

Mia, wife concealed assets in tax returns

Their declared assets alone are worth over Tk 14cr, but their tax files don't reveal all

SHARIFUL ISLAM and DIPAN NANDY

When Asaduzzaman Mia retired as the longest-serving Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner in 2019, by his own admission, he went home with about Tk 1.75 crore in service benefits. But that does not give a true picture of his wealth accumulation. Fact is, the career cop and his family became much wealthier long before that.

The five-member family, which includes three children, owns at least



Asaduzzaman Mia



Afroza Zaman

into allegations of ill-gotten wealth worth at least Tk 200 crore amassed by Asaduzzaman's family and five of their relatives. The figure is based on open-source information, and a formal investigation is currently underway. "We have sent letters to various offices and financial institutions seeking information about the movable and immovable assets of 10 individuals related to the Asaduzzaman couple, including their three children," said an ACC source who has knowledge about

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FAMILY'S WEALTH

|| **ACC'S PRIMARY FINDINGS || ASSETS SHOWN IN TAX FILES

Asaduzzaman Mia	At least Tk 45cr	Tk 6.01cr (2022-23)
Afroza Zaman	At least Tk 65cr	Tk 8.24cr (2023-24)
Asif Sahadat	At least Tk 15cr	Tk 2.76cr (2023-24)
Ayesha Siddika	At least Tk 16cr	Tk 2.98cr (2023-24)
Asif Mahdin	At least Tk 31cr	Tk 2.49cr (2023-24)
TOTAL	Tk 172cr	Tk 22.48cr

**FROM OPEN SOURCE; FORMAL PROBE UNDERWAY

two multi-story buildings in Dhaka's Basundhara and Nikunja, at least four apartments in the capital and Savar and at least 20 acres of farm and non-farm land in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Savar, Gazipur and Faridpur. The family also owns the majority shares in at least two transport companies and an IT firm set up between 2017 and 2019, an investigation by The Daily Star has found. It is difficult to put a concrete figure on these assets, but the Anti-Corruption Commission is now looking

the investigation.

Over the last three months, this newspaper has gone through hundreds of pages of tax files, land deeds and other official documents relating to Asaduzzaman, his wife and their three children as well as three of their close relatives.

Judging only from their recent tax records, land deeds and the records of the two transport lines, an IT firm and a gold shop filed with Registrar of Joint

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Parents look after Abdullah, a dengue patient on a drip, at Mugda Medical College and Hospital yesterday. The six-year-old from the capital's Meradia has been undergoing treatment at the hospital for four days. Dengue cases have surged in the city in recent weeks. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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BANGABANDHU-1 SATELLITE

Another white elephant

Project estimated to incur Tk 1,500cr loss

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The Bangabandhu-1 satellite, one of the marquee projects of the Awami League government, has turned into a financial black hole, costing the state coffers upwards of Tk 1,500 crore.

In September 2014, despite the Planning Commission's reservations, former prime minister Sheikh Hasina approved the Tk 2,968 crore project, whose cost later went



down to Tk 2,765 crore.

Of the amount, the government bore Tk 1,406 crore and about term loan facilities of 155 million euros from HSBC on a 12-year tenure. When the

facility agreement was signed in September 2016, 155 million euros amounted to Tk 1,400 crore.

As of now, the Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited (BSCL), the state-owned company formed to operate the satellite, has failed to furnish a single paisa to the state coffers.

Every six months, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)

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No work, no pay if unrest doesn't stop today

Garment factory owners to activate labour law clause

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment factory owners yesterday threatened to shut down their production units for an indefinite period under the 'no work, no pay' clause of the labour law if the unrest in the sector continues from today.

Clause 13(l) of the Bangladesh Labour Act states that the workers will not be paid for the days in which the factories were not in operation.

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US TEAM IN DHAKA

Trade, labour reforms to top agenda

Bangladesh to get \$200m aid

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh is set to receive \$200 million in technical assistance to support its institutional and economic reform initiatives as a high-profile US delegation, including Assistant Secretary Donald Lu, lands in Dhaka.

In its first such visit to Dhaka since the formation of the interim government, the US delegation will discuss ways of boosting trade and economy through necessary reforms in the financial and labour sectors.

Economic Relations Division Additional Secretary AKM Shahabuddin and USAID Mission Director Reed J Aeschliman will sign an agreement on the \$200 million today, finance ministry sources said.

The delegation led by Brent Neiman,

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Brent Neiman

QUEST FOR DEMOCRACY Bangladesh at crossroads again

TANIM AHMED

More than half a century after its independence, Bangladesh still finds itself at the crossroads of crafting a state built on durable democratic foundations. Despite having been at the same crossroads twice before, democracy remains elusive, or rather ruling governments have prevented democratic ideals or institutions from taking root.

In fact, successive governments have amended the constitution, manipulated loopholes, politicised the administration and influenced the judiciary for political expedience with deliberate determination. In the process, the institutions which lend credence to elected public representatives and strengthen democracy have been ruined. Whether law enforcement or judiciary, whether the Election Commission or the Anti-Corruption Commission, they hardly enjoy the confidence of the people. Even the press and media establishments have lost the trust they used to enjoy once.

This had been most rampant during the last 15 years when former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League regime completely obliterated every last vestige of democratic principles. It had systematically decimated the institutions

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INT'L DAY OF
DEMOCRACY



Construction of a jetty on the Buriganga remains incomplete for about four years. Then state minister for shipping inaugurated the construction of the jetty in Pagla area of Narayanganj in March 2020. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Newly Elected
Chairman
of Bangladesh
Association
of Banks
BAB

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Mia, wife concealed assets in tax returns

FROM PAGE 1
Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC), these eight members of Asaduzzaman's family and close relatives have assets worth more than Tk 50 crore.

According to their recent tax files, the combined declared assets of the Asaduzzaman couple and their three children, educated at expensive educational institutions at home and abroad, stand at nearly Tk 23 crore.

Of the three children, only their eldest son, Asif Shahadat, is known to have a job, currently employed at a multinational company with an annual pay of Tk 24 lakh after tax. Of the two others, their youngest son, Asif Mahdin, is still a student in the US while their second child, Ayesha Siddika, completed her medical graduation from Bangladesh Medical College in Dhaka a few years ago.

The combined wealth of these three siblings stands at over Tk 8.17 crore, according to their latest tax files.

Asaduzzaman did not respond to our calls, WhatsApp messages and email over the last two weeks, but in an interview with The Business Standard in late June, he denied that any of his family wealth is ill-gotten.

"We have declared our assets in our tax returns," he told the English daily.

THE CONCEALMENT

But our investigation reveals that the family's tax files hide much of their wealth, while the rest do not match with their known sources of income. In case after case, they also heavily understated their asset value.

For example, in 2022-2023 tax year, Asaduzzaman declared TK 6.01 crore of assets in his name, but showed no bank deposit, although he showed Tk 1.69 crore of cash in his hand.

This newspaper is also in possession of land deeds showing he owns 1.5 bighas of land in Gazipur's Chhoto Gobindapur jointly with his youngest son, Asif Mahdin, but he did not list the land in his tax file.

In a glaring case of understatement, the value of his furniture was shown just Tk 50,000. His electricity bill was shown Tk 40,348, or Tk 3,362 per month.

His wife Afroza Zaman, officially a housewife, declared Tk 8.24 crore of assets in 2023-2024 tax year. She too did not report her bank deposits in her tax return, although The Daily Star has documents showing she had more than Tk 1.54 crore in at least two banks on June 30, 2024.

She also did not mention her position as chairman at Moumita Transport Limited,

where she holds 4,000 shares (40%). Afroza, 59, is also a director of another transport line, Gulshan Chaka, where she holds 2,000 shares (25%). Her tax file does not mention this either.

ASADUZZAMAN'S WEALTH

In his 2022-23 tax return, the former police commissioner declared more than 16 acres of farm land, mostly inherited and "Heba" land, and residential plots in Faridpur, his hometown, Dhaka's Badda, Savar and Ruppangj in Narayanganj.

In Purbachal of Ruppangj alone, he has two plots in his name measuring 12.5 kathas. Their purchase value was shown Tk 1,45,60,000. But two local land brokers said residential plots in this area cost around Tk 1 crore per katha.

Suddenly in 2013, he received over 600 decimals or six acres of farmland in "Heba" (gift) from his two sisters and another unnamed donor. The declared price of all his land other than the "Heba" land and inherited lands is Tk 2,18,35,140, according to his tax file.

Two sources in real estate companies say the current

husband.

In just a decade from 2011, she bought multiple pieces of land in Dhaka's Joar Sahara, Purbachal in Ruppangj, Gazipur and Faridpur whose combined deed value was shown at Tk 2.2 crore.

In 2017-2019 alone, she bought 210 decimals of land in Gazipur and Ruppangj – 100 decimals in her own

both her passport and NID, seen by The Daily Star, she used "Afroza Zaman" as her official signature.

TRANSPORT LINES, IT FIRM

Afroza and her two elder children own majority shares in at least three companies registered with the RJSC. However, their tax files mention their stakes in only



Asaduzzaman Mia's youngest son Asif Mahdin owns this triplex home, left, in the capital's Nikunja. This 6-story building, now rented out to a school, in Basundhara is owned by Asaduzzaman's wife Afroza Zaman.

PHOTO: STAR

name and 110 decimals with a woman named Jubaida Binte Zafar. The total price of these was shown Tk 34.98 lakh or Tk 16,656 per decimal.

According to her 2023-24 tax file, she has assets worth at Tk 8.24 crore, which is Tk 2.23 crore more than her husband's total asset a year ago.

That year, Afroza had Tk 1,39,42,816 in Southeast Bank and Tk 15,08,840 in Krishi Bank, but she did not show it in her tax return. The Daily Star has the year closing statements of her accounts at the two banks.

Afroza also employed

other tactics to cover up the family's true worth. This include using nicknames in land deeds and using different signatures at different times.

In a land deed in 2019 in Faridpur's Alifdanga, her husband's name was recorded as "Md Mintu Mia". Relatives say Mintu is Asaduzzaman's nickname, but nicknames are not allowed in official documents.

In further evidence that she tried to hide her assets, she identified herself as "Alpana Begum" (Alpana is her nickname) and her husband as "Mintu Mia" in four separate land deeds. The Daily Star has each of the four land deeds, showing that she bought 39 decimals of land in Faridpur's Alifdanga between 2008 and 2011. Her latest tax file has no mention of this land.

Several other land deeds also show she used different signatures at different times, sometimes signing as "Afroza Zaman" and other times as "Afroza Begum". In

one of the three – Sapphire Consortium Limited.

Sapphire is an IT firm set up in September 2018, whose official address is same as the previous residential address of the Asaduzzaman family in Ramna's Eskaton Garden Road, documents show.

Afroza is its chairman holding 10,000 shares (50%), while Asif Shahadat and Ayesha Siddika are directors holding 4,000 shares each. The company's authorised capital is Tk 1 crore divided into 10 lakh shares of Tk 100 each. Together, they hold 18,000 (90%) of the 20,000 shares sold so far.

However, Afroza and Asif concealed their investments in the two other companies – Moumita Transport Limited and Gulshan Chaka – set up in September 2017 and April 2018. Their route permit was granted when Asaduzzaman was the head of the committee that approves the route permit.

Afroza is chairman of Moumita Transport Limited, set up in September 2017, where she holds 4,000 shares. Other shareholders include Afroza's brother Nur Alam (1,000 shares) and half-brother Harichur Rahman Sohan (1,500 shares). Md Kalu Shek, a transport leader from Gopalganj, is the managing director and has 2,000 shares, RJSC documents show.

Before Sheikh Hasina's fall, at least 140 buses operated between Savar and Narayanganj under Moumita's banner. It is not clear how many of these buses are owned by the company shareholders and how many by third parties, a usual practice

in Bangladesh's transport sector.

In this route, each bus owned by third parties has to pay Tk 1000 to the transport line per day. Even if all these 140 buses are owned by third parties, Moumita earned around Tk 35 crore in commission in the last seven years since its inception.

However, the calculations

banner. The profit sharing between bus owners and Gulshan Chaka is not clear.

For over a week before his arrest on Wednesday night on murder charges, The Daily Star tried to reach out to Asaduzzaman via phone, WhatsApp messages and email, but he did not respond. This newspaper also visited his house in Nikunja



of the commissions are estimates by transport sector insiders, and The Daily Star cannot confirm that all 140 buses plied the road every day over the last six-seven years.

Afroza is also chairman of Gulshan Chaka, holding

on September 10, but they were not home.

On September 3, this newspaper spoke to Asaduzzaman's wife Afroza Zaman by phone when she said her husband was outside the country, but would not disclose where.

Asked about their assets, she said, "I don't want to talk about this. My husband used to look after this."

She then hung up the call and did not respond to our calls and WhatsApp messages afterwards. Asif Shahadat and Ayesha Siddika's phone numbers were found switched off.

Former inspector general of police Nur Mohammad said Asaduzzaman's retirement benefit as an additional IGP was about Tk 1.5 crore.

"Frankly speaking, during service period, a government official can barely cover the family expenses with the salary. There's no way they can acquire significant wealth from this income alone. Yet, it's widely known that some officials invest in various sectors – like in the stock market or real estate – under their own name or someone else's name," he told The Daily Star.

"The question is how does a government employee accumulate massive wealth? The answer lies in bribery and corruption – whether through kickbacks, corruption in procurement, recruitment scams or promotion business," he said, adding that legal actions must be taken against corrupt officials to send a message to other members of the force.



The question is how does a government employee accumulate massive wealth? The answer lies in bribery and corruption – whether through kickbacks, corruption in procurement, or recruitment and promotion scams for personal gains.

Nur Mohammad, former IGP

2,000 shares. Asif is a director having 1,000 shares.

At least 38 buses operate in the capital's Gulshan area under Gulshan Chaka's banner. Again, it's not clear how many of these buses are owned by the transport company itself and how many are owned by other individuals or companies that use Gulshan Chaka's

Clear journos

FROM PAGE 12
widely condemned and criticised in the international arena.

The council thinks the current trend of repeatedly filing murder cases against journalists is also tarnishing the interim government's image internationally, the statement added.

The Editors' Council also emphasised that journalism devoid of professionalism, and characterised by unethical practices and sycophancy,

should be rejected.

It said journalists who supported the repressive actions of the previous government in the name of journalism could be investigated by a committee formed by the Press Council. If found guilty, they can be punished under the Press Council Act.

For other offences, they can be tried under the existing law based on recommendations by the Press Council, the Editors' Council added.

Man held for assaulting women

FROM PAGE 12
They asked her what she was doing there "so late at night". The woman kept on saying, "I am a tourist. What is my fault?"

At one stage, they forced the woman to leave the beach.

In another video, Farokul

is seen repeatedly hitting a woman with a stick in a room. The woman begged him to stop.

Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student front of Jamaat-e-Islami, on its verified Facebook page said the accused does not belong to the organisation.

Woman

FROM PAGE 12
Action Battalion (Rab) as he tried to flee.

Later, Rab personnel detained Ilias's parents and two other individuals from the spot, Tanvir said.

Chumki was brought dead with major head injuries, said Momtaz Mujid, a doctor at Satkhira Sadar Hospital.

Ilias was also admitted to the same hospital as he was injured in a beating by locals, Tanvir said.

A case will be filed over the murder following the completion of the autopsy, said Rafiqul Islam, the officer-in-charge of Satkhira Sadar Police Station.

Beware 'deepfakes' of famous doctors promoting scams

Say experts

AFP

Social media is being flooded by digitally created "deepfake" videos using the trusted identities of famous doctors to promote dangerous miracle cures for serious health problems, experts warn.

Videos on Facebook and Instagram have taken advantage of the credibility of star TV doctors to advertise untested "natural" syrups for diabetes, even claiming that the proven, first-line drug metformin "could kill" patients.

These scams risk endangering lives, experts said, particularly because they deploy the likenesses of popular health experts such as British TV presenter Michael Mosley, who died earlier this year.

Another white elephant

FROM PAGE 1

has to pay about \$8.5 million to HSBC for the satellite, which was launched by the Falcon 9 rocket of SpaceX in May 2018.

As of April, the regulator has paid \$101.70 million in 12 instalments to HSBC, including the interest. Another eight instalments amounting to about \$64 million are due by April 2028.

But given the 40 percent depreciation of taka against the dollar in the last couple of years, the burden of repayment has intensified on the BTRC.

Now, the BTRC has to pay Tk 190 crore to Tk 200 crore every year in two instalments.

"We don't know why we agreed to pay this huge amount of public money without any financial viability – it's like the value of money has been reduced to that of jackfruit leaves and we are feeding it to a goat which will never yield any benefit to us," said a top official of the BTRC on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly on the issue.

Given the satellite's predicted life span of 15 years – that is it will cease to exist beyond 2033 – time is running out to recoup the project cost.

The government is set to lose more than Tk 1,500 crore as the revenue from the Bangabandhu-1, whose clients are mostly the local TV stations, has been failing to meet its mammoth project cost, according to estimates of the industry people.

After completing the project, the BTRC handed over the satellite to the newly formed BSCL in 2018.

As the loan was signed by the BTRC with HSBC, this asset has to be kept in the books of the BTRC even though no future benefit will flow to the entity, according to the BTRC's audit report for 2021.

"When you pass the asset of company A to company B, company B will bear all the expenses of company A's assets as per accounting principle. But here, BTRC has handed over the asset, which is the satellite, to BSCL and is still paying its debt and principal sum," said another BTRC official.

BSCL incurred losses of Tk 19 crore in 2018 and 2019, according to its audit report. After that, it logged in profits amounting to Tk 187 crore in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The audit reports for 2023 and 2024 are yet to be released and BSCL has not shared any financial statement for the two years.

Shahjahan Mahmood, the immediate past chairman of BSCL, declined to comment on the figures, while Md Jahirul Islam, the current managing director (additional charge), hasn't responded to The Daily Star's request for comment.

The interim government should review the satellite project, said Iftekharuzzaman, the executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

It should be reassessed whether the project was initiated after properly evaluating its financial viability and profitability, or if it was undertaken merely as a prestige project.

"Was a cost-benefit analysis conducted to determine whether procuring satellite services from external sources would have been more economical than launching our own satellite? At the time the project was conceived, was

its financial feasibility and comparative cost-benefit thoroughly assessed?" Iftekharuzzaman said.

The feasibility study was faulty and that set the foundation for several subsequent issues, including overestimating the market demand, competition and revenue potential, which affected the overall project plan, said an expert wishing anonymity.

The study projected that the capacity of the satellite can be sold to Indonesia, the Philippines, Saarc countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

However, in the seven years since the satellite's launch, Bangladesh has failed to create a market in these countries.

The frequency coordination with these countries should have been done before the launch of the satellite, according to a document presented by BSCL to the ministry recently.

As a result, Bangladesh is not getting the landing rights in these countries, it said.

There is a significant underutilisation of the capacity of the satellite, which was manufactured by manufactured by France-based Thales Alenia Space.

Only 59 percent of the C-band frequency has so far been sold while 25 percent of the Ku-band could be sold.

The C-band offers better resistance to rain but requires larger antennas, while Ku-band provides higher bandwidth but is more affected by weather conditions.

Bangladesh paid \$36 million to Russia for the orbital slot.

The price is significantly more than typical payments for such slots, which are usually \$8-10 million, according to industry experts.

"The failure in frequency coordination and planning led to this costly outcome, which could have been avoided with better management," the expert said.

The satellite was originally scheduled to take off in 2017 but was delayed by a year. This led to the incurrance of unnecessary costs.

As per the audit information, the satellite has now undoubtedly become an item in a potentially long list of white elephants, said Iftekharuzzaman, who has been appointed the head of the committee formed to reform the Anti-Corruption Commission.

"The burden of this project is now being placed on the people, and that burden is accumulating on a regular basis. Since the project was approved during an authoritarian government that lacked accountability, now is the time that the high officials who colluded in the process and facilitated it should be held accountable," he added.

The past government has awarded the key officials involved in the satellite launching project.

For example, Shyam Sunder Sikder, who was the telecom secretary during the launch of the project, was made the BTRC chairman later on, while Mahmood, who was the BTRC chairman, the implementing authority of the satellite project, was later made the chairman and chief executive officer of BSCL.

Trade, labour reforms

FROM PAGE 1

assistant secretary for International Finance at the US Department of the Treasury, arrived yesterday.

Other members include, Donald Lu, US assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs; Anjali Kaur, deputy assistant administrator of USAID for the Bureau for Asia; Brandon Lynch, assistant US trade representative.

The delegation will also seek to know the roadmap for the next election. The current interim government is in charge of the country under unique circumstances. Under such contexts, the US delegation will seek a clear roadmap and restoration of democratic process, diplomatic sources said.

The delegation will also seek reforms in labour, financial management, and foreign investment sectors.

On the other hand, Bangladesh will want both technical and financial support from Washington as the country has undergone massive reforms and is facing financial challenges, they said.

The delegation will call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Finance Adviser Saleh Uddin Ahmed, and Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur and hold an official meeting with Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin over lunch.

Officials from the ministries of foreign affairs, finance, commerce, labour, and Bangladesh Bank are also scheduled to be present.

"I think this will be more of an exploratory meeting. The US will want to know the present challenges Bangladesh faces and seek reforms. Moreover, they will want restoration of democracy," said M Humayun Kabir, former Bangladesh ambassador to the US.

He said Dhaka needs to explain the context of how the interim government is in power and the mammoth tasks of reforming state institutions and the economy.

There are serious challenges in financial management, foreign currency reserves, declining exports, etc. If there is not enough foreign currency to import fuel, the power sector will face troubles. Also, in the aftermath of the July protests, foreign orders for garments have declined, and there is unrest in the industries.

"Washington has the capacity to support us in various ways. For example, it can provide special privileges for boosting our garment exports to the US market," Humayun Kabir, also president of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, told this correspondent yesterday.

The US is Bangladesh's

largest foreign direct investor (FDI) and largest export country destination. In 2022-23, US FDI in Bangladesh was \$261 million. Last year, Bangladesh's export to the US was \$7.72 and imports were worth \$2.04 billion.

The US suspended GSP facilities following the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013. In 2021, it imposed sanctions against Rab and seven of its officials, and last year it announced a visa policy for those undermining democratic elections in Bangladesh.

After the January election, Washington had said it was not free, fair, and participatory. However, it continued to have partnerships with Dhaka for economic prosperity and promoting the values of the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), which many experts view as meant to counter China.

Humayun Kabir said Washington should be happy that the interim government now has taken up a massive reform initiative, which will help improve democratic values and good governance that go very much in line with the US IPS.

Besides, Washington can also support Bangladesh's need for funding from the IMF, World Bank, and ADB, he said.

"If Dhaka can convince Washington its current political and financial realities and the sincerity

in reforms, including improving human rights situation, I think Washington can come up with necessary support – both financial and technical," he added.

Won't tolerate

FROM PAGE 1
measures to protect shrines and cultural sites.

Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony where people of all beliefs peacefully coexisted for thousands of years, it said.

"We are stating in unambiguous terms that we will remain a country of harmony and any attempt to disturb religious or cultural tolerance and harmony will be strongly dealt with."

In recent days, mobs vandalised shrines in different districts and assaulted devotees.

In Sylhet, hundreds of madrasa students and locals attacked and vandalised the shrine of Hazrat Shah Poran and assaulted at least seven people.

In Narayanganj, four people were injured while locals attacked and set fire to Bab-e Jannat Dewanbag Sharif.

Earlier on August 25, Aynal Shah Dargah, a shrine in Sonargaon, was demolished.

Buchai Pagla Mazar in Dhamrai, Dargah Barir Mazar in Naokhali, and Shah Sufi Fasih Paglar Mazar in Gazipur's Porabari were also vandalised.

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Fishermen prepare their trawler and nets for a fishing expedition in the Bay of Bengal. Each trawler typically carries 13-15 fishers who spend 10-12 days at sea catching fish before returning home. Each fisherman earns around Tk 5,000-6,000 per trip. The photo was taken at Ghat-5 in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Act against harassment of journalists

Indian press clubs write to CA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia (FCC), the Press Club of India (PCI), the Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) and the Press Association (PA) have expressed anguish and concern over the selective harassment of Bangladeshi journalists, and the undue restrictions on them.

In a letter to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on Friday, they said implicating as many as 52 respected media personnel in murder cases, imprisoning some of them and filing unsustainable charges against many others in the International Crimes Tribunal are blatant violations of the freedom of expression and thoughts.

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EC should be formed on political consensus

Speakers tell policy dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission should be formed based on political consensus, involving all political parties, media, and civil society members, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

The policy dialogue was organised by Democracy International in Dhaka.

Speakers stressed the need for a search committee inclusive of representatives from all parties, the media, and civil society to ensure a transparent and fair process.

They also demanded the cancellation of the "Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Appointment Act, 2022", urging reforms to prevent government control.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, said, "When the Act was passed in 2022, we



Speakers stressed the need for a search committee inclusive of representatives from all parties, the media, and civil society to ensure a transparent and fair process.

provided feedback on the draft, but our recommendations were ignored. The Act was passed with an indemnity provision, which

is unacceptable. This provision allows them [government] to appoint whoever they want to the Election Commission."

"The previous government appointed people of their choice, which was biased. An election that disrupts democracy is unconstitutional. They violated the constitution. Therefore, this law should be repealed and reformed," he added.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said on Wednesday that Badiul Alam Majumdar will head the Electoral System Reform Commission.

Yesterday, Badiul said his committee would propose forming the Election Commission based on political consensus and transparency.

At the discussion, former election commissioner and an adviser to the interim government Sakawat Hussain proposed a

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3 more die of dengue, 548 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three dengue patients died and at least 548 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, according to the daily statement of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the deaths, two were in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) area while one at Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) area.

This year, the total number of cases rose to 18,589 while 106 deaths from dengue disease were reported during the period.

Currently, 1,932 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at various hospitals, of which 672 are from outside Dhaka.

'Women's role in movements often ignored'

Speakers tell seminar marking death anniversary of Noorjehan Murshid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite women playing an instrumental role in all movements, their voices are often ignored once the movements end, said Sharmeen Murshid, social welfare and women's affairs adviser of the interim government at a seminar yesterday.

Citing historical examples, she said, "They [women] are told to return home and are neither welcomed nor celebrated."

"Even though 100 women fought as armed freedom fighters during 1971, after the nine-month war ended, they were not accepted back into their families. Entering married life became a difficult matter for them, even though their male counterparts were celebrated upon returning home," she said.

She praised the women who participated in the July 2024 movement, highlighting their solidarity with men in defending protesters from attacks and arrests.

The seminar, titled Nariswar (Voice of Women), was organised by Uttarsury: Noorjehan-Sarwar Mushid Cultural Centre at Bangla Academy to mark the 21st death anniversary of Noorjehan Murshid, a key figure in Bangladesh's women's movement.

The event highlighted Noorjehan's crucial role in shaping Bangladesh's cultural and political foundation.

The second phase of Nariswar focused on "Movement, Progress, and the Language of Women's Resistance".

Sharmin said the 2024 mass upsurge saw female martyrs for the first time in contemporary history and stressed the importance of remembering their sacrifices.

She also criticised the interim government, which she herself is a part of, for failing to implement a women-sensitive administration.

Prapti Tapasi, female coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement at Jahangirnagar University, also said despite women contributing significantly to the mass uprising, they did not receive the respect they deserved.

Tapasi recounted how many female students from schools, colleges, and universities joined the protests, bravely holding placards and shouting slogans like, "Why did you kill my brothers?"

She pointed out that many of these young protesters, some of whom joined without informing their parents, are now injured and receiving treatment at hospitals.

She honoured the legacy of female pioneers such as Begum Rokeya, Nawab Faizunnesa,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Despite women contributing significantly to the mass uprising, they did not receive the respect they deserved.

PRAPTI TAPASI
Protest Coordinator

Nurses demand reform in sector

Form human chains in Dhaka, Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurses, midwives, and nursing students and teachers organised protests in Dhaka and Gazipur yesterday morning, demanding reforms in the nursing and midwifery sectors.

In Dhaka, under the banner of "Nursing Reform Council", they formed a human chain in front of the National Institute of Kidney Diseases and Urology on Mirpur Road around 11:00am yesterday, which continued till 12:00pm.

In a letter sent to the health adviser, the protesters made a one-point demand, which is the removal of all non-nursing administrative officials from the positions of director general and director of Directorate General

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



No shortage of fertiliser in country Says agri adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Agriculture and Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said that the country has enough fertiliser stock to last until December and there will be no shortage.

He made the statement while speaking as the chief guest at a meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Farmers will be able to purchase and use fertilisers according to their needs, he said.

The meeting addressed the current flood situation across various districts, reviewed rehabilitation measures for affected farmers, and evaluated progress in relief efforts.

Officials also discussed the activities of the Department of Agricultural Extension, Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, and Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Pedestrians and vehicles struggle through a rain-soaked, pothole-riddled road in front of Mugda Hospital, Dhaka. Despite repeated repairs, the road remains in poor condition, continuing to disrupt daily life for commuters. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Nurses demand

FROM PAGE 3

of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM), and president, and registrar of the Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council, calling for the appointment of highly educated and experienced nurses to these positions.

In Gazipur, nurses formed a human chain on the Dhaka-Kishoreganj highway under the banner of "Nursing and Midwifery Reform Council".

Our Gazipur correspondent reported that over a hundred students from Syeda Zohra Tajuddin Nursing College and Kapasia Upazila Health Complex participated in the demonstration held around

11:00am in front of the college and health complex. Shafiqul Islam, principal of Syeda Zohra Tajuddin Nursing College, said the protest was organised in response to "derogatory" comments made by the Director General of DGNM, Maksura Noor, about the nursing profession.

Teachers, and nursing officers also joined the programme protesting the remarks and demanded reform in the sector, reports our correspondent.

Lecturers of Syeda Zohra Tajuddin Nursing College and nurses from Kapasia Upazila Health Complex also joined the demonstration.

Women's role

FROM PAGE 3

Noorjehan Murshid, and Sufia Kamal, saying their spirit lives on in the current generation.

Tapasi also paid tribute to the RMG workers, and mothers and aunts, who supported the protests with food and assistance, urging that their contributions should not be forgotten.

Addressing demands for a "new Bangladesh," Tapasi condemned ongoing violence and abuse, referencing recent incidents including the gang rape in Suhrawardy Uddyan and the mistreatment of female sex workers and garment workers.

"We will not tolerate violence, oppression, rape, or wage deprivation

anymore," she said.

Dr Shahman Moishan, associate professor at Dhaka University's theatre and performance studies department, discussed Noorjehan Murshid's views on women's liberation.

Moishan read from Murshid's writings, highlighting her belief that development, politics, and democracy are intertwined.

Writer Nishat Jahan Rana presented excerpts from Noorjehan writings, reflecting on her leadership and critical perspectives.

The seminar was chaired by linguist and former Dhaka University professor Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, while distinguished speaker Dr Morshed Shafiul Hasan also spoke.

Act against harassment

FROM PAGE 3

"We hope you share with us the belief that a free press should be the pride of Bangladesh. Eliminating dissent and suppressing press freedom tarnish the image of not only your administration but also of Bangladesh as a country," reads the letter jointly signed by the presidents of these organisations.

"We urge you to be vigilant against all those who are enemies of press freedom

and act against them if they harass journalists,"

They requested Prof Yunus, as a globally respected Nobel Peace laureate, to personally intervene and ensure the safety and security of journalists in carrying out their jobs without fear and favour.

"Kindly order the release forthwith of journalists who have been arrested on frivolous charges," reads the letter.



Consumers form a human chain on the Ashwini Kuman Hall premises in Barishal yesterday, demanding cancellation of "demand charge" from electricity bill.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

ABHAYNAGAR WATERLOGGING

Residents of 25 villages suffer every year

MOHISIN MILON, Benapole

Residents of 25 villages in Sundali, Chalishia, and Payra unions under Jashore's Abhaynagar upazila are suffering due to waterlogging following recent heavy rains.

The waterlogging has been a persistent issue since the construction of a sluice gate in Bhabadah in 1968, meant to drain water from Phultala and Dumuria upazilas of Khulna, and Abhaynagar, Manirampur, and Keshabpur upazilas of Jashore.

However, waterlogging became permanent from 1985 due to the decline in water levels of the Teka, Pashur, and Srihar rivers.

Despite multiple government initiatives, the waterlogging problem continues throughout the year, worsening during the monsoon season.

The recent rains have further exacerbated the situation, inundating approximately 710

hectares of croplands across the 25 villages, including Chalishia, Bagdah, Sundali, and Betbitha.

Hundreds of fish enclosures have also been washed away, impacting several thousand families.



Many residents have incurred significant losses, with crops destroyed and fish farms devastated.

Some are even being forced to sell cattle at low prices as they struggle to rear animals in the difficult conditions.

"At least 125 hectares of croplands are submerged while

fish from many enclosures have been washed away in my union," said Bikash Roy, chairman of Sundali union parishad, adding that no government aid or damage assessment has yet been made.

Chairmen of Chalishia and Payra unions echoed his concerns.

Aminul Haque, senior fisheries officer in Abhaynagar upazila, said fish from at least 120 enclosures were washed away, causing losses of around Tk 5 crore.

"Vegetables on 120 hectares and 590 hectares of Aman paddy fields are submerged," said Lavli Khatun, upazila agriculture officer.

Joydev Chakraborty, the upazila nirbahi officer, said he would visit the affected areas and take necessary action.

Meanwhile, Palash Kumar Banerjee, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Jashore, said a Tk 47.65 crore project is underway to address the issue once and for all.

Be united against

FROM PAGE 5

Mahmuda Sultana Rimi, Minhazur Rahman, Said Afridi, Sardar Shuvo, and Badrunnesa Jannat, also participated.

Student leaders voiced concerns over corruption in healthcare, particularly at Narail District Hospital.

They alleged the facility charges exorbitant fees for surgeries and also misuses government-supplied medicines.

They also highlighted inefficiencies at passport, land, and transport offices,

and talked about illegal river occupation.

The students called on officials to address these problems and urged collective efforts from political leaders and the public to eradicate discrimination and corruption.

The meeting concluded with prayers for the deceased and injured participants of the movement.

Later, student leaders held a separate meeting at Narail Government Victoria College.

EC should be formed

FROM PAGE 3

three-tier search committee for appointing commissioners.

He said polls should always be held under an interim government no matter how good the election commission is.

In his keynote speech, Md Abdul Alim, principal director of Democracy International, highlighted how the 2022 Act was passed in just 10 days, with only two minor amendments accepted from 72 proposed by the opposition.

Other political leaders, including BNP's Selima Rahman and Jatiyo Party's Shamim Haider Patwari, called for an independent and transparent Election Commission.

They proposed a blend of youth and experience in its formation, with all political parties, big or small, having a voice in the process.

Patwari said the process of forming the EC should be designed in a way that prevents any government from exerting control over it.

BNP's Rumin Farhana said the names identified by the search committee should be sent back to the political parties for final approval, as they are the primary stakeholders in the process.

Ariful Islam Adib, a member of the National Citizens Committee, Nurul Haque Nur, president of

Gono Odhikar Parishad, Bobby Hajjaj, chairman of the Nationalist Democratic Movement, Matiur Rahman Akand of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, and Ashraf Ali Akand, presidium member of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, echoed calls for a broader and more inclusive approach to forming the EC, free from government control.

The programme was conducted by CPD Distinguished Fellow Prof Rounaq Jahan, while Dana L. Olds, chief of party at Democracy International, also spoke among others.

Stop lifting


FROM PAGE 5

Contacted, Dewan Raju claimed he is not illegally lifting sand from the river.

"I made an agreement with dredger owner Masud Parvez to unload sand from a bulkhead on the riverbank to fill up a pond acquired by my cousin. The sand is not lifted directly from the river," he said.

Masud Parvez said he is not involved in sand lifting and had only rented the dredger to Dewan Raju.

Contacted, Liton Dhali, upazila nirbahi officer of Manikganj Sadar, said necessary steps will be taken upon inquiry.



TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following tender :

TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
RFP/HCR/CXB/2024/002	FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAME AGREEMENT(S) FOR THE PROVISION OF UNARMED SECURITY GUARD SERVICES FOR UNHCR OPERATIONS IN BANGLADESH

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this Request for Proposal (RFP) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/245817>

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the RFP document via the URL below:

<http://etenderbox.unhcr.org>

Bid submission deadline: Monday, 14 October 2024 – 14:00 hrs. Bangladesh time.
Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer to be submitted only through link above.

Human chain

FROM PAGE 5

Echoing him, Tania said, "We did not get justice as Bashundhara group had strong allies in the Awami League. We hope the current law advisor will ensure justice for Munia."

Police recovered the body of 21-year-old Munia from a Gulshan flat on April 26, 2021. Following the incident, Tania filed a case with Gulshan Police Station, accusing Bashundhara

Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir of abetting her suicide.

Anvir was acquitted of the charges after police, in their final report, said they did not find Anvir's involvement in the incident.

On September 6, 2022, Tania filed another case with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal 8 of Dhaka, charging Anvir of Munia's rape and murder.

No shortage

FROM PAGE 3

The adviser emphasised that fertiliser imports are proceeding as usual and urged farmers not to buy or store extra fertiliser due to concerns over future supply.

He instructed the authorities concerned to expedite the rehabilitation process for flood-affected farmers, ensuring transparency.

The recent floods have severely impacted 23 districts, submerging 3,72,733 hectares of land, including 2,08,573 hectares of agricultural land.

The estimated loss in crop production stands at 7,14,514 metric tonnes,

valued at approximately Tk 3,346 crore, he said.

Over 1.4 million farmers have been affected, with 14.58 percent of the total cultivated crops destroyed in the flood-hit areas.

The worst flood-hit districts include Feni (35,673 hectares, 80 percent of farmland submerged), Noakhali (38,456 hectares, 37 percent), Cumilla (49,608 hectares, 36 percent), Lakshmipur (15,626 hectares, 33 percent), Chattogram (23,992 hectares, 16 percent), Moulvibazar (15,222 hectares, 12 percent), and Brahmanbaria (8,326 hectares, 35 percent).

Gonotantik Chhatra

FROM PAGE 5


a 55-member Jatiya Nagorik Committee was unveiled to work towards fulfilling the goals of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, which had toppled the Awami League-led government.

Nahid Islam, the member secretary of Gonotantik Chhatra Shakti, assumed the role of an adviser to the interim government, and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan was also appointed as an adviser to the government.

"Internally, we decided to dissolve all activities

of Gonotantik Chhatra Shakti as most of the leaders of the organisation, which led the anti-discrimination students' movement platform, have become inactive," said Akhter Hossen.

On October 4, 2023, Akhter Hossen, the former social services secretary of Ducus, announced the name of the new organisation during a press conference. Most of the leaders and activists of this new student organisation, including Akhter, were previously associated with Chhatra Odhikar Parishad.



TENDER NOTICE

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar hereby announces the launch of the following tender :


TENDER REFERENCE NUMBER	ITEM DESCRIPTION
ITB/HCR/CXB/2024/006	THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FRAME AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF VARIOUS ICT EQUIPMENT, HP PRINTER AND TONER FOR UNHCR BANGLADESH

Interested and bona fide vendors are invited to participate in this Invitation to Bid (ITB) by accessing and downloading the tender documents at the following web link:
<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/246495>

Bids to be submitted:
Bids should be submitted as per the guidance in section 2.6 of the ITB document via the URL below:

<http://etenderbox.unhcr.org>

Bid submission deadline: Sunday, 6 October 2024 – 14:00 hrs. Bangladesh time.
Kindly note that no hard copy is acceptable. The offer to be submitted only through link above.



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Sundarban East Forest Division
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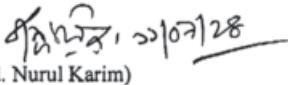
Memo No: 22.01.0000.481.29.005.24.3534

Date : 11/09/2024.

e-Tender Notice


This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Sundarban East Forest Division, Bagerhat.

Tender ID Package No	Name of work	Tender Document Last Selling/ downloading date and time	Last date and time for Tender Security submission	Tender Closing date and time
Tender ID : 1013441 Package No : SEFD/GD/PSMF- 04/2024-25	Purchase and Supply of Desktop Computer and Printer (with License Software) at Sadar Range-05 Nos.	02 October, 2024 16.00 p.m.	03 October, 2024 13.00 p.m.	03 October, 2024 15.00 p.m.
Tender ID : 1013535 Package No : SEFD/WD/PSMF- 04/2024-25	Repair works of Water Vessel-02 Nos. (M.L. Sawatch-02, M.L. Bonohorini-08) at Chandpai Range.	02 October, 2024 16.00 p.m.	03 October, 2024 13.00 p.m.	03 October, 2024 15.00 p.m.
Tender ID : 1013876 Package No : SEFD/GD/PSMF- 05/2024-25	Purchase and Supply of Furniture (Steel Bed-130 Nos., Executive Official Table-25 Nos., Official Chair-100 Nos., SS Alna-40 Nos.) at Chandpai, Sarukhola and Sadar Range.	02 October, 2024 16.00 p.m.	03 October, 2024 13.00 p.m.	03 October, 2024 15.00 p.m.



(Quazi Md. Nurul Karim)
Divisional Forest Officer
Sundarban East Forest Division
Bagerhat.

GD-424



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e- Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

e- Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

Tender ID NO	Package NO.	Description of Works	Last Selling Date and time	Closing Date and time	Opening Date and time
1012370	Trans_Cumilla/2024-25-W-01	Modification, Upgradation, Installation and Commissioning of TBS runs in Saida Gas field TBS, Kasba, Brahmanbaria	22 September, 2024; 18:00	23 September, 2024; 15:00	23 September, 2024; 15:00

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 National 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.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from eGP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd.)

For more details please contact to the PE's Support desk (01711-881698)



Engr. Md. Shafiqul Haq
Deputy General Manager (Transmission),
BGDCL, Cumilla

GD-433

Former public admin minister Farhad arrested

STAR REPORT

Former Public Administration minister Farhad Hossain was arrested in Dhaka's Eskaton area last night.

A Rab team arrested and handed him over to police, said Adabar Police Station OC Mahfuz Imtiaz.

Farhad was arrested in a murder case filed for killing garment worker Rubel during the student-led mass uprising, the OC added.

On August 22, Rafiqul Islam, father of the victim, filed the case with Adabor Police Station against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 147 others.

The complainant alleged that some of the accused, as per instruction, directly or indirectly, took part in the attack on hundreds of students on Ring Road at Adabor on August 5.

Rubel was shot and he died after two days.

Former home minister's son Joty placed on 4-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Safi Muddaser Khan Joty, son of former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, on a four-day remand for interrogation regarding an attempted murder case.

The court passed the order after Ashulia police produced Joty before it with a seven-day remand prayer, court sources said.

Police arrested Joty in Uttara early yesterday.

On September 11, Robiossani Shipu, student of a private university, filed the case with Ashulia Police Station against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 29 others.

According to the case, the complainant was shot when he participated in the quota reform protests in front of the Bypail Central Jame Masjid in Ashulia on August 4.

PRAYER
TIMING
SEPTEMBER 15

Fazr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN 4:35

12:45

4:30

6:09

7:45

JAMAT 5:10

1:15

4:45

6:12

8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A large hill in Kandigaon village of Ghaznaipur union being razed using excavators by a local syndicate. Vested groups have been taking advantage of lax monitoring to raze hills and sell the soil.

PHOTO: STAR

NABIGANJ UPAZILA IN HABIGANJ

Hill cutting on amid lax monitoring

MINTU DESHWARA, from Habiganj

Illegal hill cutting has turned rampant in Dinarpur Pargana under Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj district in recent times.

Vested groups have been taking advantage of lax monitoring to raze hills and sell the soil. As such, people living in the foothills are passing days amid concern of landslides.

Locals expressed frustration over the apparent indifference of the administration and Department of Environment.

Dinarpur Pargana, comprising Debpara, Ghaznaipur, and Paniunda unions, is a well-known hilly terrain in the upazila.

An environmental organisation, Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, filed a writ petition with the High Court in 2015 to stop razing of hills in Dinarpur. The HC responded by issuing a status quo, and directed the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Habiganj to take appropriate steps to protect the hills.

However, despite the HC directives, vested groups remained

active in cutting hills from different areas of Dinarpur over the years.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent observed that a large hill in Kandigaon village of Ghaznaipur union was being razed using excavators by a local syndicate led by one Raju Mia since September 12.

The extracted soil was being transported to neighbouring Bangaon village.

The hill razing activities in Habiganj's Nabiganj, Bahubal, Chunarughat, and Madhavpur upazilas have been going on for years, posing grave threat to the environment.

TOFAZZAL SOHEL, BAPA

The hill cutting activities left the families living near the hill in a precarious situation.

Contacted, Raju Mia claimed that he has been extracting soil from his own land on the hill.

"Since no one is given permission for hill cutting, I did not seek approval from the local

administration or environment department in this regard," he added.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary and central executive member of the Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit, said, "The hill razing activities in Habiganj's Nabiganj, Bahubal, Chunarughat, and Madhavpur upazilas have been going on for years, posing grave threat to the environment."

Shahen Deluar, assistant commissioner (land) in Nabiganj upazila, said they were collecting information about the hill cutting activities.

"The primary responsibility for filing cases in this connection lies with the DoE. If DoE officials are present, we can conduct mobile court drives under the Environment Act," he added.

Akhtaruzzaman Tuku, deputy director of DoE in Habiganj, however, said the local land office is responsible for addressing the issue initially by stopping hill cutting activities and taking necessary legal actions.

"I will discuss the matter with assistant commissioner (Land) in the upazila," he added.

Gonotantik Chhatra Shakti dissolved

STAR REPORT

A week after the formation of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, all activities of Gonotantik Chhatra Shakti (Democratic Students' Force) were dissolved by its leaders yesterday.

Akhter Hossen, the founding convener of Gonotantik Chhatra Shakti, said they had internally decided to dissolve all the activities of the organisation.

Akhter is also the member secretary of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

He made the announcement while speaking to reporters at a press conference of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

On September 8, SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Be united against corruption

Student leaders hold discussion in Narail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A discussion was held in Narail yesterday between the local administration and leaders of the anti-discrimination student movement.

The meeting, attended by district and police officials, political leaders, and media representatives, took place in the deputy commissioner's office.

Attendees included Deputy Commissioner Sharmin Akter Jahan, Superintendent of Police Kazi Ehsanul Kabir, and Acting Civil Surgeon Dr Subrata Kumar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Shashwati Shil and Additional Superintendent of Police Tarek Al Mehedi.

Representatives of the anti-discrimination student movement, including Wahid Uz Zaman,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Human chain demands justice for Munia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighters and their families formed a human chain in Cumilla town hall yesterday, demanding a fair trial and justice for the murder of college student Mosarat Jahan Munia.

Gathering at the spot around 11:00am yesterday, freedom fighter Joynal Abedin, former president of Bangladesh Chhatra League's Cumilla South unit Kabirul Islam Sikder, and Munia's elder sister Nusrat Jahan Tania spoke at the protest programme.

Abedin said not being able to prosecute the murderer of the daughter of a freedom fighter is an injustice.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

EXPLOSION AT CTG SHIPYARD

Two more die, death toll now 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two more workers, who were injured in the explosion at a shipbreaking yard in Chattogram, died at Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute early yesterday.

Jahangir Hawlader, 45, and Barkatullah, 23, were declared dead between 6:00am and 6:30am, said Tariqul Islam, resident surgeon at the hospital.

Jahangir and Barkatullah had suffered burns on 70 and 50 percent of their bodies respectively, he said.

With their death, the death toll from the incident has risen to six.

The explosion occurred at a shipbreaking yard in Sitakunda around 11:40am on September 7, according to Mohammad Solaiman, superintendent of Industrial Police, Chattogram.

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৩	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	১	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র; ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক
৪	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	১	সিআইডি/লজিস্টিকস/প্রকিউরমেন্ট/২৩-২০২৪/২৯৯১(৫) তাঃ ১২/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ
৫	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	১	দরদাতার (ক) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও ভ্যাট সনদপত্র (খ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদপত্র (গ) বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের তফসিলিকৃত যে কোন বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক হতে ইস্যুকৃত আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদপত্র (ঘ) সংশ্লিষ্ট বিদ্যে কমপক্ষে দুই (০২) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র ইত্যাদি থাকতে হবে। বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র দলিলে উল্লেখ রয়েছে।
৬	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান ও ঠিকানা	১	১০০৬ নং কক্ষ (নতুন বিল্ডিং), প্রকিউরমেন্ট শাখা (১০ তলা), সিআইডি সদর দপ্তর, মালিবাগ, ঢাকা।
৭	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	১	বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার (প্রশাসন), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, সিআইডি, ঢাকার নতুন বিল্ডিং (১২ তলা) রক্ষিত দরপত্র ব্যাঙ্ক।
৮	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	১	১৮/০৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ এর পূর্বে।
৯	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১	৩০/৯/২০২৪খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১০	দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও সময়	১	০১/১০/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১১	দরপত্র খোলার সময় ও তারিখ	১	০১/১০/২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১২	প্যাকেজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	১	বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সিডিউলে উল্লেখ আছে।

ক্রমিক নং	প্যাকেজের নাম	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	টেন্ডার জামানত	ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক চুক্তির মেয়াদকাল
১।	বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী (লট-১)	১,০০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছর পর্যন্ত

১৩. নিয়মাবলী:

(ক) টেন্ডার জামানত বারদ ব্যাংক গ্যারান্টি/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/সে-অর্ডার বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার (প্রশাসন), সিআইডি, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকার অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে।

(খ) বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী (লট-১) ক্রয়ের দরপত্রের লট ভিত্তিক মূল্যায়ন করা হবে।

(গ) বইপত্র ও সামগ্রিকী ক্রয়ের দরপত্রের আইটেমগুলি লটের মোট মূল্যের ভিত্তিতে চুক্তি সম্পাদন করা হবে ক্রয়কারীর চাহিদা মোতাবেক যে কোন সংখ্যক মালামাল সরবরাহ করতে হবে।

(ঘ) কোন কারণে দরপত্র জমা দেওয়ার তারিখ ও সময় বা খোলার সময় সরকারি ছুটি থাকলে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবসে দরপত্র জমা দিতে হবে এবং ঐ দিনই পূর্ব নিধারিত সময়ে খোলা হবে।

(ঙ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

১২.০৯.২৪

বন্দকার শামিমা হায়দারমিন

বিশেষ পুলিশ সুপার (লজিস্টিকস)

পক্ষে/অ্যাডিশনাল ইন্সপেক্টর জেনারেল

সিআইডি, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা

ফোনঃ ৪৪০৭০০১১

GD-434

Stop lifting sand from Kaliganga

Locals demand at human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Local residents of Bara Baroil village under Nabagram union of Manikganj Sadar upazila yesterday formed a human chain demanding authorities concerned to stop illegal sand extraction from Kaliganga river and remove a pipe from a government road in the locality that was installed for sand lifting.

People from different walks of life joined the event held at around 10:30am.

Speakers alleged that one Dewan Raju, using his political connection with Nabagram union parishad chairman Gazi Hassan Al-Mehdi Suhaz, had installed a large pipe connected with dredger machine on the north side of the village road to lift sand from the river and dump it in Nabagram area around two months back.

Despite protests by locals, they did not stop the illegal activities and instead harassed and threatened the villagers.

After the Awami League government's ouster on August 5, the UP chairman went into hiding, and the sand lifting stopped for a while, before Dewan Raju resumed the activities recently using support of local BNP leaders, the speakers also alleged.

Due to the pipe being installed on the road, movement of vehicles has become difficult, they also said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF FORCES INTELLIGENCE

DHAKA CANTONMENT, DHAKA-1206

1. Invitation for Tender No. 01/2024-2025/SIB Dated 10 September 2024

2. Sealed Tender (single envelop system) in local currency are invited from bonafide Manufacturer's/Supplier's/Indenter's (Enlisted Firms of ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE, DGFI & DGDPI) to supply of the following items for DGFI:

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Defence/ Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206						
2	Agency	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence						
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director General, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence						
4	Procuring Entity Code	Engineering & Other Equipment under Code no 4112304 and Office Equipment under Code no 4112310						
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka						
6	Invitation for	Supply of Printer Black & White, Color Printer, PPC Machine, Scanner machine, Multimedia Projector, Paper Shredder and TV (Color)						
7	Invitation Reference no	23.01.901.800.08.006.01.10.09.24						
8	Date	10 September 2024						
9	KEY INFORMATION	Open Tender						
10	FUNDING INFORMATION	Government of Bangladesh (GOB)						
11	PARTICULAR INFORMATION							
12	Date of Advertisement for Tender	15 September 2024						
13	Last Selling Date of Tender	29 September 2024						
14	Tender Closing Date and Time	30 September 2024 at 1200 hours						
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	30 September 2024 at 1215 hours						
16	Name and Address of the Office(s)	Address						
17	a) Selling of Tender Document	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206.						
18	b) Receiving of Tender Document	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206.						
19	c) Opening of Tender Document	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206.						
20	INFORMATION OF TENDERER							
21	Experience of Tenderer	As per Tender Documents.						
22	DETAILS							
23	Ser	Description of Goods	Qty	Details	Price of Tender Document (Non-Refundable)	Tender Security Money	Budget Code	Duration of Supply
24	a	Printer Black & White	25	As per Schedule	500.00	8,000.00	4112310	As per deed
25	b	Color Printer	20	As per Schedule	300.00	4,000.00	4112310	As per deed
26	c	PPC Machine	07	As per Schedule	750.00	14,000.00	4112310	As per deed
27	d	Scanner machine	20	As per Schedule	500.00	10,000.00	4112310	As per deed
28	e	Paper Shredder	20	As per Schedule	500.00	6,000.00	4112310	As per deed
29	f	Multimedia Projector	05	As per Schedule	500.00	7,000.00	4112304	As per deed
30	g	TV (Color)	32	As per Schedule	750.00	16,500.00	4112304	As per deed
31	18	Sample to be provided with the Schedule tender (if necessary).						
32	PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS							
33	19	Designation of Official Inviting Tender		General Staff Officer-1				
34	20	Address of Official Inviting Tender and Telephone No		Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka-1206 Tel:8871800 Ext: 2024				
35	21	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without showing any reason.						
36	22	All proceedings will be regulated as per PPR 2008.						

আই এস পি আর/বিবিধ/২০২৪/৩৭৩

১২/০৯/২৪

General Staff Officer-1
For Director General

GD- 431



Shankha Dasgupta Syed Ahmed Shawki PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Directors relieved post-censorship, looking forward to OTT Awards

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The third iteration of the *Blender's Choice–The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards*

is set to take place later this year, with submissions open until October 8. As Bangladesh's OTT scene continues to evolve, the awards have become a prestigious platform for celebrating both on-screen and behind-the-scenes talents. To celebrate their hard work this award ceremony is returning once again.



Shihab Shaheen

As Bangladesh's OTT scene continues to evolve, the awards have become a prestigious platform for celebrating both on-screen and behind-the-scenes talents. To celebrate their hard work this award ceremony is returning once again.

Notable figures in the industry, including director Shihab Shaheen who directed some landmark projects in OTT, including *Syndicate* and *Kachher Manush Durey Thuiya*, praised the awards for recognising

the best in digital content. He expressed cautious optimism about the new political environment, stating, "I am cautiously hopeful. While people remain sensitive on many issues and are becoming polarised, I believe the situation is improving compared to the previous regime, where we could rarely tell stories as we wished."

This year, the awards broadened the categories to honour set designers, costume designers, and other creative professionals. Shankha Dasgupta, director of *Guti*, applauded the inclusivity, mentioning, "I appreciate The Daily Star for recognising those behind the scenes—like art directors, costume designers, and makeup artists. I trust the jury will ensure that the most deserving talents are celebrated."

Multiple award recipient, *Karagar* famed director Syed Ahmed Shawki expressed how eagerly directors anticipate this event, calling it a vital platform alongside the National Film Award. "As OTT has flourished in our country, this platform has become a fitting tribute to the tireless efforts behind the scenes. This appreciation is a great source of inspiration, and the people from the fraternity always look forward to it," he said.

With growing recognition for digital content creators, the awards are set to celebrate the best of Bangladesh's flourishing OTT industry.

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Entertainment Partner
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NEWS

Depression to cause more downpours

FROM PAGE 12
likely to move west-northwestwards further.

Rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at different places across the country today, it added.

In Cox's Bazar, bodies of two fishermen, who went missing after a trawler went down in the Bay on Friday, were recovered at Inani Beach yesterday afternoon.

One of them was identified as Mohammad Abdul Karim, 35, of Banshkhali Raipur Union of Chattogram. The identity of the other could not be confirmed, said Inani Police Outpost Inspector Rezaul Karim.

However, nine other fishermen, who were in the trawler, survived, said boat owner Abul Bashar.

Several hundred tourists faced immense sufferings due to waterlogging in Cox's Bazar town.

In Sunamganj, a woman drowned, and another one went missing after a boat capsized during a storm in the Naluar Haor area under Dirai upazila on Friday evening.

The deceased is Rahima Begum, 75, of Kaldhar village under Dirai upazila. The missing woman was Mollika Begum, 35, a resident of the same village, police said.

In Noakhali, at least 17 fishermen went missing after 10 trawlers capsized in the Meghna river near Hatia upazila between Friday afternoon and 8:00pm.

Fishermen on nearby trawlers and boats rescued 120 people alive, but 17 fishermen were still missing, said Milton Chakma, acting upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), of Hatia.

Rescue operations were hampered due to rough weather, he added.

Flood situation in some low-lying areas in the district deteriorated due to incessant rain since Friday evening.

[Our Correspondents from Cox's Bazar, Noakhali and Moulvibazar contributed to this report]

Beware of attacks

FROM PAGE 12
in an attack in Gopalganj yesterday [Friday]. Another leader was killed. This attack indicates that they [Awami League] are still lurking like hyenas and they may strike any time. We must resist their attacks."

The BNP organised the rally to pay homage to those who lost their lives in the recent student-led mass uprising and the struggle against authoritarianism.

Fakhrul said the democracy-loving people have waged movements by sacrificing their lives and enduring repression.

He thanked all political parties and organisations who stood by the BNP and worked with it during the long struggle for democracy.

He also praised the BNP's leaders and activists.

"We all now say that we have achieved freedom, and perhaps we

have. But the evil forces around us continue to expand their influence and attempt to divide us. Now we must maintain the unshakable unity with which we fought for 16 years. We must not fall into their plots under any circumstances."

Fakhrul said people believe that the interim government will create a democratic environment and reform the democratic institutions to establish a democratic state through a meaningful and fair election.

He also urged the government to withdraw all the cases filed against them opposition leaders and activists during Hasina's regime.

"On the eve of the International Day of Democracy, we want to pledge that we will work together to transform Bangladesh into a true democratic state and strengthen its institutions.... Let us move forward in favour of democracy, people, and humanity."

Nagorik Committee

FROM PAGE 12
country," Samantha said.

"Different domestic and foreign allies of fascism are currently trying to divert the people. These incidents are adding fuel to their attempts."

The interim government failed to meet people's expectations in this regard, she added.

"The government has not asked why the law enforcement agencies are not working. Government action on any issue is sluggish."

The committee condemns the

government's inaction regarding "mob justice" across the country since August 5, she said.

"The inaction surprised us. We know that the fascist government relied on police and administration. We know it would be tough to make police and administration work. But we also witnessed the silent role of the other law enforcement agencies."

The delay in publishing the list of the martyrs of the recent mass uprising is not acceptable and "many injured are not receiving proper treatment."

Israeli air strikes hit house

FROM PAGE 12
In an earlier statement, Bassal said rescuers were continuing to search for the missing.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strike.

Bassal said Israeli forces carried out similar strikes in some other parts of the Hamas-run territory overnight, killing at least 10 people.

Five people were killed in northwestern Gaza City when an air strike hit a group of people near Dar Al-Arqam school, he said.

Three others were killed in a strike in the Al-Mawasi area of the southern Khan Yunis governorate, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge, Bassal added.

No work, no pay

FROM PAGE 1
Khandoker Rafiqul Islam, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), announced the decision after a view exchange meeting on the current labour unrest at Ashulia, which houses more than 400 factories.

Three advisers to the interim government -- including Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan, the adviser on labour and employment ministry -- the government higher-ups, a group of former BGMEA presidents, factory owners, senior army officers, police officers, union leaders and millers attended the meeting.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), supported the BGMEA decision and said the BKMEA member factories will also follow the same decision if the unrest does not stop today.

Most of the factories in Ashulia were running yesterday until lunchtime, after which the workers did not return to their workstations.

So, if the unrest continues, the factory owners will shut their units that cannot be run, Islam said.

If the government assures safety, the production units will be run as normal, said AK Azad, chairman and chief executive officer of Ha-Meem Group which employs 75,000 workers and officers mainly at Ashulia.

"If the unrest continues, we will shut the factories."

The government formed a committee headed by an additional secretary of the labour ministry to find out the reason for the unrest and the committee is scheduled to submit the report after one month.

"But one month is too long -- we want an immediate decision from the government for running the factories," Azad said.

Ha-Meem Group could not run

its factories at Ashulia even with the help of the police as a group of outsiders came to the gate and called the workers to join the movement.

As many as 20 industrial police members were deployed in his factories at Ashulia, but it was not possible to run the units.

Ananta Garments has been bearing Tk 1.2 crore as operational loss for every day of unrest, said its managing director Inamul Haq Khan.

So, over the last 13 days, the company lost Tk 15 crore.

Yesterday, which was the 14th day of the unrest, he could open his factory.

"Still, it is uncertain whether we can return to normal production as the unrest is continuing in the Ashulia industrial belt," he said.

Work orders are diverting to India, Pakistan and other countries as international retailers and brands are worried and asking about the frequent unrest in Bangladesh, said Kalpan Hossain, managing director of DEKKO Legacy Group.

The current unrest has been taking place for three reasons: instigation of outsiders, some logical and illogical demands by the workers, and turf war over jhoot (scrapped clothes) trading, said Md Moin Khan, general officer commanding (GOC) of the 9th Infantry Division of Bangladesh Army.

The army will continue patrolling the industrial belts so that normalcy can be restored and production resumed in the affected factories, he added.

Md. Sibgat Ullah, deputy inspector general of Industrial Police, said they have already arrested many wrongdoers involved in the unrest.

He also suggested clearing the workers' salaries, which were supposed to be done in the first week of a month.

As of yesterday, 4,094 of the 9,481 factories have completed the

payment to the workers, he added.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garment Workers Federation, asked the factory owners to reopen their units and to meet the demand of the workers.

The federation will help in the smooth running of the factories, he said, while asking the factory owners not to blacklist the workers for their alleged involvement in the unrest.

"The basic causes for the unrest need to be found out -- there is an instigation by the defeated forces," said Montu Ghosh, president of the Garment Workers Trade Union Centre.

Babul Akhter, general secretary to the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, urged the factory owners to sort out their mid-level management, become sincere in meeting the workers' demands, take care of unionism and give equal attendance bonuses and other allowances.

The government will try to ensure the safety of factories by deploying full force in the industrial zones, said Adilur Rahman Khan, the adviser to the industries ministry.

The owners have been requested to keep their factories running; if there is any unrest in any factory, the government will take measures and special measures against the wrongdoers, he said.

If any quarter is found involved in the unrest, the government will also take measures against them, Khan added.

Asif Mahmud Sajeed Bhuiyan, adviser for the labour and employment ministry, suggested the factory owners meet the genuine demands of the workers.

The government is considering ramping up open market sales by the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh in the industrial belts so that the workers can buy commodities on the cheap, he said.

Cash-strapped Maldives says no need for IMF bailout

AFP, Colombo

The Maldives says its financial troubles are “temporary” and the luxury tourist destination has no plans to seek an International Monetary Fund bailout after warnings of a possible sovereign default.

Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer said the Indian Ocean archipelago, best known for its upscale resorts and celebrity visitors, was pressing ahead with tax hikes to meet its debt servicing obligations.

“We have bilateral partners who are very sensitive to our needs and our situation,” Zameer told reporters in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Friday night.

“I seriously don’t think it is a time where we will be right now engaging with the IMF... The issue that we have is very temporary because currently we are having a dip in reserves.”

He said tax reforms, along with the rationalisation of state-owned enterprises, would improve liquidity.

Zameer was visiting Sri Lanka along with Finance Minister Mohamed Shafeeq to meet with local central bankers and other officials.

China and India are the two largest bilateral lenders to the Maldives, a tiny nation of 1,192 tiny coral islands in the Indian Ocean scattered across the equator.

President Mohamed Muizzu came to power a year ago on the back of a campaign to evict a small contingent of Indian troops deployed in the Maldives and pursue closer ties with China.



A Ukrainian serviceman calls home after being released from Russian captivity at an undisclosed location near the Ukrainian-Belarusian border. PHOTO: AFP

Russia, Ukraine swap 206 POWs

AFP, Kyiv

Moscow and Kyiv swapped 103 prisoners of war each yesterday in a deal brokered by the United Arab Emirates, a rare moment of coordination between the two warring sides as Russia pushes ahead in east Ukraine.

The Russians released in the swap were captured during Ukraine’s incursion into the Kursk region, Moscow said, while some of the Ukrainians freed had been held prisoner since Moscow seized the Azovstal steel plant in May 2022.

“Another 103 soldiers were returned to Ukraine from Russian captivity,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Telegram.

Among the freed were 82 privates and sergeants as well as 21 officers, Zelensky said. “The defenders of Kyiv, Donetsk, Mariupol and Azovstal, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and the Kharkiv regions,” he added.

Russia confirmed it had “handed over” 103 Ukrainian army prisoners, and received 103 Russian servicemen captured by Kyiv in its Kursk offensive in return.

“At present, all Russian servicemen are on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, where they are being provided with the necessary psychological and medical assistance, as well as an opportunity to contact their relatives,” the Russian defence ministry said.

Despite ongoing hostilities, Russia and Ukraine have managed to swap hundreds of prisoners throughout the two-and-half-year conflict – often in deals brokered by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia or Turkey.

The announcement comes a day after Zelensky said 49 Ukrainian POWs had been returned from Russia, and three weeks ago both sides swapped 115 prisoners each in a deal also mediated by the UAE.

The UAE’s foreign ministry hailed the deal as a “success” and thanked both sides for their

cooperation yesterday.

RUSSIAN ADVANCES

The prisoner swap came as Russia pushed ahead in east Ukraine, where it claims to have captured a string of villages in recent weeks.

The Russian defence ministry said in a daily briefing it had “liberated” the village of Zhelanne Pershe, less than 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the key Ukrainian-held logistics hub of Pokrovsk.

Pokrovsk lies on the intersection of a key road that supplies Ukrainian troops and towns across the eastern front and has long been a target for Moscow’s army.

More than half of the city’s 60,000 residents have fled since the invasion began in February 2022, with evacuations ramping up in recent weeks as Moscow’s army closes in.

Ukraine had hoped its major cross-border incursion into the Kursk region last month would slow down Russia’s advances in the east.

Trump pledges to deport Haitians in Ohio city if elected

REUTERS, California

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump pledged on Friday to conduct mass deportations of Haitian immigrants from the Ohio city of Springfield, even though the majority of them are in the United States legally.

The city for days has found itself at the center of a social media maelstrom after right-wing agitators latched onto false claims that Haitian arrivals were eating household pets.

“We will do large deportations in Springfield, Ohio,” Trump said at a press conference at his golf resort near Los Angeles.

The majority of the 15,000 Haitians in Springfield are there legally. Trump’s longstanding pledge to conduct mass deportations usually refers to those in the country illegally.

Trump did not repeat the assertion

he made during Tuesday’s presidential debate with Democrat Kamala Harris that immigrants were eating dogs and cats, remarks that have been widely mocked.

Two elementary schools were evacuated and one middle school in Springfield was closed on Friday after anonymous bomb threats were made against the community for the second day in a row, according to ABC News.

At the White House, President Joe Biden urged the attacks on the Haitian community to cease.

“It’s simply wrong. There’s no place in America. This has to stop – what he’s doing. It has to stop,” Biden said.

The Biden administration extended Temporary Protected Status to hundreds of thousands of Haitians in the United States in June, a decades-old program that protects legal immigrants from deportation and gives them work permits.



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GD-436

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
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Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.



Md. Rezaur Rohman
Executive Engineer
LGED, Natore
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GD-435

Iran puts 2nd satellite this year in orbit


REUTERS

Iran yesterday launched a research satellite into orbit with a rocket built by the Revolutionary Guards, its state media reported.

The launch comes as the US and European countries accuse Iran of transferring ballistic missiles to Russia that would likely be used in its war with Ukraine within weeks. Iran has denied this.

The Chamran-1 satellite, which was launched into space by the Qaem-100 satellite carrier, was put into a 550-kilometre (340-mile) orbit and its first signals had been received, the media said, adding that the solid fuel carrier was designed and built by the Aerospace Force of the Revolutionary Guards.

The primary mission of the satellite, which weighs 60 kg (132 pounds), “is to test hardware and software systems for demonstrating orbital manoeuvring technology in height and phase.



Mymensingh City Corporation
Mymensingh
Estd: 2018
Engineering Division
www.mcc.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.21.6100.014.00.000.24-1395

Dated: 11/09/2024


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1	ID No. 1009538 & LGCRRP/ Mymensingh/ 2023-24/W-06	1) Construction of RCC drain starting from Bolashpur Jomsher Morol house to Vatikashor Rail Gate via Abdul Awal Minto house in Ward No. 19 (Length=790m) 2) Upgrading of Uni-block road starting from Bolashpur Jomsher Morol house to Abdul Awal Minto house in Ward No. 19 (Length=650)	17/09/2024 10.00am	06/10/2024 15:00pm	07/10/2024 13.00pm

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Md. Rafiqul Islam Miah
Chief Engineer
Mymensingh City Corporation
Mymensingh
E-mail: ce.dee.ce.mym@lgi.gov.bd

GD-437

Restoration of natural drainage a must

Prioritise immediate unclogging of canals in Noakhali

We are concerned by the prolonged inundation in eight upazilas of Noakhali since the flooding in early August, which has affected the lives, health, and livelihood of at least 21 lakh residents of the district. The protracted submersion is an eye-opener for us and highlights the consequence of human greed. As per a report in this daily, the floodwater could not recede because of the obstructions in the natural drainage system of the district caused by human activities.

Encroachment of canals and other water bodies for fish farming, clogging of canals with garbage including non-degradable plastic waste, and the construction of dams and sluice gates without proper long-term impact studies or input from locals are impeding the flow of the floodwater from Noakhali to the sea via the Meghna River. The situation is so dire that between 60,000 and 70,000 people in the district have been living in shelters for over a month. Since most of these shelters are educational institutions, thousands of students in the district are unable to resume their academic activities.

The stagnant water is not just destroying the homes and properties of residents, many of them also have to travel long distances to collect safe-drinking water. While the flood caused significant loss of crops, livestock, and fish enclosures, the standing water is expected to negatively impact soil fertility and, consequently, the livelihoods of farmers. In some areas, there are reports of a shortage of animal fodder. Additionally, there is a risk of an outbreak of waterborne diseases. To make matters worse, fresh flooding in low-lying areas of several districts including Noakhali have been forecasted by the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre. That would make the inundation worse.

The situation in Noakhali underscores the urgent need to protect our rivers, canals, and other natural water bodies from encroachment, pollution, and unplanned development. While we appreciate the environment adviser's plan to free at least one river in every division, the canals in Noakhali should be unclogged, excavated, and restored immediately as a top priority. The government must also ensure that concerned authorities work with experts and locals to identify the problematic government infrastructures exacerbating the standing water situation and develop sustainable solutions to the problem. In the long run, we hope the interim government will be able to strengthen the National River Conservation Commission to revive and protect our rivers and canals from human-induced environmental degradation in the future.

Attacks on women must stop

Take action against those who harassed women in Cox's Bazar

We are deeply disturbed by the repeated incidents of harassment of women in public places over the past month by individuals who apparently consider themselves above the law. In the latest incident, a group of men led by Mohammad Farokul Islam, a local resident, attacked several women in Cox's Bazar on the night of September 11. Video footage showing the men beating the women with sticks and verbally abusing them has been circulating on social media, as the group themselves posted the videos, boasting about their actions. Last month, we encountered a similar video showing a man harassing and beating women in the capital's Shyamoli area with a stick. These incidents of vigilante justice are a troubling sign for the country and calls for urgent action by our law enforcement agencies.

Reportedly, the men verbally abused a woman at the beach and forced her to do sit-ups while holding her ears. They also questioned another woman about her presence late at night and forced her to leave the beach. In yet another incident, Farokul, the ringleader, was seen repeatedly hitting a woman with sticks while she lay on the floor begging them to stop. The question is, what were the tourist police doing when these criminal offences took place? Farokul even defended their actions on Facebook, labelling the women they attacked as "prostitutes." Even if his claims were true, who gave them the right to beat and harass them? This trend of mob justice, moral policing, and targeted attacks on women must stop.

Since a case has been filed against six people including Farokul, after his detention on September 13, we urge the police to immediately arrest all the others responsible for the attacks on women in Cox's Bazar. It also needs to be investigated whether anyone in the local administration is behind the group, as Farokul claimed that he was being backed by the administration.

We also call upon the home adviser and the police to send out a strong message that mob beatings and attacks on women won't be tolerated anymore. And that if anyone is involved in vigilante justice, they should be handed over to the police. It is only through upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice for victims that we can eradicate these heinous practices from the country.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



The Nuremberg Laws are passed

On this day in 1935, the Nuremberg Laws, among the first pieces of racist Nazi legislation that would culminate in the Holocaust, were passed in Germany; designed by Adolf Hitler, they deprived Jews of German citizenship and forbade marriage or sexual relations between Jews and "citizens of German or kindred blood."

Unanswered questions about the Pilkhana massacre

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING



Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (ret'd)
is a former associate editor of The Daily Star.

SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

There are renewed calls, and rightly so, for a fresh inquiry into the BDR killings. Newer allegations of actions and inactions are emerging from various sources, some claiming to be direct witnesses who had heretofore not dared to speak publicly. Even the former chief of army staff (CAS) has tried to offer an excuse that certainly doesn't wash with the public.

February 25 remains a day of calumny, ignominy and anguish, with the brutality perpetrated by the mutineers and killers unmatched by anything in recent memory. It is also unparalleled in the duplicity of certain people in important positions within the administration. Time cannot heal the pain, and the earthly supplements given to the victims' families are but a palliative that may put only temporary gloss over the wound.

Let's put the tragic statistic in perspective. On that day and the day after, 57 of the best and brightest officers of the Bangladesh army were brutally put down. Thirteen others were also killed in the process. Compare that with the number of officers martyred during the Liberation War—over the course of nine months, we lost 47 officers.

But why bring up this matter after 15 years? Has the issue not run its course? With an official inquiry completed, its findings (incomplete though) and a raft of recommendations made public, one would assume that the matter would be behind us. It bears mention that the inquiry report in its entirety has not been made public, and the original version has been heavily redacted.

The killings, along with the mutineers' actions in the following two days, suggest a well-thought-out event that stemmed from expert planning. As long as the real motive and mastermind remain a mystery, this matter cannot be considered closed, and despite ongoing legal proceedings, further investigation is warranted.

Admittedly, the mutineers have been tried, with many BDR members sentenced to various prison terms. Some are even out of jail after completing their sentences, while a large number are facing the death sentence. But like me there are many, and not just within the military fraternity, who are still in the dark about many aspects of the case.

The first question is whether any action has been taken on the primary



On February 25, 2009, and the day after, 57 of the best and brightest officers of the Bangladesh army were brutally put down.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

recommendation of the Anis-uz-Zaman committee, that further investigation is needed to uncover the true mastermind behind the incident. This is crucial, as even the committee admitted that "the real cause and motive behind the barbaric incident could not be established beyond doubt."

The current administration should immediately follow up on the committee's recommendation and conduct further investigation to get to the bottom of the mutiny. The "dal-bhat" explanation is too trite to be accepted as the causative factor of the rebellion that had matched, in some aspects, the Pakistani brutality of 1971. It may have been a secondary factor, one exploited by those orchestrating the mutiny.

The handling of the episode itself merits thorough scrutiny, although some may take issue with my suggestion. We cannot ignore the fact that the BDR jawans also revolted in 1991, and the general opinion is that the matter was handled too leniently. The leaders of the 1991 revolt got off lightly, and that may have had a part in this mutiny too. The purpose of an investigation into an event like February 25, 2009, is not only to identify and punish the perpetrators but also to learn from the mistakes and

unfortunately, military commanders lost sight of that—or was it deliberate inaction? I wonder.

Former army chief Moin's excuse of following the chain of command betrays his puerility at its worst. If he had been worth his salt, upon learning of the killings of officers and their families, he would have immediately dispatched troops to BDR HQ to save lives, informing his superiors afterward. Under such circumstances, waiting for permission to move troops was not mandatory. Moin, along with those above him, including the then prime minister and others in positions of responsibility, have blood on their hands and must be brought to justice.

Calling the mutineers to the negotiation table—with the head of government no less—after they had already killed many officers and their families reeks of conspiracy. This method for dealing with mutineers is unheard of. Negotiating, and asking the mutineers to surrender their weapons after 52 of the 57 officers had already been killed, displays a pathetic ignorance of how to manage such a critical situation, where a large number of officers and their families were being held hostage.

The argument of avoiding collateral

Another example of incompetence was the so-called surrender of weapons to the home minister. Why did the security forces not immediately enter the BDR complex to secure the area once the mutineers had surrendered? It is now known that several officers were killed by the mutineers in the early hours of February 26. And why was the rear gate of the BDR complex left unguarded, allowing many mutineers to escape with weapons under the cover of darkness?

One wonders whether the administration has delved into the performance of the intelligence agencies. Did none of them get wind of what was about to happen? With so many of them deployed in sensitive areas and units, how did none of them pick up on any signs of unrest?

The conversations between the CAS, the then PM and the intelligence agency heads must be scrutinised. Many unknown facts would likely emerge. Alleged complicity of political leaders in the killings must be investigated, as must be the possible involvement of foreign hands in the massacre. Only when the true masterminds behind the BDR mutiny are identified and brought to justice can we draw a conclusion to the matter.

Critical challenges facing the economy

AN OPEN DIALOGUE



Dr. Abdullah Shibli
is an economist and works for Change Healthcare, Inc., an information technology company. He also serves as senior research fellow at the US-based International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI).

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

The head of the interim government, Prof Yunus, recently formed a committee to prepare a "white paper on the state of Bangladesh economy." The terms of reference for the committee are very broad, but the key task is to present the true state of the economy, outline key weaknesses (and, if possible, identify the sources), and, most importantly, provide a roadmap for the interim government.

One cannot overstate the white paper's role in shaping the new administration's policies and forthcoming reforms. Fortunately, the committee has already invited public input, and I am confident that the committee and the competent support staff will accomplish their mission.

It is tempting to throw my hat into the ring and write a long email to the committee and offer my professional view on the cardinal issues facing the country along with my ideas on curtailing corruption, stabilising the foreign exchange sector, reducing income inequality or alleviating poverty. But I will resist for two reasons. First, I have complete faith in the competence of the committee members, with some of whom I have exchanged opinions and thoughts in various forums. Secondly, the experts in the group—and outside—have voiced their learned opinions in professional journals and social and print media over the last few years on

the goals of this nation, its progress, and the roadblocks. In other words, the research is already there. The nation is waiting with bated breath for this august body to practice due diligence, given the resources provided at its disposal, and come up with its own prognosis and suggest some best practices to help the new government achieve its economic goals before the latter hands over power to elected leaders.

Professor Yunus in his first speech to the nation last month identified three areas that deserve utmost priority: banking, corruption, and undue emphasis on GDP growth. The data from the past Household Income and Expenditure Surveys carried out by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) over the last two decades clearly indicate the trend pointing to the rising levels of income and wealth inequality. Whether we take the well-known measure, the Gini coefficient, or an alternative measure, such as the Palma ratio, and compare the income share of the top 10 percent with the income share of the bottom 40 percent, the signs are clear. We are heading towards a very unequal society. The committee must address this issue and debunk the previously held trickle-down theory.

Another important aspect of the white paper is a thorough diagnosis of the economic malaise of the

country. What role did the various irregularities play in inflating the cost of megaprojects, the collapse of the financial infrastructure, and the economic hardship of the average person? Did the previous regime fudge the data and paint a rosy picture of the condition of the masses? How did the elite and the politicians manage to evade the rule of law and siphon

What role did the various irregularities play in inflating the cost of megaprojects, the collapse of the financial infrastructure, and the economic hardship of the average person? Did the previous regime fudge the data and paint a rosy picture of the condition of the masses? How did the elite and the politicians manage to evade the rule of law and siphon billions out of the country?

billions out of the country?

But then after all the diagnosis is done, the committee needs to prioritise the issues to inform the interim government's next steps. Obviously, the interim government does not have to promise any miracles. Our people understand that we went through some rough patches and the interim government and all the wise men and women involved in rebuilding our political system, economy, and

the administrative structure face serious odds. Nonetheless, it is worth reminding ourselves of the immediate and long-term problems that will be with us regardless.

The country witnessed food price increases in the double digits for months in a row, and there are still no signs of prices cooling down. These increases leave their mark on the budget since, even if there is a deceleration of inflation, recent inflationary hikes have already hit consumers' pockets hard. According to one BBS study at the end of 2023, one in every five households in Bangladesh experienced food insecurity.

To ensure success of the above initiatives, the state must effectively identify vulnerable people and thereby determine the nature and duration of the support they will need, ensure that the genuinely poor and vulnerable people receive support, and monitor the channels to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the distribution chain.

The previous government was overthrown because of its economic mismanagement, so if the interim government promises that it will try to manage it well and avoid corruption and greed as much as possible, based on the recommendations of the white paper and allow a task force to implement policies in order of priorities, that itself will be a first.

The white paper committee must also be mindful of its audience. Who are they? There are three: policymakers, the general public, and to a lesser degree, the experts. The people need to know the actual state of the economy. Experts already have a good understanding of the former regime's misdeeds. It is the policymakers in the interim government who urgently need a roadmap.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

Can we hold onto our precious freedom?



NO STRINGS
ATTACHED
Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

The idea of freedom is central to the concept of democracy. When we talk about fundamental democratic rights, we essentially mean basic freedoms that are guaranteed for every citizen regardless of their race, sex, religion, ethnicity, language, or any other status. A democracy ensures a form of governance that protects the right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, access to education, health, protection of the law and so on. Unfortunately, Bangladesh's history bears witness to how successive so-called democratic governments have abused the term in astounding ways, becoming anything but democratic.

After the stunning fall of an autocratic regime camouflaged in democratic garb—a fall made possible by the sacrifices and courage of our students and the general public—we now have a precious opportunity to reclaim our rights as a people. At the same time, we are trapesing on a delicate tightrope with no safety net if we fall.

We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to realise the unfulfilled dreams of a nation that tasted freedom in 1971 after enduring nine months of bloody warfare and genocide by an occupying force. The aspirations of our freedom fighters, that included the general people, to build a country free from oppression, discrimination and poverty, remain unfulfilled. Fifty-three years later, a new generation is fighting for that freedom.

In 1991, after the fall of the Ershad government through a peoples' uprising led again by students, we thought we were finally on the path to democracy. It seemed everyone was on the same page, including

of corruption, nepotism and violation of constitutional rights.

These attacks on the basic principles of democracy as enshrined in our constitution, were taken to new heights during the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina. In fact, neither of the two major parties practiced democratic norms within their ranks—both were dominated by one-person rule and relied on dynastic succession of power.

Hasina's way of consolidating power was to politicise every state institution and machinery to completely obliterate any kind of dissent or anyone she considered an obstacle. She used the police and other security forces, including intelligence agencies, to clamp down on opposition parties, particularly the BNP and Jamaat, through arbitrary arrests and jail sentences. Anyone she or her cronies considered a challenge to her power was harassed or persecuted through draconian laws such as the Digital Security Act (later renamed the Cyber Security Act). This included journalists, civil society members, teachers, students, cartoonists, writers and also members of minority communities.

Accusations of "hurting religious sentiments," "anti-state activities" and being "anti-liberation" were used to crush perceived opponents or for personal revenge. While freedom of speech and the independent media became casualties of Hasina's regime, a culture of obscene sycophancy flourished rendering any divergent opinion to be dangerous and resulting in frightening consequences. The number of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings

soared, the poor went hungry and the middle class struggled to make ends meet.

The economy buckled under a crippled banking sector, foreign exchange reserves dwindled to precarious levels and power plants awarded to cronies became money pits, failing to meet the demand for electricity. Every sector and institution fell victim to this mafia state, where oligarchs ruled and every single decision came from only the top

students had finally awakened the people, bringing together people from all walks of life and political affiliations to free the country from the clutches of a dictator.

It would, however, be naive to think that democracy has been freed and restored to its rightful place—to the people of Bangladesh. True, on August 5, the people reclaimed the power that had been robbed from them for decades. But we are now merely at the

fair election can take place, there is much to be done to heal, rebuild and restore. Ensuring the security and safety of all citizens and their properties must be the first priority. The hundreds of closed factories must be reopened through sincere dialogue with workers. The new political kids in town must put an end to the old habits of extortion and political supremacy.

One thing is for sure: we cannot go back



People from all walks of life gather at the central Shaheed Minar to press home their one point demand for Sheikh Hasina to resign on August 2, 2024. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

It would, however, be naive to think that democracy has been freed and restored to its rightful place—to the people of Bangladesh. True, on August 5, the people reclaimed the power that had been robbed from them for decades. But we are now merely at the preparatory stage in the long journey towards a functioning democracy.

the leaders of the two major political parties. The elections were considered to be free and fair, and the rise of independent media gave promising signs of a thriving democracy. But as we know, all too soon democracy started to suffer unforeseen blows. During the BNP's regime, the tentacles of greed and power began to creep in, ushering in a culture

soared during her rule. It was a mafia state, where the "family" included all relatives and friends who had the license to loot banks, siphon money abroad, grab land, and even put people they didn't like in jail, with total impunity. Megaprojects worth thousands of takas in loans were launched as part of the development illusion, while food inflation

boss—the prime minister. Thus, in 15 years of unopposed rule, marked by two farcical elections where the opposition boycotted and ballots were stuffed the night before in one, democracy was completely eradicated and the constitution blatantly violated.

But as history has shown, every tyrant must ultimately bow down to those they have terrorised. The latest onslaught on a democracy already on life support took place between July 15 to August 5, when Hasina made the worst error of judgement by unleashing her goons, the police and other security forces on unarmed students and general people. The bloodshed that ensued—over a thousand lives lost, thousands blinded or maimed for life, a five-day internet blackout and the imposition of a curfew—led to a spontaneous uprising for freedom. The

preparatory stage in the long journey towards a functioning democracy.

The interim government led by a visionary person of integrity, faces a daunting task ahead. The suppressed resentment, fear, anger, grief and deprivation of people whose voices had been silenced for 15 years have been unleashed, some in violent and anarchic forms. Meanwhile, remnants of the fascist regime continue to work their mischief to discredit the interim government and the student activists. Religion is being weaponised to promote ideas that are in direct conflict with democratic ideals. Mob justice continues to create an atmosphere of fear, and the moral police feel empowered enough to openly display their misogyny.

Before the interim government can create an environment in which a credible, free and

to the old style of governance, one that had no accountability, no representation of people's aspirations and did not ensure the rights of all, especially women and minority communities.

The chief adviser's speech on September 11 indicates that the process of reform is underway. Special commissions are being formed to carry out the much-needed reforms to institutions, especially the electoral process, the Election Commission, police, judiciary and the legal system. Good governance is being introduced to the broken financial sector. But the repair process requires patience, humility and unity from all. It is the only way we can hold onto our precious freedom and not let it slip through our fingers again.

The need for transparency in political financing



Azmin Azran
is digital features coordinator at The Daily Star.

AZMIN AZRAN

As more details emerge about the misdeeds of business groups like S Alam following the fall of the Awami League government, we are left to ponder just how deeply intertwined the fortunes of these business tycoons were with the political party at the centre of Bangladesh's authoritarian turn. While the correlation has long been clear, the causality will, hopefully, be established further as more investigations take place. But if we can only uncover the specifics of the financial relationships between industrial groups and political parties after dramatic resignations of prime ministers following mass uprisings, this does not bode well for the state of accountability in the country. Yet, these relationships have long shaped the fate of our country, enabling political parties to hide behind money to undermine democracy— disenfranchising of millions of poor and powerless.

Money is pivotal in politics, but if we want to prevent it from becoming poison as it has in the past, the democracy-oriented reform agenda of the interim government has to include robust mechanisms to ensure financial transparency in Bangladeshi politics.

Currently, political financing—or more specifically, campaign financing—in Bangladesh is governed through the Representation of the People's Order (RPO), 1972. It provides guidelines for candidates on how to maintain and report their finances, and restricts both candidates and parties to specific spending caps for election campaigns. After the latest regulations update, candidates cannot spend more than Tk 25 lakh on elections, while political parties are limited to Tk 4.5 crore if they field over



Every penny raised and spent by political parties or campaigns must be publicly available so that voters can make informed decisions. FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

200 candidates (less if they field less).

Anyone familiar with the previous "elections" held between 2014 and 2024 will know that it is virtually impossible these spending caps were adhered to, despite parties' claims of compliance on paper. In 2018, for example, Awami League claimed to have spent Tk 1.05 crore on the election, BNP said it spent Tk 1.11 crore, and Jatiya Party got it done for just Tk 4.52 lakh. The reason they have been able to get away with these unabashed falsifications, as reported by

which encompasses the entire vertical of the political process. Going forward, the EC needs access to forensic accountants and the power to summon financial records from political donors. Every step needs to be taken to make these records as accessible as possible to voters, with the media taking a proactive role in highlighting discrepancies and suspicious connections found within these records.

This is not to suggest that business organisations or wealthy individuals should be prohibited from donating to political

parties. They have the right to participate in politics, and providing funds can be their way of staying engaged. However, voters should have information on who is financially backing a candidate.

As reliance on small financial contributions by supporters and political party members and voluntary participation in political work has dwindled, it has become a global trend for political parties to turn to large businesses for funding. The larger the business, the larger their financial contribution, which often leads

While campaign financing is a core component of political financing, there is much more to it. Political parties in Bangladesh and globally for that matter must remain relevant through media and social media outside of election cycles, which also costs money. Regulating political financing should not hinder the survival of political parties. Legal, transparent, and democratically engaging fundraising methods need to be left open for them.

back to the sort of politics that connects them to people and relies on supporters and members to finance their basic functions. The alarming trend of the majority of parliament members being businesspeople highlights the unhealthy intertwining of business and politics—a trend that has to be reversed.

While campaign financing is a core component of political financing, there is much more to it. Political parties in Bangladesh and globally for that matter must remain relevant through media and social media outside of election cycles, which also costs money. Regulating political financing should not hinder the survival of political parties. Legal, transparent, and democratically engaging fundraising methods need to be left open for them.

In Germany, elected officials are asked to pay a portion of their salaries to the party which nominated them, a process which has both benefits and pitfalls. In many countries, including the UK, Sweden, Spain, Canada, and Australia, the state provides direct funds to political parties once they qualify for it through electoral means. Some nations indirectly support political parties by allowing them to use state resources such as the state media. Foreign aid for political parties can be a contentious matter, but considering the vast Bangladeshi diaspora, a mechanism could be created for their contributions to support democracy without inviting foreign influence.

Ultimately, those who fund politics will always have influence on political parties, and should a candidate get elected, this influence will then seep into the government. Whether or not it's a huge conglomerate or regular people contributing to the coffers of parties, they will always expect their money to carry weight, which is why transparency is paramount to this process. Every penny raised and spent by political parties or campaigns must be publicly available so that voters can make informed decisions.

The UN's focus on Artificial Intelligence for this year's International Day of Democracy is relevant for Bangladesh, where technology could help make democratic processes more transparent and efficient. However, the foundation for such progress lies in a resource that has somehow become increasingly scarce: common sense.

Unlocking the health benefits of vitamin D

Vitamin D is essential for various bodily functions, including supporting your immune system, muscles, and bones. It helps your body absorb important minerals like calcium and phosphorus, keeping bones strong. You can get vitamin D through sunlight, certain foods like fatty fish and fortified dairy, or supplements.

Studies suggest a link between low vitamin D and depression, though it is unclear if a deficiency causes depression or vice versa. Research is ongoing to determine if increasing vitamin D can help boost mood.

Vitamin D also plays a role in preventing conditions like osteoporosis, a bone disease common in older adults. It may even reduce the risk of developing multiple sclerosis and some cancers, like breast and colon cancer.

Getting enough vitamin D can be tricky, especially for those who avoid sunlight, have darker skin, or are older. Low levels may lead to muscle pain, slow wound healing, and conditions like rickets or osteomalacia, which cause soft or weakened bones.

For those with digestive issues or who have had gastric bypass surgery, absorbing vitamin D may be more difficult, increasing the risk of deficiency. Regular blood tests can help monitor your vitamin D levels, and supplements may be recommended if you are at risk of deficiency.

While vitamin D is crucial, it is important to avoid oversupplementing, as too much can be harmful. Moderation, combined with a balanced diet and regular sunlight exposure, is key to maintaining healthy levels.



A silent struggle of Cystic Fibrosis in Bangladesh

DR RAHAT BIN HABIB

September 8th is the Cystic Fibrosis (CF) Day, which is celebrated globally by patients, parents, and healthcare professionals to raise awareness and support. Cystic Fibrosis (CF) is a genetic disorder that disrupts the lungs and digestive system by causing the production of thick, sticky mucus. This mucus leads to blocked airways, making breathing difficult and increasing the risk of lung infections.

Common symptoms include chronic cough and digestive problems such as poor growth and greasy stools. In infants, CF may present as poor weight gain and skin that tastes unusually salty.

In Bangladesh, CF is relatively rare and often underdiagnosed due to limited awareness and resources. The condition is often underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed due to this lack of awareness and the misconception that it primarily affects Caucasian populations. However, we have more than 200 CF cases from primary and secondary data. The exact prevalence is unclear, but it is less common compared to Western countries. Many cases are misdiagnosed as other respiratory or digestive conditions, partly due to a lack of awareness among healthcare professionals and the general population.

CF is inherited, requiring both parents to be carriers of the CF gene. While more prevalent in people of European descent, CF can affect individuals from any country, including Bangladesh.

Diagnosis involves several key tests. The sweat chloride test measures the amount of chloride (salt) in sweat, with elevated levels indicating CF. Genetic testing identifies mutations in the CFTR gene, confirming the diagnosis. Radiological exams, like chest X-rays or High-Resolution Computed Tomography (HRCT) scans, help evaluate lung damage and mucus buildup.

In Bangladesh, treatment options for cystic fibrosis are gradually improving but still remain limited. A few hospitals in Dhaka provide specialised care, including medications and physiotherapy. Enhancing awareness and promoting early diagnosis are crucial steps toward better management and quality of life for individuals with CF. We hope to explore the potential of gene therapy in the future.

The writer is an Assistant Professor (Pediatrics) of Saheed Sayed Nazrul Islam Medical College & Hospital in Kishoreganj.

Lung cancer symptoms: what you must know

STAR HEALTH DESK

Lung cancer often develops without showing any symptoms in its early stages. The lungs do not have many nerve endings, so a tumour can grow without causing noticeable pain. This makes it difficult for many people to detect lung cancer until it has advanced and spread to other parts of the body.

When lung cancer symptoms do appear, they may include:

- A chronic, raspy cough, sometimes with blood-streaked mucus
- Changes in a long-standing cough
- Recurring respiratory infections, like bronchitis or pneumonia
- Shortness of breath that worsens over time

- Wheezing, lasting chest pain, hoarseness, and trouble swallowing
- Shoulder pain

These symptoms typically occur when a tumour blocks airways or cancer spreads to nearby tissues.

Symptoms of early-stage lung cancer:

At Stage I, lung cancer is usually symptomless. It is often caught through screenings rather than the patient noticing symptoms. However, some signs may include a persistent new cough, coughing up blood or mucus, shortness of breath, chest pain, or frequent infections like bronchitis or pneumonia.

Symptoms of advanced lung cancer:

In Stage IV, when the cancer spreads to more areas of the lungs or other parts of the body, additional symptoms may develop, such as:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Headaches, numbness, or seizures if the cancer has reached the brain

Other uncommon symptoms:

Some symptoms of lung cancer affect parts of the body not directly connected to the lungs, such as:

- Clubbing of the fingers, where the nails curve and fingers appear larger
- High calcium levels in the blood, leading to stomach upset, thirst, frequent urination, or confusion
- Horner syndrome, which causes a drooping eyelid, a smaller pupil, and less sweating on one side of the face
- Swelling in the face, neck, or arms due to restricted blood flow

Skin-related symptoms

Lung cancer can also cause certain skin issues, such as jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) or easy bruising due to interference with adrenal glands.



Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths globally, but the rates have been decreasing. However, the decline is not as significant among younger women. This has raised questions among experts, with genetic factors possibly playing a role. Historically, lung cancer has been associated with older men who smoke, so doctors may not immediately suspect the disease when a nonsmoking young woman presents with symptoms like a persistent cough or recurring respiratory infections.

Types of lung cancer and their symptoms:

There are two main types of lung cancer: non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and small cell lung cancer (SCLC). NSCLC is more common, making up about 85% of cases. It has three subtypes:

1. **Adenocarcinoma:** More common in women and nonsmokers, usually found in the outer areas of the lungs.
2. **Squamous cell carcinoma:** Typically forms in the central part of the lungs near the airways.
3. **Large cell carcinoma:** Can develop anywhere in the lungs and tends to grow faster.

SCLC, while less common, spreads quickly and is more strongly linked to smoking. It is also more likely to cause symptoms like bone pain, confusion, seizures, and paralysis.

Both NSCLC and SCLC share many symptoms, such as coughing, chest pain, wheezing, and hoarseness. SCLC is more likely to cause hypercalcemia (high calcium levels) and problems with the adrenal glands.

When to see a doctor:

If you experience persistent coughing, coughing up blood, frequent respiratory infections, or wheezing, it is important to see a doctor. Additionally, sudden shortness of breath, coughing up large amounts of blood, chest pain that does not go away, sudden vision problems, or weakness should prompt an immediate visit to the emergency room.

Takeaways:

Lung cancer often goes unnoticed in its early stages due to the lack of symptoms. Common signs include a persistent cough, chest pain, and recurring infections. It is important to consult a doctor if you are concerned, as early detection improves the chances of successful treatment.

While lung cancer is a serious diagnosis, treatments are improving, and survival rates are increasing, particularly when the disease is caught early.



A new hope for asthma remission

Asthma treatment has come a long way, and now the focus is not just on managing symptoms but on achieving "remission"—a state where symptoms are nearly gone while on therapy. While new medications have helped many people, some types of asthma, especially those without typical allergic reactions, remain harder to treat effectively.

Recent findings from the AMAZES trial bring some promising news. In the original study, patients with uncontrolled asthma who took Azithromycin three times a week for a year saw a significant reduction in asthma flare-ups. Now, a follow-up analysis has revealed that many of these patients achieved remission.

In fact, more than half of the patients who took Azithromycin experienced long periods without asthma attacks or the need for oral steroids, compared to only 39% of those on a placebo. This improvement was seen in patients regardless of whether they had the type of asthma that is typically linked to allergies.

While Azithromycin is not a cure, it could offer new hope for those struggling with asthma that do not respond well to standard treatments, allowing them to enjoy a better quality of life with fewer symptoms and disruptions. You must discuss with your physician about experimenting this new treatment option.

WHO prequalifies the first vaccine against Mpox

STAR HEALTH REPORT

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced the addition of the MVA-BN vaccine to its prequalification list, marking the first vaccine prequalified for mpox. This step is expected to significantly accelerate access to the vaccine in communities where controlling the spread of mumps is a priority.

The vaccine, produced by Bavarian Nordic A/S, underwent a rigorous review process with the European Medicines Agency, its regulatory body. WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus highlighted the importance of this development in the ongoing fight against mpox, particularly in Africa, where outbreaks have been persistent. He emphasised the need for urgent global action in procuring and distributing the vaccine to ensure equitable access for those most in need.

The MVA-BN vaccine is recommended for people aged 18 and older and is administered as a two-dose injection, with the second dose given four weeks after the first. It can be stored at standard refrigeration temperatures (2-8°C) for up to eight weeks. Although the vaccine is not licensed for people under 18, WHO suggests that it may be used off-label in younger individuals, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems in high-risk situations.

Dr Yukiko Nakatani, WHO Assistant Director-General for Access



to Medicines and Health Products, stated that the prequalification would expedite procurement by international organisations such as Gavi and UNICEF, helping to bring the vaccine to the regions most affected by the ongoing mpox emergency. Additionally, this decision may encourage national regulatory authorities to fast-track approvals, thereby increasing global access to this crucial vaccine.

The WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunisation has thoroughly reviewed available evidence and recommended the use of the MVA-BN vaccine during mpox outbreaks, particularly for those at high risk of exposure. In situations where vaccine supply is limited,

WHO advises administering a single dose to stretch resources. Data has shown that a single dose of the MVA-BN vaccine can be 76% effective in preventing mpox when given before exposure, while the two-dose schedule increases effectiveness to 82%.

Vaccination after exposure to the virus is generally less effective, emphasising the importance of pre-exposure vaccination in high-risk populations. Additionally, the MVA-BN vaccine has demonstrated a strong safety profile and consistent performance in clinical trials and real-world use during the ongoing global outbreak, which began in 2022.

As the virus continues to evolve, WHO emphasises the importance of collecting

data on vaccine safety and effectiveness across different settings. Since the WHO Director-General declared a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) in August 2024, the organisation has conducted assessments of the MVA-BN vaccine's suitability for emergency use and prequalification.

In addition to the MVA-BN vaccine, WHO is progressing with prequalification and emergency use listing procedures for two other mpox vaccines—LC-16 and ACAM2000. Furthermore, WHO has received expressions of interest from six companies for the emergency use listing of mpox diagnostic products, further expanding global capacity to detect and respond to outbreaks.

The ongoing mpox outbreak, particularly severe in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was declared a PHEIC in August 2024. Since the global outbreak began in 2022, more than 103,000 cases of mpox have been confirmed across 120 countries. In 2024 alone, there have been over 25,000 suspected and confirmed cases, and 723 deaths reported from 14 African countries.

As the situation continues to unfold, WHO's prequalification of the MVA-BN vaccine marks a critical step in the fight against mpox, ensuring that vulnerable populations have better access to life-saving vaccines and tools to stop the spread of the disease.

Source: World Health Organisation

Global strategic plan to combat Mpox outbreaks

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) to curb human-to-human transmission of mpox. The plan, running from September 2024 to February 2025, outlines coordinated efforts at global, regional, and national levels. WHO projects a funding need of US\$135 million and will soon launch an appeal for financial support.

The SPRP focusses on comprehensive surveillance, prevention, and readiness strategies while also advancing research and equitable access to medical countermeasures such as diagnostic tests and vaccines. Key efforts will target individuals at high risk, such as healthcare workers and close contacts of confirmed cases, to interrupt transmission chains.

Collaboration with organisations like the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and other global partners is critical. A virtual scientific conference on 29-30 August 2024 will align mpox research with outbreak control goals.

In Africa, where the need is most pressing, WHO's Africa Regional Office (AFRO) and Africa CDC will lead the response with a unified plan and budget. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, emphasised the importance of a coordinated global effort, stressing equity, solidarity, and community empowerment.

This plan builds on previous WHO recommendations and aims to enhance preparedness and response capabilities in affected regions, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries.

Source: World Health Organisation

Breaking through the fog



Imagine your brain is a room filled with bright lights, everything clear and easy to see. Then, one day, a thick fog rolls in, dimming the lights. Tasks that were once second nature—making decisions, remembering where you put your keys—now feel like navigating in the dark. This is what living with brain fog from depression can feel like.

You might sit down to focus on work, only to find your thoughts scattered and your mind wandering. Conversations blur together, and even following a simple to-do list becomes frustrating. This is not just forgetfulness; it is a cognitive slowdown caused by depression. The brain, weighed down by sadness and exhaustion, struggles to function as it used to.

Many people do not realise that brain fog is a real and treatable symptom of depression. It is the mind's way of signalling that something deeper is going on. But as isolating as it feels, there is hope. Therapy, medication, and even lifestyle changes like exercise and better sleep can help clear the fog. It might take time, but with support, the haze can lift, allowing the brain to regain its clarity and sharpness.

In the end, brain fog is a symptom, not a permanent state. When treated, those lost thoughts and fading memories begin to resurface, and the world becomes bright again.

Salahuddin’s quiet exit

SPORTS REPORTER

Kazi Salahuddin’s reign as the longest-serving president of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) will officially come to an end on October 26, the four-time BFF president announced in an impromptu press briefing yesterday.

The poster boy of post-independence Bangladesh football will depart after navigating through four tricky terms, leaving a legacy of corruption, mismanagement, flawed elections and failure to make good on lofty goals.

When the BFF media wing issued a message that Salahuddin would be speaking to the media at his office in a little over an hour’s time, there was little doubt regarding the forthcoming announcement, considering the speculations over his position for the past few days.

Appearing at the office and in front of media for the first time since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, the 70-year-old wasted little time over preambles before cutting straight to the chase: “I was with you for four terms. I consider myself very lucky to have had this opportunity in my life. I have decided not to contest in the upcoming elections which are due on October 26. It is my final decision.”

A close friend of Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman and brother of now-deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Salahuddin had expressed his desire for seeking a fifth term as president of the country’s second-most affluent sporting body on its October 26 elections, even a week after Hasina’s ouster.

“I am not resigning; instead, I will contest the election again because I will not leave football in the face of any threats,” Salahuddin had told The Daily Star on August 12.

However, Salahuddin was getting increasingly isolated as time went by. His long-term

resign.

Salahuddin was feeling the heat, and there was no alleged state-mechanism to bail him out this time, hence he had to leave the pitch without a fight, even though he successfully avoided the fate of having to resign.

While he will likely have a quiet exit a month-and-a-half later, leaving the chair to someone else to run the football show, Salahuddin’s legacy in Bangladesh football will certainly be a topic of discussion for a long time.

His quiet exit is a stark contrast to the euphoria and excitement that had been generated a decade-and-a-half ago when a much younger

men’s team would play in the FIFA 2022 World Cup has been a fodder for memes over the years as the team has failed to even reach the final of the SAFF Championship, arguably the lowest rung of world football, ever since.

The men’s team’s standing in the FIFA rankings has plummeted to the late 190s while the women’s team have failed to make much of an impact outside the SAFF region.

Although there have been successes at age-level, for both men and women, and the top-tier leagues have been held regularly, football at grassroots level has dried up, creating a top-heavy structure in the country’s football.



His quiet exit is a stark contrast to the euphoria and excitement that had been generated a decade-and-a-half ago when a much younger and astronomically more popular Salahuddin took office as an elected president.

aided by Abdus Salam Murshedy, a former Awami League MP and a long-serving BFF senior vice-president, had resigned soon after the change of government while two out of the four vice-presidents – Kazi Nabil Ahmed and Mahiuddin Ahmed, both leaders of Awami League – have been missing since August 5.

Former footballers, a section of fans as well as political leaders, led by former national team captain Aminul Haque, were piling on the pressure for him to

and astronomically more popular Salahuddin took office as an elected president.

One of the best footballers the country has ever produced, Salahuddin came to power when Bangladesh football was stagnating due to lack of proper planning and mismanagement.

The former captain and later a coach of the national team, Salahuddin made lofty promises to the people of the country, often very detached from reality.

His declaration that the Bangladesh

The sponsors, who had come in droves when Salahuddin assumed responsibility, have mostly turned their backs while the spectators have largely deserted the stands, signifying the departure of domestic football from the collective conscience.

The most damaging part was perhaps the unearthing of massive corruption inside the football headquarters, something that may not have implicated Salahuddin personally yet has damaged the reputation of Bangladesh in world football.

Striving to ‘conquer the summit’

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh squad is set to leave for India today to play a two-match Test series. The Tigers will be buoyed by their monumental maiden Test series win against Pakistan earlier this month, which led to the players receiving a winning bonus of Tk 3.20 crore from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Expectations for the Tigers have risen significantly, with people hoping for a repeat of similar performances on Indian soil, which has traditionally been a challenging venue, particularly in the longer format.

These expectations are not unfounded, given their performance over the past 17 months, during which they have won five of their eight Tests, including a home Test win over New Zealand and two away Test victories at Pakistan.

Bangladesh are touring India for a full series comprising two Tests and three T20Is for the first time since 2019. In their last two Test tours, they suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of the Asian giants.

Although Bangladesh made their Test

debut in 2000, playing India, it took 17 years for them to visit the neighbouring nation for their first away Test against India.

Mushfiqur Rahim, who led the side in the one-off Test series, scored a brilliant hundred, but it was in vain as Bangladesh eventually lost the match by 208 runs in Hyderabad during



their first visit in 2017.

In 2019, Bangladesh struggled to put up any resistance in both Tests in Indore and Kolkata, losing on the third day and suffering innings defeats on both occasions.

The Tigers have a poor home record against India as well, having lost eight out of ten Tests, with rain playing a significant role in the two drawn matches.

However, with the positive results they are

bringing into the series and the form of the players, former captain and selector Habibul Bashar remains hopeful for a better show this time, banking on a much-improved team from the 2019 version.

“In the last five to seven Tests, Bangladesh have performed exceptionally well. Whether at home or away, such performances are significant. This is the big difference in Bangladesh at this moment,” Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

The last time India lost a home Test series was in 2012, when they were defeated 1-2 by England in a four-match series. Since then, they have won a record 17 successive Test series on home soil and have only lost four Tests out of 51 matches at home.

Bashar, also the current women’s wing head, reckons the Tigers “shouldn’t aim for just a respectable result”.

“It’s difficult to climb Everest. People die while climbing Everest. But still, people go there to conquer the summit... I believe we are in a position to conquer the ultimate goal and not just show intent,” he concluded.

The first Test will begin in Chennai on September 19, while Kanpur will host the second Test from September 27.

DOMESTIC FOOTBALL

Pre-season limited to 5 weeks

SPORTS REPORTER

The participating clubs in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) have been given nearly a five-week period for pre-season preparation instead of the six weeks that most clubs sought, the decision taken by the board (BFF) following a first meeting regarding the 2024-25 season yesterday.

The Challenge Cup is set to be named in honour of the martyrs of July-August’s mass uprising.

Clubs to receive a percentage of sponsor’s money.

137 more local players registered than previous season.

Consequently, the season is set to commence on October 11 with the one-off Challenge Cup match at Bashundhara Kings Arena, and it will be followed by the beginning of the Federation Cup and BPL on October 15 and 18, respectively.

Imrul Hasan, the BFF Professional League Management Committee Chairman and BFF vice-president, mentioned they have dropped two tournaments from the calendar due to the altered situation in the country.

“The changed scenario led us to backtrack from our previous promises to hold the Super Cup and Independence Cup [this year],” he said following the meeting at the BFF House, adding that only three venues – in Dhaka (Kings Arena), Cumilla and Mymensingh – have been finalised, while remaining venues will be confirmed after discussions with district collectors and the National Sports Council (NSC).

The president of Bashundhara Kings further informed: “Though the meeting did not discuss the matter, there was an unofficial decision to name the Challenge Cup after legendary footballers in each edition. This time, however, we will name the Challenge Cup after July’s martyrs.”

SHORT CORNER

Faruque speaks to media in a no media event

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed said he was thrilled by Bangladesh’s current pace attack in an impromptu press conference after the winning bonus handing over ceremony for the national team at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel today, going against the board’s own directive that there would be no media interaction at the event.

Red-soil pitch awaits Tigers in Chennai?

Come September 19, Bangladesh could be greeted on a red-soil pitch in their first of the two-Test series against hosts India in Chennai, according to reports from The Indian Express – an English-language Indian daily. Red-soil pitches usually offer a lot of bounce, with spinners always staying in the game as well.

Guardiola convinced rivals eager for Man City sanctions

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has no doubts that other Premier League clubs are keen for the English champions to be punished for 115 alleged breaches of rules relating to financial regulations. A long-awaited hearing into charges brought by the Premier League in February 2023 is finally set to get underway on Monday.

Read full stories on The Daily Star’s website

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

CATALAN DERBY

Toppers Barca seek payback at Girona

AFP, Barcelona

Hansi Flick’s Barcelona face Girona today (8:15 pm, Bangladesh time) in a Catalan derby aiming to secure a fifth win from five La Liga matches at the start of the season.

Last season the Catalan giants were upset twice by their upstart minnow neighbours, who thumped Xavi Hernandez’s side 4-2 home and away in the spotlight.

Girona, in their fourth ever season in La Liga, ultimately finished third, behind second-place Barca, but for much of the season the Blaugrana could only watch as the tiny club battled Real Madrid for top spot.

Although Girona’s title bid eventually collapsed, their second triumph over Barca secured them Champions League football and delivered Madrid’s record-extending 36th league crown.

A lot has changed since then, with Flick’s arrival in place of Xavi seeming to revitalise Barcelona’s squad.

Led by teenage star Lamine Yamal,

new arrival Dani Olmo and veteran striker Robert Lewandowski they have won their opening four matches and are the only team in La Liga with a 100 percent record.

Girona, on the other hand, have lost star names including Artem Dovbyk



and Savinho and coach Michel Sanchez is still fitting together his replacement puzzle pieces.

After a 3-0 thumping by Atletico, Girona responded with 4-0 and 2-0 wins

over Osasuna and Sevilla respectively, indicating they are on the right track once more.

Flick has a long injury list to manage but is expecting to have playmaker Olmo available despite suffering a blow against Serbia while playing for Euro 2024 winners Spain.

Morale is high at the club because of their fine start, including a 7-0 demolition of Valladolid before the international break, and Gavi’s partial return to training on Thursday after a long injury lay-off provided further good news.

“We work much harder than before,” Barca midfielder Pedri told Mundo Deportivo.

“The team doesn’t dip after the 70th or 80th minute, it maintains the same fitness levels.”

Many expected champions Real Madrid to defend their crown with ease after signing Kylian Mbappe this summer but if Barcelona can avenge last year’s double defeat at Montilivi, it would be a statement victory.



Substitute Callum Hudson-Odoi [R] celebrates after his superb second-half goal helped Nottingham Forest beat Liverpool 1-0 at Anfield yesterday, achieving the biggest surprise win of the English Premier League season so far. The defeat ends Liverpool’s winning streak and they now occupy second place with nine points in four matches as leaders Manchester City overcame a spirited Brentford 2-1 at the Etihad yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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**BANGLADESH'S
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Depression to cause more downpours today

3 drown, over a dozen missing

STAR REPORT

At least three people have died, and 18 others gone missing after boats capsized due to inclement weather in three districts since Friday evening.

The maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal-3 due to a depression over the Bay, said a weather bulletin of the Met office.

"All fishing boats and trawlers over the north Bay have been advised to remain in shelter till further notice," it added.

Low-lying areas of Chattogram division may be inundated as water level of the rivers in this region may increase in the next 24 hours, said a bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) at 6:00pm yesterday evening.

The Land Deep Depression is

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Tourists were back at the Cox's Bazar beach yesterday despite bad weather after being stuck in their hotels for a day due to waterlogging triggered by record-breaking rainfall.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVU

Clear journos of wholesale allegations

Urges Editors' Council

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Editors' Council yesterday called for promptly clearing journalists of wholesale allegations levelled against them, in a spree of murder cases, if their involvement is not found in proper scrutiny.

"The Editors' Council wants to say unequivocally that the continuity of such action is tantamount to the abuse of the existing law and a breach of the interim government's promise to ensure freedom of journalism," the council said in a statement.

If journalists have committed any crime, legal action can be taken against them on specific allegations following appropriate legal procedure, said the statement, issued by the council's President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud on its behalf.

It said attempts to silence journalists with repressive laws like the Digital Security Act or the Cyber Security Act, along with harassment and arrests during the previous government, were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Man held for assaulting women on the beach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police have arrested a suspect in the harassment and assault of several women at Cox's Bazar sea beach and Lal Digghi area of the beach town on the night of September 11.

A team of the Detective Branch of Cox's Bazar police picked up Mohammad Farokul Islam, 22, from the town's Kalur Dokan area on Friday night, hours after videos of harassment and assault of several women went viral on social media, said Javed Mahmud, an officer-in-charge of DB in Cox's Bazar.

Farokul, a former madrasa student hailing from Chattogram's Lohagara upazila, has been residing in the Rumaliar Chhara area of Cox's Bazar town for several years. He claimed himself to be an Islami Chhatra Shibir activist.

A victim, who is also a member of the third gender community, filed a case with Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station yesterday against two named and five-six unnamed suspects for harassing and assaulting women, said Jasim Uddin Chowdhury, additional superintendent of Cox's Bazar district police.

Farokul has been named as the prime accused in the case. The other named accused is one Nayan Rudra.

The arrestee was produced before a Cox's Bazar court yesterday.

The Daily Star has analysed at least seven videos of the harassment and assault. One of those videos shows Farokul, armed with a stick, and his associates verbally abusing a woman at the sea beach and forcing her to do sit-ups while holding her ears.

In another video, the same group of men are seen approaching a woman sitting on a beach chair late at night on September 11.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Farokul Islam

Nagorik Committee for new constitution

People to decide how it's to be done, the body says in first press briefing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recently launched citizen's platform Jatiya Nagorik Committee has said it is in favour of replacing the current constitution with a new one.

"We believe the 1972 constitution did not reflect the dreams and aspirations people had in 1971. It was a partisan constitution..." Nasir Uddin Patwary, convener of the committee, told its first press briefing held at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

He added, "There were opportunities before 1975 to rebuild the country, but it was not done. There was chaos.

"In 2024, we have the chance once again. The majority of our people are young and the people of every sector took part in the mass uprising, irrespective of party and ideology.

"We will draft a new constitution based on people's opinions after discussions with the stakeholders. The will of the people will be reflected in it, and we will make sure that no fascist can get hold of the country.

"We will hold a public discussion

to determine how it will be written... A few young people cannot make a decision on the matter. All the people and stakeholders will decide. Whatever they decide will reflect the will of the people."

Leaders of the committee formed on September 8 asserted that theirs is not a political party, but their initiative is political in nature.

"Jatiya Nagorik Committee will work to create a new democratic political settlement by abolishing the fascist system. We want to reach a settlement, so that no head of the government has to flee like Sheikh Hasina," said committee spokesperson Samantha Sharmin.

Other members said the places of worship were being attacked to divert the masses and the mob violence is calling the mass uprising into question.

"We ask the government why the law enforcement forces are not taking action against those attacking temples and shrines. Failure to stop this will harm the government and the

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The places of worship are being attacked to divert the masses and mob violence is calling the mass uprising into question.

Beware of attacks by AL cadres

Says Fakhrul



UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday urged the people to stay vigilant against any possible attack from Awami League cadres.

Speaking at a rally at the Central Shaheed Minar, he called upon all political parties not to succumb to the plots of the associates of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The BNP leader urged the interim government to provide appropriate compensation and allowances to the families of those killed, maimed, or wounded in the movements against Hasina's regime.

"Our Swechhasebak Dal President SM Jilani and his wife were injured

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Israeli air strikes hit house, school

Rescuers say at least 26 bodies pulled from rubble in Gaza

AFP, Palestinian Territories

An Israeli air strike hit a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City yesterday, with Palestinian rescuers reporting five dead and the Israeli military saying it had targeted Hamas fighters.

Thousands of Palestinians displaced by the war, now in its 12th month, have sought shelter in the Shuhada al-Zeitun school, said Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the civil defence agency in the Gaza Strip.

It was the latest school building housing displaced Gazans to be hit by an Israeli air strike, resulting in "five martyrs, including two children and a woman", Bassal told AFP, adding that several other people were wounded.

AFP could not independently verify the toll.

Bassal said the bodies "were pulled from under the rubble after Israeli warplanes hit the Shuhada al-Zeitun school with two missiles".

The Israeli military said it carried out a "precise strike" on the school compound which "was used by Hamas terrorists".

Earlier in the day, the civil defence agency reported an Israeli air strike on a house elsewhere in Gaza City had killed at least 11 people, with more strikes overnight in other parts of the Hamas-run territory leaving at least 10 dead.

"We have recovered the bodies of 11 martyrs, including four children and three women, after an Israeli warplane hit a three-storey house of the Bustan family," Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for the agency, told AFP.

He said the strike took place at around 1:00 am (2200 GMT Friday) and that the house was located near the Shujaiya school in the Al-Tuffah neighbourhood of eastern Gaza City.

"Several families had taken refuge in the house targeted with a single missile without any prior warning," Bassal said, adding that many others were wounded.

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Woman with disabilities killed for playing music loudly

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A woman with intellectual and physical challenges was killed in Satkhira yesterday after being struck with a hammer for playing loud music in front of a house.

The incident occurred around 10:00am near the Thanaghata intersection of Labsa union under Satkhira Sadar upazila.

Five people, including main suspect Ilias Hossain, 27, were detained, said Faisal Tanvir, commander of Rab 6.

The victim, identified as Rozina Sultana Chumki, 20, daughter of Rezaul Karim of Thanaghata village, was a vocational student at SWID Khatimunnesa Hanif Laskar Intellectually Challenged School in Satkhira town.

"Chumki was walking on the road and playing music loud on her bluetooth speaker around 10:00am. At that time, Ilias of the same area hit Chumki on the head with a hammer. Chumki died on the spot," said Sakhina Khatun, a resident of the area. Locals later detained Ilias and handed him over to the Rapid

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An army soldier stands guard as people look at the Shah Sufi Fasih Paglar Mazar in Gazipur's Porabari after it was attacked and vandalised on Friday.

PHOTO: STAR

Hasina, 58 others sued in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A case has been filed against 59 individuals, including former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, accusing them of attempting to murder a student during an anti-government protest in Dinajpur on August 4.

Fahim Faisal, 22, a resident of Rajbati area in Dinajpur, filed the case at Kotwali Police Station on Friday, claiming he was shot and injured during the demonstration.

Officer-in-Charge of the police station Farid Hossain confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the case statement, Faisal, who participated in the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, was shot during an attack on protesters near Dinajpur Sadar Hospital.

Protesters were assaulted with firearms and local weapons, resulting in multiple injuries to Faisal's face, chest, arms, and other parts of his body. He was treated at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital and recovered partially.

Former whip Iqbalur Rahim, Dinajpur Sadar Upazila Chairman Imdad Sarkar, and general secretary of the district's Jubo League Anwar Hossain are among the accused.