

REVISING TEXTBOOKS

Govt dissolves committee in face of flak

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government yesterday dissolved a committee formed earlier this month to revise the textbooks under the National Curriculum and Textbook Board.

The decision came against the backdrop of sharp criticisms from some quarters for not including Islamic scholars in the 10-member coordination committee for revision of books for primary and secondary schools.

They had also been calling for the exclusion of two members – Samina Luthfa and Kamrul Hassan, both teachers of Dhaka University – for what they said was their anti-religion stance.

Over the last one week, the groups have been writing extensively on social media against the two, while others pledged their support for the teachers.

Samina and Kamrul are members of University Teachers' Network, which played a significant role in the mass uprising that led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina government on August 5.

A member of the now-disbanded committee, requesting anonymity, said the government showed that it would bow down if a quarter made such demands.

Moreover, by branding the two as anti-religion, the groups have put the teachers at "very real risk" of being attacked, said the former member.

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Several thousand residents of the Bhabadaha area in Jashore district suffer for nearly six months every year due to flooding by the Mukteshwari, Teka, Sree and Hori rivers, which have become shallow because of siltation over the years. As the rivers cannot drain the floodwater, mobility remains a challenge in the area for a long time. The problem also affects education and farming greatly.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Stop spread of hate speech

University teachers write to CA

DU CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network yesterday called on the government to stop the spread of hate speech, intolerance and interference in the citizens' freedom of expression.

They made the demands in an open letter, which was emailed to the Chief Adviser's Office.

Gitara Nasreen, a professor of Dhaka University's mass communication and journalism department, read out the letter to reporters at a press conference in Dhaka University Club.

"It's a matter of regret that within just a few weeks of the mass uprising, we are witnessing various intolerant, aggressive and anarchist gatherings in different parts of the country ... Three people were killed in mob violence at three universities. An army officer was killed in an attack while trying to apprehend criminals. People of different ethnicities have been brutally killed in the Chattogram Hill Tracts," the letter read.

"Women are being assaulted, molested and harassed on the streets and in tourist areas. Workers are being oppressed by goons hired by factory owners. In universities, colleges, schools and offices, a number of violent incidents are taking place. Shrines, temples and industrial

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Int'l support garnered to help reforms, growth

Experts say about Yunus' NY trip

PORIMOL PALMA and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

As Bangladesh embarks on a new journey toward freedom and democracy after the July uprising, the international support received by Prof Muhammad Yunus at the UN General Assembly is poised to significantly advance the country's reform and growth initiatives, say foreign policy experts.

The student-led uprising and Yunus's global fame have added unique significance to his presence at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

Experts believe the relationship between the US and Bangladesh will enter a new phase, leading to



increased investment from Western nations and other key countries following Yunus's first ever visit to New York as head of government for the 79th UNGA session and other sideline events.

Yunus's address at the UNGA,

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and meetings with global leaders, including US President Joe Biden, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and heads of the World Bank, IMF, European Commission, USAID and UNDP and other relevant UN agencies signify that his interim government enjoys both political and economic support.

Following a meeting with Yunus, Ajay Banga, president of the World Bank Group, said that the World Bank will provide \$3.5 billion to Bangladesh to support the interim government's reform initiatives.

S Alam's tax file shows no foreign income

MOHAMMAD SUMAN and ZYMA ISLAM



S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam's 2022-2023 tax file is a puzzle. In that tax year, he declared personal assets worth Tk 2,532 crore, but did not show any personal bank loans from Bangladesh or his foreign income.

He, however, declared Tk 2,546 crore in loans from his "relatives". A closer look at his tax file reveals that many of these extremely generous "relatives" are in fact companies owned by him and his family.

These "relatives" include his own companies S Alam & Co., Sonali Traders, Genesis Textile, Accessories and Apparels Ltd, his cousin Ansarul

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Israel kills Hezbollah chief

ME at precipice of 'full-blown war', warn Russia, EU; Tel Aviv vows to destroy Hezbollah; Khamenei swears revenge; Biden says his death 'measure of justice' for his victim

AGENCIES

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has been killed, the Lebanese movement said yesterday, dealing a seismic blow to the Iran-backed group that has been engaged in a year of cross-border hostilities with Israel.

Hezbollah's statement came after the Israeli military said it had killed Nasrallah in an air strike on Beirut's southern suburbs Friday, a move that EU and Russia said risks pushing the Middle East at



the precipice of a "full-blown" war. "Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah, has joined his great, immortal

martyr comrades whom he led for about 30 years," Hezbollah said in a statement.

It said he was killed with other group members "following the treacherous Zionist strike on the southern suburbs" of Beirut.

The killing of Nasrallah has dramatically inflamed fears of a full-scale war in the Middle East – a possibility that US President Joe Biden's administration has been desperately seeking for months to forestall, CNN reported quoting

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Who is Nasrallah?

AGENCIES

Slain Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, whose death was confirmed yesterday by his Iran-backed movement, wielded great power in Lebanon but led a life in hiding to avoid assassination by his group's arch-enemy, Israel.

Lebanon's most powerful man and the only one in the tiny Mediterranean country with the power to wage war, Nasrallah was killed aged 64 in a wave of Israeli strikes on Friday on

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Khamenei moved to a secure location

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has been transferred to a secure location inside the country with heightened security measures in place, two regional officials briefed by Tehran told Reuters.



The sources said Iran was in constant contact with Lebanon's Hezbollah and other regional proxy groups to determine the next step after Israel announced that it had killed Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in a

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A man walks on the rubble of damaged buildings in the aftermath of Israeli air strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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আস্থার সাথে সাফল্যের শীর্ষে

বছরে

আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক

দীর্ঘ ৩০ বছর ধরে আমরা আছি গ্রাহক আস্থার শীর্ষে। ৩৬ লক্ষ গ্রাহকের সাড়ে ৫১ হাজার কোটি টাকার আমানত (জুন'২৪) ও সাড়ে ৪৬ হাজার কোটি টাকার বিনিয়োগের এই বিশাল ক্যানভাসই প্রমাণ করে আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংকের উপর আস্থা রেখেছে গ্রাহক। দেশব্যাপী বিস্তৃত নেটওয়ার্কের মাধ্যমে আমদানি-রপ্তানি, রেমিট্যান্স সংগ্রহ ও বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের নির্দেশনা পরিপালনসহ ব্যাংকিংয়ের সবগুলো সূচকেই সুদৃঢ় অবস্থানে আছে আপনার, আমার, আমাদের আল-আরাফাহ্ ইসলামী ব্যাংক। এভাবেই আমরা এগিয়ে যেতে চাই সমৃদ্ধির পথে আপনাদের সাথে।

আল-আরাফাহ্ aib ইসলামী ব্যাংক পিএলসি।

India lifts ban on non-basmati rice export

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India yesterday withdrew its 14-month-long blanket ban on the export of non-basmati white rice with immediate effect but imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of \$490 per tonne.

The neighbouring country has also slashed the export duty on parboiled rice from 20 percent to 10 percent, according to a notification from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade.

Indian rice exporters welcomed the decision, terming it as a "game-changer" for the sector, our New Delhi correspondent reports.

However, rice importers and mill owners are unlikely to take up on the opportunity due to the 67 import duty, adequate rice production at home and the depreciation of taka, said Chitta Majumder, adviser of Bangladesh Rice Mill Owners Association.



A worker packaging hilsa for shipment to India ahead of Durga Puja. The photo was taken on Friday at a fish market on Port Road in Barishal. PHOTO: TITU DAS

7 die of dengue in a single day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven more people died of dengue in the country yesterday, the highest in a single day this year so far. As of yesterday, 67 people died of dengue this month alone, with seven of them being children.

Meanwhile, the total number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease has risen to 150 this year. Among them, 82 patients died in different hospitals under Dhaka South City Corporation.

In 24 hours till yesterday morning, 860 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of them, 195 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals under Dhaka North City Corporation, while 181 were hospitalised in Dhaka South City Corporation.

Some 3,174 patients are receiving treatment in different hospitals across the country.

Of those who died yesterday, 52 percent were women and 48 percent were men.

Two patients died in Chattogram and Dhaka divisions each, while one patient each died in Barishal division, DNCC, and DSCC areas.

A total of 28,565 dengue cases have been reported since January 1, 2024.

Last year, 1,705 people lost their lives due to dengue, making it the deadliest year on record.

The DGHS recorded 321,179 cases and 3,18,749 recoveries last year.

Govt dissolves committee in face of flak

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"They are already being told to avoid public transport and being outdoors alone. Who will take the responsibility if the teachers are now attacked?" asked the former member.

Rushad Faridi, assistant professor of economics at DU, said those who were not happy with the committee could raise questions about the competence of individuals in the committee.

"But they are simply terming certain members 'anti-religion' and demanding that they be dropped. These claims are creating instability and conflict in society. These teachers are already cancelling prescheduled events due to safety concerns," he said.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami on September 22 urged the interim government to include in the national textbook review and revision committee at least two Islamic scholars: one from Alia madrasa background and another from Qawmi.

Islamic Andolon Bangladesh also demanded inclusion of Islamic scholars in the committee.

Asked if the government disbanded the committee because of the pressure, NCTB Chairman Prof AKM Reazul Hassan said, "I have no knowledge of the matter. But disbanding the committee will not affect the NCTB's task of revising the textbooks."

The government formed the committee as the NCTB decided to discontinue the new national curriculum and restore the old one from 2025.

Contacted last night, Education Adviser Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud said, "We dissolved this committee because there was no need for such a committee."

Specialists from both Islamic and general streams of education are at the final stage of revising the textbooks.

"We have not dissolved the committee because of anyone's demand," he added.

Sheikh Abdur Rashid, senior secretary at the Secondary and Higher Education Division, said textbook revision was a continuous process and there was no need for a coordination committee.

He added that the government is not likely to form any such committee in near future.

The NCTB is responsible for the development of curriculums, production and distribution of textbooks at primary and secondary education.

Earlier in June this year, the NCTB removed a story titled "Sharifa's Tale" from the 7th grade history and social science book amid criticisms from Islamist groups.

In February 2023, it dropped two textbooks "History and Social Science: An Inquiry-based Reader" for 6th and 7th graders, giving in to the pressure from different Islamist groups that said the books were promoting the "debatable" Darwin's theory of evolution and demeaning the Islamic attire for women.

An NCTB official said no textbooks have been fully withdrawn since at least 2010.

In 2017, writings of famous authors were dropped because Islamists disliked them, said a former NCTB member, who was involved in the process. He added the exclusions were done on instructions from "higher authorities".

Int'l support garnered to help reforms, growth

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The UNGA served as a platform for the interim government to communicate to leaders from nearly 200 countries the circumstances surrounding Yunus's appointment as head of government, the challenges it faces, and the reform initiatives he has launched.

"Prof Yunus executed this task in the best possible way," said former Bangladesh ambassador to the US, M Humayun Kabir, also the president of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

"The chief adviser ticked all the boxes. He met key personalities and touched upon all the important issues – political, economic, human rights, humanitarian, climate change – as well as regional and global matters," he told The Daily Star.

Humayun said that Yunus's rare meeting with the US president was particularly significant, as the latter pledged full support for the interim government's reform initiatives.

"The US-Bangladesh relationship, which had been strained during the previous Awami League regime, has now entered a new phase."

The initiatives aimed at improving governance across critical sectors like finance, labour, and democracy, with an emphasis on youth, align well with the values of Western democracies, the former diplomat said.

Yunus reached New York on September 23. He was scheduled to return home at 2:15am today.

During his four-day stay in New York, the chief adviser participated in some 40 big events on the sidelines of the UNGA, his Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told UNB.

The interim government has demonstrated its political will to improving human rights by inviting a UN Fact-Finding Mission to investigate

the human rights abuses that occurred during the July uprising, and by establishing an inquiry commission to probe enforced disappearances.

Yunus further conveyed to the international community that six commissions have already been formed to facilitate reforms in various sectors, with additional commissions planned. The government will implement essential political, economic, and governance reforms based on their recommendations and consultations with stakeholders before the parliamentary elections.

"We now have a strong international support base and the financial resources we need. It's time for us to deliver," said Humayun.

The young people had called for an end to discrimination and the establishment of social justice and democracy, emphasising that reforms must align with their expectations, he said.

SK Tawfique M Haque, a professor of political science at North South University, said warm reception for Prof Yunus from global leaders and the commitment of several billion dollars for Bangladesh will give a huge boost to both foreign and local businesses.

"We can expect increased investment in Bangladesh from Western nations," he told The Daily Star.

Analysts noted that many foreign investors, particularly from the West, had been hesitant to investing in Bangladesh due to a lack of conducive business environment. Prof Yunus has pledged to improve labour rights and the overall business environment.

This initiative, along with the development of green industries, is crucial for Bangladesh which will lose its trade privileges upon graduating

from LDC status to developing nation in 2026. Therefore, creating a competitive business environment is vital for sustaining in the post-LDC era.

"These are the areas where we need to work a lot. The international community is supportive and we must leverage that," said Humayun.

Keeping the regional perspectives in mind, Prof Yunus met Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu. While there was no meeting between Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain met Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

The chief adviser also held talks with UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk, UN Refugee Agency Chief Filippo Grandi and International Criminal Court Chief Prosecutor Karim AA Khan.

"There may be a shift in Bangladesh's Rohingya policy as Prof Yunus aligns more closely with international standards. This could encourage the international community to increase funding and renew their focus," said Prof Tawfique.

He said that while Bangladesh's relationship with the US has reached a new height, the country must remain cautious due to its geographical position, bordered by India and close to China.

"Socio-economic development is our priority. We will definitely uphold democracy and human rights, and avoid doing anything that could lead to a conflict with any foreign nation," Tawfique said.

Bangladesh's foreign relations must be rooted in mutual interest and respect, said Humayun.

Israel kills Hezbollah chief

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current and former US officials.

Hezbollah will almost certainly respond, according to Jonathan Panikoff, a former senior intelligence official specialising in the region, and Iran is likely to play a role.

"The response is likely to be big enough that the odds it will prompt a full-scale war will skyrocket," Panikoff said.

The strike was also a clear signal of Israel's willingness to risk a broader conflict, and that it was not close to accepting a ceasefire proposal backed by the US, according to Mick Mulroy, a former top Middle East official at the Defense Department. Hezbollah is also now unlikely to be interested in the negotiations.

Amid condemnations from Arab countries and calls for ceasefire from Western powers, Biden described Nasrallah's death as a measure of justice for what he called the Hezbollah chief's many victims, including thousands of Americans, Israelis and Lebanese, and said the US fully supported Israel's right to self-defence.

Leading Republicans in the House of Representatives also welcomed the end of a "reign of bloodshed, oppression, and terror" by "one of the most brutal terrorists on the planet".

On Friday, Biden ordered US forces in the Middle East to be adjusted "as necessary".

"He has directed the Pentagon to assess and adjust as necessary US force posture in the region to enhance deterrence, ensure force protection, and support the full range of US objectives," the White House said in a statement.

Biden also ordered US embassies in the region to "take all protective measures as appropriate," it said.

A senior member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, deputy commander Abbas Nilforoushan, was also killed in the Israeli attacks in Beirut on Friday, Iranian media

reported yesterday.

Strikes continued on Beirut's southern suburbs throughout the early evening yesterday, according to a Reuters live broadcast, sending large clouds of smoke over the city.

The Lebanon violence has raised fears of a wider spillover, with Iran-backed militants across the Middle East vowing to keep fighting Israel.

In Israel, air raid sirens sounded across the centre of the country yesterday – including Tel Aviv – and large bangs were heard after a missile was fired from Yemen and intercepted, according to the Israeli military.

Hezbollah said in a statement that it would continue its battle against Israel "in support of Gaza and Palestine, and in defence of Lebanon and its steadfast and honourable people".

Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said his country was facing the threat of danger, without mentioning the death of Nasrallah. His office later announced three days of mourning for the Hezbollah chief.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Nasrallah's killing would be avenged. He also declared five-day mourning for the slain leader, as did Iraq.

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref denounced the "unjust bloodshed" and threatened that Nasrallah's killing will bring about Israel's "destruction".

Rarely seen in public, Nasrallah had enjoyed cult status among his Shia Muslim supporters, and was the only man in Lebanon with the power to wage war or make peace.

"Hassan Nasrallah is dead," Israeli Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani announced earlier on X. He said there was "still a way to go" in Israel's fight against Hezbollah.

Military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, in a televised briefing, called Nasrallah "one of the greatest enemies of the State of Israel of all time" and added: "His elimination makes the world a safer place."

Stop spread of hate speech

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establishments are being vandalised while Bauls and Ahmadiyyas have also been attacked.

"We think these incidents are related to various unresolved issues and the lack of democracy that has prevailed in the society for long. If this continues, the sense of insecurity among the citizens will only intensify, and the government will have to face more problems in overcoming the crisis."

It added, "In this transitional period, it's necessary for the current government to play its role in an unquestionable manner, and take immediate action. Those spreading hateful remarks...and those attacking people of different communities and identities and interfering with the citizens' freedom of expression must be stopped."

In response to a query, Gitiara said, "Disrespecting someone's faith, using hateful words, launching attacks – no tolerant culture can be established in this manner. Everyone should believe that everyone deserves dignity. The government's action in this regard is not visible. There should be a message from the policymakers and advisory bodies. We want a clear message [from them] that these [intolerance, aggression and violence] aren't acceptable."

Professor Saeed Ferdous of Jahangirnagar University said, "Intolerant voices seem to be getting stronger in the society. Various hegemonic voices are emerging to

block the voices of different races, religious identities and political beliefs. [They are] Spreading hate. We want the government's quick intervention in such matters. There was so much blood ... Such a boulder was brought down ... If we're now in a place where the same kind of hatred is being spread, then how will it work?"

He also said the government should hold dialogues with the members of society who are showing intolerance and, if necessary, to suppress the intolerance with a strong hand. "If it's necessary to apply the rule of law, then the rule of law should be applied."

Asked about on-campus student politics, he said, "We aren't against politics, but we're definitely against intolerance, hatred and occupation in the name of politics."

Rushad Faridi, assistant professor of economics at DU, posed a question to the chief adviser about whether there are any signs of an inclusive society being formed. "Some teachers are working on textbook reforms. Their qualifications can be questioned. But instead, people are demanding their removal by tagging them as 'anti-religion'. Such demands are causing unrest and conflict in the society."

Nasir Uddin Ahmed, a teacher of Jagannath University, said, "Student politics is the basis on which autocratic governments fall. Politics will continue. But it should be welfare-centred."

S Alam's tax file shows no foreign income

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Alam Chowdhury's company M/S Ansar Enterprise, his brothers and company directors Osman Gani and Abdullah Hasan, among others.

Ansarul Alam was detained at the Shah Amanat International Airport on September 2, 2024, over allegations of taking bank loans worth over Tk 1,970 crore in the names of shell companies.

S Alam himself is currently under the scanner in connection with alleged laundering of thousands of crores from Bangladesh through astronomical borrowing from his family-owned banks. Government regulators are also looking into his offshore empire.

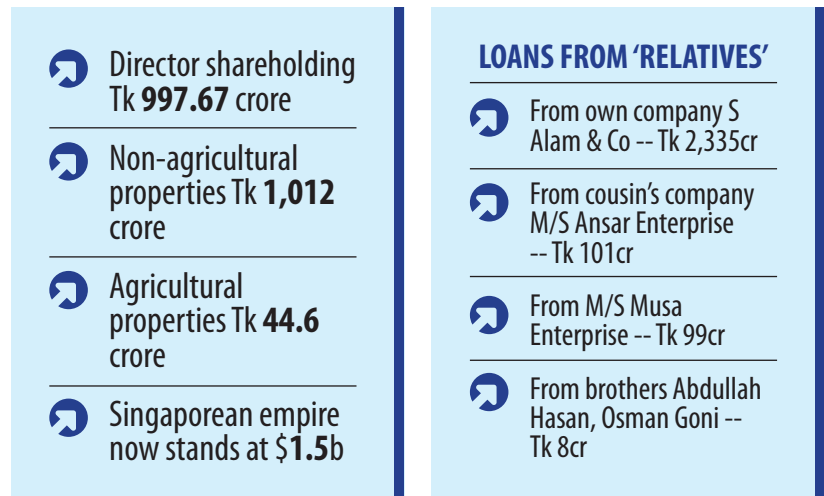
Last year, an investigation by The Daily Star found that he has built a business empire in Singapore worth at least about \$1 billion, although there is no record of him taking any permission from Bangladesh Bank to invest or transfer any funds abroad.

That figure of \$1 billion was based on his company 2021 filings with Singapore's Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority. The Daily Star has now obtained his filings of 2022, which show that his wealth there rose to \$1.5 billion.

Just three days ago on September 26, The Daily Star has reported that SS Power, a company owned by S Alam Group, has laundered \$815 million (nearly Tk 10,000 crore) to China through two LCs using fake invoices. The matter is now under investigation by regulators.

Earlier in August this year, this newspaper reported that S Alam Group and its concerns took out Tk 95,331 crore since 2017 from six banks, with 79 percent of the amount coming from Islami Bank.

According to his 2022-23 Bangladesh tax file, S Alam lent Tk 330 crore to his three sons, his mother, his brother and 11 companies owned by



him and his sons.

The highest amount of his loans – Tk 2,335 crore – from "relatives" comes from his parent company S Alam & Co. His total liabilities stood at Tk 2,215 crore, while his net worth was Tk 303 crore last year.

However, his tax return shows no foreign income, although financial statements of his Singaporean company show his business empire there is expanding.

His company, Wilkinson International, had an annual turnover of over \$77 million or Tk 924 crore in the year ending December 2022 and made a profit of \$2.6 million (Tk 30.85 crore). This period covers the first six months of the Bangladesh tax year for which S Alam said he had no foreign income.

His total income in 2022-23 from Bangladesh sources is about Tk 30 crore, according to his tax filing.

Wilkinson International was founded by S Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen on August 27, 2009,

with Alam controlling 70 percent, and his wife the rest 30 percent.

The couple resigned as directors from Wilkinson on December 16, 2020, and transferred ownership to an offshore entity, Peacock Property Holdings Ltd, in the British Virgin Islands. An infamous tax haven, British Virgin Islands is a secrecy jurisdiction, and companies are not legally obliged to name their shareholders or directors on any official filings.

Wilkinson's financial statement also says that in 2022, the company received \$498 million or Tk 5,949 crore in financing.

The Daily Star could not reach S Alam by phone and WhatsApp as his phone was found switched off.

Awrongjob Khan, deputy commissioner of taxes, confirmed that S Alam never reported his foreign income in his tax return.

Under tax rules of 1984 and 2023, declaration of foreign income is mandatory. Violation of the rules can be penalised by monetary fines and confiscation of assets.

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RTI act needs reform

Says Iftekharuzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), yesterday emphasised the need for reforms in the Right to Information (RTI) Act and the Information Commission to uphold the spirit of the July Revolution.

He made the remarks during a discussion at the Information Commission's auditorium, marking International Day for Universal Access to Information 2024.

"When the RTI Act was first introduced, it was seen as a victory for citizens, but over time, it has become clear that it remains largely symbolic," said Iftekharuzzaman.

He stressed the importance of direct recruitment within the Information Commission, asserting that the commission should not be defined solely by its commissioners, who must be appointed impartially.

"The commissioners should be nonpartisan, ensuring the commission's credibility," he added.

He criticised the entrenched mindset among officials, saying, "Many officials treat information as their personal asset, but in reality, it belongs to the people. Public officials should understand their role as custodians of information, not gatekeepers."



He also called for an end to the practice of withholding information, a problem that has persisted since the past.

Iftekharuzzaman urged that the RTI Act be used as a tool for empowering citizens and promoting transparency.

Freedom of speech, the right to dissent, and the free flow of information are essential elements of the student-led movement. Ensuring the unrestricted flow of information is critical for building a transparent, accountable, and corruption-free Bangladesh.

"Freedom of speech, the right to dissent, and the free flow of information are essential elements of the student-led movement. Ensuring the unrestricted flow of information is critical for building a transparent, accountable, and corruption-free Bangladesh," he said.

Information Commission Director SM Kamrul Islam chaired the event, while the secretary in charge of Information and Broadcasting Ministry Md Nazrul Islam also spoke.



Even on a weekend, Dhaka streets did not fail to wear their usual weekday look, with long tailbacks being formed in different parts of the city. The photo was taken at the Mayor Hanif Flyover in the Jatrabari area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Interim govt
relying too
much on
bureaucracy'

Hossain Zillur
Rahman tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The incumbent interim government has increased its dependence on "ordinary bureaucracy" rather than implementing significant changes in the administrative system, said former adviser to a caretaker government Hossain Zillur Rahman.

He was speaking at a book review event at Pathak Samabesh in the capital yesterday.

He expressed concern that the government appeared to be doubling down on a "colonial bureaucracy" rather than pursuing reform.

Zillur urged citizens to take responsibility for enacting positive societal changes rather than placing the entire burden on the interim government.

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VIOLENCE IN RAMU

12 years on, justice remains elusive

Failure to punish offenders fuel further communal attacks, say experts

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Twelve years after the communal attacks on the Buddhist community in Ramu, Cox's Bazar, justice remains elusive as no trial has been completed in any of the 18 cases filed over the incident.

Not a single perpetrator has been convicted and legal experts argue that failure to deliver justice in previous attacks on minority communities, such as those after the 2001 national elections, has emboldened further attacks, including those at Nasirnagar in Brahmanbaria in 2016 and the widespread violence following the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5 this year.

On September 29-30, 2012, violence erupted in Ramu after rumours spread that a Facebook post by a local Buddhist youth, Uttam Barua, had demeaned Islam.



The attackers torched temples and looted more than 50 homes in Ramu. Further attacks took place in Ukhiya and Teknaf upazilas, targeting Buddhist and Hindu temples and homes.

An investigation by The Daily Star revealed that Uttam Barua's

Facebook account may have been hacked, with a doctored image used to provoke the attacks. Barua has been missing ever since.

The cases filed following the violence are still pending in various courts in Cox's Bazar.

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Committee
launched
to protect
Buddhists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an aim to unite the country's Buddhist citizens under one platform, the Bangladesh Buddhist Community Protection Committee was officially launched yesterday.

Bhedanta Buddhapriyo Mahathero, president of Bangladesh Bauddha Kristi Prachar Sangha, has been made president of the newly launched 51-member committee, said its member secretary Ashok Barua during a press conference held at Sagar Runi Auditorium of Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

"In the aftermath of the student-led mass uprising, there has been a spree of incidents of violence, communal conflict, and attacks on Buddhist monasteries and religious institutions across different parts of the country. The recent deadly clashes

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

MINORITY COMMUNITIES
122 incidents of
attacks since Aug 5
Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There have been at least 122 incidents of attacks on minorities across the country since the ouster of Awami League government on August 5.

Minority Rights Movement, a platform for minority communities, revealed information yesterday at a press conference held in front of the National Museum in Dhaka.

The platform placed eight-point demands, including: conducting trials of post-August 5 attacks on minorities through fast-track tribunals, providing compensation and rehabilitation to the victims of communal violence, enacting a Minority Protection Act, establishing a Ministry

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



For the past six years, 60-year-old Badsha Fakir has been selling stones he claims can change fortunes, seashells that "ease stomach pain," and rubber rings that supposedly relieve aches. Priced between Tk 500 and Tk 1,500, these trinkets attract many hopeful customers seeking miracles, despite there being no actual evidence that they will actually bring the promised results. The photo was taken on a footpath in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

COMBATING NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Stringent tobacco control a crying need

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers comprising health experts and physicians yesterday called for stringent control on use of tobacco products in order to combat the alarming rise of non-communicable diseases.

A growing number of NCDs, including cardiac complications, cancer and diabetes, have been linked to consumption of tobacco products, they said at a workshop titled, "Empowering Young Physicians for Tobacco Control in Bangladesh", organised by the National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute.

Prof Khandaker Abdul Awal Rizvi, president of the National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh, presided over the event.

Prof Fazila Tun-Nessa Malik, the foundation's general secretary, urged young physicians to play a proactive role in educating the public about harmful effects of tobacco and advocating for tobacco control measures.

In the keynote speech, Prof Sohel Reza Choudhury, head of the foundation's

Epidemiology and Research Department, warned about the growing influence of tobacco companies promoting e-cigarettes, particularly targeting the youth through misleading marketing strategies, and demanded a complete ban on all forms of e-cigarettes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase tax on tobacco products
- Strengthen tobacco control laws
- Halt tobacco companies' ad campaigns
- Enforce nationwide ban on e-cigarettes

Prof Safiun Nahin Shimul of the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University, recommended for a drastic increase in cigarette prices, coupled with effective taxation.

Doctors attending the workshop made four key recommendations for controlling tobacco use: increasing taxes on tobacco

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Watermelon in fish farms

A game changer for farmers in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Around 6,200 farmers across nine upazilas of Khulna have been cultivating off-season watermelon on approximately 919 hectares of land in fish farms.

This innovative method has boosted yields, profits, and enthusiasm among farmers.

In Dumuria upazila alone, around 2,250 farmers are growing watermelon on nearly 305 hectares of fish farms, producing 30-35 tonnes per hectare.

The total production in the upazila is estimated to be worth around Tk 40 crore, according to the Department of Agricultural Extension.

During a visit to several integrated farms in Dumuria, this correspondent saw watermelon being cultivated on raised bamboo platforms along fish enclosures, with fruits wrapped in net bags to protect them from pests and damage.

The watermelon variety, 'Astha', starts yielding fruit within 60-62 days and can often be harvested three times per season. This dark-green variety has seen rising demand, especially when regular watermelons are unavailable.

"I cultivated 'Astha' on 40 decimals of land along my fish enclosures. The fruits weigh 4-8kg and sell for Tk 35-40 per kg. I spent around Tk 25,000

and have already sold watermelons worth Tk 1,20,000. Traders come to us, so we don't need to take the produce to market," said Mirtunjoy, a local farmer.

Farmer Afzal Hossain added, "It's a profitable crop with minimal cost and effort. Even heavy rains cause little damage due to the elevated banks of the enclosures."

A similar scenario was observed in Batiaghata upazila.

Md Insad Ibne Amin, Dumuria's upazila agriculture officer, said a decade ago, farmers were unfamiliar with this method. "With

guidance from DAE and cooperation among themselves, farmers have profited from integrated fish farming and watermelon cultivation," he said.

Pintu Mallik, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Batiaghata, pointed out that watermelon seeds are imported from countries like Thailand, Japan, and India, though high seed costs and limited storage facilities are challenges.

Kazi Jahangir Hossain, deputy director of DAE in Khulna, said the practice has positively impacted the region's agriculture and economy but emphasised the need for affordable, improved seed varieties and better storage facilities.



Locals carry fishing traps home after purchasing them from a market in Khulna. These traps are typically placed in water when canals overflow during the monsoon season, catching various native fish such as puti, bele, and taki. The demand for such traps rises during the rainy season, with prices ranging from Tk 800 to Tk 1,200 depending on size and quality. This photo was taken at Phultala upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Incomplete work, full payment

Contractors withdraw bill for unfinished Ratnai river dam work

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Allegations of widespread irregularities have surfaced in connection with the work on a river protection embankment on Ratnai river in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

Even though only around 25 percent of the work has been completed so far, the contractors went on to withdraw the total bill for the project.

Officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board said the work to place geotextiles and dump sand-filled geo-bags along the 200-metre embankment at a cost of Tk 20 lakh began in May-June 2023.

Asaduzzaman Nannu, a local Awami League leader and also chairman of Durgapur union parishad, and Ershad Ali, brother of former social welfare minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed's APS Mizanur Rahman, got the work as contractors.

Till June 2023, the contractors only placed geotextiles on the embankment but did not

dump sand-filled geo-bags, thereby leaving most of the work incomplete. However, they collected the entire bill, while abandoning the rest of the work.

"The incomplete work left the embankment vulnerable. Eventually the river breached the embankment recently and devoured seven

Anwar Hossain, a local UP member, alleged that Ershad had abused political influence to get away with the irregularities even though he was repeatedly urged to complete the work for the embankment.

Ershad declined to comment in this regard. Asaduzzaman is on the run since the fall of the AL



homesteads of Dakshin Gobdha village in Durgapur union, while leaving many other houses and vast stretches of arable lands under threat," said Abdul Khalek, a local.

Locals submitted a written complaint to the BWDB authorities in Lalmonirhat recently.

government on August 5.

"We've received a written complaint from the villagers. The site will be inspected soon and necessary steps will be taken if any irregularity is found in the work," said Shunil Kumar, executive engineer of BWDB in Lalmonirhat.

Interim govt

FROM PAGE 3

"Today, the responsibility for bringing positive change should not rest solely on the shoulders of the interim government. Every citizen must play a part," he said.

He further warned that while the "autocratic government" has been ousted, a few oligarchs who collaborated with it may attempt to regain influence by using vast amounts of money.

Prominent economist, Anu Muhammad, criticised the recently ousted Awami League government for trying to maintain power by appeasing the military and several business groups. He argued that the interim government lacks a clear roadmap or specific targets in its action plan and expressed concern over recent attacks on minority communities. "Why should minorities feel insecure? We have not seen any effective measures addressing this issue," he said.

The book review programme was centred on Songkote Gonotontro (Democracy in Crisis), authored by senior journalist Amir Khasru.

Several writers, retired military officers, and journalists were present.

Two more

FROM PAGE 5

admitted their involvement in the killing, Rab added.

Later, the army filed a case with Chakaria Police Station regarding the arrests.

With these latest arrests, a total of nine people have been arrested in connection with the murder of Lt Tanjim, Officer-in-Charge Manzur Kader Bhuyan told The Daily Star.

The Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR), in a statement yesterday, said at least 17 people were involved in the killing.

Five locally made guns, 14 rounds of bullets, and a knife have been recovered from the arrestees so far. The Bangladesh Army will continue to conduct operations to arrest the other robbers involved in the killing, the ISPR statement added.



Need proper

FROM PAGE 5

of proper reformation," he added.

Shafiqur also said they have forgiven Awami League for oppressing their party, but they will never forgive the mass killings conducted by the AL government. "We want justice for every killing," he said.

The party's district unit ameer Abu Taleb Mondol chaired the rally.

Earlier, Shafiqur met with the families of the martyred students during the student movement in Pabna.

122 incidents of attacks since

FROM PAGE 3

for Minority Affairs, upgrading the Hindu Religious Welfare Trust to Hindu Foundation, upgrading the Buddhist and Christian welfare trusts to foundations as well, introducing laws for the recovery and protection of Debottor (religious endowment) properties, properly implementing the Vested Property Return Act, and extending the Durga Puja holiday to five days.

Addressing the briefing, Antu Roy, convener of the platform, claimed none of these attacks were politically

motivated. "The current interim government, media, and police administration are all trying to cover up these incidents by labelling those as politically motivated attacks," he alleged.

"That's why we have compiled this list through field investigations. We visited these locations to verify the incidents first hand. However, the incidents reported from Khulna have not been included yet, as our probe is still ongoing there," he said.

Antu Roy demanded security for members of the minority communities,

as well as justice and compensation for the victims of communal attacks. Representatives of the platform Bakul Barman, Susmita Kar, Sukanto Barman, Banamali Barman, also Linkon Datta also spoke.

PRAYER TIMING					
SEPTEMBER 29					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:15	6:00	7:30	
JAMAAT 5:10	1:15	4:30	6:05	8:00	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

Stringent

FROM PAGE 3

products, strengthening existing tobacco control laws, halting tobacco companies' advertising campaigns, and instituting a nationwide ban on e-cigarettes and vapes.

Md Aatur Rahman Masud and Md Mostafizur Rahman, advocacy manager and lead policy adviser respectively of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Bangladesh, and Sharf Uddin Ahmed Choudhury, adviser to the NHFB's Tobacco Control Programme, also spoke among others.

12 years on, justice remains elusive

FROM PAGE 3

Many of the accused are out on bail, and no significant progress has been made in the legal proceedings.

Additionally, two public interest litigation writs filed with the High Court have stalled due to a lack of initiative by the lawyers involved.

Human rights activists and legal experts, including Supreme Court lawyers ZI Khan Panna and Manzill Murshid, cite the involvement of local influential figures in the attacks as a major reason for the lack of progress.

According to them, politically connected individuals often escape accountability, and investigations are hampered by a lack of autonomy within the police force.

Advocate Panna stressed the need for honest and competent judges to ensure a fair trial, while Advocate Murshid called for police reforms to allow for impartial investigations.

Advocate Syed Rezaur Rahman, the public prosecutor of Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court, confirmed that all the cases remain

pending. The former PP, Advocate Md Faridul Alam, suggested that many victims of the Ramu attacks are not actively pursuing the cases, as they were given new houses and pagodas by the previous Sheikh Hasina-led government, which garnered their support.

Despite this, the broader issue of communal violence against minorities remains unresolved, and the absence of justice for the victims of the Ramu attacks underscores the ongoing vulnerability of these communities.

WRIT PETITIONS
On October 2 and 3, 2012, Supreme Court lawyers Md Eunus Ali Akond and Jyotirmoy Barua filed two petitions with the HC, seeking action against the attackers and negligent local officials. Despite probe reports identifying both the perpetrators and the officials' failure to prevent the attacks, the HC has yet to issue a verdict.

The final hearing remains pending due to the reconstitution of its bench and the apparent lack of initiative from the lawyers in progressing the

petitions. **PROBE REPORTS**
The probe reports were submitted to an HC bench led by Justice Mirza Hussain Haider, now retired. Before his elevation to the Appellate Division, the bench's jurisdiction was reconstituted by the then chief justice.

One report, submitted on May 16, 2013, revealed the failure of local administration, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies in preventing the attacks. Conducted by a judicial body, the investigation identified 298 people responsible and made 20 recommendations, including improving administrative competence, regulating social media posts, and promoting patriotism, according to HC sources.

A separate police-led probe identified failures by the then Superintendent of Police Selim Md Jahangir and the Officer-in-Charge of Ramu Police Station, AK Nazibul Islam.

While action was recommended against the OC, none was suggested for the superintendent.

The home ministry's final report listed 205 individuals involved, saying the violence was planned at least 10 days in advance.

The petitioners, including Advocate Akond, have shown reluctance in moving the petitions forward, contributing to delays in the HC's final decision.

Advocate Akond told The Daily Star that he would not seek a hearing as no HC bench was willing to take up the matter.

Committee

FROM PAGE 3

between hill and Bangalee communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts have also caused significant concern. We demand exemplary punishment for the perpetrators, as well as compensation for the victims," he said.

The committee has been formed through the coordination of four leading Buddhist organisations: Bangladesh Buddha Kristi Prachar Sangha, Bangladesh Buddhist Federation, Bangladesh Buddha Samiti Dhaka Region, and Bangladesh Buddha Jubo Parishad.



Position Vacancy Announcement

Position: **Project Management Specialist (Budget), FSN - 10**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bangladesh is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals for the position of **Project Management Specialist (Budget), FSN - 10** in the Office of Population, Health, and Nutrition (OPHN) Location: USAID/Bangladesh, Deadline for application submission: October 13, 2024.

For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit USAID/Bangladesh.

website: <http://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/work-with-us/careers> and www.bdjobs.com

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Office of the Natore Pourashava

Natore

Memo No. Nat. Pou/Engr. Div/ADB/2024/1619

Date: 26/09/2024

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-2025 Limited Tendering Method (LTM)

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

SL No	ID Tender	Package No.	Name of works	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & opening Date & Time
1	1017531	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-1	Rehabilitation of BC road starting from Hajra Natore behind of Collector School to Alwo NGO (Ch 0.0 to 234.0m) In ward no 03, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		
2	1017563	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-2	Maintenance of BC road at Bongojol Rajebari staff quarter (Ch 0.0 to 186.5m) in ward no 01, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		
3	1017569	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-3	(a) Maintenance of BC at Natore Pourashava Premises (Ch 0.0 to 13.4m) in ward no 06. (b) Maintenance of BC road starting from Molikhati Ghose Para more to Fanchi Semal factory (Ch 0.0 to 180.0m) in ward no 05 (c) Maintenance of BC road at Borohoripur Gunarigram road in front of zomzom tower (Ch 0.0 to 76.5m) In ward no-03 under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		
4	1017571	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-4	Maintenance of pump house Roof at (a) Horishpur Chairman road ward no 03 (b) Horishpur Mola bazar ward no 03 (c) Potuapara Jolok pump no 01 ward no 02 (d) Potuapara pump no 02 ward no 02 (e) Rothbari ward no 01 (f) Alipur upshore ward no 06 (g) Molikhati PTI ward no 05 (h) Kandivita ward no 05 (i) Alipur DPHE pump no 01 ward no 06 (j) Alipur DPHE pump no 02 ward no 06 (k) Chockbodho nath para ward no 09 (l) Maintenance of roof at Pouro Bhaban ward no 06 (m) Construction of CC road starting from Kanikhal Adv. Khogandonth house to North direction Goradar house (Ch 0.0 to 59.5m) in ward no 04 under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.	14/10/2024 at 15.00pm	15/10/2024 at 12.00pm
5	1017577	NAT-ADB/24-25/Special-23-24/W-5	Construction of RCC Drain starting from Bolaripara Shanto Tailors to Existing RHD Drain (Ch 0.00 to 46.0m) in ward no 03, under Natore Pourashava. During the year 2024-2025.		

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not 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 banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (The bill will be paid when fund revived)

DOWNPOUR IN JASHORE

52 SCHOOLS WATERLOGGED

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

Swelling rivers following incessant rains recently flooded the low-lying areas in Jashore's Manirampur upazila, leaving at least 52 educational institutions submerged.

The situation has disrupted academic activities severely, including several schools being compelled to announce closure.

Sources at the upazila education office revealed that floodwaters inundated at least 52 educational institutions in Nehalpur, Kultia, Manoharpur and Durbadanga unions under the upazila.

Among those, Hatgachha Govt Primary School, BHMS Lower Secondary Girls' School, and Hatgachha Secondary School have suspended their academic activities amid the situation, while eight others including Mashiahati Degree College, Kultiya Girls' School, Bajje Kultiya Govt Primary School, and Mashiahati



Secondary School may have to announce closure soon.

Visiting various schools in the upazila, this correspondent observed that students were going through immense sufferings, being compelled to tread through waist to knee

deep water to attend classes, while many educational institutions were seen conducting classes with the classrooms submerged.

The inundated roads adjacent to the schools were facing severe traffic

congestion. Several schools were seen to have installed makeshift bamboo bridges to allow students enter school compounds safely.

"Downpour over the past few days caused water to accumulate on the school

ground and submerge the classrooms. Students have been facing difficulties to attend classes... They are also being deprived of sports activities as the school ground is flooded," said Mamata Rani, headteacher of Alipur Govt Primary School.

Utpal Biswas, senior teacher of Lakhaidanga Secondary School, echoed her.

Sanjit Kumar Biswas, headmaster of Hatgachha Secondary School, said the classes have been suspended due to the ongoing unavoidable situation, and the matter has been informed to the upazila secondary education office.

Akram Hossain, secondary education officer of Manirampur upazila, said, "We have received written applications from five schools that are facing severe waterlogging on school grounds and in classrooms, and may have to announce closure. We advised the teachers to continue academic activities through alternative methods."

Need proper reforms before election

Says Jamaat ameer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pubna

Jamaat e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday said they want the country to go through proper reforms before an election.

An acceptable election can only be held after a thorough reform, he said.

He was speaking as chief guest in a rally, organised by Pabna district unit of Jamaat, held at the Pabna Edward College yesterday afternoon.

"We want to give a logical amount of time to the interim government before holding the election so that they can make proper reforms in different sectors. Through the path of such reforms, we can have a fair and acceptable election," said Dr Shafiqur. The roadmap for the reformation should be fixed after holding discussions with political parties, he also said.

Appreciating the initiative of the interim government, the Jamaat Ameer said this government has been formed through a revolution, so they have to do a lot.

"If the interim government fails, then the entire nation will fail. So they have to be successful, and we have to help this government for the sake

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Excavation work turns bridge on Fanai river risky

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

A 24-meter paved bridge over the Fanai river in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila has become hazardous for vehicles and pedestrians due to damage caused by river excavation.

The bridge, constructed by the Local Government Engineering Department in 1997-98 fiscal year, connects the Lakshimpur-Hashimpur road in the upazila.

Bangladesh Water Development Board in 2021-22 FY excavated a 40-kilometre stretch of Fanai river at a cost of around Tk 17 crore.

"The excavation caused substantial damage to both the bridge and connecting road. Excavation equipment disturbed the soil around the bridge's central pillar, causing it to tilt and eventual sink as the river's water level rose during onrush of upstream waters," said Alauddin Kabir, a local resident and journalist.

Also, before the excavation was completed, heavy rains caused collapse of the Rangichhara-Lakshimpur-Gutguti road at several points, he added.

About 100 feet stretch of the road has so far collapsed along the embankment on the east end of the bridge, posing risk of the bridge collapsing any time, while leaving the route extremely risky for movement.

Approximately 20,000 people from Purshai, Bhatgaon, Deogaon, Hasimpur, Beri, Rangichhara, Nortan, Kabiraji, and Palgram villages rely on the bridge for access to Kulaura upazila headquarters and Rangichhara Bazaar.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw a signboard on the east side of the bridge that reads: "Dangerous bridge, traffic prohibited, by order of the authorities."

Roshan Ali, a local resident,

urged authorities concerned to construct a new bridge and repair the damaged road.

Tarek Bin Islam, an engineer of LGED in Kulaura upazila, said they have inspected the bridge and are in discussions with higher authorities regarding construction of a new bridge.

Confirming the matter, Ahmed Abdullah, LGED executive engineer in Moulvibazar, said, "A proposal submitted to higher authorities for constructing a new bridge and repairing the damaged portions of the road is awaiting approval."

Javed Iqbal, executive engineer of BWDB in Moulvibazar, said the dredging of Fanai river was conducted to manage rapid hill runoff, according to the river's measurements.

"Inspections will be done soon to implement necessary measures to protect the river protection embankment," he added.

Tourists asked not to visit Sajek till Sept 30

UNB, Dhaka

The local administration of Rangamati district has extended its order to not to travel to Sajek for three more days till September 30.

Additional District Magistrate Zobaida Akter issued a notice in this regard yesterday.

According to the notice, the tourists were discouraged from travelling to Sajek from September 25 to 27.

Considering the situation, the officials extended the travel ban for three more days.

Man beaten to death in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

On suspicion of stealing a fishing net, a group of youths allegedly beat a man to death in a village of Dinajpur Sadar upazila on Friday, said police.

The deceased is Tahidul Rahman, 40, of Sahedganj Hatkhola village under the upazila.

Citing relatives and witnesses, police said around 11.00am on Friday, five to six youths went to Tahidul's house and accused him of stealing a fishing net. Then the group forcibly took Tahidul to a nearby bamboo orchard in the village.

They tied him up and kept beating and torturing him for a couple of hours. After Tahidul fainted due to the torture, the gang took him to a local doctor for treatment.

After Tahidul regained consciousness, the torturers dropped him back home at around 4:30pm. Tahidul's blind mother was at home then. After some time, when he was not responding to his mother's calls, she went towards him and found out her son's numb body as he was lying on the floor lifeless.

His mother started screaming, and then locals arrived there and found Tahidul dead at around 7:30pm. Being informed, police went there and recovered the body and sent it to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy. Tahidul's body was full of torture marks, said police.

Shahinul Islam, a cousin of Tahidul, filed a murder case with Dinajpur Sadar Police Station accusing five individuals in this connection.

Police did not disclose the names of the accused for the sake of investigation. OC Farid Hossain of the police station said an investigation was ongoing in this regard.

LT TANJIM MURDER
Two more arrested in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Two more people have been arrested in connection with the murder of Lt Tanjim Sarwar Nirjon in Chakaria upazila, Cox's Bazar.

The arrestees are Nashir Uddin, alias Dakat Nashir, 38, from Dumkhali Reservepara, and Enamul Haque, alias Enam Dakat, 50, from Majipara in Chakaria upazila, said Rab-15 in a press release yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a joint team led by an operation unit of Rab-15 made the arrests in the Madhyam Kaharia Ghona area of Chakaria around 5:00am yesterday.

Lt Tanjim, 23, was stabbed to death during a drive to prevent a robbery in the upazila in the early hours of September 24.

During primary interrogation, the arrestees

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Workers load a truck with old books collected from hawkers in various areas of Barishal. These books will be taken to paper mills for recycling. The labourers earn Tk 500-700 working from morning till afternoon. This photo was taken in the city's Hatkhola area yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

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রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. এর ক্যান্টনমেন্ট শাখা, রাজশাহী ২৯-০৯-২০২৪ তারিখ রোজ রবিবার হতে নতুন ঠিকানায় স্থানান্তরিত হয়ে ব্যাংকিং কার্যক্রম শুরু করছে।

পুরাতন ঠিকানা	বর্তমান ঠিকানা
রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. ক্যান্টনমেন্ট শাখা হোল্ডিংনং-৫১১, কাদিরগঞ্জ দড়িখরবোনা পোস্ট-ক্যান্টনমেন্ট, থানা-বোয়ালিয়া রাজশাহী।	রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি. ক্যান্টনমেন্ট শাখা "গ্রীন হাসেম গার্ডেন" দ্বিতীয় তলা হোল্ডিংনং-৫৪৮, নন হাউজিং এস্টেট উপশহর মোড়, দড়িখরবোনা পোস্ট-ক্যান্টনমেন্ট, থানা-বোয়ালিয়া রাজশাহী।

সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক এবং শুভানুধ্যায়ীদের ব্যাংকিং সেবা গ্রহণের জন্য নতুন ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগের অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

'DESH TA KI TOR BAPER NAKI'

Ethun Babu and crew recall risky resistance



Ethun Babu remarked, "During the time of the sham election period in January, we released the powerful song *Bhot-er Baksho Lathi Mari* (Kick the ballot box)," which was a direct attack on the alleged corruption and voter suppression that marred the election process. He claimed to have received constant threats following that. "Shortly after, we released the track *Mamar Barir Abdar*, and it was a satirical song reflecting the widespread nepotism within the political system."

Songs like *Amar Odhikar Kere Niche Karagare* (My rights are being taken to prison) and *Dofa Ek Dabi Ek, Sheikh Hasinar Podotyag* (One demand, one condition: Sheikh Hasina must resign) followed. These were bold calls for justice and freedom, demanding the resignation of the former prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, and holding the government accountable for its actions.

On December 3, 2022, in Rajshahi, the band performed a song that would mark a pivotal moment in their protest journey—*Desh Ta Ki Tor Baper Naki?*

In the following six months, they organised six programs, performing 19 of their songs. But the atmosphere was tense, as they were always under surveillance. In Faridpur, while performing on a truck, they were targeted by a group of people armed with sticks. Fortunately, their supporters

living with feelings of suffocation," she recalled, as the band members hid to avoid recognition. They were being hounded, not only for their art but also for the truth they spoke. Songs like *Tomar Tole Tole Betha Go* (Pain in your feet) and *Tomar Chair Bhenge Jachchhe* (Your chair is breaking)

Ethun Babu, most known for composing the all-time hit *O Priya Tumi Kothay*, was prosecuted by the previous government for merely voicing out his political opinions.

Ethun, Mousumi, and Poran, the trio behind nearly 39 protest songs, faced severe threats for their work, even being forced into hiding.

ZAHID AKBAR

In November last year, the song *Desh Ta Ki Tor Baper Naki?* became a rallying cry against the oppressive regime, reflecting the frustrations of the oppressed. Written by renowned musician Ethun Babu, known for his commercially successful film songs, the track gained renewed attention during July's student-led mass uprising. Voiced by Mousumi Chowdhury, the song struck a chord with protesters, symbolising resistance against authoritarian rule.

Ethun Babu, most known for composing the all-time hit *O Priya Tumi Kothay*, was prosecuted by the previous government for merely voicing out his political opinions.

Ethun, Mousumi, and Poran, the trio behind nearly 39 protest songs, faced severe threats for their work, even being forced into hiding. Despite the dangers, their collaboration fuelled a powerful resistance, using music to challenge oppression and amplify the

voices of the silenced.

"Our story, spanning 15 months, began with 46 artistic pieces: 39 songs and seven poetry segments, recitations, and short plays. These creations weren't just art; they were protests, imbued with the raw emotions of those standing against the suffocating grip of a regime that had overstayed its welcome," shared Ethun Babu. "But this rebellion came at a price. We were forced into hiding after receiving numerous threats. It was a precarious time for us, as we feared for our lives while continuing to fight through our art."

"For us, this was a unique experience," Mousumi reflected, as they recalled the circumstances that birthed their protest music. "The disappearances and murders happening around us weighed heavily on our minds, haunting our thoughts. These grim events stoked our creativity, inspiring songs that not only captured the frustrations of the people but also served as anthems of resistance."



(Is this country your father's property?). "This audacious track questioned the entitlement of the ruling elites, confronting the narrative of power that had alienated the people. After this performance, the band felt the need to lay low for a few months, as the situation had become increasingly dangerous," said Poran. This track was also used as a tool during the Kolkata protest this year.

in one palm and freedom in the other," described Ethun Babu. Their supporters within the government passed on warnings, trying to protect them from being completely cornered.

The situation took a heavier toll on Mousumi Chowdhury. She was forced to move homes 25 times to evade those threatening her after the release of the songs. "We were experiencing

laid bare the deteriorating healthcare system, where ordinary citizens suffered while government officials sought treatment abroad.

Poran, another band member, shared how his father was socially insulted because of his involvement with the group. In a particularly cruel twist, Poran was branded as part of Jamat Shibir—a label often used to discredit political opponents by associating them with Islamist extremism. These stigmas not only threatened their safety, but also isolated them from their communities.

Despite the threats, harassment, and fear that followed them everywhere, the band continued their mission. They performed with the knowledge that anything could happen at any moment. "Yet, the fear could never silence us completely," said Ethun Babu.

Their protest was not just against the government's oppressive regime, but also against the years of torture, rising prices, and injustice that had plagued Bangladesh for 15 years. They sang for the people whose voices had been drowned out and whose lives had been made unbearable by the circumstances.

Their songs, like *Desh Ta Ki Tor Baper Naki?* still echo in the hearts of those who continue to fight for freedom, proving that music, even in the darkest of times, remains one of the most powerful forms of resistance.

PHOTOS: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED

NEWS

Reconstitute NHRC with qualified people

FROM PAGE 12 that institutions like the NHRC do not act as a puppet of the government. "There should be fairness in the appointment of commission members and the commission should undergo constructive reforms," added Shihab.

Pallab Chakma, executive director of Kapaeng Foundation, said the human rights situation of a country can be evaluated through the condition of its minority communities.

"Our commission has become a rehabilitation centre for retired bureaucrats. How would these bureaucrats, who worked under the political leaders and ministers, question the past government?" Pallab wondered.

Speaking at the event, Shipping, Textiles and Jute Adviser Brigadier General (Retired) M Sakhawat Hussain sought the cooperation of political parties to uphold human rights and bring reforms.

"We need the support of every political party."

"We must protect all of our citizens. It is also your (political parties) duty to protect the rights of all the citizens," he said.

The adviser said the government has a plan to build the police as a humane force, and added that violators of human rights must be brought to justice.

Sakhawat stressed the need for a united civil society, which is "divided into many factions".

Mohammad Nur Khan, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra, said the role of the NHRC is significant, and its appointment process should be transparent. Its members should

also be accountable.

He urged the government to not only focus on recent human rights violations, but to start discussions on violations dating back to 1972.

"We must preserve sites of state abuse like torture cells and the 'Aynagar' as historical evidence," he said.

Khan also called for immediate travel bans on government officials implicated in past human rights abuses to prevent them from fleeing the country.

Supreme Court advocate Dilruba Shormin said retired bureaucrats were appointed to the commission as it always was insignificant to the government.

"If we want to reconstitute the commission, we have to make sure that a law enforcement agency does not have the authority to investigate human rights violations by its own members," she said.

Political observer Saleh Ahmed said that Bangladesh could not build a society where human rights prevail because the country lacks a "fair political practice".

"We do have commissions, laws, and everything in place, but there is no application of those as we lack a fair political practice. If it does not exist, no institution will function. If we can improve our political practice, everything else will get better," he said.

Journalist Ashraf Qaiser said those who can torture others are appreciated in this country.

"If you have power and don't show it, you're not a man. It's part of the culture. It's not possible to ensure human rights just by amending some rules or reconstituting some

institutions. We have to change our mindset as well," said Qaiser.

Alena Khan, human rights activist and lawyer, opined in favour of amending some rules of the NHRC.

"The commission cannot disclose the report of any investigation committee to anyone other than the government. If this law remains in place, every commission will be compelled to work as per the will of the political government. This must be changed," she said.

Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) Chairman Bobby Hajaj said that the commission should have the capacity to fight against any human rights violations by government institutions.

"If the Human Rights Commission remains a part of the government, it will not be able to oppose the government. We have to bring it out of the government's dominance to see an effective role from it," said Bobby.

The speakers also urged the interim government to form separate commissions to investigate the deadly 2009 BDR mutiny, the 2013 attack on a Hefazat-e-Islam rally and the killings during the July-August student-led mass uprising.

Sanjida Islam Tulee, convener of Mayer Daak, a platform for family members of victims of enforced disappearances, Barrister Asaduzzaman Fuaad, joint member secretary of the Amar Bangladesh (AB) Party, Rashed Khan, general secretary of the Gono Odhikar Parishad (GOP), Jahangirnagar University student Tauhid Siam and Jagannath University student Naima Akter Rita, among others, spoke at the dialogue.

'Shop employee kills cigarette trader, assistant'

FROM PAGE 12 of land on Road 108, had been living in the tin-roofed house for the past decade. He had also been running a wholesale cigarette shop on the same plot. Sabbir was his employee who helped out at the shop. The owner of the plot lives abroad.

Rafiq's son, Arifur Rahman Bappi, who went through CCTV footage collected from the area, told The Daily Star that the double murder took place early Friday morning.

According to Bappi, both victims

were killed by a recently hired employee. The suspect, whose identity remains unknown, fled the scene with a significant amount of cash and cigarettes from Rafiq's shop.

Citing the contents of the CCTV footage, Bappi said the employee was seen exiting the house, where Rafiq and Sabbir had been staying, around 6:30am on Friday. Later, a pickup van arrived at the scene, on which the employee was seen loading multiple sacks with the help of the driver.

However, when contacted, the

police did not confirm the details provided by Bappi. Yesterday morning, local residents alerted the police after noticing a foul odour emitting from Rafiq's house.

After arriving at the house, police found the bodies with their throats slit.

The bodies were later sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital mortuary.

Gulshan Police Station Officer-in-Charge Touhid Ahmed said an investigation was underway to apprehend the perpetrator.

Interim govt must win

FROM PAGE 12 important to remember that the visible and invisible evil spirit of a dictatorship, built up over a decade and a half, will not rid us of its poisonous breath so easily."

The BNP's Jhenaidah district unit organised the mass rally at Payra Chatrar, demanding justice for Rakib and Sabir, two locals who were martyred during the recent anti-autocracy movement.

The BNP acting chairman said they are often witnessing the interim government's helplessness and disarray in the face of the ongoing conspiracies in the partisan administration left behind by "autocrat Hasina".

He also cautioned that "if this

situation persists, the government, trapped in the constraints placed by the autocrat's associates, will eventually see a series of small crises escalate into major disasters. At that point, the path to effective solutions will be exceedingly narrow."

Tarique said it is important to keep in mind that there is no alternative to an elected government for ensuring foreign investment, international confidence and relations, state stability, ease of doing business, public safety, continuity of development, and providing citizens with daily services at the grassroots level.

He further said the mass uprising led by students and the public in July and August has emerged as a message

of another independence and victory for the nation. "If we hastily label this as the success of a specific group, we risk falling into the trap of distorting history once again."

The BNP leader highlighted the importance of honouring the contributions of people from all walks of life—political parties, students, housewives, and workers—in the great conflict against autocracy.

He also emphasised the sacrifices of the millions of political activists who have fallen victim to everything from murder and enforced disappearances, to judicial harassment and other forms of oppression over the past seventeen years. "If we fail to do that, history will not forgive any of us."

'Uprising death toll 1,581'

FROM PAGE 12 days, said Tarikul.

The number is more than double the primary figure of deaths given by the interim government. The health ministry recently published a draft list of 708 deaths.

After the final verification, the number of martyrs will be finalised, which may increase or decrease as there are some names of individuals who were not killed in the movement, along with having some duplicate names in both lists prepared by the ministry and the sub-committee, said Tarikul.

The list was prepared by the joint efforts of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee (National Citizens Committee) and the central sub-committee on health affairs, formed by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

As-Sunnah Foundation, Human Rights Support Society, Red July and many other organisations have also helped prepare the list, said Tarikul.

Jatiya Nagorik Committee convener Nasir Uddin Patwary said, "There have been some cases of deaths regarding which confusion is still there about their involvement in the movement. So, we are going for further investigation before publishing their names as martyrs in any open platform."

"We do not want anyone to be announced as a martyr in any public platform before verifying it in all

possible ways," Nasir added.

All the information of martyrs or victims will not be made public as a number of issues came to light over the data, along with some policies of various international organisations, he said.

Nasir expressed concern over the politicisation of martyrs' information, saying, "We have been informed that some political party leaders reportedly put pressure on victims to announce them as their party man after collecting data from the public platform."

Many groups have been trying to misuse the information of victims and martyrs to serve their own interests, Nasir added.

For treatment of the injured, a specialised team will be formulated soon with specialised physicians, particularly for the critically injured persons, Nasir said.

The team will also be working to send patients abroad for advanced treatment if needed, he said.

Regarding the list of injured, they said it will also be finalised soon. The family members of the martyrs and injured were asked to contact the UNO, the civil surgeon or the deputy commissioner of every district for their any query about the list or other necessities, including treatment.

Earlier, a report of the sub-committee on health published on September 21 showed 1,423 persons died in the student-led mass upsurge.

Khamenei moved

FROM PAGE 1 strike on south Beirut on Friday.

After Hezbollah confirmed Hassan Nasrallah's death, Khamenei condemned Benjamin Netanyahu-led Israel's actions, declaring that "all the resistance forces in the region stand with and support Hezbollah."

Khamenei called upon Muslims to "stand by the people of Lebanon and the proud Hezbollah with whatever means they have and assist them in confronting the ... wicked regime [of Israel]."

Khamenei asserted that "the fate of this region (Middle east) will be determined by the forces of resistance, with Hezbollah at the forefront."

Earlier, Khamenei took to social media to state that "Hezbollah is the victor" in its ongoing struggle against Israel, despite the group facing significant challenges from repeated Israeli strikes against its leadership.

The backdrop of Khamenei's statements includes a series of unprecedented air raids targeting residential areas in Lebanon. Reports indicate that over 700 people have been killed since Israel intensified its bombing campaign earlier this week, with numerous civilian casualties, including children.

Khamenei condemned the violence, stating that "the massacre of defenseless people in Lebanon once again revealed the savage nature" of Israel and highlighted the "short-sightedness" of its leaders.



Residents take refuge on a rooftop as their neighbourhood submerged in flood waters after the Bagmati river overflowed following heavy monsoon rains in Kathmandu yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Israel to press Lebanon offensive until 'objectives' met

Netanyahu tells UN, says Israel has the capability to strike anywhere in Mideast

AFP, United Nations

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed at the UN to press his country's offensive against Lebanon's Hezbollah, dashing hopes for a 21-day truce proposed by France and the United States this week.

Netanyahu's highly anticipated turn at the United Nations, during which he repeatedly denounced the global organization as anti-Israel, was met with jeers by some delegates who walked out, but cheers and applause from his backers.

"As long as Hezbollah chooses the path of war, Israel has no choice, and Israel has every right to remove this threat and return our citizens to their homes safe," Netanyahu told the UN General Assembly.

"We will continue degrading Hezbollah until all our objectives are met."

His remarks appeared to undermine a truce proposal unveiled by the United States and France after President Joe Biden and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, met on the sidelines of the UN gathering.

The White House has said that the ceasefire call had been "coordinated" with Israel, but Netanyahu's office on Thursday said that the prime minister had not responded to the proposal.

Netanyahu also issued a blunt warning to Iran in his UN address, saying: "I have a message for the tyrants of Tehran. If you strike us, we will strike you."

"There is no place in Iran that the long arm of Israel cannot reach, and that's true of the entire Middle East," he added.

Delegates representing Lebanon, Iran, the Palestinians and others exited the room as Netanyahu took the rostrum for his speech.

"We have no interest in listening to the war



criminal Netanyahu and to his lies," Majed Banya, the Palestinian deputy ambassador to the UN, wrote on X alongside an image of his delegation's empty seats.

Netanyahu was "promising to repeat the atrocities committed in Gaza in Lebanon, (he) has nothing to do at the podium of the General Assembly," Banya added in a subsequent post.

Ahead of his appearance, protesters gathered outside Netanyahu's hotel in New York to demand an end to the violence in Gaza and Lebanon.

Netanyahu vowed Friday that "Hamas has got to go" and would have no role in the reconstruction of Gaza as he vowed to fight until "total victory."

Since Monday, Israel has shifted its focus from Gaza to its northern front with Lebanon, where heavy bombing has killed 700 people and sparked an exodus of around 118,000 people.

The UN said Friday that a "catastrophic" intensification of Israeli attacks targeting Hezbollah militants had left Lebanon facing its "deadliest period... in a generation."

The Israeli strikes have brought the overall death toll in Lebanon to more than 1,500 people killed in nearly a year of clashes, according to Lebanese authorities.

That toll surpasses the 1,200 mostly civilians killed during the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, which also killed around 160 Israelis, most of them soldiers.

Russian strike on Ukraine hospital kill 9

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russian forces hit a medical center in Sumy in northeastern Ukraine yesterday morning then struck again as the building was being evacuated, killing nine people and injuring 20 others, Ukrainian officials said.

Ukrainian prosecutors said that at the time of the attacks, 86 patients and 38 staff members were in the hospital.

"The first attack killed one person and damaged the ceilings of several floors of the hospital," Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said on Telegram.

As people were being evacuated, the Russians struck again, killing a further five people, he said.

The State Emergency Service of Ukraine said on Facebook that nine people were killed and twenty others were injured in the attacks.

Meanwhile, a Russian air strike killed three people and injured others in Slatyne in the Kharkiv region of northeastern Ukraine, regional governor Oleh Synyubov said yesterday.

Ukraine's air force earlier said they had shot down 69 of 73 drones during an overnight Russian attack that included two ballistic and two cruise missiles.

US POLLS CAMPAIGN

Harris to fix 'broken' immigration system

AFP, Douglas

Kamala Harris pledged Friday she would tighten the border and fix America's broken immigration system on her first visit to the US-Mexico frontier as a presidential candidate.

The US vice president is playing catch-up on immigration, with a majority of Americans saying they trust Republican rival Donald Trump more than her on one of the most important issues for voters ahead of November's election.

In a speech in Douglas, Arizona before a friendly audience, Harris tried to straddle a tough-on-illegal-migration line with a promise to reach across the aisle to fix an immigration system she said was broken.

"The US is a sovereign nation, and I believe we have a duty to set rules at our border and to enforce them, and I take that responsibility very seriously," she said. "... We must reform our immigration system to ensure that it works in an orderly way."

And she said anyone crossing the border illegally would be barred from seeking asylum in the country. But "hard-working migrants" who come to the US legally should be given a pathway to citizenship, she said.

Recent polls have seen Harris eating into Trump's lead on migration with voters, yet it still remains a weak spot, with record illegal border crossings under her and Biden's watch.

But Harris points to numbers that have plummeted since Biden signed an executive order in June temporarily closing the border to asylum seekers.

PEACE PUSH IN UKRAINE Blinken questions China's sincerity

AGENCIES

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday questioned China's sincerity in seeking peace in Ukraine as he directly pressed his counterpart over exports that boost Russia's military.

Blinken met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, the latest talks as the two powers look to dial down once-soaring tensions.

While crediting the diplomacy with bringing progress, Blinken warned that the United States would not back down on concerns over China's exports to Russia and made clear that Washington could impose more sanctions.

Blinken said that China is fueling the "war machine" of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"When Beijing says that, on the one hand, that it wants peace, it wants to see an end to the conflict, but on the other hand is allowing its companies to take actions that are actually helping Putin continue the aggression, that doesn't add up," Blinken told a news conference.

"Our intent is not to decouple Russia from China. Their relationship is their business," he said.

"But insofar as that relationship involves providing Russia what it needs to continue this war, that's a problem for us, and it's a problem for many other countries, notably in Europe," Blinken added.

The top US diplomat said that China has provided 70 percent of machine tools and 90 percent of microelectronics needed by Russia for military production that includes rockets and armored vehicles.



Who is Nasrallah?

FROM PAGE 1
Hezbollah's main bastion in south Beirut.

With Nasrallah's cult status among his Shia Muslim supporters, the influence he had over Lebanon's institutions and Hezbollah's formidable arsenal, his death is bound to have ripple effects across the country and the wider region.

Nasrallah was rarely seen in public since his movement fought a devastating 2006 war with Israel.

Very few people were believed to know where Nasrallah lived, and the vast majority of his speeches over the past two decades were pre-recorded before being broadcast from a secret location.

A gifted public speaker, Nasrallah was a master of cadence, swinging from humour to belittle his enemies to rage to fire up his 100,000-man militia.

The bearded, bespectacled cleric was never seen without traditional robes and the black turban that marked him out as a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

He was elected secretary-general of Hezbollah in 1992,

aged just 32, after an Israeli helicopter gunship killed his predecessor, Abbas al-Musawi.

Hezbollah is the only group that refused to give up its weapons after Lebanon's 15-year civil war ended in 1990, and Nasrallah had insisted that Israel remains an existential threat.

Born in Beirut's impoverished northern suburb of Burj Hammud on August 31, 1960, Nasrallah was one of nine children of a poor grocer hailing from the tiny southern village of Bazuriyeh.

He studied politics and the Quran for three years at a seminary in Iraq's Shia holy city of Najaf, before being expelled in 1978 when the Sunni dominated government turned on Shia activists.

He then became heavily involved in Lebanese politics and gained much of his early experience in the Shia Amal militia during the civil war.

But he broke away from Amal when Israeli troops marched on Beirut in 1982 to become one of the founders of Hezbollah.

He acquired his cult status in Lebanon and across the Arab world after

Israel withdrew its troops from south Lebanon under relentless Hezbollah attack in May 2000, ending 22 years of occupation of the border strip.

Nasrallah's years at the helm of Hezbollah — or Party of God — saw the group expand from guerrilla faction into the most powerful political force in Lebanon.

Hezbollah is admired by many Shias in the country for supporting local charities, building up health and education services in its strongholds and assisting the needy among its supporters.

But in divided Lebanon, the movement is also widely hated, including by those who dream of a nation free from sectarianism and in which the rule of law prevails.

Nasrallah's personal popularity soared across the Arab world after a UN-brokered ceasefire ended Hezbollah's 2006 conflict with Israel.

But it suffered a blow later when he sent fighters into neighbouring Syria to prop up President Bashar al-Assad's regime after civil war broke out there in 2011.



Protesting farmers dump sacks of basmati rice along a street in Amritsar in Punjab yesterday. India yesterday gave the go-ahead for exports of non-basmati white rice to resume as inventories in the world's biggest exporter of the grain surge and farmers prepare to harvest a new crop in the coming weeks.

PHOTO: AFP

Storm Helene death toll hits 47

REUTERS, Atlanta

Authorities across a wide swath of the southeastern United States yesterday faced the daunting task of cleaning up from Hurricane Helene, one of the most powerful to hit the country, as the death toll continued to rise.

At least 47 deaths were reported by early yesterday, and officials feared still more bodies would be discovered across several states.

Helene was downgraded late on Friday to a post-tropical cyclone.

In Florida's Pinellas County near Tampa, Sheriff Bob Gualtieri said he had never seen destruction like what was wrought by Helene. "I would just describe it, having spent the last few hours out there, as a war zone," Gualtieri told a press conference.

At least 3.25 million customers woke up early yesterday without power across five states, with authorities warning it could be several days before services were fully restored. The worst outages were in South Carolina with more than 1 million homes and businesses without power, and Georgia with 777,000 without power.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

We commend the CA for his UNGA speech

Intl community should respond to his call for collective action

Amid international debates and speculation surrounding Bangladesh's July uprising, Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus had a significant responsibility at the UN General Assembly to articulate the true aspirations and intentions of the people of Bangladesh. We commend the chief adviser for eloquently sharing these sentiments with the international community in his speech at the UNGA. Yunus rightly praised the courage and determination of the people of Bangladesh, the armed forces, and particularly the youth, for standing up against injustice, corruption, and suppression of basic rights that characterised the previous autocratic government. He invited all countries across the world to deepen their engagement with Bangladesh in its quest for democracy, the rule of law, equality, and prosperity.

Previously, the international community appreciated Bangladesh's economic growth but remained critical of its democratic and human rights deficits, which Bangladesh is determined to improve. Yunus reminded the international community that Bangladesh was born out of its people's profound belief in liberalism, pluralism, and secularism. In accordance with those values, new generations of Bangladeshis have inspired the entire nation to reimagine a better, more egalitarian, and inclusive Bangladesh.

That said, the chief adviser also provided an intellectual outline not only for Bangladesh but for the international community to create a more prosperous, peaceful, and sustainable world. He highlighted two existential threats to human civilisation: the first being climate change, of which Bangladesh is among the worst sufferers, and the second being the threat of unrestrained development of artificial intelligence, which could devastate the job market. Unless the global community takes the matter of climate justice and climate change seriously, all forms of advancement and economic gains may get washed away by climate catastrophes.

Yunus also mentioned the need for the international community to proactively work to end all wars. He pointed out the tragedy unfolding before the whole world in Gaza and expressed the urgency of ending the genocide being carried out against Palestinians. He also emphasised the necessity of ending the war in Ukraine, both to save lives and to restore global stability. The chief adviser further called on the international community to help address the instability in Myanmar, and to help Bangladesh repatriate the Rohingya community back to their homeland. The international community must realise that the crisis in Myanmar not only poses growing risks for Bangladesh, but for the regional security of South Asia.

Another important point raised by the chief adviser is the massive amounts of wealth that are annually siphoned out of developing countries by the corrupt. One of the best ways developed countries can assist developing nations is by preventing illicit financial flows and the siphoning off of resources from these nations—or by returning these assets. We hope the international community will fully cooperate with the interim government to recover the wealth siphoned out of Bangladesh by the previous regime to assist the country in its development and democratic journey.

Dengue management still inadequate

Without proper drives, the situation could worsen further

We are disappointed by the slow response of the government authorities to the rising threat of dengue across the country. According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 27,705 dengue patients have been hospitalised this year as of the morning of September 27, with 143 of them having died during the same period. The fact that more than half of these cases were reported in September alone should set alarm bells ringing. The question is, why didn't the authorities take the necessary steps in time despite repeated warnings from experts that dengue could become fatal this year? While it is understandable that the void created in our local government institutions after the fall of the Awami League government has hampered our dengue control programmes for some time, there should be no excuse for any failure now, as administrators were eventually appointed in the city corporations and municipalities after the interim government took charge.

Reportedly, the current weather conditions in the country—intermittent rains and high humidity—are very suitable for the breeding of Aedes mosquitoes. According to entomologists, if this weather pattern persists, the number of dengue cases will peak in October. A field-level survey has already found a high density of Aedes mosquitoes in the capital. The dengue situation is also rapidly worsening in Chattogram. This means there is no scope for the authorities to take the matter lightly anymore. The death of 60 people (as of the morning of September 27) in less than one month should serve as a wake-up call for our city and municipal authorities.

They should immediately conduct mosquito eradication drives across the country, including in the hospitals, giving more importance to hotspot management. It must also be ensured that effective insecticides are used in these drives. Keeping the cities clean and conducting awareness campaigns to engage people in these initiatives is also crucial. In addition, the DGHS has a very important role to play here. It should prepare hospitals and healthcare facilities to provide proper care to dengue patients, maintain an accurate database of patients, and conduct regular surveys to tackle this deadly threat. It is, however, encouraging that the government has formed some teams to ensure the implementation, coordination, and supervision of mosquito eradication efforts across the country. We hope they will be able to tackle the situation before it is too late.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Call for political solution for East Pakistan

On this day in our Liberation War history, India and the erstwhile Soviet Union called for an urgent political solution to the problems created by the developments in East Pakistan, in keeping with the "wishes, the inalienable rights and lawful interests of its people."

BATTLING AGAINST THE CURRENT

The river governance puzzle we must solve



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NAZIFA RAIDAH

Recently, the Adviser for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Syeda Rizwana Hasan said, "Cost-effective plans will be developed to clean the rivers, and a campaign against polythene and plastic will be launched." On August 20, she announced that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) would assist Bangladesh in implementing low-cost river cleaning projects for key rivers, notably the Buriganga, Turag, and Balu. These are commendable initiatives, and Bangladesh is fortunate to have someone like Rizwana Hasan, who has championed river protection since the start of her career in 2003.

However, the fight to protect our rivers and ensure environmental justice remains an uphill battle, complicated by the bureaucratic mess left by previous administrations. While the current direction shows promise, implementing these plans will require unwavering political will, accountability, and sustained public engagement. Without addressing the systemic issues that continue to hinder environmental governance, the journey towards restoring our rivers may remain fraught with obstacles.

Too many cooks spoil the broth
Bangladesh's water management framework is a classic example of how too many overlapping policies and authorities can lead to inefficiency and confusion. Two significant acts—the Bangladesh Water Act and the National River Protection Commission Act—were introduced in 2013. The Bangladesh Water Act, drafted by the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), was intended to provide an integrated approach to water resource management. Meanwhile, the National River Protection Commission (NRPC) Act aimed to safeguard rivers from illegal encroachments and pollution. However, these laws, though comprehensive on paper,



The Buriganga River, once a lifeline of Dhaka, now stands as a testament to ineffective water resource management.

overlapping responsibilities. The Ministry of Shipping, for instance, was tasked with river regulation, even though this should fall under the MoWR's jurisdiction, as outlined in the rules of business for different ministries.

Institutional gaps further exacerbate this lack of coordination among ministries. Water Resources Planning Organisation (WARPO), the agency responsible for implementing the Water Act, lacks clarity in its mandate, resources, and specialist personnel. The NRCC, intended to protect the rivers, is similarly constrained, needing the support of other ministries, such

governance
The Buriganga River, once a lifeline of Dhaka, now stands as a testament to ineffective water resource management, despite legal frameworks aimed at its protection. The river is heavily polluted, and its potential is untapped beyond its use for transportation. Projects such as Bangladesh Inland Water Transport

Water Act (2013), which was meant to tie it all together, ensuring the sustainable use, protection, and development of the nation's water. Yet, water governance is currently structured like a patchwork quilt—each ministry and agency has a role, but no one seems to be working from the same script. The Ministry of Water Resources may be the

Authority's walkway initiative are steps forward, but the encroachment of the river continues, which necessitates behavioural change and alternative provisions for locals to ensure long-term success.

Long-term projects like the Buriganga River Restoration Project, initiated in 2010, still remain incomplete despite multiple extensions and soaring costs. The Covid-19 pandemic, delays in land acquisition, and permit approvals only added to the woes of this once-ambitious initiative.

Furthermore, the Bangladesh Water Act 2013 lacks a comprehensive approach which contributed to Buriganga's deterioration. While addressing water allocation and pollution, the Act fails to incorporate revenue management, community participation, and climate change mitigation.

primary regulator, but other heavy-hitters like the Ministry of Shipping and the Ministry of Land also have a say, creating confusion and diluting accountability.

Finally, there's the Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP) 2100, which is an ambitious 100-year vision designed to address everything from flood protection to river sustainability. Yet with all the well-meaning policies and plans, there is a lack of coordination and clear leadership. As a result, we're not making the progress we need to.

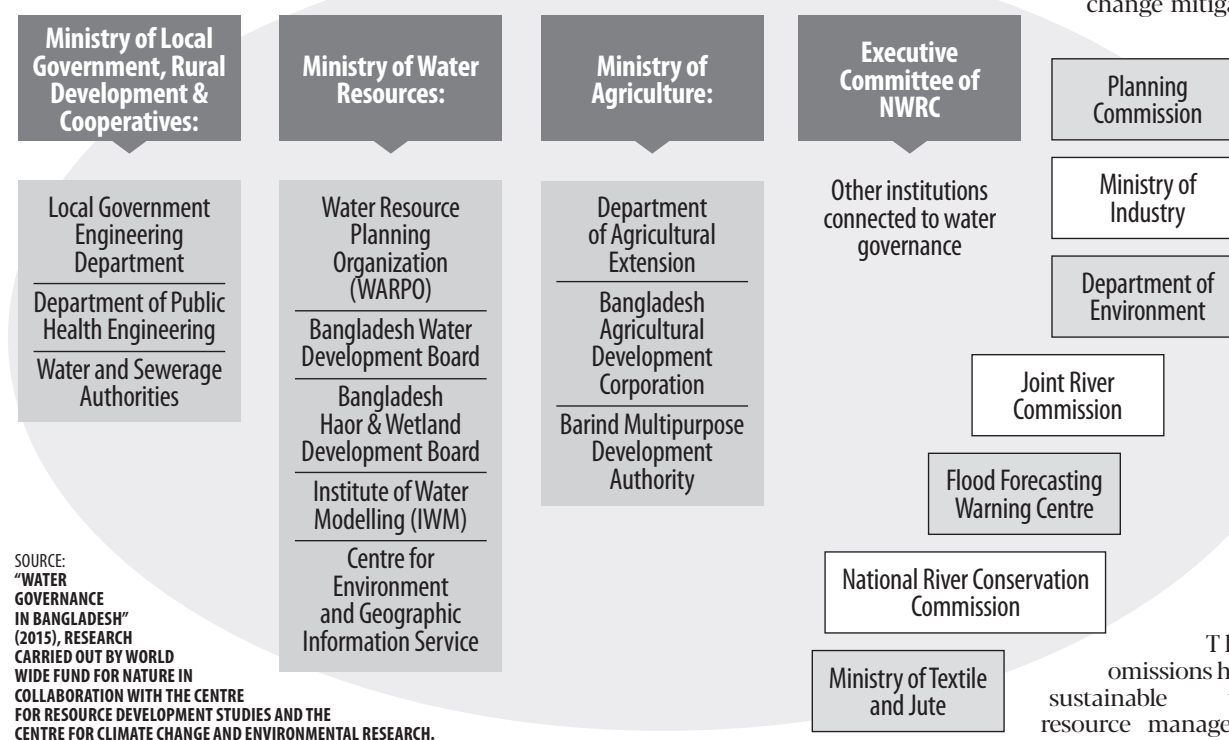
To enhance river governance, Bangladesh must first focus on developing a more inclusive and iterative policymaking process. The current structure of centralised governance has been counterproductive in addressing on-the-ground issues, and as such, a more diversified approach is required. This should include greater community-based engagement to enable the government to respond more swiftly to pressing issues like flooding. By instituting robust feedback mechanisms for continual assessment and adaptation of policies, Bangladesh can respond more effectively to emerging challenges, refining its strategies based on real-world outcomes.

A key example of this iterative process is the Dutch "Policy Loop"—a cyclical approach to policymaking, where each phase of implementation is followed by an evaluation. It involves several stages: setting objectives, implementing policies, monitoring outcomes, and then revisiting and refining those policies based on feedback. This process enables governments to respond to real-time challenges and evolving conditions, ensuring that policies are not static but can be adapted as necessary. For Bangladesh, adopting a similar approach would provide more precise intervention points, allowing for a comprehensive strategy to address issues like encroachment, pollution, and displacement.

Simultaneously, Bangladesh needs to prioritise investment in strengthening the institutional capacities of municipal and district-level bodies. The success of the Netherlands in integrated water management practices and stakeholder engagement can offer valuable insights. The "Room for River" project, for example, provides a model of balancing river management with community needs. Adapting these models to suit Bangladesh's unique geographical and socio-economic conditions could significantly improve the effectiveness of our river governance.

Finally, developing an integrated policy framework that aligns river management with broader environmental, social, and economic objectives will ensure that river governance contributes positively to sustainable development. This would prioritise long-term sustainability and resilience, especially in the face of climate change.

National Water Resource Council (Headed by Hon'ble Prime Minister)



SOURCE: "WATER GOVERNANCE IN BANGLADESH" (2015), RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND THE CENTRE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH.

exist alongside an overwhelming number of other policies related to water, including the Environment Conservation Act 1995, Coastal Zone Policy 2005, and National Forest Policy 1994.

To complicate matters further, water management falls under the jurisdiction of seven ministries and agencies, each with its own mandate. The Ministry of Water Resources is the primary regulator, while the Ministry of Environment and Forests monitors water resources. Ministries such as Agriculture, Local Government, and Disaster Management also hold critical roles as water users, leading to a fragmented and often contradictory approach with overlapping responsibilities. Previously, because of this premise, each department would shift the blame onto another.

The situation became more convoluted when, in 2019, the High Court declared rivers as legal entities and identified the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) as the rivers' legal guardian. While the ruling was groundbreaking, its implementation remains stalled by

as the Ministry of Land for riverbank management and the Ministry of Shipping for waterway transportation.

What's most striking is the exclusion of the Ministry of Industry (MoI) from water governance, despite the industry being a significant water user and polluter. The absence of MoI, along with influential industry bodies like the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), in decision-making processes leaves a critical gap. These sectors wield significant influence and must be involved in water planning, particularly in regulating industrial wastewater and water usage.

With multiple ministries, overlapping mandates, and the exclusion of key stakeholders, the great challenge for the new government is to streamline water governance so that decision-making in protecting rivers goes through fewer sieves of bureaucracy than the previous regime.

Buriganga: A glaring example of mismanaged water resource

communities out of critical decision-making processes.

Institutionally, little has been done to ensure coordination between various agencies, leaving the responsibilities of local government bodies and regulatory agencies unclear. This lack of clarity perpetuates inefficiency, with institutions passing on the blame for Buriganga's continued degradation. A decade of inaction from Dhaka Water Supply and Sewage Authority (WASA), despite numerous projects, only underscores the systemic issues at play.

The way forward

Bangladesh's journey in managing water resources began with a heavy focus on flood control and boosting agriculture, as seen in the 1964 Water Master Plan. Since then, policies like the National Water Policy (1999) and the National Water Management Plan (2001) have sought to create a more integrated system, introducing concepts like Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) to streamline how water resources are handled across various sectors.

Fast forward to the Bangladesh

Hopes and anxieties of the Bangladeshi diaspora



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

A number of recent op-eds and news items on the Bangladeshi diaspora in the US and the Middle East caught my attention. I have also read several knowledgeable articles and op-eds on the contribution and concerns of the diaspora published in these columns since the July uprising. There is indirect evidence that the interim government is very much aware of the roles played by the diaspora, particularly those who live in North America and the UK.

A media report, "Forex market on the mend as remittances rebound," provided some encouraging news for the new administration. It not only signals that our foreign exchange coffers will be bolstered in the coming months but also indicates a positive trend. The hard-working Bangladeshis are sending money home once again, and they foresee that things are heading the right way after the July-August uprising.

I was also glad to note that the editor of this newspaper was visiting the US a few weeks ago, and left with a very positive impression about the role of the diaspora after attending the St Gregory's High School alumni reunion held in New Jersey. He noted that he met several cricketers and other well-known Gregorians who were able to charm him with their feelings of nostalgia and patriotism for their old country. Also, worth noting, as he pointed out in his op-ed, that "there were professionals from

academia, business, engineering, IT, medicine, pharmacy, and even cybersecurity."

I am curious to know if the editor of *The Daily Star* also met with the average diaspora in the New York tri-state area. Most of the Bangladeshi diaspora, ie, those I come across on an everyday basis in the US, have a slightly different perspective on the comings and goings in their birthplace. A majority of the Bangladeshis living in this region are hard-working men and women, many of whom are from lower middle-income groups, according to data from the Pew Research Center. I mention this group because most of those living in the tri-state area, which includes parts of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, are small-scale entrepreneurs or hold blue-collar jobs. I meet them occasionally and hear from them regularly, and I will present some of their concerns and aspirations from a random sample.

They are concerned about many issues, some recent and some from the immediate past. It was reassuring to learn that the Bangladesh Army Chief General Waker-uz-Zaman has vowed to back the country's interim government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus "come what may" to help the government complete key reforms so that elections could be held within the next 18 months. I will provide a short list of issues, the

diaspora is concerned about, in the following paragraphs. The diaspora always pays special attention to the law and order situation in the country, particularly in the hill tracts, and the safety and security of the minority community. Rallies, human chains, protests, and demonstrations have been held in all major cities. A protest rally was

ethnic and religious minorities in Dighinala, Khagrachari, and Rangamati. People from Bangladeshi Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim communities, including Indigenous families, and several Indian and American citizens participated in the protest.

The cost of living, particularly for those who live on fixed incomes and

savings and have seen their lifestyles disrupted. With the inflation rate in the double digits, they have been experiencing the "shrinking taka." Any money sent to them buys less and less every day. My frozen personal bank account with one of the affected financial institutions has made it impossible for me to send any financial support to my

gone into hiding, and are nervous about resuming their regular activities. The flip-flop on the Constitutional Reform Commission, mass allegations against political activists and civilians alike, and blanket accusations for the misrule of the former government also surface occasionally. The current administration needs no reminder that with an estimated 13 million Bangladeshis residing abroad in 162 countries, the diaspora stands as the sixth-largest migrant group globally. Their views and actions have some influence, echoing across Bangladesh's financial and social spheres. Bangladeshis people living abroad (diaspora) often experience significant emotional and social impacts due to the hardships faced by their families still living in Bangladesh, as they maintain strong emotional connections to their homeland despite being physically distant.

Our interim leader Prof Yunus, a champion for poverty eradication, was recently in New York City to attend the United Nations General Assembly session. He was expected to meet with Max Roser, a kindred spirit. Roser is a professor at the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government, where he researches global issues such as poverty, hunger, and war. In the September 24 issue of *The New York Times*, Roser wrote, "Poverty is not history. People around the world are still struggling to afford housing, heating, transport and healthy food for themselves and their families." The diaspora is aware that the time the interim government has is short and the tasks ahead for Prof Yunus are lengthy, but we have confidence that Prof Yunus is the right person to take the helm at the right time to make a dent in the issues we face.



The Bangladeshi diaspora, particularly those in North America and the UK, played a significant role in the recent mass uprising. PHOTO: REUTERS

held last Sunday in Boston at the historic Harvard Square in front of Harvard University to protest against the killing of Indigenous people, arson attacks on their businesses, vandalism of religious places of

have had their livelihoods disrupted due to labour unrest and supply chain issues, is also on our minds. Personally, many of my elderly relatives and retired friends live on fixed incomes such as pensions and

relatives and charitable causes.

We are also concerned about the workers' unrest and the prevailing sense of uncertainty among the business class. Some members of the former autocratic regime have

BENEATH THE HEADLINES

Readings from a citizens' perceptions survey



Imran Matin
is executive director at BIGD, Brac University

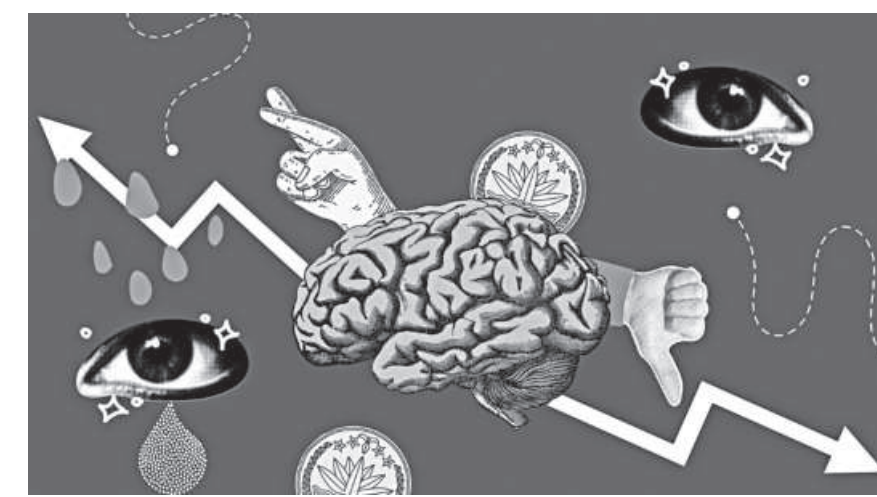
IMRAN MATIN

Recently, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) presented the findings from a nationally representative Rapid Research Response 2024 survey to get a national picture of citizens' perceptions, experiences, and expectations in the first 40 days since the fall of the former autocratic government on August 5. This survey is part of a longitudinal survey that BIGD has been conducting since 2019. The current round was a phone survey that collected responses from 2,363 adult men and women from all districts. District and rural-urban population weight was used to calculate national-level estimates.

The findings attracted widespread attention on traditional and social media. In this write-up, I want to go beneath the headline, offer a snapshot of the average mood of the nation, and examine trends and variations which can hold important insights for political and policy strategy.

The general findings on the national mood were, to an extent, as expected—people feel very optimistic, both in terms of the political and economic directions of the country. There was a dramatic improvement from similar surveys we conducted before, the most recent one being in January this year. The mood upswing from the 2022 survey to the latest RRR 2024 survey is from 39 percent to 71 percent for political direction and from 25 percent to 60 percent during the same period for economic direction. The optimism is driven by a sense of freedom and relief, which creates aspirations about a better future. It is also a reflection of the urgency with which people want to see tangible positive outcomes and progress.

Looking at the trend data across 2022, January 2024, and the RRR 2024 survey, we notice that the optimism in the political direction (39 percent, 41 percent, and 71 percent for each of the three surveys) is consistently higher than the corresponding economic direction



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

(25 percent, 32 percent, and 60 percent) of the country. In short, economic optimism remains markedly lower than political optimism, remaining behind by about 10 points in each of the surveys. Furthermore, in the RRR 2024 survey, we find that the economy has also been clearly prioritised as a focal area of reform. Indeed, there is a real urgency to get the economy to work for the majority in terms of creating jobs, improving real wages, and managing inflation to reduce the sufferings of people in the context of the ongoing polycrisis since the pandemic.

Digging deeper into these numbers, we find three interesting differences in trends occurring across lines of gender, income, and rural-urban areas. Women have consistently been less optimistic than men across economic and political directions, and the gender gap seems to have grown further in the RRR 2024 survey. In the economic direction, the gap was five percentage points in the 2022 survey, and grew to eight percentage points in the RRR 2024 survey. Similarly, in the political direction, the gap widened in the same timeframe from three percent to nine percent. Despite the strong presence of women in the

revolution in July, their representation in post-August 5 decision making spaces has been less visible. There have also been growing incidents where the future of women's rights seems uncertain and under assault. These developments and experiences may have played a role in shaping women's perceptions and expectations.

When it comes to the income

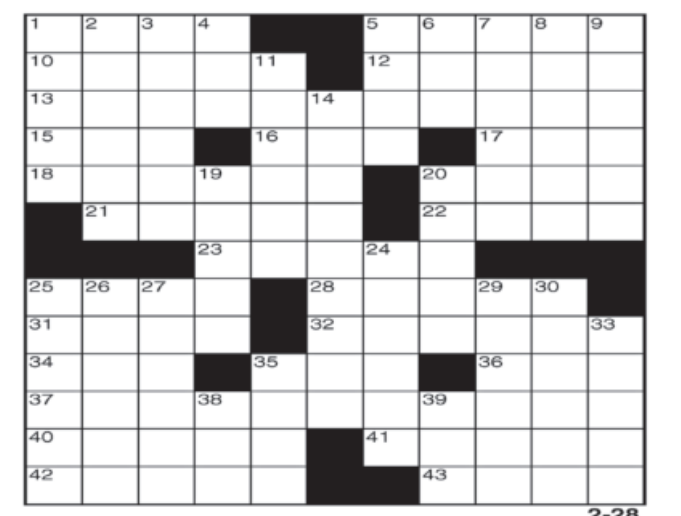
between rural and urban areas—people in rural areas were more optimistic than the urban population in the previous survey rounds; this reversed in the recent RRR 2024 survey. In the 2022 survey, people in the rural area were four percentage points more optimistic in both political and economic directions of the country compared to the urban sample. Comparatively, in the RRR 2024 survey it was the opposite, with the urban population now five percentage points more optimistic than the rural population in terms of political direction and eight percentage points more optimistic in terms of economic direction. This change of trend in optimism and aspirations in the urban population, in the context of urban poverty and employment reality, may increase different types of claims given that urban labour is relatively more organised. The reversal against rural areas also needs political and policy attention. In addition, political and policy attention is needed for the comparatively lower optimism seen in the rural areas.

It may be challenging for opinion surveys such as this one to reflect true public opinion, especially on topics about which people may be afraid or embarrassed to express their views or preferences publicly. In this RRR 2024 survey, we used an experimental method called a randomised list experiment to identify biased responses to questions where we thought such bias was likely. One such question was if the respondent supported the one-point demand of the uprising calling for the resignation of Sheikh Hasina on what was being called July 34. We find that an overwhelming 83 percent of the respondents said yes to the question. The randomised list experiment suggests that the true, unbiased yes was 60 percent, suggesting that 23 percent of those who said yes did not give an unbiased response.

This type of self-censorship raises an important challenge for the democratic Bangladesh we all want to craft where everyone can express their views without fear. The July uprising has opened up this freedom in ways that were unimaginable over the last 15 years. Still, the divisive wounds will need to be healed through restorative justice so that we can become more united and inclusive in our diversities, paving the way towards people's deliberative democracy.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Sibilant summons
5 Eiffel Tower setting
10 Match in value
12 Singer Cara
13 Grammatical category
15 "My country--of thee"
16 Attempt
17 Beavers' creation
18 Black Sea port
20 Old letter
21 Laundry problem
22 Commentary piece
23 Signed
25 Automaker Benz
28 Make wavy
31 Singer Burl
32 Yearly
34 Catch some z's
35 Employ
36 Uno plus due
37 Spot for spectacles
40 Exodus figure
41 Lesson leader
42 Stage direction
43 Disavow
- DOWN**
1 Basil-based sauce
2 Ten-armed swimmers
3 Circle-in-a-circle, in Venn diagrams
4 N Mahal
5 Feel sorry for
6 Rainbow shape
7 Study
8 Preposterous
9 Appeared
11 Admits
14 Site for a car's oil
19 Goes yachting
20 "The Kiss" creator
24 Writer Hemingway
25 Checkers demand
26 Arthurian island
27 Meal
29 Change genetically
30 Church leader
33 Distrustful
35 Cold War side
38 Glimpse
39 Bossy's chew



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

Unlocking the Sun's potential: How daylight influences physical activity and mood in depression

Seasonal changes can significantly impact mood, especially for individuals with mood disorders like major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. Many people notice their symptoms worsen during darker, shorter days, but the precise reasons for this have long been unclear.



While mood disorders are already the leading cause of disability worldwide, up to 30% of individuals with depression or bipolar disorder experience a distinct seasonal pattern in their symptoms. Understanding the role of environmental factors like sunlight in these patterns could open the door to better treatment and self-management strategies.

A recent study, published in PLOS Mental Health, sheds light on how sunlight exposure influences physical activity in people with depression. The study found that depressed individuals tended to be less physically active during the day, but this inactivity was closely linked to the amount of daylight and sunlight intensity. More sunlight led to increased physical activity, suggesting that longer days and brighter light may help mitigate some depressive symptoms.

Interestingly, the study also suggests that individuals with depression may have an altered physiological response to sunlight, making them less able to capitalise on its benefits. These findings could lead to the development of digital tools that track sunlight exposure and physical activity, offering clinicians a new way to monitor and manage seasonal mood disorders. This approach could help people better recognise their own patterns and take steps to improve their mental health throughout the year.

Source: PLOS Mental Health



WORLD RABIES DAY: A call to action

STAR HEALTH DESK

Every year on September 28, the world observes *World Rabies Day*, a vital occasion aimed at raising awareness about the prevention of rabies and highlighting progress in combating this deadly disease. This date holds particular significance as it marks the anniversary of the death of Louis Pasteur, the pioneering French chemist and microbiologist who developed the first rabies vaccine.

Despite the availability of effective vaccines and treatments, rabies remains a major global health challenge, claiming the lives of tens of thousands each year. Alarming, approximately 99% of these cases result from bites by infected dogs. Rabies is a viral zoonotic disease that leads to severe inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. It manifests in two forms: furious rabies, characterised by hyperactivity and hallucinations, and paralytic rabies, which results in paralysis and coma. Once clinical symptoms appear, the disease is nearly always fatal, but it is completely preventable through vaccination and timely medical intervention.

To effectively tackle rabies, comprehensive surveillance systems are crucial. The World Health Organisation (WHO) supports the integration of human and animal rabies surveillance, enabling countries to report data that is essential for tracking progress in rabies control and elimination campaigns. Accurate and integrated data not only helps in understanding the disease's burden and informing policy decisions but also ensures that vaccine and treatment resources are allocated appropriately. Countries are encouraged to nominate national focal points to participate actively in this global initiative, sharing their surveillance data

through designated platforms.

The WHO has established two main strategies for rabies prevention: pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). PrEP involves administering several doses of the rabies vaccine to high-risk populations before exposure, while PEP consists of a series of vaccines and, in some cases, rabies immunoglobulin, administered after suspected exposure. The WHO recommends both intradermal and intramuscular administration routes for the vaccines, with new schedules allowing for cost savings and improved accessibility.

While vaccination is a critical measure, it alone cannot eliminate rabies.

The One Health approach emphasises the interconnectedness of human and animal health, facilitating a coordinated response that enhances rabies surveillance and control. National and regional elimination plans bolster preparedness and mobilise resources, ultimately benefiting community health and well-being.

In 2015, a global commitment was made to achieve zero human dog-mediated rabies deaths by 2030. For the first time, four major organisations—WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)—have united

To effectively tackle rabies, comprehensive surveillance systems are crucial. The World Health Organisation (WHO) supports the integration of human and animal rabies surveillance, enabling countries to report data that is essential for tracking progress in rabies control and elimination campaigns.

Addressing the disease at its source—through mass dog vaccination—is the most effective strategy. Vaccinating at least 70% of dogs in areas at risk is proven to significantly reduce human rabies cases. Engaging communities to raise awareness about rabies prevention and ensuring dog vaccination are essential components of this strategy. Public knowledge empowers individuals to seek prompt medical care when needed and to recognise the importance of preventive measures in animals.

To combat rabies effectively, collaboration between the human and veterinary health sectors is essential.

in a collaborative effort known as United Against Rabies. This initiative seeks to empower countries to take action, build institutional capacity, and ultimately eliminate human deaths caused by rabies.

World Rabies Day serves as a reminder that rabies is not just a health issue but a preventable tragedy. Through concerted efforts in education, vaccination, and collaboration, we can end the burden of rabies and protect lives. Together, we can achieve a world free from rabies, ensuring that no one suffers from this entirely preventable disease.

Source: World Health Organisation

World leaders commit to decisive action on AMR

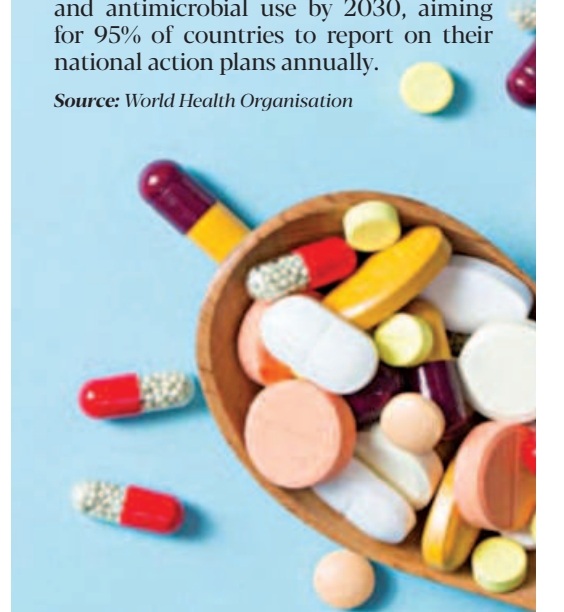
Global leaders have approved a political declaration at the 79th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), committing to targets including a 10% reduction in the estimated 4.95 million deaths associated with bacterial AMR by 2030.

The declaration calls for sustainable national financing and US\$100 million in catalytic funding to ensure that at least 60% of countries have funded national action plans on AMR by 2030. The Quadripartite—comprising the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)—welcomed this commitment, emphasising a One Health approach that links human, animal, plant, and environmental health.

Key targets include ensuring that at least 70% of globally used antibiotics belong to the WHO Access group, and that 100% of countries have basic water, sanitation, and hygiene services in healthcare facilities. Additionally, the declaration aims to reduce antimicrobial use in agriculture and address antimicrobial pollution.

The declaration formalises the Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR as the central coordinating mechanism for the global response to AMR and calls for updating the Global Action Plan by 2026. Countries are encouraged to report quality surveillance data on AMR and antimicrobial use by 2030, aiming for 95% of countries to report on their national action plans annually.

Source: World Health Organisation



Does my medical condition AFFECT MY ANGER?

DR NUR A SAFRINA RAHMAN

Experiencing anger is a natural part of being human, but frequent and intense outbursts can harm both your health and relationships. Understanding the possible underlying medical reasons for your anger can help you address the issue effectively.

Dementia and anger

Various forms of dementia, including Alzheimer's and Lewy body dementia, can lead to increased frustration and aggressive behaviours as the condition progresses. These outbursts can be particularly challenging for carers, who may need to identify immediate triggers, such as physical discomfort or difficulties in communication.

Medications and anger

Some anxiety medications, particularly benzodiazepines, can occasionally cause irritability or aggressive behaviour as a side effect. This risk may be heightened in individuals with a history of aggressive tendencies. If you notice changes in your mood while taking these medications, it is essential to consult your healthcare provider.

Autism spectrum disorder

Anger and frustration can be common among individuals on the autism spectrum. Outbursts might occur due to sensory overload, stress, or changes in routine. For many, difficulties in communication can exacerbate feelings of anger, making it crucial to identify triggers and develop coping strategies.

Impact of cholesterol medications

Statins, which are often prescribed to lower

cholesterol levels, have been associated with increased aggression in some studies. Low cholesterol can lead to reduced serotonin levels, which may contribute to irritability and mood swings.

Depression and irritability

Depression is frequently accompanied by irritability, particularly in men, who may express their feelings through anger. This anger can be directed outward or turned inward. Thankfully, both therapy and medication are effective treatments for depression.

Diabetes and emotional responses

A diagnosis of diabetes can bring about a range of emotions, including anger, particularly if it requires significant lifestyle changes. Fluctuating blood sugar levels can also affect mood, so maintaining stable glucose levels is important for emotional balance.

Epilepsy and behaviour changes

Individuals with epilepsy may exhibit aggressive behaviour following seizures due to confusion and fear. Certain anti-seizure medications can also lead to changes in behaviour, particularly in children.

Liver health and emotions

Chronic liver issues can manifest as irritability or anger. Conditions like cirrhosis or hepatitis can lead to a buildup of toxins in the body, resulting in hepatic encephalopathy, which can cause personality changes.

Hormonal changes in women

Hormonal fluctuations during menstruation or menopause can significantly impact mood. Conditions like premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) can cause

extreme anger and irritability due to changes in hormone levels.

Strokes and emotional changes

Experiencing a stroke can damage the areas of the brain that regulate emotions, leading to increased irritability or behavioural changes. This emotional shift is not uncommon after such a significant health scare.

Hyperthyroidism

An overactive thyroid, or hyperthyroidism, can lead to heightened anxiety and irritability. Effective treatment is crucial to managing these symptoms and maintaining emotional stability.

Wilson's disease

This rare genetic disorder, which results in copper accumulation in the liver and brain, can affect personality and behaviour if it impacts the frontal lobe, leading to increased anger and frustration.

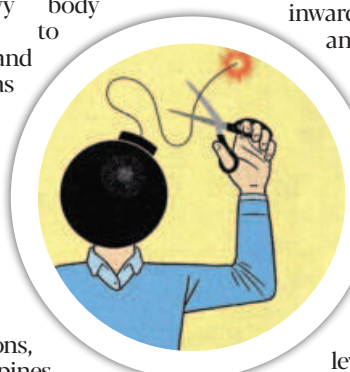
If you suspect that a medical condition or treatment is influencing your anger, it is vital to consult with a healthcare professional. They may recommend counselling or other therapeutic options.

To help manage your anger, consider these strategies:

- Engage in deep breathing exercises and positive self-talk.
- Share your feelings with supportive friends or family.
- Keep a journal to track your thoughts and emotional responses.
- Practice assertive communication in healthy ways.
- Look for humour in everyday situations.

By recognising the potential medical influences on your emotions, you can take proactive steps toward managing your anger more effectively.

The writer is a public health specialist.
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Navigating the postpartum journey

STAR HEALTH DESK

The postpartum period, often considered the first six weeks after childbirth, is a transformative time filled with physical and emotional changes as new mothers adjust to life with their newborns. While this period can feel overwhelming, it is important to recognise that every woman's experience is unique and influenced by factors like delivery type and previous pregnancies. Here is a month-by-month overview of what to expect during recovery.

Week 1: Immediate recovery

During the first week, many women remain in the hospital after a vaginal delivery, often dealing with soreness in the perineal area, especially if there was tearing. Post-delivery bleeding, initially bright red, is normal as the body begins to heal.

Those who undergo a C-section may experience significant discomfort at the incision site, making mobility challenging. Regardless of the delivery method, emotional fluctuations are common, particularly around day three, when hormonal changes can lead to tearfulness and anxiety.

Recovery tips: Ice packs can soothe perineal pain, while over-the-counter pain relievers can help manage discomfort. Staying hydrated and using stool softeners can ease the bowel movement process, especially after a C-section.

Week 2: Ongoing adjustments

By the second week, vaginal bleeding may start to taper off for some women, while others might experience continued bleeding. As healing progresses, itches around sutures can occur, which may indicate positive recovery signs. For C-section mothers, soreness persists, but mobility often improves. Emotionally, many women experience the "baby blues," characterised by mood swings and sadness.

Recovery tips: Focus on gradual movement, such as light walks, and prioritise a balanced diet to support energy levels. If breastfeeding, seek assistance from

a lactation consultant if you experience any difficulties.

Week 6: Transitioning to new norms

At six weeks, physical healing is typically well underway. Vaginal bleeding should have ceased, and most women are cleared for light exercise and sexual activity. However, some may still feel apprehensive about intimacy. For C-section moms, the incision should feel less sensitive, but some numbness may persist.

Recovery tips: This is a good time to address any lingering emotional concerns during your check-up. Engage in gentle exercise to rebuild strength and stamina.

Six months: Setting in

By six months postpartum, many women notice a return to pre-pregnancy health, although some may still feel fatigued, especially if their baby is not sleeping well. The body may have changed, with some weight distribution shifts or alterations in breast appearance, especially for those who are still breastfeeding.

Recovery tips: Regular exercise becomes vital for both mental and physical well-being. Incorporating core strengthening activities can alleviate back pain, a common complaint.

One year: Embracing motherhood

At the one-year mark, many women feel closer to their pre-pregnancy selves, although their bodies may still feel different. If breastfeeding continues, its impact on physical appearance may persist. Mental health is often closely tied to how well mothers are adapting to their new roles and the sleep they are getting.

Recovery tips: Continue to prioritise self-care. Find opportunities to nap when the baby sleeps to catch up on rest, which is crucial for maintaining overall health.

In conclusion, the postpartum period is a significant phase in a woman's life, characterised by both challenges and milestones. By understanding these changes and taking proactive steps toward recovery, new mothers can better navigate this profound transition.



Untreated hypertension increases dementia risk

Dementia is one of the most feared outcomes of ageing, affecting millions of individuals and their families worldwide. While genetics and age play significant roles, other modifiable risk factors have garnered attention, particularly hypertension. For years, researchers have explored the complex relationship between high blood pressure and cognitive decline, increasingly recognising hypertension as a major contributor to dementia risk.

Untreated hypertension can significantly heighten the likelihood of developing Alzheimer's disease, as well as other forms

of dementia. Individuals with untreated high blood pressure are at an increased risk for cognitive decline compared to those who effectively manage their hypertension with medication or who never had hypertension.

Interestingly, this relationship highlights the protective role of antihypertensive treatment. Properly managing blood pressure not only reduces the risk of cardiovascular complications but also appears to safeguard cognitive health. Moreover, while high blood pressure is linked to increased risk for Alzheimer's dementia, it is also associated with non-Alzheimer's

forms of dementia, indicating a broader impact on cognitive function.

These findings emphasise the critical need for hypertension management as a proactive approach to reduce the risk of dementia. Controlling blood pressure serves as a vital intervention, helping to delay or prevent the onset of dementia as individuals age. Thus, effective hypertension management could be key to promoting both heart and brain health, fostering a better quality of life in later years.

Source: PLOS Medicine

U-17s fight back to set up final against India

SPORTS REPORTER

Saiful Bari Titu made some inspired substitutions as Bangladesh fought back from two goals down to beat Pakistan 8-7 on penalties in the semifinals of the SAFF U-17 Championship in Thimphu yesterday, setting up a final clash against defending champions India.

The goal-shy Bangladesh team, who were lucky to go through to the last-four battle with only a point and having scored a single goal in two matches, wasted a handful of chances to take the game by the scruff of the neck. They had to pay the price, too, going two goals down after the hour-mark, with the first goal conceded in the 32nd minute when Shahab Ahmed headed home Subhan Karim's corner. The lead was doubled right after the hour mark as Abdul Rehman dispatched from the spot after a through-ball had hit defender Siam Omit's right hand inside the Bangladesh box.

Desperate for a comeback, Titu made a number of substitutions, bringing on Mohammad Manik first and then Mithu Chowdhury and Akash Ahmed in a double change.

Manik reduced the arrears in the 74th minute, turning in a corner from Murshed Ali before taking the game into penalties



We started the match very well. We should have scored on two-three occasions. From there we were not able to control the game and after the first half too. So I made some changes to make an impact on the match. I must say it was a dramatic comeback. We were lucky, (scoring) in the final moments and then winning on penalties. But all credit goes to the players because they fought very well.

SAIFUL BARI TITU
Bangladesh coach

PHOTO: BFF

with a placing shot on a cut-back from Mithu Chowdhury in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

Both teams changed their goalkeepers for the decisive spot-kicks as Alif Rahman Imtiage stood between the sticks for Bangladesh, replacing regular goalkeeper

Nahidul Islam.

It proved to be a long and nerve-racking ordeal for both teams as the first seven shots from each side were successful. However, Alif made a brilliant save against Pakistan's Abdul Ghani before Kamal Merdha converted Bangladesh's eighth

attempt to take Titu's charges to the final.

The final, to be played on Monday, will be a rematch of last edition's final, which was played in under-16 format, where India emerged victorious by 2-0 margin. India beat Nepal 4-2 in the first semifinal earlier in the day.

Kohli, Kayes renew ties from Brisbane

SPORTS REPORTER FROM KANPUR

Produced in Bangladesh, MKS Sports bats have been making the rounds locally and received a big boost when last year they received ICC approval to brandish their logo in international cricket.

MKS is an acronym of the names of the three partners: cricketers Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Imrul Kayes, and Shahin - Rajshahi's 'bat doctor' Hossain Muhammad Aftab.

The very willows made it to Kanpur on Friday and were gifted to India superstars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma by Shahin, on behalf of the company, who informed members of the media that Kohli was particularly excited to receive the bat.

The gifts also renewed ties between Kohli and former Bangladesh opener Kayes, who both shared a camp in Australia.

"Virat and I were in Australia for many days in 2008 during a camp - in Brisbane's Centre of Excellence for HP - before making the national team," Kayes informed The Daily Star.

The gift of Bangladesh-made bats is a gesture that brings wider international recognition for Kayes and company. However, MKS Sports will have to compete against Indian and Pakistani bat manufacturers, who have over 50 years of experience, to carve out a space for themselves in the market.

While MKS is far off from known names in the bat industry for now, the excitement and feedback from Indian superstars should help the brand gear up for new challenges going forward.

Rishad and Co planning to fill in Shakib's shoes

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Shakib Al Hasan's decision to call it quits in T20Is has created a massive vacuum in Bangladesh's spin bowling department in the shortest format, one that would soon spread to the other two formats as well as he is set to retire from all forms of international cricket in the matter of months.

After leading the Bangladesh spin attack in all three formats for more than 18 years, the 37-year-old has officially entered the final stretch of his international career and speculations have already begun about how the Tiger's spin attack will shape up in his absence.

With 708 wickets to his name till yesterday, Shakib is Bangladesh's most successful bowler across formats by some margin. Pacers Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (389) and Mustafizur Rahman (323) occupy the next two spots in the list followed by off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz (296), who made his international debut in 2016; 10 years after Shakib.

Miraz has long been touted to take over Shakib's role as an all-rounder in

the team, however, within a very short time Rishad Hossain, a leg-spinner who has the ability to tonk the ball, has also inserted himself in that debate at least in the shortest format.

It would be extremely difficult for anyone to step into Shakib's shoes but out of the current crop of spinners, which includes the likes of Taijul Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Mahedi Hasan and Nayeem Hasan, Miraz and Rishad look the best equipped to do so owing to their batting abilities.

The first test of how the spin attack will cop in the post-Shakib era will take place in the forthcoming three-match T20I series against India, starting in Gwalior on October 6.

Rishad, who is still very new to the international circuit with three ODIs and 24 T20Is, told reporters in Mirpur yesterday that the spinners are already planning on how they can make up for Shakib's absence moving forward.

"The five to six of us spinners who are in the pipeline are discussing with each other about how to go about the matches in India and the upcoming games. We are talking about how we can cover his absence," Rishad told reporters ahead of

an inter-squad practice match.

"Shakib bhai all of a sudden taking such a decision is very disappointing for us. Inshallah, we will try to gradually cover up with our best efforts," he added.

Rishad has recently staked a claim in one of Shakib's long-lasting records by becoming the second Bangladeshi to get a contract in Australia's Big Bash League (BBL), getting drafted in by Hobart Hurricanes for the upcoming season.

His brilliant stint in this year's ICC T20 World Cup where he took 14 wickets earned him global recognition and attracted interest from franchises from different leagues across the world.

He was picked by Toronto Nationals in the Global T20 Canada but could not get due to visa complications. He was also picked by Harare Bolts in the ongoing Zim Afro T10 but could not take part owing to national team commitments.

Rishad runs the risk of missing out on the BBL as well, as its schedule clashes with the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

BBL will run from December 15 this year to January 27 next year, while the 11th BPL is scheduled to start on December 27 and run until February 7.

Hobart, however, have two matches scheduled before the start of BPL, on December 19 and 21 respectively. So, the 22-year-old remains hopeful about getting the opportunity to get a taste of BBL.

"Hopefully I will be able to play a few Big Bash matches," said Rishad.



Wicket concerns mount after unusual rainfall

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI FROM KANPUR

Persistent rain has plagued the second Test between India and Bangladesh since its opening day, marking an unusual weather pattern for this time of year in Kanpur. As the heavy downpour left players restless and eager for action, the visitors are particularly concerned about how the wicket will behave when play resumes today.

Following heavy showers on Friday evening and moderate overnight rain, both teams returned to their hotel early in the morning yesterday, signalling the second day's play would be completely wiped out.

The teams did not return to the stadium, given no matter how much the super sopplers continued their work, the drainage system was not adequate for all that water.

There was no post-day press conference yesterday due to rain, as it happened on the opening day. Instead, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto shared his thoughts in a video message via Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) media. Shanto talked about the disappointment felt by the cricketers.

"There was no play again today [Saturday], which is a disappointing thing for the players. Not much can be done about it, but had the game started, it would have felt good," Shanto said.

On Friday, Bangladesh had recovered well from the early loss of both openers. Jasprit Bumrah, in particular, got the ball to move at pace, but the slowness of the surface had also been evident. However, it did not mean that shots could not

"The wicket was good. The challenge here was the stop-and-start nature of the game so far."

NAJMUL HOSSAIN SHANTO



be played, as both Shanto and Mominul Haque's innings reflected.

"The wicket was good. The challenge here was the stop-and-start nature of the game so far," Shanto added.

A tricky ground to score on, 300 is considered a pretty good total. Bangladesh reached 107 for three on day one, and their two best Test batters, Mominul and Mushfiqur Rahim, were at the crease, with Liton Das, Shakib Al Hasan, and Mehedi Miraz yet to come.

"I think we lost one wicket too many... I won't say we are in a bad position," he felt.

Overall, it depends on how the wicket behaves if play is possible on day three, having been under covers for a while. "If we look at the game right now, we are sort of in a middling position.

"There is rain and not much sun to be had. In that sense, as the game progresses, it will be understandable how challenging the wicket is," said the Bangladesh captain, pointing to the fact that their innings is in the balance.

While Kanpur will be wishing that Sunday brings forth some sun and cricket, the Tigers will hope the dampness of the wicket at Green Park Stadium does not destabilise their second innings.



Cole Palmer made history in Chelsea's 4-2 rout of Brighton at home yesterday as the 22-year-old became the first player in the Premier League to net four goals in the first half. It was also his third league hat-trick, the joint-most for the Blues alongside Didier Drogba, Frank Lampard, and Jimmy Floyd-Hasselbaink.

PHOTO: AFP

Jayasuriya eyes series win, not milestone

AFP, Galle

Sri Lanka were just five wickets away from a crushing second Test and series victory over New Zealand on Saturday, with the tourists 199-5 at stumps on the third day, having followed on after collapsing to 88 all out in their first innings.

Tom Blundell was not out on 47 and Glenn Phillips on 32 when bad light forced an early end to play in Galle after debutant off-spinner Nishan Peiris took three top-order wickets.

"Obviously the first innings wasn't ideal. It was a bitter pill to swallow," said Blundell afterwards.

"Things were happening very quick. Sri Lanka are a very good team and their

spinners bowled really well."

Sri Lanka declared Friday on a mammoth 602-5 for their first innings, then spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took 6-42 for his ninth five-wicket haul as the visitors failed to get to three figures.

Jayasuriya will need to dismiss all five remaining New Zealand batsmen to equal the record for fastest bowler to 100 Test wickets, held since 1896 by England's George Lohmann who reached the milestone in his 16th Test.

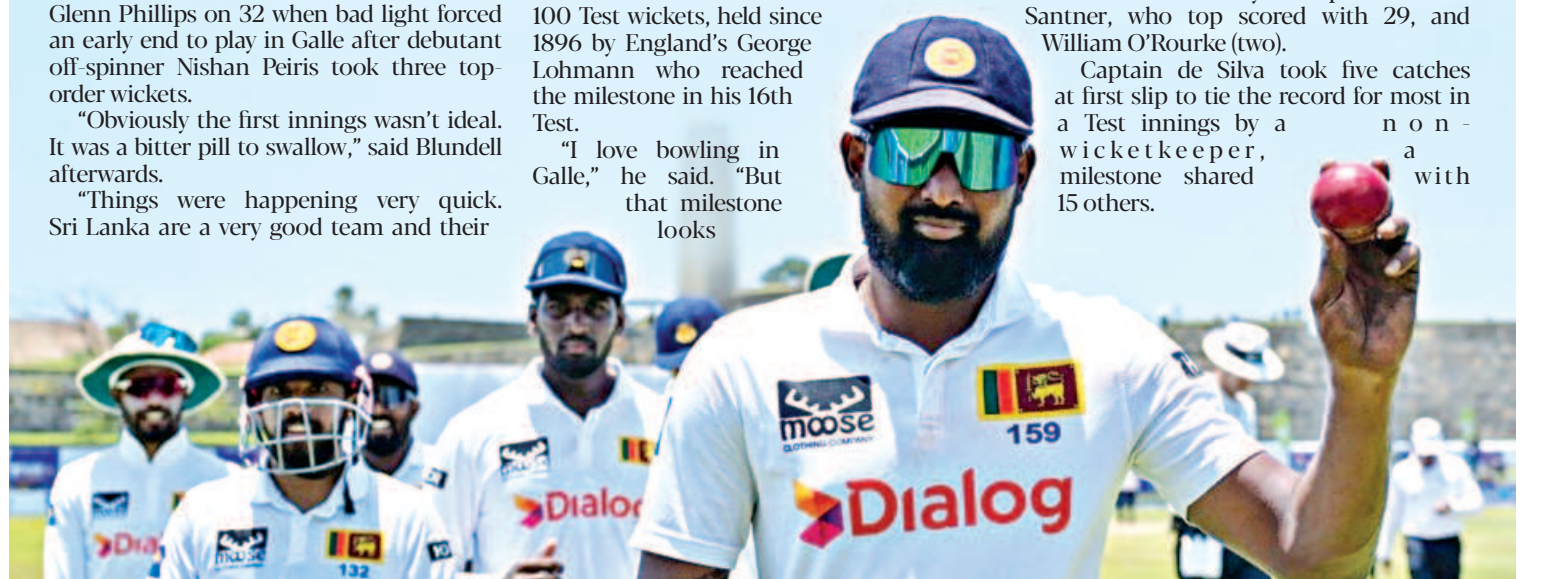
"I love bowling in Galle," he said. "But that milestone looks

out of reach now.

"Obviously when you have runs on the board you can dictate terms like we did today," he added. "We will be delighted with a series win."

Resuming at a precarious 22-2 in their first innings, New Zealand's batsmen barely put up a fight and their highest partnership was the 20 added by last pair Mitchell Santner, who top scored with 29, and William O'Rourke (two).

Captain de Silva took five catches at first slip to tie the record for most in a Test innings by a non-wicketkeeper, a milestone shared with 15 others.



Interim govt must win BNP's absolute trust

Says Tarique

UNB, Jhenaidah

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman said yesterday that the interim government, led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, must take on the challenge of winning the BNP's absolute trust.

"We all know that there was no alternative to an interim government to fill the vacuum suddenly created in a dictatorship-free Bangladesh. For valid reasons, we supported them at the time and still support them.

However, they must take on the challenge of ensuring that our trust in them remains unshaken."

Addressing a mass rally via video link, the BNP leader emphasised that the interim government must specify the responsibilities assigned to them and outline a roadmap for fulfilling those duties effectively.

"While it may not be possible for them to implement all changes, it would also be unreasonable for them to shoulder responsibilities they cannot carry."

The BNP leader said that every decision, statement, and reaction at the highest levels of government requires the careful and visible application of utmost caution to avoid misunderstanding.

He also said that running a government is a highly sensitive and complex task, warning that even a small deviation can raise a big question.

"Carelessness can weaken the essential trust and fracture the unity that is at the core of the nation's strength."

"Any one of these can lead to a terrible disaster. It's

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"While it may not be possible for them to implement all changes, it would also be unreasonable for them to shoulder responsibilities they cannot carry."



Vehicles having trouble on Atis Dipankar Road in Malibagh. The road, which was already in bad shape, has now become almost impassable due to further damage caused after heavy rains.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'Uprising death toll 1,581'

Says Anti-Discrimination Student Movement's sub-committee

BSS, Dhaka

A total of 1,581 people have lost their lives in the student-led mass uprising across the country, according to the primary data collected by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement's sub-committee on health affairs.

"We have prepared the primary list of 1,581 fatalities based on the information that will be finalised, and the names will be included in the health ministry website as martyrs after final verification by the district committee led by deputy commissioners," Tariqul Islam, member secretary of the sub-committee on health, told a press conference yesterday on the Dhaka University campus.

The list has already been sent to the district level committee, asking them to complete the verification within three

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Reconstitute NHRC with qualified people

Urge speakers at a dialogue on human rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is imperative to reconstitute the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) as a "truly" independent body in nature with qualified people to protect human rights, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The commission had turned into a "rehabilitation centre for retired bureaucrats over the years", the speakers

said at a dialogue on human rights at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) in the capital.

The Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) organised the event as part of its 'Dialogue for Democratic Reconstruction', a series of programmes, with CGS Chairperson Munira Khan in the chair.

Addressing the event, Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Shihab Uddin Khan

alleged that people were deceived when the commission was constituted.

"The Human Rights Commission was presented as an eyewash to the international community. This commission could have played a key role [in preventing] human rights violations, but it could not because it was not independent," he said.

He urged the government to ensure

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GULSHAN DOUBLE MURDER 'Shop employee kills cigarette trader, assistant'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two decomposing bodies were recovered from a tin-roofed house in the capital's Gulshan-2 neighbourhood yesterday.

The victims, identified as Rafiq, 62, from Barishal, and Sabbir, 15, from Mymensingh, had their throats slit and their bodies bore multiple stab wounds, said police.

Rafiq, a caretaker of an empty plot

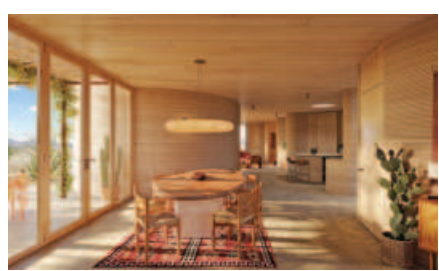
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Despite the obvious safety hazards, overloaded trucks on hilly roads is common in Dighinala of Khagrachhari. Such disregard for safety often leads to vehicles tipping to one side and tragedies. The photo was taken from the upazila's Larma Square bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAHMAN

World's first 3D-printed hotel takes shape in Texas



REUTERS, Texas

It looks like any other 3D printer - except it's the size of a crane and is, layer by layer, building a hotel in the Texan desert.

El Cosmico, an existing hotel and campground on the outskirts of the city of Marfa, is expanding. It is building 43 new hotel units and 18 residential homes over 60 acres (24 hectares) - all with a 3D printer.

It is the world's first 3D-printed hotel, says El Cosmico owner Liz Lambert and the partners behind the project - Austin, Texas-based 3D printing company ICON and architects Bjarke Ingels Group.

Lambert said the technology allows for unprecedented creativity.

Nepal landslides, floods kill 66

69 missing; death toll likely to rise

REUTERS, Kathmandu

At least 66 people have been killed in Nepal since early on Friday as persistent downpours triggered flooding and landslides, closing major roads and disrupting domestic air travel, officials said yesterday.

The death toll could rise, they added, with another 69 people reported missing, and 60 injured since Friday morning, home ministry official Dil Kumar Tamang told Reuters.

Most of the deaths took place in the Kathmandu valley, which is home to 4 million people and the country's capital, where the flooding brought traffic and normal activity to a standstill.

Rescue workers used helicopters and rubber boats to help people stranded on rooftops or elevated ground as some parts of Kathmandu reported up to 322.2 mm (12.68 inches) of rain over the last day.

Most rivers in the Himalayan nation have swollen, spilling over roads and bridges, authorities said, after nearly a week's delay in the retreat of South Asia's annual monsoon rains brought torrential downpours across the region.

Police were working to clear debris and reopen roads after landslides blocked highways in 28 places, said police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki. The earliest let-up in the rains might not come until Sunday, said Binu Maharjan, a weather forecasting official in Kathmandu, who said a low pressure system over parts of neighbouring India had caused this year's extended rains.

"Heavy rains are likely to continue until Sunday morning and weather is likely to clear after that," Maharjan told Reuters.

PHOTO ON PAGE 7

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