearly marking 'Technical' and 'Financial' offers on the envelopes to the Office of the Chairman, Purchase Committee, Head Office, Eastern Bank PLC., 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212 on or before Thursday, 12 September 2024.

Tenders are allowed to bid for all lots or any lot separately. Any bid not submitted separately against each lot will be rejected. However, common documents need not to be submitted for multiple lots, submission with one lot is enough.



PHOTOS: RATUL CHOWDHURY

'GUM JAAN O JOBAN'

A glimpse into the grief of the forcibly disappeared

At the heart of the exhibition are Johan's photographs, which depict the everyday lives of families of the forcibly disappeared. Each image tells a story of loss and endurance—whether it's a mother holding a photograph of her missing child, or a child gazing out of a window, waiting for the father's return.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Gum Jaan o Joban is a powerful tribute to the families affected by enforced disappearances, brought to life through the lens of artist Mosfiqur Rahman Johan. Over the course of three years, Johan immersed himself in the lives of these families, documenting their grief, resilience, and the haunting absence of their loved ones. His work captures the essence of their experiences, offering a deeply intimate portrayal of their ongoing struggles.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Friday, marking the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, and is underway at the Nalinikanta Bhattasali Gallery at the National Museum in Dhaka. It revolves around 16 victim families and captures the heart-wrenching realities faced by those left behind, offering a rare and moving glimpse into the lives of the families of the disappeared. "We never thought that we would ever be able to share these stories with the public. But in this new reality, in this new Bangladesh, we now have the opportunity to exhibit this work. We hope that



through our efforts, others will be inspired to share their stories as well," mentioned Sarkar Pratik, the curator.

"Enforced disappearances are inherently unjust, and there is no justification for them. Every effort will be made to find those who have disappeared and to bring those responsible to justice. This is not too much to ask in a civilised society, and we will strive to ensure no government ever uses such tactics to hold onto power again," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Adviser on Forest, Environment, and Climate Change. Photographer Shahidul Alam, Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua,

Johan collected during his time with these families. These records provide a deeper understanding of the emotional toll that enforced disappearances have taken. It also features news clippings and records of the protests that these families have led in their quest for justice. The protest images highlight the collective strength and determination of these families, as they stand united in their demand for accountability and truth. An audio-visual recording accompanies the visual elements, adding another layer to the exhibition's narrative.

Johan's work captures the transformation of grief into activism, as these families refuse to let the memories of their loved ones be erased. "I spent years living with these families which helped me gain an unparalleled understanding of their emotions. In this exhibition, I have tried to reflect on the depth and sensitivity of this understanding. It is a long project and I hope I can do some justice to these victims," he shared.

The ongoing exhibition, organised by Mayer Daak, will run until September 6 from 10:30am to 5:00pm.

Abul Hayat's autobiography to be unveiled on his birthday

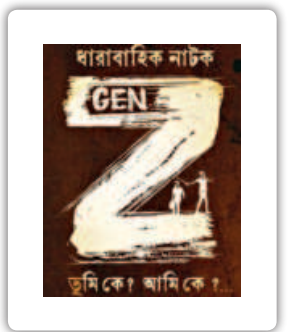


Abul Hayat's autobiography, titled *Robi Poth*, which took him a decade to write, is finally complete. The 300-page book features a cover illustrated by his elder daughter, actress and artist Bipasha Hayat. It is set to be published by Suborno Prakashani. The veteran actor candidly admitted, "I'm quite lazy by nature. I'd write a bit, then set it aside. It was Bipasha's constant reminders that became impossible to ignore and ultimately led me to finish it." The book is expected to be revealed on the actor's 80th birthday on September 7.

The incredible stories of his long and vibrant journey are coming together in one compelling volume. "I've written about the moments from my birth that I felt needed to be shared. I hope that together, these stories will give readers a complete picture of my journey," he shared.

Political series on 'Gen Z' underway

Gen Z has been at the forefront of the transformative change in Bangladesh. Their movement has played a pivotal role in reshaping the nation's political landscape. A heightened sense of political awareness among people also led to a profound shift in perspectives.



Inspired by these developments, director Abul Hayat Mahmud is gearing up to direct a political satire, titled *Gen Z Ami Ke? Tumi Ke?*

Penning by Mezbah Uddin Sumon, the filming of the series is set to begin on September 10.

The story is built around the idea of a family representing a country. The narrative will move forward with the genre political satire blending humour, laughter, love, and tension, all centred around this family dynamic.

NEWS

Bowlers put Tigers on top

FROM PAGE 12
Pakistan in to bat first. Taskin Ahmed, who came into the playing XI in place of injured Shoriful Islam, got things going for the visitors with a sizzling opening spell which started a spearing in swinger that sniped through the defences of opener Abdullah Shafique. Pakistan took control of proceedings after that initial jitter as skipper Shan Masood (57) and Saim Ayub put together a 107-run stand before Miraz dismissed the former soon after lunch, trapping the left-handed batter lbw with one that gripped the surface. Having maintained strict lines through the

day, Miraz used variations of length intelligently. That is how he dismissed Ayub, who scored 58, as he enticed the lefty with a flighted one outside off which ripped past the bat and found the gloves of Liton Das, who whipped the bails off, leaving Ayub stranded outside the crease. Once the tail was exposed, Miraz came back in the last session to take three more, courtesy of a cat-and-mouse game of lengths he used to great effect throughout the day. Miraz and Taskin were aptly supported by Hasan Mahmud and Nahid Rana. It seemed like a regular day at work for Hasan, who vigilantly flirted along the corridor outside off-

stump and maintained strict lines and lengths. But it was far more impressive to see Rana's discipline. The 21-year-old was expensive in the previous Test and has a tendency to lose his bearings at times but he showed up, totally sorted with the task at hand, and picked up the prized wicket of Mohammad Rizwan (29) which exposed Pakistan's tail and helped the Tigers bowl the hosts out faster. While a few chances went begging, courtesy of missed catches, spirits remained high due to the disciplined efforts of the bowlers and it is up to the batters to pull their weight from the start of Day 3.

155 people still missing

FROM PAGE 2
In addition, there is no trace of 29 businesspeople, contractors, and traders who were picked up. The pre-election year of 2013 was the worst year for enforced disappearance, with 33 victims picked up that year still remaining missing, shows data. The election year of 2017 logged 17 such victims about whom there is still no trace. The year 2021 was the last year when a victim was picked up and forcibly disappeared. In December that year, the US imposed sanctions

of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances 2024. The other signatories of the statement include Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Capital Punishment Justice Project, the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances, the International Federation for Human Rights, Mayer Daak, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, and the World Organisation Against Torture.

of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances 2024. The other signatories of the statement include Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development, Capital Punishment Justice Project, the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances, the International Federation for Human Rights, Mayer Daak, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, and the World Organisation Against Torture.

Drop charges, free journos

FROM PAGE 12
sympathetic to the former government, are among the media professionals named in the case, as is the recently ousted former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The couple have already been charged with the murder of other demonstrators and are currently behind bars. RSF said most of the media professionals named in the complaint have left their homes for fear of arrest. Those named in the case include journalists Abed Khan, Ahmed Jobaer, Ajoy Dasgupta, Ashish Saikat, Farida Yasmin, Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, ZI Mamun, Manash

Ghosh, Manzurul Islam, Mozammel Babu, Murni Saha and Nobonita Chowdhury. The others are Naem Nizam, Pranab Saha, Probash Amin, Saiful Alam, Shyamal Dutta, Shyamal Sarkar, Soma Islam, Subhash Singha Roy, Swadesh Roy, Tushar Abdullah and Zayadul Ahsan Pintu. In addition, on August 28, three other journalists were named in another case concerning the murder of a protester in Bogura. Police had not yet issued any arrest warrants at the time of this writing. The accused are local correspondents Mahmudul Alam Noyon of the daily Janakantha,

Hasibur Rahman Bilu of Independent Television, and J M Rauf of the daily Kaler Kantho. They are charged with playing a role in the death of a protester named Mohammad Shimul. The murder charges against the three journalists came on the heels of three cases already underway against media professionals. "The current targeting of media professionals appears to be a continuation of the anti-journalist sentiment that marked Hasina's reign," Bernard said. During Hasina's last months in power, Bangladesh ranked 165th out of 180 countries in RSF's 2024 World Press Freedom Index.

Yunus to place reforms outline As floodwater

FROM PAGE 12
parties, including the Jatiya Party, Gono Forum, Jasad (Ambia), Islami Andolon Bangladesh, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), and six other Islami parties at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital. Mahfuj said during these discussions, the political leaders presented numerous reform proposals. Some leaders suggested constitutional amendments, while

others proposed a complete rewrite of the constitution. "The chief adviser assured them that their proposals would be taken into account," Mahfuj added, according to BSS. He said Prof Yunus's primary goal is to form a broad national consensus, building on the successes of the recent student-led movement. He also said the issue of "transition of power" will be included in the reform outline, the BSS reports.

Policemen seen piling up bodies

FROM PAGE 12
front of the police station. According to them, the footage may have been captured from a three-storey building just in front of the police station. They suspect the bodies belonged to the victims who were killed in police firing on August 5, the day Hasina resigned and left the country amid an unprecedented student-led movement. In the video, Dhaka District North Detective Police (DB) inspector (investigation) Aralat Hossain was seen walking unarmed. Masudur Rahman, officer-in-charge (investigations) of Ashulia Police Station, was also seen in the video. Riaz Uddin Ahmed Biplab, OC of Dhaka North (DB) police, confirmed the presence of DB inspector Aralat in the video to The Daily Star yesterday. He, however, said detectives did not open fire as they did not have the weapons required. One police member who was present at the scene said that several detectives as well as OC Masudur was present there. Dhaka District Superintendent of Police Ahmad Mueed said they have seen the footage. "We have sent the video to the Cybercrime team for identification.

We are working to confirm this. If the matter is confirmed, we will take necessary legal actions," he said. The first 20 seconds of the video shows a body of a young man lying on the road. After around 20 seconds, more bodies were seen stacked on a van with a bloodstained face and hands of two men, likely dead, spread out. The bodies are covered with bedsheets, as two armed policemen stood nearby. At around 35 seconds into the footage, two cops wearing police flak jackets were seen shaking the body of a man lying on the road. At one point of the video, two men were seen putting a banner over the bodies, apparently to cover them, with six to seven cops standing close by. During a visit to the area, locals told this correspondent that the video was of the area adjacent to the police station. This correspondent matched the location to the footage. Fahima Begum, a shopkeeper, identified the place to be just in front of her shop. Billal Hossain, who sells vegetables in a van close by, also confirmed the location. At least 46 people were killed in violence in Savar on August 5. Many bullet-hit are still receiving treatment in different hospitals.

4 of a family die in road crash

FROM PAGE 12
head-on with a lorry. All the four died on the spot. The victims were returning home from a relative's house in Dhaka. A fire service team reached the scene around 10:00pm and rescued the injured and recovered the bodies.

The bodies were sent to Narsingdi 100-bed Zilla Hospital, said Md Mizanur Rahman Khan, director of the hospital. The four injured, including the microbus driver, were referred to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital after they were given primary treatment at the sadar hospital.

As floodwater

FROM PAGE 12
morning. But no doctor came to visit me until now," Ayesha Akhter, 25, of Herangirpore area under Noakhali Sadar Upazila, told this newspaper on Friday evening. The hospital's Registrar Md Emran Hossain, however, denied the allegation and said a doctor served the patients throughout the day on Friday. As many as 519 medical teams were working in the 11 flood-hit districts, according to the disaster management and relief ministry. The ministry said yesterday that the death toll from the floods increased by five to 59, including six women and 12 children, in nine districts while the number of people affected by the flooding in 11 districts was over 54.57 lakh. Of the deceased, 23 people died in Feni, 14 in Cumilla, nine in Noakhali, six in Chattogram, three in Cox's Bazar, and one each in Moulvibazar, Lakshmipur, Brahmanbaria and Khagrachhari, according to the ministry's report. Around 7 lakh people were still marooned, the report said. The government's Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre yesterday forecast that all the major rivers of the country were flowing below the danger level. Unicef on Friday said over 20 lakh children in eastern Bangladesh were at risk as floods swept through homes, schools and villages. [Our correspondents from Chattogram and Noakhali contributed to the report]

Fuel prices drop

FROM PAGE 12
notification, the prices of all petroleum fuels – petrol, diesel, octane, kerosene, furnace oil, jet fuel, and marine fuels – will be set automatically based on the international market price. In the first adjustment of March, diesel and kerosene prices decreased by Tk 0.75, octane dropped by Tk 4 and petrol by Tk 3. In April, the price of diesel and kerosene was reduced by Tk 2.25 per litre but the petrol and octane remained unchanged. In May, the government hiked diesel price by Tk 1 per litre, and petrol and octane prices by Tk 2.50 per litre. During the unstable situation in the first of July, the prices were unchanged for August. In July, the prices of diesel and kerosene were cut by Tk 1 per litre while petrol and octane prices were unchanged at Tk 127 and Tk 131, respectively.

COP29 finance draft reveals divided positions

AFP, Paris

The UN has published a draft on climate financing due to be presented at the COP29 in November, laying out the conflicting positions from which the main country blocs will try to clinch the next climate deal.

The document, which AFP consulted Friday, is the basis for negotiating an accord that is due to be reached at COP29 in Baku under Azerbaijan's presidency.

The "New collective quantified goal", or NCQG in UN jargon, is intended to replace the engagements made by developed countries to provide \$100 billion a year in financing to help developing countries face climate change.

The draft lays out seven rough options that summarise the opposing positions.

Arab countries say developed countries should commit at least \$441 billion a year in grants between 2025-2029 to mobilise loans and private financing that would bring the annual total to \$1.1 trillion.

African countries insist on an annual objective of \$1.3 trillion.

Over the past months, the donor countries — which the Rio summit in 1992 identified as the United States, the European Union, Britain, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Turkey, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand and Australia — have said these amounts are unrealistic.

Arguing that they now account for less than 30% of historic emissions, they want to expand the list of donors to China and Gulf countries, who refuse to consider it.

The EU, while accepting that "developed country Parties continue to take the lead in mobilising climate finance from a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels", said the "collective goal can only be reached if Parties with high GHG emissions and economic capabilities join the effort."

The EU wrote that all "global investment flows", public and private together, must reach at least \$1 trillion per year by 2035, without specifying the share that would come from rich countries — a formulation close to that of the United States.

"We now only have 73 days before COP29 begins and Parties need to accelerate their engagement on this top negotiating priority to reach consensus," COP29 President-Designate Mukhtar Babayev said.



People protest calling for an end to the Israeli offensive in Gaza during a demonstration in solidarity with Palestinians in Dublin, Ireland, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Deadly strikes hit Russian, Ukrainian border cities

Media investigation identifies 66,000 Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine

AFP, Kyiv

Aerial strikes on Russian and Ukrainian border cities killed at least a dozen people on Friday, bombardments that came as Kyiv dismissed its air force commander in a major military shake-up.

Both sides also claimed to have advanced on the battlefield — Moscow in eastern Ukraine and Kyiv in its shock offensive into Russia's western Kursk region — with the fighting showing no sign of subsiding, two and a half years into Russia's invasion.

A Russian aerial strike on the northeastern city of Kharkiv on Friday afternoon killed seven people, including a 14-year-old girl, Ukraine's interior minister said.

At least 77 were wounded, including 18 children, the emergency services said.

Another Russian strike yesterday killed two people and injured 10 more including children in a village in Ukraine's Kharkiv region, the governor said.

President Volodymyr Zelensky called on Kyiv's Western backers to up their support after the attack, which officials said was with a glide bomb.

"We need strong decisions from our partners to stop this terror," Zelensky said in a post on social media.

"We need long-range capabilities," he added, referring to Kyiv's appeals to allies to lift restrictions on the use of Western-supplied missiles inside Russian territory and deliver more longer-range weapons.

"We need the implementation of air defence agreements for Ukraine. This is about saving lives," he added.

Across the border some 60 kilometres (37 miles) to the north, Russia said

Ukraine had fired cluster munitions on the city of Belgorod and its suburbs, killing at least five and wounding 37 civilians, including at least six children.

"One woman and four men died of their wounds on the spot before an ambulance arrived," regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said in a post on Telegram.

Meanwhile, independent Russian media outlet Mediazona yesterday said according to its estimates more than 66,000 Russian military personnel have died during the war in Ukraine.

Mediazona has been drawing up a list of known soldier deaths in conjunction with the BBC Russian Service using open source data.

Previously in April, they announced they had found more than 50,000 names of Russians killed.

Vacuum looms

FROM PAGE 1

students entered my office and started chanting slogans denouncing me. They brought a resignation letter and asked me to sign it," Malek said.

He then signed the paper while the intruders hurled abuse at him.

"I did not get a chance to defend myself. In my 32 years as a teacher, I never faced such humiliation. I never imagined my students would behave this way," he said as his voice cracked.

Video footage of him signing the resignation letter went viral on social media. Many commented that teachers should not be humiliated like that.

Several other videos of teachers being forced to resign made the rounds on social media.

At least 150 teachers across the country were forced to resign after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5, according to a count by The Daily Star. Many were also humiliated and harassed.

The actual number could be much higher as this newspaper could not reach all the places.

"These are acts of anarchy," Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan of Dhaka University told this newspaper.

"Over the last 16 years, there was rampant politicisation of educational institutions. But the way teachers are being humiliated and forced to resign is unacceptable and condemnable," he added.

Some groups seeking opportunities are taking advantage of the interim government's lack of action and destabilising educational institutions, he added.

FORCED RESIGNATION

Around 11:30am on August 19, over 50 students gathered in front of the arts faculty at Dhaka University and demanded the ouster of its dean Prof Abdul Bachir.

The protesters accused him of being a lackey of the Hasina government. They also blasted him for issuing show-cause notices to students who participated in a Quran recitation event on the campus.

An hour later, Prof Bachir signed his resignation letter.

Prof Nisar Hossain, dean of the fine arts faculty at the university, was also forced to resign the same day.

On August 18, around 50 students of Azimpur Government Girls' School and College forced principal Geetanjali Barua, assistant head teacher Gautam Chandra Paul, and physical education teacher Shahnaz Akhter to resign.

Geetanjali said, "Before August 18, they never sought my resignation. That morning, they stormed my office and humiliated me."

At Holy Family Red Crescent Nursing College, principal Shahanara Khatun and assistant professor Sonali Rani Das were compelled to resign on August 19 by 30-40 students.

At Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, acting principal Keka Roy and assistant professor Farhana Khanam were also forced to resign.

"I was confined to a room for four hours and forced to sign the resignation letter. Madam Keka Roy was also forced to resign. She wanted to stay as a regular teacher, but they did not let her," Prof Farhana told reporters.

At Jahangirnagar University, pro vice-chancellor (administration) Prof Sheikh Md Monzurul Huq and treasurer Prof Rasheda Akhter were forced to resign by protesters on August 18.

A group of students locked their rooms and let them go after they resigned.

Teachers were also made to resign at Gulshan Model High School and College, Siddheswari Girls' High School, Mirpur Naznin School and College, Keraniganj Kalatia High School, Lalbag Saleha High School and Anwara Begum Muslim Girls' High School had to resign.

GOVT SHOULD ACT

Prof Tanzimuddin said, "The government should take an immediate step to stop this."

Education Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud earlier said, "Complaints against individuals will be noted, but forcing one to resign is not an option."

He emphasised the need for maintaining proper relationships between teachers and students.

The Secondary and Higher Education Division recently issued an order, asking the deputy commissioners to see that a conducive environment is maintained at educational institutions.

Over 15 teachers in Savar, Ashulia, and Dhamrai; nine in Gazipur; 30 in Khulna; 24 in Sylhet and Sunamganj; 12 teachers in Jashore; four in Rajshahi; three in Moulvibazar; three in Cox's Bazar; two each in Chattogram, Barisal, Bogura, Chandpur, and Tangail; and one each in Manikganj, Dinajpur, Thakurgaon, and Narsingdi, were forced to resign.

Additionally, several hundred teachers have voluntarily stepped down as per student demands. Protests are still continuing at various institutions.

Over 20 teachers were barred from entering their institutions and were threatened. Some filed complaints with police stations.

Police file

FROM PAGE 2

Over 3,000 people, including leaders and activists of the BNP and Jamaat, who were arrested in the 228 cases, were relieved of the charges of committing violence and cybercrimes, an inspector at the DMP's prosecution division told The Daily Star yesterday.

"A total of 290 cases were filed at different police stations under DMP between July 17 and August 5 centring violence. Of them, 62 were filed over murder charges," the inspector said, requesting anonymity.

Except for the murder cases, police have already submitted probe reports to the courts in the rest of the 228 cases, clearing the accused of the charges, he added.

Police sources said almost all the cases were filed by police as per the directives of the previous Awami League government that fell on August 5 following a mass uprising.

A high official at the PHQ said most of these cases were filed accusing innocent people, including students, although violence was carried out by the leaders and activists of the AL and its associate bodies.

But then police high-ups, who performed duties unprofessionally, directed the field-level officials to file cases against those who were not involved, the official said.

"In some cases, the names of the some real suspects were not included in the FIRs of murder cases. We are now investigating those cases and naming those suspects in the FIRs."

For instance, Sub-Inspector Nowsad Ali of Badda Police Station on July 28 filed a case accusing 8,000 to 10,000 people of killing private job holder Towfiqul Islam Bhuiyan. Towfiqul, 34, died from bullet wounds at a hospital on July 21.


The victim's wife, Ismat Jahan Elora, last night said police did not communicate with them before filing the case.

Ismat on August 22 filed a supplementary FIR against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 112 other named accused, including several former AL ministers.

Another supplementary FIR was recorded with New Market Police Station in the murder case of shop employee Shahjahan Ali, 24.

According to the primary complaint, the case was filed against some leaders and activists of the BNP and Jamaat. But the supplementary FIR, submitted to a Dhaka court on August 18, shows that unidentified criminals were accused in the case.

Former AL law minister Anisul Haque, Hasina's former private investment adviser Salman F Rahman, and ex-director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Cell Maj Gen (sacked) Ziaul Ahsan were shown arrested in the case.



Bangladesh Tourism Board

(National Tourism Organisation)
Parjatan Bhaban (Level-9 & 10), West Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

Invitation for Tender Notice

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
2. Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB)
3. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
4. Invitation for	Store Rakes & Different types of maintenance work for Bangladesh Tourism Board
5. Invitation Ref No	30.33.0000.111.69.001.24 - 437
KEY INFORMATION	
6. Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION	
7. Budget & Source of Funds	GOB
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
8. Tender Publication Date	September 01, 2024
9. Place, Last Date and Time of Selling Tender Documents	Research & Planning Section, Bangladesh Tourism Board Level-9 (Parjatan Bhaban), E-5 C/1, West Agargaon Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Administrative Area, Dhaka - 1207 September 15, 2024; Time: 5:00 pm.
10. Last Date and Time of Submission of Tender Documents	Date: September 16, 2024; Time: 1:00 pm.
11. Tender Opening Date and Time	September 16, 2024; Time: 2:30 pm.
12. Place of Submission	Office of the Chief Executive Officer Bangladesh Tourism Board Level-9, Parjatan Bhaban, West Agargaon, Sher e Banglanagar (Administrative Area), Dhaka-1207
13. Place of Opening	Office of the Chief Executive Officer Bangladesh Tourism Board Level-9, Parjatan Bhaban, West Agargaon, Sher e Banglanagar (Administrative Area), Dhaka-1207
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
14. Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	a) 5 (Five) Years' Experience as Supplier. b) Credit Line/Liquid asset of Minimum BDT 20 (Twenty) Lac c) At least 3 (Three) similar contracts as Supplier. d) Updated Trade License as Supplier/Producer/Importer (2024-2025) e) VAT Registration Certificate. f) Updated Income Tax Certificate (till 2023-24 tax years). g) Audited Financial Report of last 3 (three) years. (2023, 2022, 2021) h) Other Conditions as specified in TOR and PPR-2008.
15. Brief Description of Supply	Store Rakes & Different types of maintenance work.
16. Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk. 1000/- (One thousand) Non-Refundable
17. Tender Security	Tk. 50,000/- (Fifty Thousand) Taka in the form of Pay Order in favour of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Bangladesh Tourism Board.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
18. Name & Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Mazharul Islam, Deputy Director (Research & Planning) Bangladesh Tourism Board Level-9, Parjatan Bhaban, West Agargaon, Sher e Banglanagar (Administrative Area), Dhaka-1207
The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject any or all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings without assigning any reason.	

Sd/-
(Md. Mazharul Islam)
Deputy Director (Research & Planning)
Bangladesh Tourism Board

GD- 301

The robbing of Islami Bank

How could two state institutions participate in this process?

For the first time, we have directly heard from the former managing director of Islami Bank that he was forced to resign from his position at the Shariah-based bank after being taken hostage by members of a security force. Although speculations about such incidents had been circulating previously, this account now confirms those suspicions. Given that even the appointment of a bank MD requires Bangladesh Bank's approval, how could such an event occur? It has now been alleged that S Alam Group—a private conglomerate—used two state machineries: a security agency to hold the former MD at gunpoint to force him to resign, and the Bangladesh Bank to legitimise the takeover of the bank, which is akin to robbery.

According to the former MD, many top officials of Bangladesh Bank stayed in their offices late into the night to accept his resignation. Why did none of them protest this irregularity using our regulatory body? Does the central bank lack an internal evaluation or inquiry mechanism that could have prevented this? How could all our banking laws be ignored, allowing a private individual to effectively rob a bank under the direct supervision of Bangladesh Bank? The same questions should be asked about the relevant security agency. Why didn't it protect itself from such inappropriate and unethical use? The security agency is responsible for national security, so why was it utilised as if it were an agency for hire?

After taking over Islami Bank, the S Alam Group acquired several other banks in the country. Why were none of these takeovers prevented, and were the same or different state mechanisms involved in these acquisitions? These are questions that we need answers to. Moreover, the interim government must create provisions so that this cannot repeat again.

Now is the opportunity for our security agencies to ensure they are never used in this manner again. For the sake of our national interests, we hope they will make the most of it. Provisions must be established to prevent partisan politics from turning our security agencies into instruments of the ruling establishment, and to ensure that their primary function remains the protection of national security.

Systems also need to be in place to ensure that the Bangladesh Bank is not merely used to rubber-stamp such abuses but is instead able to perform its regulatory task of protecting depositors' interests and maintaining the overall health of the financial sector. Therefore, the upcoming banking sector reforms must address the existing loopholes that allowed for partisan politics and cronyism to ruin all central bank independence, rob banks at the barrel of a gun simply at the whim of powerful interest groups, which ultimately has led to tremendous financial irregularities and harm to our overall economy and national interests.

A refreshing change at Dhaka airport

All operations must be upgraded and made efficient

We are delighted to note that within just a few weeks of the new interim government's swearing-in, things are changing for the better at Dhaka airport. A report by *The Daily Star* quotes passengers who have expressed their satisfaction with the speedy retrieval of luggage from the carousels upon arrival. This is music to our ears, as we have all too often witnessed and experienced the immense suffering caused by the inefficiency and lackadaisical attitude of the staff responsible for handling luggage.

In the past, passengers had to endure delays of two to three hours for their luggage to reach the carousels, with no explanation provided by the airport authorities for such tardiness. It is quite a novelty, therefore, to see passengers moving through immigration quickly and then having to wait only 18 to 20 minutes to receive their luggage. This improvement is clearly due to good leadership at the top level of airport authorities, that is ensuring proper coordination among the ground handling staff. This is how all international airports are supposed to operate, but sadly, until now, Dhaka airport has rarely achieved such efficiency.

As numerous media reports have highlighted, corruption and inefficiency have plagued our Dhaka airport, causing immense suffering to passengers. Apart from the general apathy towards passenger comfort, there have been issues with other facilities, such as the cleanliness and maintenance of the washrooms and waiting areas. These matters must also be addressed immediately to ensure that passengers are treated with respect and care.

The interim government has promised to take necessary measures to guarantee proper treatment for Hajj flight passengers as well as migrant workers, ensuring a smooth and hassle-free journey for them. Once the third terminal is operational, we expect all services at the Dhaka airport to improve drastically. The significant improvement in luggage handling is a promising sign and gives us hope that the overall management and general attitude of the staff towards regular passengers will see a noticeable change.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Germany invades Poland

On this day in 1939, German forces, under the control of Adolf Hitler, bombarded Poland on land and from the air, beginning World War II.

A disturbing legal provision

The Penal Code needs to be changed



David Bergman is a journalist and can be followed on X (formerly Twitter) @TheDavidBergman

DAVID BERGMAN

There is a provision of law in Bangladesh's Penal Code which could have a considerable impact upon the criminal prosecution of hundreds of students, protestors and onlookers killed by Awami League government law enforcement officials on July 16 and after.

Yet, very few people are talking about it.

It is section 76 of the Penal Code which is titled, "Act done by a person bound, or by mistake of fact believing himself bound, by law."

It states: "Nothing is an offence which is done by a person who is, or who by reason of a mistake of fact and not by reason of a mistake of law in good faith believes himself to be, bound by law to do it."

The wording is rather convoluted, and its meaning is not clear. The Penal Code however provides some "illustrations" to help with its application, and the first one reads:

"A, a soldier, fires on a mob by the order of his superior officer, in conformity with the commands of the law. A has committed no offence."

Law enforcement officers will inevitably seek to argue that they were ordered to fire on the protesters—ironically, a particular claim that prosecutors would also support—and so must be acquitted from the offence of murder.

The prosecution may argue that this illustration given in the Penal Code only refers to a "soldier," and so does not refer to a "police officer." However, when you had Border Guards of Bangladesh (which includes some military officers), police and in some situations, the army, all involved in shooting after July 16, can the law treat soldiers and police officers differently?

Prosecutors may also assert that the police did not act "in good faith" when they did the shooting, or that the firing was not "in conformity with the commands of the law."

It may also be possible to challenge the constitutionality of this provision which was drafted in colonial times,

extent it remains unchallenged, will certainly be an obstacle for conviction, and prosecutors will need some clever legal minds to find a way of working around it so that it does not have a significant impact upon any trials that take place.

However, it should be noted, that those members of the Awami League's student or youth wings seen shooting

itself.

One possible way round this is to prosecute police officers and others in the country's International Crimes Tribunal for the offence of Crimes Against Humanity. This is because the offence of murder, as part of a Crime Against Humanity, is not defined in the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973, and so this defence set out in



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Law enforcement officers will inevitably seek to argue that they were ordered to fire on the protesters.

and no doubt was included with an intention to protect the British colonial police and army from being prosecuted. It could be argued, for example, that section 76 of the Penal Code violates the constitutional principle of the "right to life" though if the court gave such a ruling it is not clear whether it should retrospectively apply to the student protest killings particularly as the reason for the challenge was to remove a defence that the accused would otherwise have been able to use.

Such a ruling may also face resistance from the current Bangladesh Army as it would remove a protection provided to its soldiers and officers.

Nonetheless the provision, to the

at protestors, who were not formally part of any law enforcement entity, could not avail themselves of this defence were they to be prosecuted for murder.

This provision might not just have an impact on the prosecution of police on the ground but also those higher up the law enforcement or political food-chain alleged to be involved in ordering or inciting the killing, who could be prosecuted for "common intention" (section 34) or "abetment" (section 107).

This is because courts will not be able to convict a senior police officer or a politician for complicity in the murder unless a law enforcement officer is first convicted for the offence

Section 76 of the Penal Code does not apply.

However, there are many problems with the International Crimes Tribunal—as were very evident during the trials of those accused of crimes committed during the 1971 war—and any attempt to prosecute people in that court for international crimes would not only require considerable amendment of the procedures, but also a change in the offence of Crimes Against Humanity in order to ensure that it matched the offence set out internationally.

The ICT, as a forum of prosecution, however very much requires its own separate consideration. That is a matter for another day.

The alterations we need in our Election Commission



Dr Md Abdul Alim is an elections specialist, currently working as principal director with Democracy International, and previously served as director of the Election Working Group.

MD ABDUL ALIM

The 1970 Pakistan election was considered the "fairest and cleanest" election in Pakistan's history, which paved the way for Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan. However, Bangladesh has failed to institutionalise a sound electoral process in the 53 years since independence. Even though all elections held under caretaker governments (CG) were termed as mostly free and fair, elections held under political governments lacked credibility; some were even considered farcical. The key reason is political interference into the workings of election administration by successive political governments since 1972. To stay in power, the ruling class in most cases conducts purely decorative and ritualistic elections denying independence to the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) and politicising other institutions with electoral responsibilities such as law enforcement agencies, local administration, judiciary, etc. aiming to manipulate election results.

The democracy-loving people of Bangladesh, where elections are festivals, are waiting to exercise their franchise in the 13th parliamentary elections. However, to ensure requisite institutional conditions for holding the next elections, the interim government needs ample time to rebuild Bangladesh's electoral institutions. The interim government and the new election commission, which is expected to be formed soon, must address the following key immediate

issues not only to guide Bangladesh towards conducting genuine democratic elections but also to render the commission a professional citizens' organisation.

First, the country needs an independent Election Commission (EC) free from political intervention. The first and foremost step towards an independent EC is the recruitment of credible and non-partisan authorities with a demonstrated commitment to democracy and accountability to citizens. However, the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners

Appointment Act, 2022 is incomplete, as it lacks recruitment criteria for commissioners, excludes citizen scrutiny, and does not ensure transparency. Moreover, the loopholes around this law allow the ruling class to easily recruit loyal people as election commissioners. Therefore, the interim government should engage an expert pool to review and propose amendments to the law to ensure it is comprehensive, adheres to international best practices, and ensures the recruitment of commissioners capable of neutrally performing their functions.

Second, no EC around the world can conduct credible elections alone. They need support from various institutions, including the police and civil service. During elections, the EC should emerge as the de facto government authority on election administration, assuming total control over police and bureaucracy, and cutting its link with the political government completely.

Political neutrality of electoral institutions is paramount. However, due to blatant politicisation of state institutions, some police personnel in particular played a blatant role in ensuring victory of ruling party candidates, including widespread ballot stuffing in multiple elections held under a political government. In order to neutralise temporary poll officials, including police, the IG should amend the Election Officers (Special Regulations) Act, 1991 so that no temporary poll officials, including returning officers and police, can play a biased role in any future elections.

Third, the EC should become a citizens' organisation. In genuine democratic elections, citizens are "the ultimate controlling power." Therefore, EC-decision making must be based on citizens' voices to make the EC "of the people, by the people and for the people." The new EC should conduct its work transparently, including adopting a transparency guideline so that Bangladesh can benefit from an EC that is fully accountable to citizens.

Fourth, an election cannot be termed as credible if opposition parties do not participate and if there is a lack of qualified candidates running for office. The UN declared that "political contestants (parties, candidates and supporters of positions on referenda) have vested interests in the electoral process through their rights to be elected and to participate directly in government." In Bangladesh, there are allegations that some qualified political parties were denied registration with the EC, while parties that did not meet the registration criteria were enlisted. Lack of participation of all qualified political parties raises questions about the credibility of elections. Therefore, both the IG and the EC, before the next election should create equal opportunity for all political parties to participate in elections.

Fifth, election observation in Bangladesh has never been

professionalised due to official and unofficial political intervention of the ruling party and EC restrictions. While election observers are a key electoral stakeholder, the EC never established professional relationships with observer organisations. Instead, many credible observers were labelled as "politically biased" when they published credible election observation reports.

There are many examples of political, election time governments thwarting effective election monitoring by pressuring election observers in multiple ways. Practices that negatively impacted past observations efforts include NGO Affairs Bureau cancelling previously approved funds for observing organisations to prevent them from carrying out their mandates; intelligence agencies subjecting election observers to intense scrutiny, which discouraged observers from conducting election monitoring; BEC issuing credentials during the night preceding election day, preventing observers from traveling to their desired constituency, and restricting observers' movement.

Due to such barriers, most credible organisations stopped observing elections in Bangladesh. The IG and the BEC should develop a strategy not only to professionalise election observation but also to build a culture of accrediting credible election observation organisations as an integral part of elections. Elections are of paramount importance to a country's quality of democratic governance. They are the means through which people voice their preferences and choose their representatives. I strongly believe the presence of an interim government creates an opportunity to bring elections back to the citizens of Bangladesh, including establishing a sustainable electoral mechanism, which no longer changes the rules of the game to engineer electoral outcomes.



FILE PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN
Inflation must be tamed in the shortest possible time, or else it will remain a keg in the economic tinderbox.

FALL OF A TITAN

Looking for the economic tinderbox



Dr Zaidi Sattar
is chairman of Policy
Research Institute of
Bangladesh (PRI).

ZAIDI SATTAR

Just when the Hasina regime was imbued with an aura of invincibility, the ground finally shifted on August 5, 2024, and the 15-year-old regime collapsed like a house of cards. This regime change, and the process that led to it, will be recorded in blood-letters, once again, in the annals of Bangladesh history. To the nation's advantage and to restore stability, we had someone of the stature of Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus, widely respected nationally and internationally, who was unanimously offered the high task of leading the nation onwards.

Bangladesh is no stranger to national student movements and violent transitions. A peaceful transfer of state power has eluded this country for much of its 53-year existence. But it was for the first time that a student movement toppled an apparently powerful government. Political analysts around the world will now have to sift through their books to ascertain the theoretical underpinnings that best fit the latest transformative developments. Suffice it to say that the end of a long-running progressively authoritarian regime was inevitable, albeit unpredictable. The nagging question was when... and how?

Since early July, Bangladesh has gone through what can aptly be called a youth-driven mass uprising that toppled a regime that had lost touch with the people. But, for such a movement to change a regime that appeared fully ensconced in the saddle of government, there has to be some lethal and explosive spark that removes the ground from underneath the holders of state power. I am no political scientist, but I would like to argue that in a situation where one political party and its cronies share much of the wealth creation that has indeed happened over the past decade and a half, then it is the exclusion of the vast swath of the population (an overwhelming majority), not connected with the ruling elites or their henchmen, that presents a classic case for a political explosion to unravel.

It is true that, as a consequence of the Covid pandemic and subsequent Russo-Ukraine war, the economy was treading a rough terrain, putting a damper on the notion of a fairytale economy of Bangladesh. To make matters worse, there was an inexcusable mishandling of the internal and external challenges afflicting the economy that triggered something of an "economic tinderbox," a concoction of Lutley Siddiqi, a talented professor of Bangladeshi origin at London School of Economics (LSE). Was there an "economic tinderbox?" The answer, in my view, is yes and no. To be objective, one needs to take a closer look.

Most certainly, inflation, a rise in the general price level, remains a ticking time bomb. Ordinary citizens are suffering from serious diminution of their purchasing power from double-digit inflation that has stubbornly persisted for over 18 months. If not handled deftly and fast, it could be the cause of another implosion in the future. It is therefore reassuring to see the appointment of a highly competent professional economist like Dr Ahsan Mansur (former IMF Division Chief and Executive Director, PRI) at the helm of Bangladesh Bank. His immediate task is to bring inflation

under control and restore sanity in the financial sector. But the challenges should not be underestimated.

Orthodox monetary management, which is now in full swing and seems to be intensified (by raising interest rates a few notches) may take too long for the patience of ordinary citizens to last. This inflation is not just an excess demand phenomenon which can be quashed by restraining demand through monetary tightening. There is a significant cost-push element arising from exchange rate depreciation (raising import prices) and hike in domestic energy tariffs that triggered the first inflationary spike in domestic prices in 2022. Then, there is the need to give a deflationary shock to prices, particularly to essential food items such as sugar, edible oils, onions, wheat, spices, etc. Import prices of intermediate and capital goods also need a reprieve in order to reduce production costs that have risen as a consequence of the 36 percent exchange rate depreciation that occurred over the past 18 months or more. What are the options?

Bangladesh presents a unique case of possible inflation control via long-pending tariff rationalisation in a high tariff economy. This presents an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. What is not known to most experts in the country is that the 36 percent exchange rate depreciation has raised already high tariffs by exactly 36 percent, across-the-board. It is high time to shave off at least half of that, an action that will provide the disinflationary trigger to domestic prices.

Another point to note is that even if inflation were to decline to 6-7 percent due to monetary contraction, from the current level of more than 11 percent, over the next 6-9 months, that will not bring down market prices from current levels. This is the reality. You can't reduce prices by imposing pricing caps either. So, it is critical to come up with every possible ammunition in the economic policy package to reduce market prices to tolerable levels. The tariff handle is one such instrument. Tariff rationalisation has been a long pending agenda. Its time has come. The National Tariff Policy 2023 has all the right policies waiting to be implemented. Budget and balance of payments support from IMF-WB could assuage any adverse impacts on revenue or balance of payments.

Bottom line: inflation must be tamed in the shortest possible time, or else it will remain a keg in the economic tinderbox.

Next off, it is the massive misgovernance in the banking and financial sector that needs immediate attention and redress. Needless to give details, all of which are now in the open. Some of the big guns involved in mega-theft (no better word to describe what has happened) of banks are in custody or on the run. The malaise runs deep and is a signature outcome of cronyism of the worse kind. What a mockery of the banking supervision rules. Setting up a banking commission and publishing a white paper on the state of the financial sector is a high priority and acknowledged by the interim government. Governance reforms in this sector simply cannot wait. Given the depth of the malaise, it is a tall

order but one that deserves not words but action. Or else, here is one more keg in the tinderbox that could lead to a meltdown of the overall economy, simultaneously bringing both political and economic distress.

Since the outbreak of the Russo-Ukraine war the economy has been reeling under a balance of payments shock out of which it is yet to recover fully. Mismanagement of foreign exchange reserves and mishandling of exchange rate policy led to sharp depletion of forex reserves that were in highly comfortable range until 2022. After inexplicable delays, the exchange rate was substantially depreciated. A flexible exchange rate policy has been adopted—a crawling peg system—which has had the intended impact of stabilising forex reserves while minimising the divergence between the bank rate and the kerb market rate, thus incentivising and redirecting remittances through official channels.

Now comes the hard part. Restoring forex reserves to comfortable levels exceeding 5-6 months of import cover will need robust export performance for which a competitive exchange rate will play its part. This is where the interim government needs to exude signals of stability to the world community with laser-focus on reforms that bring dynamism to our export-oriented economy. That will then attract rising amounts of export-seeking foreign direct investment (FDI) bringing capital and technology and creating jobs with upskilling of workers aimed at markets of the future.

Thankfully, the nation can reap enormous dividends from the leadership that Nobel laureate economist Dr Muhammad Yunus brings to the table. Having received messages of continuing support from the multilateral institutions like the UN, World Bank, and IMF, there is increasing prospect of receiving higher balance of payments and budget support to backstop much needed reforms in financial, trade, and tax systems. Though not perfect, Bangladesh presents a notable example of effective aid utilisation where official development assistance has been a catalyst for its rapid progress.

To conclude, despite the youth-driven upheaval, the key drivers of the economy remain very much intact and ready to take the economy to new heights. First, the readymade garment industry has by and large remained unscathed with export prospects unaltered and perhaps better in the coming year as China+1 geoeconomics, a global strategy of diversifying supply chains, takes deeper root. Second, remittances are already showing signs of resurgence to be commensurate with the fact that departure of migrant workers has doubled in recent years. Third, agriculture, a sector that has taken the country towards food self-sufficiency, is also transforming itself into a mechanised and viable commercial enterprise of the future. Fourth, NGO-GO partnership for health, education, and human services for which Bangladesh is recognised the world over, gets a new boost with an NGO pioneer at the helm of affairs. These key drivers present challenges, with occasional hiccups, but no tinderbox-like phenomenon.

No doubt, there was a pent-up demand in the country for regime change. The youth have delivered where politicians failed. If this event can be called a "second independence", the nation indeed gets another chance to firmly establish itself as a "success story of development" that Oxford University professor and leading development economist, Stefan Dercon, thinks it is.

The urgent path out of Bangladesh's current fragility



Mir Nadia Nivin
is an international governance and institutional reform specialist having served previously with the UN in many countries around the world helping strengthen governance and implementing reforms. She can be reached at nadia.nivin@gmail.com

MIR NADIA NIVIN

The youth-led movement's victory in wresting freedom from an autocratic, kleptocratic government has provided us with the rare opportunity to once more rebuild our nation from scratch, to let go of all previous baggage and perform political and geopolitical settlements on top of which Bangladesh had to be built. We have managed to raze all of that to the ground and before us lies a clean slate.

However, this is an urgent call to collectively be cognisant of the fact that our country right now is at an extremely critical stage. We are at this point, in essence, straddling a high, thin ledge, on one side of which lies the potential for a strong, sustained democratic Bangladesh and on the other side the spectre of crippled, failed nation.

Statistics, unfortunately, offer no solace either. In modern history, student-led movements against autocratic regimes have been one of the most studied phenomena in the realms of politics and political science. Here, statistics show that most countries fail to achieve that holy grail of a corruption-free, economically stable democracy, the vision of which generally fuels the movement towards its culmination of ousting an unpopular regime.

The post-movement results however fall anywhere along the spectrum of a country either descending into a failed state, reverting to some other form of autocracy, falling into military control, or managing to attain some

in case of Bangladesh? In case of their absence, what can be done as corrective action?

Taking the *first* driver, we have largely met that condition by establishing, in the immediate aftermath of an autocratic regime, a non-partisan, interim government that is socially acceptable to all stakeholders. Also fully understood is that the interim government will be working towards ensuring a democratic general election. However, a clear time limit and the overall terms of responsibility are yet to be set officially, which are essential elements of any temporary governance arrangement.

Nevertheless, concessions may be made for not being able to immediately set a time limit or terms of reference, as the interim government took reins at a time of deep national crisis. Almost all state institutions have been rendered completely dysfunctional through the infestation of the upper ranks with inept, corrupt, and partisan personnel.

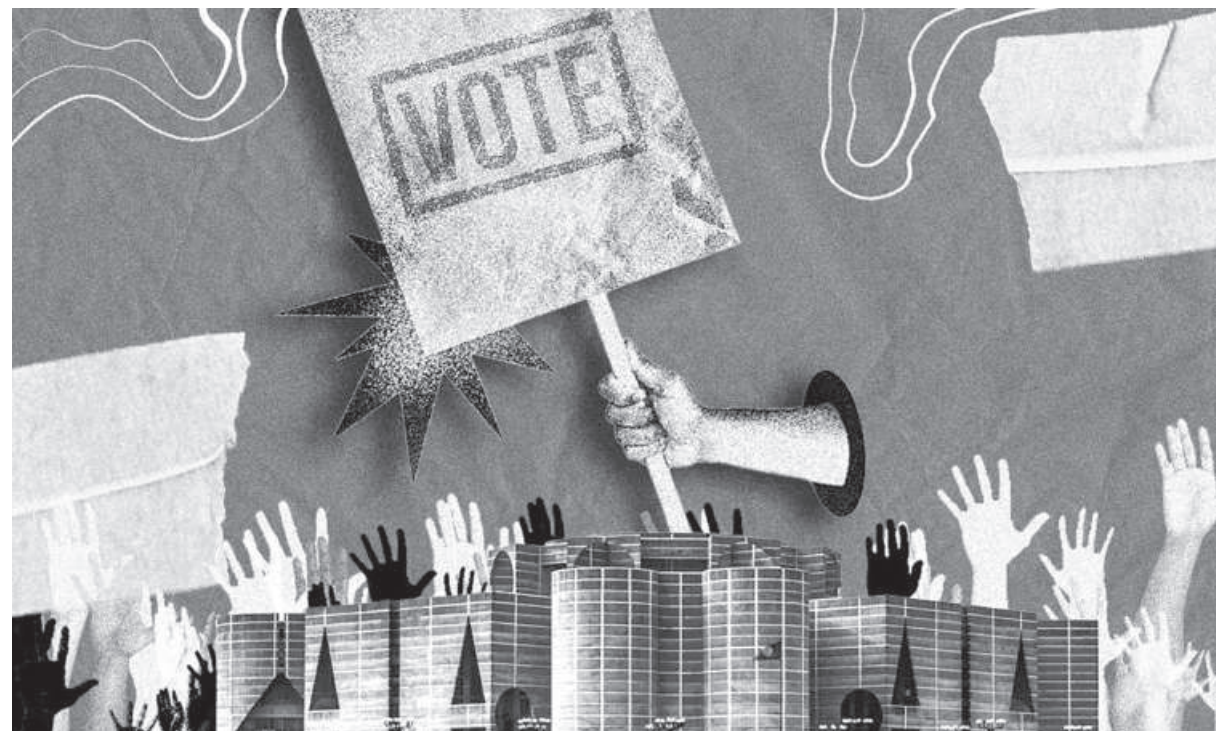
This brings us to the *second* stated driver of having some key functioning institutions in place for the conduct of elections. It can therefore be argued that the reforms being undertaken by the interim government, which include the law enforcement agencies, judiciary, election commission etc., are required, at the very least, for democratic elections to be held.

Having said that, it will, however, be an astute move by the interim government to try and keep within

needs. Instead, parties are engaged in struggle for power and access to state resources. In addition, 15 years of hostile rule by a single party have, to a great extent, left an impoverished political culture.

To ensure a sustainable democratic transition, we therefore need political parties that are explicitly pro-democracy, reinvigorated to embrace and represent the needs of the citizens, and eschew focusing on personal interests and patronage systems. Although there is no dearth of political parties in Bangladesh, extensive party reforms are necessary to have them surface into the modern era and serve as vehicles of representation. As such, one of the key tasks that the interim government should engage on, and this can relate directly to its primary mandate of electoral preparations, is to dialogue with political parties on required reforms, to be able to carry forward the kind of democracy we Bangladeshis are dreaming of.

The *fourth and final* driver, and perhaps the most significant one, is sadly one that is missing in case of Bangladesh: a regional environment that is supportive for a democratic transition. Through a combination of geography and an unrelenting, detrimental presence in our internal affairs, "regional" for us has unfortunately devolved into meaning only India. With Sheikh Hasina gone, perhaps for the first time in the history of Bangladesh, most serendipitously, India has been left with little or no "game" in this country, so to speak. However, we are indeed feeling the effects of this: the inexorable effort to try and establish the "invisible foreign hand" conspiracy theory, for instance, to not only undermine the agency of Bangladeshis to oust an autocracy but to also try and create a narrative for India to come (back) in to counter the "foreign hand."



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

success but by no means anywhere near the anticipated goal. Therefore, the aftermath of a successful movement is a political "Bermuda Triangle" so to speak—the potential to transition to democracy following many a successful uprising has disappeared exactly at this stage.

Post-movement, Bangladesh is at that fragile stage right now. If we want to beat the odds, and beat the statistics, we absolutely must draw lessons and do things differently. This begins with the urgent realisation that the key drivers of a successful mass uprising and those of a democratic transition post long-term autocracy are vastly different.

The necessary drivers of a democratic transition, following a successful movement include: *firstly*, a temporary governance arrangement that is non-partisan, socially legitimate with clear time limits and with predominant responsibility to establish an enabling environment for the conduct of free, fair elections; *second*, a set of functioning state institutions that would enable the conduct of democratic elections; *third*, existence of pro-democracy political parties with clear democracy mandates; and *finally* a regional environment that is supportive at the very least.

It is then important to analyse whether these drivers are present and if so, how do they manifest

a time frame of 120 days, as was stated in the erstwhile caretaker government provision. An interim arrangement, in juxtaposition to an active constitution of a parliamentary democracy, continuing for a longer period lays it open to several risks. These include the risk of being challenged on the legitimacy of reforms that cannot be directly linked to the formation of an enabling environment for general elections, the risk of being viewed as a form of power nab backed by the military (akin to the 2006-08 situation), consequently the risk of losing goodwill and support of international, pro-democracy allies; and perhaps most importantly, the risk of allowing our great "neighbour" time to re-insinuate itself once again and debilitatingly so, into our socio-political sphere.

Moving to the *third* driver, this requires the existence of pro-democracy political parties that in mandate and action engage to protect and uphold the principles of democracy. In functioning democracies, political parties tend to fulfill a vital intermediate role between citizens and the state, in which they represent citizens' interests and translate these into policy agenda. Now, in Bangladesh, most existing political parties will state that they are pro-democracy by "general intent," but by no means do they represent citizens' interests nor are they responsive to the

Then there is misinformation vastly exaggerating the attack on minorities. Despite more and more reports to the contrary, India continues to overplay this in local and international media. These are all but a few post-Hasina shenanigans of our great neighbour. The situation has been aptly described by a well-known international publication which headlined, "India 'over-invested in Hasina and under-invested in Bangladesh' – and is now panicking"

If democratic elections are held timely, for the first time India might find itself in a position where it neither influences the ruling party nor the opposition. This is a highly undesirable state of things for India and something it would try its level best to remedy. Therefore, the longer we go without a democratically elected government, the more vulnerable we remain to overt and covert ploys being set in motion to regain a structure of influence in Bangladesh.

Having analysed the drivers of democratic transitions in the context of Bangladesh, on balance, we may still be on track to beat the odds. However, this will require us, both collectively and individually, to be aware of our current vulnerabilities and our fragility such that we can address these and make that transition to a democratic society, that so many before us have failed to achieve.



Mastering anxiety: Strategies for immediate and long-term relief

Anxiety is a natural response to stress, but it can become overwhelming if not managed. Whether you experience occasional worry or struggle with chronic anxiety, there are effective strategies to help you cope.

Immediate relief techniques

- 1. Question your thoughts:** Challenge the negative thoughts that fuel your anxiety. Are they realistic? Can you change your perspective?
- 2. Deep breathing:** Practice slow, focused breathing. Inhale for four counts; exhale for four. This can calm your heart rate and ease anxiety.
- 3. Aromatherapy:** Scents like lavender and chamomile can have a soothing effect. Use essential oils or candles to create a calming environment.
- 4. Exercise:** Physical activity, even a short walk, can help distract your mind and reduce stress.
- 5. Grounding techniques:** Use the 333 rule—name three things you can see, hear, and touch. This helps bring you back to the present moment.

Long-term strategies

- 1. Identify triggers:** Recognise what sparks your anxiety. This awareness can help you manage or avoid triggers.
 - 2. Try therapy:** Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is particularly effective in managing anxiety by changing thought patterns.
 - 3. Stay active:** Regular exercise, proper sleep, and socialising with loved ones can all contribute to long-term anxiety relief.
 - 4. Mindful meditation:** Regular meditation can train your brain to handle anxiety more effectively.
 - 5. Diet and supplements:** Foods and supplements like omega-3s and green tea can support mental health over time.
- By combining immediate coping skills with long-term strategies, you can better manage anxiety and improve your overall well-being.

RECOGNISING THE QUIET SIGNALS:

Early detection and symptoms of breast cancer

STAR HEALTH DESK

Waking up on a seemingly ordinary day, you might notice something different—perhaps a slight change in your breast or an unusual feeling. It is easy to dismiss these subtle signs, but they could be your body's way of signalling something important, like breast cancer. Understanding the signs and symptoms, even the most subtle ones, could save your life.

For many people, breast cancer starts quietly. There are no loud alarms, no dramatic symptoms—just a small change that could be simple to overlook. The most common early sign is a new lump in the breast or armpit that does not go away. While many lumps are harmless, some can be firm with irregular edges, more likely indicating cancer. Others might be softer, with rounded edges, or even small and difficult to detect. This is why it is so crucial not to ignore any new lump, especially since not all breast cancers present as a lump.

Your skin might also try to get your attention. Imagine your breast skin taking on a dimpled, rash-like appearance, almost resembling the peel of an orange. It might turn red, thick, or develop a strange texture. These changes are simple to dismiss but can be serious indicators that something is happening beneath the surface. Swelling in the armpit or near the collarbone could mean that breast cancer has spread to the lymph nodes, which are small organs that play a crucial role in your immune system.

Changes in your nipple are another important sign. If your nipple suddenly

starts pulling inward, feels itchy, burns, or develops sores, it is worth investigating further. Unusual nipple discharge, whether clear, bloody, or any other colour, is a red flag that should not be ignored.

Even when there does not seem to be anything wrong, breast cancer can still be present. That is why regular mammograms are vital, especially if you are over 40 or have

presents with symptoms similar to an infection. Your breast might feel warm, swollen, and red, or the skin could become dimpled, leathery, or ridged. These symptoms are often mistaken for an infection, which can delay critical treatment. That is why it is essential to know what to look for and to act quickly if you notice anything unusual.

Men, although far less likely to develop breast cancer, are not immune. About 1% of breast cancer cases occur in men, and the symptoms can be similar to those in women. A lump in the breast or armpit, or changes in the skin or nipple, such as redness, puckering, scales, or discharge, should prompt immediate medical attention.

Even after successful treatment, breast cancer can sometimes return. This recurrence might be in the same breast (local recurrence), in nearby lymph nodes (regional recurrence), or in distant parts of the body (metastatic or distant recurrence). Knowing what to watch for, like new lumps, changes in your skin, or unexplained pain, is crucial for catching a recurrence early.

So, what should you do? Listen to your body. Pay attention to those small changes that might otherwise seem insignificant. If something does not seem right, do not hesitate to consult your doctor. Being proactive about your breast health could be the most important decision you ever make. Early detection, awareness of symptoms, and regular screenings are your best defence against breast cancer. Remember, knowledge is power, and in this case, it is also a lifeline.



family history of the disease. Early detection through routine screening can make all the difference in successfully treating breast cancer.

But it is not just about finding cancer early—understanding the variety of symptoms can be life-saving. For example, inflammatory breast cancer is a rare but aggressive type that often

Bangladesh's preparedness for Mpox: Challenges and opportunities

GOURI BASAK PAROMA

As Mpox continues to spread globally, Bangladesh faces an urgent need to assess and enhance its preparedness for this emerging health threat. The recent classification of Mpox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organisation has heightened the need for countries like Bangladesh to evaluate their readiness and response capabilities.

Bangladesh might face a significant challenge with the recent Mpox outbreak, particularly with the emergence of the Clade 1b strain, which is more transmissible. This new variant's spread through sexual networks adds urgency to the country's response efforts.

Dhaka's airport has taken proactive measures by setting up systems to manage passengers exhibiting Mpox symptoms. This includes providing informational leaflets, staffing health desks 24/7, and using thermal scanners for temperature



checks. Suspected cases are directed to designated hospitals for further evaluation, with safety protocols in place, such as medical masks, disposable gloves, and hand sanitisers.

The primary challenge for Bangladesh is establishing a robust surveillance system and upgrading its diagnostic capabilities. Despite improvements made during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mpox requires specific diagnostic expertise and equipment. Enhancing laboratory infrastructure and seeking external support will be crucial for effective testing

and management.

Vaccination against Mpox is another critical aspect. Currently, two global Mpox vaccines are not widely available in Bangladesh. The health ministry must collaborate with international organisations to secure vaccine supplies and develop a priority vaccination plan targeting high-risk groups and healthcare workers.

Public awareness and education are vital for an effective response. Tailored messaging on Mpox prevention, symptoms, and treatment should be communicated through various channels, including social media and existing health programmes. Collaboration with civil society organisations will help counter misinformation and support affected individuals.

Border control and travel related measures will also play a role, particularly considering Bangladesh's geographical proximity to high risk areas. Proper screening at ports of entry, combined

with targeted travel restrictions, will be necessary to manage potential outbreaks.

Bangladesh must also address resource allocation and funding challenges, balancing the response to Mpox with other health priorities. Establishing a dedicated task force and leveraging the pharmaceutical industry's capacity for local drug and vaccine production could enhance the country's preparedness. Regional cooperation within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) may further bolster response efforts.

By proactively addressing these areas, Bangladesh can build resilience against Mpox and strengthen its overall health emergency preparedness. Effective planning, vigilant monitoring, and international collaboration will be key to navigating this emerging threat and safeguarding public health.

The writer is a student of Geography and Environment department of University of Dhaka. E-mail: paromabasak322@gmail.com

WHO urges rapid access to Mpox diagnostic tests

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has called on manufacturers of mpox in vitro diagnostics (IVDs) to submit expressions of interest for Emergency Use Listing (EUL). This move follows ongoing discussions on the need for effective diagnostics, especially in low-income settings.

Testing is crucial for timely treatment and preventing the spread of mpox. Since 2022, WHO has distributed approximately 150,000 diagnostic tests globally, with over a quarter going to African countries. An additional 30,000 tests are set to be delivered to Africa in the coming weeks.

With up to 1,000 suspected cases reported this week in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the need for diagnostic tests is increasing. WHO has partnered to scale up diagnostic capacity, including equipping six new labs since May 2024. These efforts have improved testing rates significantly.

WHO has updated its guidance to detect a new mpox virus strain and is working with countries to implement it. Diagnostic tests primarily use PCR (polymerase chain reaction) to detect viral DNA, with blood testing not recommended for routine diagnosis.

The EUL procedure allows WHO to approve and procure essential medical products like tests during emergencies, aiding countries with limited access to approved diagnostics.

Source: World Health Organisation

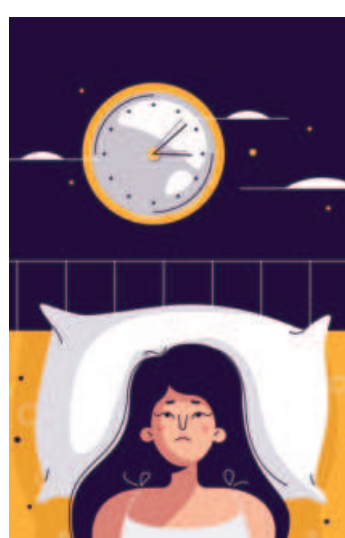


Surprising benefits of cognitive-behavioural therapy for insomnia in patients with chronic pain

For many struggling with insomnia, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is often a go-to solution. But what happens when chronic pain is part of the picture? A recent study sheds light on this very question.

In a study published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, researchers dove into the effectiveness of CBT-I among older veterans suffering from both insomnia and chronic pain. The participants, averaging 72 years old, were part of a larger trial comparing CBT-I with general sleep education. Importantly, CBT-I in this study was delivered by specially trained sleep coaches under expert supervision.

Over half of the 106 veterans who received CBT-I reported chronic pain at the start



Surprisingly, those with higher pain levels experienced even more significant improvements in their insomnia symptoms after

the treatment. This is not just a short-term fix either—benefits lasted up to a year!

This finding is noteworthy because it means CBT-I can help not just with sleep but also potentially with pain management. While this study provides a hopeful glimpse into how therapy can tackle the dual challenges of sleep issues and pain, it also highlights a gap: supervised CBT-I is not always available. However, training non-clinicians to deliver this therapy might be a step towards broader access.

In summary, CBT-I proves to be a robust ally in the fight against insomnia, even when pain complicates the issue. This research offers a promising outlook for veterans and others grappling with these intertwined struggles.

Essential insights into VITAMIN B DEFICIENCIES

Vitamin B is essential for maintaining overall health, providing energy, and supporting cell function. Deficiencies in these vitamins can lead to various health issues, depending on which vitamin you are lacking.

Symptoms and risk factors:

Symptoms of vitamin B deficiency vary, including fatigue, skin issues, and cognitive difficulties. Certain factors increase the risk of deficiency, such as older age, pregnancy, and health conditions like diabetes, celiac disease, and thyroid disorders. Excessive alcohol consumption can also hinder vitamin B absorption, raising the risk of deficiencies.

• Vitamin B12:

Key functions and sources: Vitamin B12, or cobalamin, is crucial for the nervous system and red blood cell production. Deficiency can lead to megaloblastic anaemia, characterised by fatigue, weakness, and cognitive changes.

Sources of vitamin B12: Found primarily in meat, dairy products, and fortified foods, sources include beef liver, clams, poultry, eggs, cheese, and nutritional yeast.

• Vitamin B6:

Immune support and energy conversion: Vitamin B6, or pyridoxine, helps the body convert food into energy and supports the immune system. Deficiency is rare but may result in nausea, skin rashes, and anaemia. It is also vital during pregnancy for the baby's brain development.

Sources of vitamin B6: Rich sources include poultry, fish, starchy vegetables like potatoes, and non-citrus fruits.

• Vitamins B1 and B2:

Energy production and cellular health: Vitamin B1 (thiamine) and Vitamin B2 (riboflavin) are essential for converting food into energy and maintaining cellular function. Deficiencies are uncommon but can occur in heavy alcohol consumers, leading to symptoms like confusion and mouth sores.

Sources of vitamin B1 and B2: Whole grains, fortified cereals, eggs, lean meats, and green vegetables are sources of vitamins B1 and B2.

• Vitamin B3:

Digestion and cellular development: Vitamin B3, or niacin, supports digestion, appetite regulation, and cell development. Severe deficiency, though rare, can result in pellagra, characterised by rough skin, a bright red tongue, digestive issues, and mental disturbances.

Sources of vitamin B3: Rich in meat, poultry, fish, nuts, and fortified cereals.

• Vitamin B9:

DNA synthesis and pregnancy health: Vitamin B9, or folate, is crucial for DNA synthesis and repair. Deficiency can cause megaloblastic anaemia and, in pregnant women, increase the risk of neural tube defects in babies. Excessive folic acid intake during pregnancy may also pose risks, so balance is key.

Sources of vitamin B9: Natural sources include dark leafy greens, beans, asparagus, and oranges. Many grain products are fortified with folic acid.

Preventing vitamin B deficiencies:

To prevent vitamin B deficiencies, maintain a balanced diet rich in lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. If you suspect a deficiency, consult a healthcare professional for guidance and possible supplementation. Regular check-ups can help identify and address deficiencies early, ensuring you get the necessary nutrients for optimal health.

Taskin makes instant impact ON COMEBACK

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh speedster Taskin Ahmed made an instant impact on his return to Test cricket after 14 months as he came up with a sensational bowling performance on the second day of the second Test against Pakistan in Rawalpindi yesterday.

Taskin finished with 3-57, helping his side bowl out the hosts for 274 runs in their first innings within a day after the game finally started on the Day 2 after the opening day's play got washed out.

Taskin had taken a break from the longer-format earlier this year citing injury issues but after the end of the last ICC T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the USA, he changed his mind and made himself available for selection for the Pakistan Test series.

The selection panel also showed faith on the experienced pacer as they picked him for the second Test squad but before that, they wanted to see how Taskin fared in the longer-version.



Bangladesh's Mehedi Hasan Miraz (C), Pakistan's chief tormentor in the first innings with a five-wicket haul, is all smiles after Taskin Ahmed (R) claimed the wicket of Saud Shakeel in the second session of the second day in the second Test in Rawalpindi yesterday. [Below] Miraz points at his figures of 5-61 in the honours board of the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. PHOTO: AFP/PCB

And for that, they played him in the second four-day match against Pakistan Shaheens where he bowled 15 overs and also dismissed Imam-ul-Haq in the first ball of his opening spell.

Similarly, the 29-year-old, who previously played 13 Tests since his debut in this format in 2017, tasted success almost immediately, going through the defences of Pakistani opener Abdullah Shafique with a splendid in-swing in the last ball of the first over of the game after Bangladesh chose to field first.

Taskin, who came in as a replacement

for the injured Shoriful Islam, set up Shafique brilliantly as he bowled his first five deliveries outside off, moving away from the batter, before finally pitching the ball on a good length and bringing it back sharply into the batter, hitting the top of off stump.

"That wicket [Shafique's] was really enjoyable for me. First, I set him up with away moving ones and then in the last one I brought it back into him. That was intentional," Taskin told the reporters in the press meet after the end of the second day's play.

Taskin didn't get any more successes in his first spell where he bowled four overs but kept the pressure on Shan Masood and Saim Ayub, who went on to score fifties, and when he came back to bowl his next two spells, he carried on from where he had left off.

At one time, Saud Shakeel, the middle-order batter who scored a hundred in the opening Test, hit him for back-to-back boundaries. But Taskin had the last laugh, as he knocked over Shakeel's stumps in the same over to send him back to the pavilion.

Bangladesh kept taking wickets at regular intervals from the second session onwards. With Pakistan quickly running out of wickets, Salman Agha, the No.7 batter, decided to try and hit some boundaries against the second new ball and smashed Taskin for two sixes in consecutive overs.

Taskin, however, kept baiting Salman, who made 54, into going for big shots and eventually his plan worked as the batter mishit a pull shot and got caught at fine leg by Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz soon wrapped up the innings by completing his 10th five-for in Tests.

"Overall, our bowling unit has done really well. We could have done better. I'm working on everything, as I have been playing for a long time, to adapt to the format quickly. It's my responsibility as an experienced and senior bowler.

"We have to bat really well. We have to comeback well in the second innings. Nothing is over yet but it was a good day for us which could have been even better."

Sports adviser stresses on change in constitution of sports bodies



In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star, Asif Mahmud Sajeeb Bhuiyan, the Adviser for Youth and Sports to the Interim Government, has pointed out several issues he has had to encounter since being sworn in for the role on August 8. Asif explained his take on the current issues and the solutions he intends to provide. He

said that the constitutions upon which the sports federations operate need to change to establish democratic practices and create a culture where accountability is paramount. Scan the QR code to watch the interview.



Booters undergo 'demanding' training in Thimphu

SPORTS REPORTER

One of the two concerns for Bangladesh football team ahead of their two FIFA friendly matches were the altitude in Thimphu, where the matches will be held on August 5 and 8.

Bangladesh initially wanted to host these matches at home, with an aim of improving their FIFA ranking ahead of the draw for the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers. However, in light of the current situation in the country, the Bhutan FA declined to send their team, instead desired to host Bangladesh for the two matches.

With Thimphu situated 2,400 metres above sea level, Bangladesh team needed to adjust to the conditions quickly, having landed in the Himalayan nation on Friday. With that aim in mind, Javier Cabrera took his charges for a two-hour hike to the Buddha Point and back, which the players said they enjoyed.

Defender Bishwanath Ghosh said it was a unique experience for him and he enjoyed the trip thoroughly.

"It was a new experience for me. I had never done hiking before," Bishwanath said in a video message sent by the BFF from Thimphu. "Initially it was bit laborious, but once we got into the groove and got to the highest point, it was easy."

Coach Cabrera said, "It was quite important for us to adapt to the altitude. So we felt hiking and activity was to be more demanding in terms of cardio work for the players to adapt better to the environment," said the Spaniard, further informing on-pitch training will begin today, leaving the team with four sessions before the first game to be played on artificial pitch of the Changlimithang Stadium.

Mizanur urges more 'A' team tours

Bangladesh 'A' team's long-awaited Pakistan tour ended abruptly on Friday after rain played spoilsport in the final one-day match. And despite the whole series -- consisting of two four-day encounters and three one-dayers -- was mostly hampered by rain in Islamabad, 'A' team head coach Mizanur Rahman Babul pointed out several positives from the tour to The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): How do you evaluate the tour?

Mizanur Rahman Babul (MRB): If you play against teams like Pakistan or any other strong side, you will face top cricketers from the opposition... We have some weaknesses against pace bowling, but when you play against such teams, you must handle swing and reverse swing; not only from their regular bowlers but also from their net bowlers. It seems like they have mastered this art from birth. We can't get this experience in other places. So, I think this ['A' team tours] should be continued.

DS: This was Bangladesh 'A' teams first tour since 2022 in the West Indies. What has been the positives?

MRB: If you ask about the positive aspects, the national team players gained insights into the conditions before the start of the Test series [in Rawalpindi]. Mushfiq [ur Rahim] played in the first four-day match; although he didn't



get the chance to play the full game, he batted in one innings. Mominul [Haque] and Hasan Mahmud played as well. So, there were some advantages, as they could get an idea of the wicket by playing here; and against those pacers who have represented Pakistan at the national level.

DS: How do you rate the performance of Taskin, who played a first-class match after a long time?

MRB: We had planned to give him at least 14 to 15 overs to bowl in full rhythm. It's a good sign that he bowled really well here and with full effort. I think it will certainly help him in the Test series.

DS: Which players impressed you the most?

MRB: Jaker Ali [Anik] played a brilliant knock of 172. Saif [Hassan] also made a hundred [in the second four-dayer] and

played a good innings in the opening one-day match; his performance was significant among all batters.

DS: How do you see Tanzim Hasan Sakib as an all-format prospect for Bangladesh?

MRB: Sakib played brilliantly, too. He saved the opening four-day contest for us by facing 70 balls for his unbeaten 11 runs... Whether it was four-day or one-day cricket, his effort, line, and length were outstanding. I hope he will serve Bangladesh for a long time, as he has the ability, fitness, and mindset.

DS: How do you see the overall facilities in Pakistan?

MRB: Our preparation was interrupted due to the political situation in Bangladesh. When we arrived here, we had some facilities, but we couldn't use them due to rain. Players worked on their fitness in the hotel gym. There were no other training options for us during the series since only Lahore has indoor facility in Pakistan.

Root sets new ENGLAND RECORD

AFP, LONDON

Joe Root set an England record of 34 Test centuries when he reached three figures for the second time in the second Test against Sri Lanka at Lord's yesterday.

Root, who made 143 in the first innings to move level with the previous England record of 33 hundreds held by the retired Alastair Cook, went to a century on Saturday's third day when he cut Lahiru Kumara for the 10th four off 111 balls faced.

It meant Root surpassed his fellow former England captain's mark. It is Root's 145th Test compared to Cook's career tally of 161 matches.

He was last man out for 103 in England's second innings total of 251 on the third day. Sri Lanka faced a mammoth target of 483 to level this three-match series at 1-1.

Root's seventh Test hundred at Lord's also gave him sole possession of the

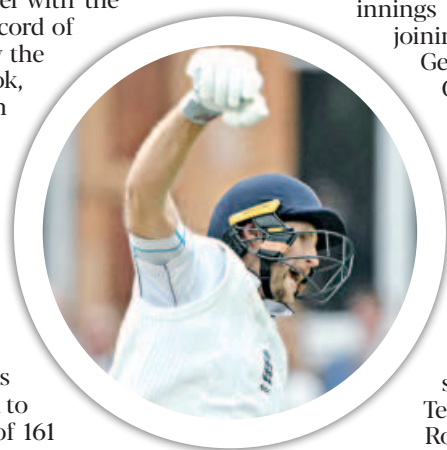
record for the most Test centuries at the 'Home of Cricket' he had shared with the England duo of Graham Gooch and Michael Vaughan, who both managed six apiece.

Root also became the fourth batsman to have scored hundreds in both innings of a Test at Lord's, joining the West Indies' George Headley (1939), Gooch (1990) and Vaughan (2004).

Gooch's combined tally of 456 runs against India at Lord's in 1990, comprising innings of 333 and 123, remains a record for the most runs scored by a single batsman in any Test.

Root's latest century also moved him into joint-sixth place in an all-time list of Test century-makers headed by India great Sachin Tendulkar, who scored 51 hundreds in 200 Tests from 1989-2013.

The 33-year-old Root is the only batsman in this group who is still an active Test cricketer.



'OUT OF GAS' Djokovic's Slam drought continues

AGENCIES

Defending champion Novak Djokovic admitted he had played "his worst tennis ever" as he slumped to his earliest exit at the US Open in 18 years yesterday, sparking more questions over his long-term future in the sport.

The 37-year-old Djokovic, a four-time champion in New York, lost 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 in the third round to 28th-ranked Alexei Popyrin of Australia. Djokovic paid a heavy price for failing to convert five break points in the sixth game of the opening set, ending



Djokovic's exit means that for the first time since 2002, none of the Slams will have been won by any members of the 'Big Three' of Djokovic, the absent Rafael Nadal or the retired Roger Federer.

the match with an uncharacteristic 14 double faults and 49 unforced errors.

"The way I played from the beginning of the tournament reaching the third round is a

success," said a despondent Djokovic, who remains marooned on 24 Slam titles with Margaret Court.

"I have played some of my worst tennis ever."

The only consolation for Djokovic in a frustrating year was winning Olympic gold in Paris earlier in August. That title -- the 99th of his career -- may turn out to be his last defining moment in the sun.

Djokovic admitted that the effort and aftermath of the feat impacted his lacklustre New York campaign.

"I spent a lot of energy winning the gold... but because it's the US Open, I gave it a shot... I didn't have any physical issues. I just felt out of gas."

"Life moves on," added the Serb. "I'll try and recalibrate and look for what's next."

At the Arthur Ashe Stadium, fans expected another drubbing, considering the former number one had already beaten Popyrin this year in the second round of the Australian Open and third round at Wimbledon. Popyrin, however, had other ideas.

"Today was something that I kind of thought I could do," Popyrin said.

"My two experiences against him earlier this year in the Australian Open and Wimbledon kind of gave me the confidence to go out there tonight and believe that I could win and actually do it and believe it."

"I've had the capability of winning a big match but not being able to back it up. So, when I did it, it kind of felt that kind of proved me right," he told reporters.

"Hopefully I can continue it this week because this is probably the biggest win of my career so far ranking-wise. To be in the fourth round of a Grand Slam by beating the greatest of all time is unbelievable."



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VIRAL VIDEO OF AUGUST 5 Policemen seen piling up bodies on van

Authorities checking authenticity; vow actions

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

A grisly video of several partially covered bloodstained bodies on a van with some policemen standing by has gone viral on social media, raising questions about possible disrespectful handling of bodies of quota movement victims.

Bodies covered with bedsheets with hands stretched out can be seen in the nearly two-minute video, captured in Savar, making rounds in social media since Friday.

Of the policemen standing beside the van, two were wearing police vests and seen throwing another body onto the piles.

Police authorities said they have seen the video and are verifying its authenticity.

Authorities have also identified at least one policeman seen in the footage.

Visiting the areas seen in the video and talking to locals, The Daily Star can confirm that the scene of the video was close to Ashulia Police Station in Savar.

Locals said the video was taken on the Plot Road in

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After waiting for hours in the queue in front of a TCB outlet, exhausted Kaburan Begum, 72, sits on the ground at Ershad Ali Primary School in Khulna town yesterday morning. Many with limited income are thronging such outlets to buy daily essentials at lower prices every day.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Drop charges, free journos RSF urges govt, says media professionals bearing the brunt of need for vengeance

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Reporters sans frontières (RSF), or Reporters without Borders, has demanded that the Bangladesh government drop all charges against journalists and release them immediately.

"The purge of journalists who are considered to be affiliated with the former government has reached a new level," Antoine Bernard, RSF's director of advocacy and assistance, said in a statement yesterday.

"Media professionals are bearing the brunt of the need for vengeance that permeates this terrible legal cabal, which is hurting the image of the political transition underway in Bangladesh," said the director of the Paris-based nonprofit working for media freedom worldwide.

The statement said the interim administration headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus must do everything in its power to end this "vicious process".

On August 29, no fewer than 25 journalists were charged with crimes against humanity for the death of a protester in July.

The complaint marks a new stage in the series of lawsuits targeting media professionals that have emerged over the past 10 days, Bernard said.

They are targeted in the case examined by the International Crimes Tribunal, a special court set up in 1973 to judge abuses committed during Bangladesh's war of independence.

Farzana Rupa and Shakil Ahmed, the journalist couple recently dismissed from Ekattor TV, a TV channel deemed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Fuel prices drop for Sept Diesel Tk 105.5, octane Tk 125

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has reduced fuel prices for the month of September following the price trends in the international market.

From now on (12:00am today), diesel and kerosene prices will be Tk 105.50 a litre, while petrol will be Tk 121 per litre, and octane at Tk 125.

The Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources issued a gazette notification in this regard.

The prices of diesel and kerosene have decreased by Tk 1.25 compared to previous prices, while octane and petrol dropped by Tk 6 per litre.

The government started fixing fuel prices under a mechanism in line with global market rates in March this year. On February 29, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) issued a notification on Automatic Fuel Oil Pricing Guidelines.

According to the

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As floodwater recedes, diseases spread

Hospitals in Feni, Noakhali struggling to cope with flow of patients; flood death toll now 59

STAR REPORT

Hospitals in Feni and Noakhali are struggling to tackle a wave of patients with floodwater receding and water-borne diseases spreading in the affected areas while the death toll from the disaster has increased to 59.

In Feni's Sonagazi Upazila Health Complex, patients were lying on the floor, balcony

and staircases on Friday afternoon. The number of patients at the 50-bed government facility increased to 96 by evening.

Chhagalnaiya Upazila Health Complex, which has the same number of beds, had 126 patients on Saturday morning.

Nusrat Jahan, an 11-year-old girl from Matiganj village, had been receiving treatment at the Sonagazi Upazila Health Complex since Wednesday night.

"We took shelter in a neighbour's house as the water entered my home," her mother Laila Akhtar said.

"As there was no clean water there, the girl drank the water stored in the tank. Since then, she has been vomiting and suffering from diarrhoea," said Laila.

"The hospital was full of patients when we came here. A ward-boy managed a place with a mattress on the floor for her."

Among the patients admitted to the health complex, 80 percent from the flood-hit areas caught water-borne diseases, said Medical Officer Dr Arnab Mallick.

In Noakhali, diarrhoea is spreading rapidly among the flood-hit people.

Noakhali General Hospital's Diarrhoea Ward, which can accommodate only 16 people, was treating 280 patients yesterday evening.

"We were compelled to drink floodwater as our house and tubewell were submerged for around three weeks. Now my child is suffering from diarrhoea," said Sajeda Akhter Noor of Babunagar villager in the district's Begumganj Upazila. Her four-month-old baby had been receiving treatment at the hospital since Thursday, she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Many patients alleged mismanagement at the hospital. "I was admitted to the hospital on Friday

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Noakhali General Hospital's Diarrhoea Ward, which can accommodate only 16 people, was treating 280 patients yesterday evening.

Yunus to place reforms outline after talks with political parties

Says his special assistant

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will present a comprehensive outline for state reforms following dialogues with political parties.

Mahfuj Alam, special assistant to the chief adviser, at a press briefing said Prof Yunus has been actively engaging with various political leaders to discuss proposed reforms and outlines.

Prof Yunus held meetings with representatives from 35 political

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Cops tell family of abducted car dealer 'not to worry'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family of businessman Aslam Serriabath filed a police complaint over his abduction from Dhaka's Pallabi two days ago, and they have been told "not to worry about him".

People in plain clothes stopped the car of Aslam, a car dealer, in the Kalshi area on Thursday night and took him away in another vehicle, according to the complaint filed by his brother-in-law Tarek Hossain at Pallabi Police Station on Friday.

Bangladesh Reconditioned

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

4 of a family die in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Four of a family, including a mother and her son, were killed and four others injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Narsingdi's Basail area last night.

The deceased - Kamrunnihar, 35, her son Sajid Mia, 12, and their relatives Tanjina Akter, 24, and Sabiha Akter, 14, - were residents of Charshubuddi in Narsingdi's Raipura upazila.

According to relatives of the victims, the accident occurred near the regional office of the Department of Immigration and Passports in Narsingdi around 9:30pm when a microbus carrying the victims collided

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed (R) runs for joy after dismissing Pakistan opener Abdullah Shafique in the first over of the second day of second Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bowlers put Tigers on top

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh bowlers, led by off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz, had a field day on Day 2 of the second Test against Pakistan at the Rawalpindi Stadium yesterday as their efforts bundled out the hosts for 274.

Miraz picked up his 10th five-wicket haul in the format, making the best use of the moderate assistance the spinners had on a batting-friendly Rawalpindi surface on the second day after the first was washed out due to incessant rain.

Bangladesh opens Shadman Islam and Zakir Hasan had two overs to negotiate late in the day which they were able to do unscathed as they managed 10 runs on the board. It wasn't smooth sailing, however, as Shadman was presented a reprieve (on nought) by Saud Shakeel, who dropped the left-handed opener on the very first delivery of the innings off the bowling of left-arm pacer Mir Hamza.

The bowlers delivered after Bangladesh put

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

অভিনন্দন



মোঃ নজরুল ইসলাম স্বপন
চেয়ারম্যান, এক্সিম ব্যাংক পিএলসি.

এক্সিম ব্যাংকের চেয়ারম্যান হলেন বিশিষ্ট ব্যবসায়ী ও শিল্পপতি মোঃ নজরুল ইসলাম স্বপন। ৩০ আগস্ট, ২০২৪ ব্যাংকের পুনর্গঠিত পরিচালনা পর্ষদের ১৭৪ তম জরুরী বোর্ড সভায় সর্বসম্মতিক্রমে তাঁকে চেয়ারম্যান হিসেবে নির্বাচিত করা হয়। তিনি একই ব্যাংকের পরিচালনা পর্ষদের সদস্য হিসেবে সততা ও নিষ্ঠার সাথে দায়িত্ব পালন করেছেন। তিনি চট্টগ্রাম বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগে স্নাতক ও স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রী অর্জন করেন। তৈরি পোশাক খাতে তাঁর দীর্ঘ ৪৪ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা রয়েছে। বর্তমানে তিনি টিভোলি অ্যাপারেলস্ লিমিটেড এবং গ্যালাক্সি স্টিচ লিমিটেডের চেয়ারম্যান এবং ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক। ২০০০ সাল থেকে তিনি একজন সিআইপি'র সম্মান পেয়ে আসছেন। এছাড়া রিয়েল স্টেট এবং এভিয়েশন সেক্টরে তাঁর ব্যাপক দক্ষতা রয়েছে।

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