

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE COMMISSION 400 complaints filed in 13 days

Submission deadline extended to Oct 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Commission of Enquiry on Enforced Disappearances received 400 complaints in the first 13 days since it began working on September 15.

The 400 incidents of enforced disappearances took place during the Awami League regime.

The commission has identified a detention centre at the headquarters of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI). The centre, known as "Aynaghar", is a joint interrogation cell housed in a two-story building.

Commission Chairman Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, a retired High Court judge, shared this information at a press conference at its office in the capital's Gulshan yesterday.

"We are investigating the cases of those who were disappeared by the state forces or the law enforcement agencies. We will summon the accused. If they fail to appear before us, we will take legal action."

"Most of the allegations of enforced disappearance have been brought

- ➔ Many complaints received from outside Dhaka
- ➔ 75 persons have made statements in person
- ➔ Accused in complaints to be summoned

against the Rab, DGFI, the Detective Branch of police, and the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit.

"On September 25, we visited the 'Aynaghar' at the DGFI headquarters. We also went to the DB and CTTC unit offices on October 1. However, we did not find any detainees. It seems that all the detainees have been released after August 5," Justice Moyeenul said.

The commission initially set September 30 as the deadline for filing complaints, but its chief said that the deadline was pushed back to October 10.

He said that 75 individuals have so far given statements in person, and many others have filed complaints by post or email.

The deadline for lodging complaints could be extended further, if necessary, he added.

"We will assess later if the investigations can be completed within three months."

Asked about a few recent detentions, Justice Moyeenul said that they were only investigating the incidents that occurred between January 1,

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Vehicles and rickshaws navigate the waterlogged Toyenbee Circular Road in the capital yesterday afternoon. Many streets and alleys in the city went under water due to intermittent rain since Wednesday night.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Malaysia PM arrives today Will discuss labour, trade issues with Yunus

DIPLOMATIC
CORRESPONDENT

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim arrives in Dhaka today for an official visit, ushering in the hope of boosting trade and investment, improving migration system, and addressing the Rohingya crisis.

This is the first visit by head of any foreign government since the

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POLICE REFORMS

Freedom from political control is the goal

Old draft ordinance may come in handy
for police reforms commission

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The setting up of a commission for police reforms is not the first such move in Bangladesh.

The last caretaker government had taken a similar step. It formed Bangladesh Police Act Drafting Committee, which came up with a draft ordinance in 2007.

The goals of the committee were to free police from political influence; make transfers, promotions, and appointments within the force transparent; and ensure that the force and its members are accountable.

That draft ordinance proposed an independent police commission and a complaints commission. It intended to

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Govt finalises 5 of 6 reform commissions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has formally constituted five commissions to reform the public administration, Anti-Corruption Commission, judiciary, police, and the electoral system.

The commissions were formed after Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus approved them.

The Cabinet Division last night issued separate

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On behalf of BAIRA,

We are Honoured to extend our warmest and heartfelt welcome to

His Excellency

Dato Seri Anwar Bin Ibrahim,
Hon'ble Prime Minister of Malaysia in
Bangladesh.



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A Cordial Welcome to

The Honourable Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Prime Minister of Malaysia

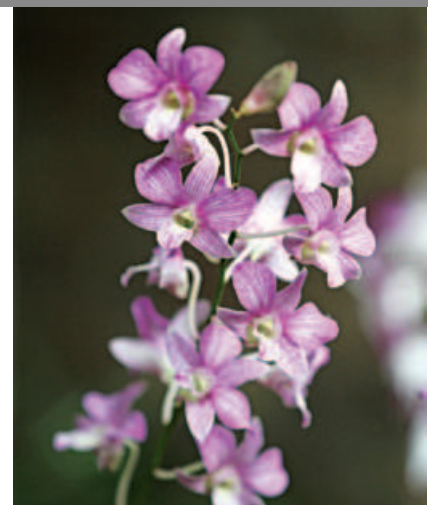
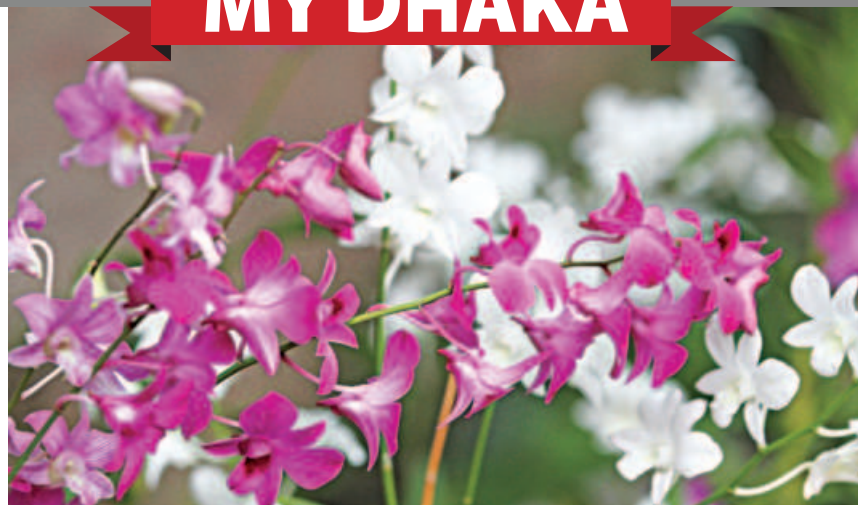
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The photos are from a previous event.

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

ANNUAL ORCHID SHOW

A day of flowers in Dhaka

NUSRATH JAHAN

As the year draws to a close, flower lovers across Bangladesh have a reason to rejoice. The Bangladesh Orchid Society is hosting its Annual Orchid Show 2024 this Friday and Saturday; a two-day event that will showcase the beauty of orchids.

The Bangladesh Orchid Society, founded in 1989, has established itself as a key player in the horticultural landscape of the country. Starting small, it has now grown into a vibrant community, united by a shared passion for orchids. Under their care, the society currently nurtures an impressive collection of 15 different species, five of which are indigenous to Bangladesh.

This year's show will feature 7-8 varieties of orchids, giving attendees a glimpse into the sheer diversity of

these delicate plants. From the bold and vibrant to the subtle and understated, the orchids on display will enchant visitors with their range of colours, shapes, and sizes. Each bloom tells its own story, offering a visual feast for those with an eye for detail and a love for nature's wonders.

However, there is more to orchid than just their beauty. Unlike many common garden flowers, orchids require daily attention to thrive. Watering twice a day is a key part of their maintenance routine. The potting materials must also be checked regularly to ensure they're not too soggy, as overwatering can be detrimental to their health.

Another essential factor in orchid care is light. While these plants need sunlight to grow, direct exposure can be harmful, especially in the sweltering heat of Bangladesh. Orchids thrive

best in indirect light, where they can absorb just the right amount of energy. Regular inspections for bugs and fungus are also crucial, as these pests can wreak havoc on the plants if left unchecked.

With proper care, orchids reward their caregivers with a longer shelf life than most flowers. They last up to two months and even longer, which makes orchids a favourite amongst flower enthusiasts worldwide.

Naseem Iqbal, president of Bangladesh Orchid Society, shares how her journey with flowers began long before her love for orchids bloomed. "I have always been a flower enthusiast," she says with a smile. "My early passion was roses, and I once had a sprawling collection of these classic flowers."

Unfortunately, the devastating flood

of the 1980s claimed her collection, a loss she still remembers vividly. Undeterred, Naseem and her husband, Mohammad Iqbal Ali, began a new journey, gradually collecting and cultivating orchids — a passion that continues to blossom.

The Annual Orchid Show 2024 promises to be a celebration of nature, beauty, and the art of cultivation. Whether you're a passionate gardener, a casual flower lover, or simply looking for a weekend activity that connects you to the natural world, the Annual Orchid Show is not to be missed. Immerse yourself in the beauty of orchids and discover the joy these remarkable flowers bring.

The show is scheduled to take place at Nasheman, House no. CEN-2, Road no. 95, North Gulshan, Dhaka 1212.

Reform talks to start with BNP tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new round of talks between the interim government and political parties starts with the BNP tomorrow.

The advisory council will meet the BNP leaders at state guest house Jamuna at 2:30pm, the party's media cell member Shairul Kabir Khan told The Daily Star.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is to lead the BNP delegation while Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will lead the advisory council.

According to BNP sources, the party will place specific proposals for reforms to different government organs.

In his address to the nation on September 11, Prof Yunus announced the formation of six commissions to reform the judiciary, the election system, the administration, the police, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the constitution.

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Bangladesh to get electricity from Nepal thru India

Tripartite agreement signed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh, Nepal, and India yesterday inked a tripartite agreement to facilitate cross border electricity trade between Kathmandu and Dhaka.

As per the agreement signed in Kathmandu, Nepal will export its surplus electricity to Bangladesh via India from June 15 to November 15 every year. India will arrange to transmit electricity from Nepal to Bangladesh through its power line.

In the first phase, Nepal will export 40MW of hydroelectricity to Bangladesh via Indian territory, PTI reported from Kathmandu.

The rate per unit of electricity has been fixed at 6.4 cents. From the export of electricity, Nepal will make an annual income of around \$9.2 million, Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) officials said.

The MoU was signed in Kathmandu between Bangladesh Power Development Board Chairman Mohamad Rizwan Karim, Nepal Electricity Authority Executive Director Kulman Ghising and National Thermal Power Corporation Vidyut

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Freedom from political control is the goal

FROM PAGE 1

change the colonial police laws of 1861, but it never saw the light of day because of strong opposition from the bureaucracy and vested quarters, said those involved in the process at that time.

Drawn up with assistance from Police Reforms Programme (PRP), funded by the UK and EU, the ordinance was forwarded to the home ministry in 2008 for promulgation, but it never happened.

One of two police officials, who were involved in drafting the ordinance and are still with the force, said the home ministry controls promotions, postings, and punishment of all officers above assistant superintendents according to the wishes of the party in power.

"But under the new law [proposed ordinance], the bureaucrats would not have any control over the police."

Citing the examples of India and Sri Lanka, they said both the South Asian neighbours have changed their British era police laws, since those were designed mainly to subjugate people and required hardly any accountability for police.

The officials suggested that the new police reforms commission, led by former home secretary Safar Raj Hossain, may draw upon the draft ordinance and the experience of Sri Lanka.

The two officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Sri Lankan law was better than that of India or Pakistan.

They cited the example of the uprising in Sri Lanka and the ouster of president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, during which the police did not use lethal force on protesters. They did not face public wrath either. "That is because Sri Lanka's police is controlled by an independent

commission," said one of the officers.

The 2007 draft had proposed a National Police Commission (NPC) and a Police Complaint Commission (PCC) to supervise policing and reduce partisan influence in the police department. The police commission would be headed by the home minister, it would have MPs from both sides of the aisle along with civil society representatives.

The complaints commission would be headed by a former judge of the appellate court along with senior retired bureaucrats and civil society representatives.

But once the Awami League took over in 2009, there was no attempt to reform the police. In fact, the AL government used the entire force as its tool for repression and to subdue opposition and dissent.

A section of police officials also worked as party activists for personal gains like securing lucrative postings and engaging in rampant corruption. In the process, they not only deprived the more competent officials, but were able to push them out to the fringes with their own groups of loyalists that had turned into an evil axis.

The axis showed its true colours during the July-August protests, when hundreds of people were shot dead by police. According to the latest estimates, at least 708 people were killed.

The law enforcers also suffered at the hands of the people who turned on them as the protests culminated in an uprising. The protesters killed 44 policemen, burnt down 224 police establishments and vandalised 236. Several police stations were razed to the ground.

Police reforms commission chief Safar Raj told The Daily Star on

Sunday that his committee members had already been picked and would soon be given formal appointments.

He added the commission will seek opinions from all stakeholders, including representatives of the print and electronic media.

Yesterday, the names of the commission members were unveiled by a notification.

The commission's office is at the home ministry.

However, those involved in the draft ordinance cautioned that even being located within the home ministry made the new commission vulnerable to pressure from bureaucrats.

THE 2007 DRAFT ORDINANCE

The draft ordinance proposed a National Police Commission (NPC) to supervise and administer the force and a Police Complaint Commission (PCC) to hold it accountable. The overarching goal was essentially the same as that of the Safar Raj Commission, reduce partisan influence.

The 11-member NPC would be led by the home minister. Members would include four MPs (two each from the government and opposition), four civil society representatives, the home secretary and the police chief. This police commission was authorised to significantly contribute to the appointment of the police chief and investigate any allegations against the top cop. Furthermore, only this commission had the authority to fire or transfer the inspector general.

The NPC would also finalise three nominees for the post of inspector general and forward them to the government for a final selection. The ordinance proposed that the government would appoint senior police officials, like additional IGP, upon the advice of the police

commission.

Besides, the police commission would have to periodically make recommendations ensure an efficient, effective, and accountable force.

Striving for stability within the force, the draft proposed that between the ranks of superintendent and inspector general, officials would remain at a post for at least two years.

The proposed ordinance criminalised any recommendations for appointments, transfers or promotions whether by a minister or an MP.

The five-member complaint commission was authorised to investigate any complaint against the police, abuse of power, violation of human rights, negligence and corruption.

The PCC, led by an Appellate Division judge or nationally reputed personality, would include a retired secretary or additional secretary, a retired IGP or additional IGP and two neutral civil society representatives.

The complaint commission would have had the authority to act voluntarily or on the basis of complaints. It was authorised to refer complaints of minor offences back to the police authorities and had the powers to investigate complaints it deemed serious. It could ask the chief justice to appoint a district judge for a judicial inquiry if it needed to.

The PCC was also given the responsibility to draw up recommendations for ridding the police force of corruption. This commission would closely supervise investigations related to all killing and rape. The draft ordinance had a provision for forming a summary court to swiftly punish police officials found guilty.

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday ruled that lawmakers can vote separately from their parties on major issues, allowing parliamentary horse-trading as the government tries to rally support for constitutional reform.

Elections in February were marred by allegations of rigging that favoured Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who heads a shaky coalition lacking the

two-thirds majority needed to change the constitution.

He is reportedly planning to give the executive more power over the judiciary, where dozens of cases are playing out against jailed opposition leader Imran Khan.

Yesterday's ruling allows his government to court individual MPs for their votes and pressure lawmakers loyal to Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for their support.

Malaysia PM arrives today

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formation of interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, who was assured of support by the Malaysian leader in a telephone call on August 13.

It is also the first state visit by any Malaysian leader to Bangladesh in 11 years.

Ibrahim, who began his first visit to Pakistan on Wednesday, will be flying to Dhaka, on Prof Yunus' invitation, around 2:00pm today and stay in the capital for about four hours.

The 58-member delegation that Ibrahim will lead include Investment, Trade, and Industry Minister Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan, deputy minister of transport, deputy minister of religious affairs, two members of parliament, and senior officials of the foreign ministry.

The Malaysian PM will hold a bilateral meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Yunus at a city hotel. He will also call on President Mohammed Shahabuddin.

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said the two sides will discuss economic, political, trade and investment, education, technology and human resource development, manpower export, higher education cooperation, communications, infrastructure development, and defense cooperation.

Foreign policy analysts said the visit by Ibrahim is more a demonstration of support to this interim government but also Malaysia's eagerness to improve Dhaka-Kuala Lumpur bilateral trade and to resolve regional issues like the Myanmar conflict and Rohingya crisis.

"Malaysia is the next chair of ASEAN. From that perspective, it can play an important role in resolving the Rohingya crisis. Also, Bangladesh has been seeking to be sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN. This idea can also be pushed further," said Prof Niloy Ranjan Biswas of Dhaka University's international relations department.

He told The Daily Star that under Bangladesh's Look East Policy, the

Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is an important region where the country is eager to increase trade.

In 2023, Bangladesh was Malaysia's second-largest trading partner among the Southeast Asian countries.

Total trade between Malaysia and Bangladesh reached \$2.78 billion that year. Bangladesh's export there, however, was only over \$300 million, according to the Export Promotion Bureau.

Malaysia is also eager to sign Free Trade Agreement with Bangladesh and attract medical tourists from here.

"Given our good relations, Bangladesh's trade can be significantly increased," said a foreign ministry official.

Malaysia and Indonesia, two important members of ASEAN, have been vocal about the Rohingya rights, and Bangladesh can work more closely with these countries to resolve the Rohingya crisis, as well as increase trade, said Prof Niloy.

Malaysia is also an important destination for Bangladeshi workers. Currently, estimated 800,000 Bangladeshis work in the Southeast Asian country.

"How to improve our workers' conditions in Malaysia is expected to be elaborately discussed during the bilateral meeting today," the official said.

As of the end of 2023, Malaysia is home to 6,288 Bangladeshi students at Malaysia's higher education institutions.

Foreign ministry officials said Prof Yunus is a good friend of Malaysian prime minister. Several Malaysian universities have established centres in the name of Prof Yunus who promotes social business and champions three-zero concept.

"The relations between the two countries can see a notable boost through this visit," said an official.

However, follow-up meetings and effective implementation of the decisions is important, he added.

400 complaints filed in 13 days

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2010, and August 5, 2024.

Nur Khan, a member of the commission, said, "We want to hear each complaint. We want to understand what happened and how people were detained in violation of the law."

Another commission member, Nabila Idris, said that many of the 400 complaints are about incidents which have come to light for the first time.

She noted that many victims of enforced disappearance neither spoke about those incidents nor filed general diaries (GDs) with police

stations before.

"We want to work with focus. We are receiving many complaints from outside Dhaka as well. Those who cannot come in person can send their complaints via post or email. Those will be of equal importance to us. We will call them to listen to their stories."

Sazzad Hossain, another member of the commission, said, "During our visit to the 'Aynagarh', we found that the centre corresponded to the victims' description. However, some changes have been made to it. Much crucial evidence, particularly the writings on the walls, have

been destroyed. We have verbally asked them not to make any more changes to the 'Aynagarh' until our investigation is complete. We have also sent a notice to them in this regard."

The interim government formed the five-member commission on August 27 to investigate enforced disappearances allegedly carried out by different intelligence and law enforcement agencies during the AL regime.

For over a decade, hundreds of families have lived with the unbearable pain of not knowing the fate of their loved ones. These

individuals, mostly critics of the AL government and members of opposition parties, disappeared during the party's 16-year rule.

In its 2021 report, Human Rights Watch said that security forces have committed over 600 enforced disappearances since Sheikh Hasina took office in 2009.

According to rights organisation Odhakar, at least 709 people became victims of enforced disappearance between 2009 and 2024. Of them, 155 still remain missing.

Plastic toys too toxic

Study finds presence of hazardous chemicals in at least 150 products

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A recent study by the Environment and Social Development Organisation and BAN Toxics has revealed that many plastic toys sold in Dhaka contain hazardous chemicals, posing significant health risks to children, particularly those under six.

The study found dangerous substances such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and chromium in toys commonly available in markets like Chawk Bazar, New Market, and Bashundhara City.

These chemicals can enter children's bodies through saliva when they put the toys in their mouths.

ISSUES

- ▶ Research tested 150 children's products
- ▶ 80pc, primarily made from recycled plastics, contained heavy metals
- ▶ Exposure to these chemicals could severely affect children's physical, cognitive, neurological development
- ▶ Toys are either domestically manufactured or imported from China

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Stricter regulations
- ▶ Banning harmful materials
- ▶ Proper labelling
- ▶ Awareness campaigns

"Children are at high risk because the first thing they do is put toys in their mouths, allowing harmful chemicals to easily enter," said Shahriar Hossain, secretary general of ESDO.

The research, which tested 150 children's products, found that 80 percent, primarily made from recycled plastics, contained alarmingly high levels of heavy metals.

These toys are either domestically manufactured (80pc) or imported from China.

Using advanced X-ray fluorescence (XRF) technology, the study detected dangerous levels of toxic metals in various children's items.

For instance, a child's water cup contained 1,380 parts per million (ppm) of lead, 247 ppm of arsenic, and 1,390 ppm of chromium—far exceeding the European Union's safety limits of 90 ppm for lead, 25 ppm for arsenic, and 60 ppm for chromium.

Other alarming cases include a stationary bag with 580 ppm of lead, 1,280 ppm of barium (limit 250 ppm), and 88 ppm of mercury (limit 60 ppm).

A children's doll set was found with 160 ppm of lead and 1,500 ppm of chromium, while a children's mug contained 220 ppm of lead, 315 ppm of cadmium, and 1,680 ppm of chromium.

The study warned that exposure to these chemicals could severely affect children's physical, cognitive, and neurological development.

"Lead exposure can cause developmental delays, cognitive impairments, and kidney damage, while cadmium affects respiratory function, kidney health, and bone density," the report stated.

Mercury exposure can result in neurological damage and respiratory irritation, while chromium has been linked to skin irritation and carcinogenic risks.

At a press conference, Shahriar Hossain

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Traffic police are continuing drives against battery-run rickshaws in various parts of the capital. After confiscation, these rickshaws will be taken for dumping. This comes in the wake of such vehicles continually breaking traffic rules and entering zones where they are not permitted. The photo was taken on Satmasjid road near Mohammadpur Police Station yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

LABOUR RECRUITMENT

Call on Malaysia to dismantle syndicate

Stakeholders urge govt; Yunus-Ibrahim bilateral meeting in Dhaka today

AT A GLANCE

- ▶ 100,000-200,000 Bangladeshi jobs in Malaysia
- ▶ 96pc face risks of exploitation
- ▶ Recruitment cost agreed by 2 govts -- Tk 78,990
- ▶ Actual average cost -- US \$4,500 and \$6,000
- ▶ Licensed agencies in Bangladesh -- 1,520
- ▶ Agencies allowed by Malaysia -- 101
- ▶ Money laundered from Bangladesh in 2yrs -- \$1b



PORIMOL PALMA and JAMIL MAHMUD

Dhaka should call on Kuala Lumpur to dismantle the labour recruitment syndicate that has created havoc for hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

The demand was made by migrant workers, rights activists, and recruiting agents, as Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus will hold a bilateral meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim today in Dhaka.

They said 100,000 to 200,000 Bangladeshi workers remain jobless or underpaid in Malaysia because of systematic irregularities by vested quarters who were close to power

structures in both countries.

A study by US-based non-profit Verite, published in May, said 96 percent of Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia reported facing risks of exploitation resulting from recruitment debt.

The debt makes it extremely difficult for them to leave an exploitative employment situation, or to seek remedy from local authorities.

Khairul Alam (not real name) is one such Bangladeshi who went to Malaysia in October last year, spending Tk 5 lakh.

He was contracted for a job at a construction company with a monthly wage of RM 1,500, which could be doubled with overtime and other allowances.

However, he, along with several hundred others, was neither provided jobs nor paid.

He then filed a case with the Labour Department that eventually asked his hiring company to arrange a job transfer to a suitable company.

"I am yet to get any job. I have been bringing money from home for my survival. My family back in Bangladesh is in debt," Khairul told The Daily Star yesterday.

An estimated 800,000 Bangladeshis now live in Malaysia. Of them, about 450,000 migrated between August 2022 and May this year under a syndicate of 101 recruiting agencies.

All their recruitment documents

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Egypt invites Yunus to attend D-8 summit

BSS, Dhaka

Egypt has extended an invitation to Chief Adviser



Muhammad Yunus to attend the D-8 Summit scheduled to take place later this year.

The invitation was conveyed by Egyptian Ambassador to Bangladesh Omar Mohie Eldin Ahmed Fahmy during a meeting with Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain on Wednesday, according to a statement from the foreign ministry yesterday.

The summit, to be hosted by Egypt, will gather leaders from the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, which includes Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Established through the Istanbul Declaration on

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Hasnat demands removal of president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Hasnat Abdullah, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement that spearheaded the mass uprising that toppled the Awami League government, has called for the removal of President Mohammed Shahabuddin.

Hasnat made the demand through a post on his verified Facebook account yesterday. He also demanded the punishment of the AL as a party, the formation of a new constitution, the removal of corrupt bureaucrats, and the cancellation of all "illegal agreements" made during former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

"Awami League [as a party] should face justice, a new constitution should be written, corrupt Awami bureaucrats should be sacked, all illegal agreements made during Hasina's tenure should be cancelled, and [Shahabuddin] Chuppu should be removed from the post of president immediately," he wrote in the post.

3 more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three dengue patients died, and at least 1,022 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Among the deaths, two were from Dhaka South City Corporation areas, while another was from Dhaka North City Corporation areas, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

With the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 177, while the total number of cases climbed to 34,121, of which 19,338 were from outside Dhaka.

Currently, 3,551 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals, of which 1,759 are from outside Dhaka. A total of 30,393 patients have been released from hospitals across the country so far this year.

PLOT TO KILL JOY Mahmudur Rahman receives bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT



Mahmudur Rahman, acting editor of the daily Amar Desh, was granted bail yesterday in a case filed over a plot to abduct and kill Sajeeb Wazed Joy, son of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Joglul Hossain of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka passed the order after the defence filed a petition with the court seeking bail for the journalist, court sources said.

On September 29, Mahmudur Rahman was sent to jail after his surrender before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka in connection with the same case.

On September 27, he returned to the country after spending over five and a half years in exile.

On August 17 last year, a court sentenced him to seven years' rigorous imprisonment in his absence.

Rains to continue till tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Meteorological Department in its forecast yesterday said heavy rainfall is likely to continue for two more days till tomorrow due to active monsoon.

The forecast also warned of possible risk of landslides in hilly areas of Chattogram division.

Rainfall amounting 44-89 mm are likely to occur at places across Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram divisions due to a likely formation of a low-pressure over Bangladesh adjoining north of the Bay of Bengal in next 48 hours from 9:00am yesterday, said BMD.

BGB not solely responsible for AL leaders' escape

Says its director general

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Border Guard Bangladesh has detained 22 individuals connected to the immediate past government and involved in various crimes since August 7, according to BGB Director General Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui.

Speaking at a press briefing at BGB headquarters in Dhaka yesterday, Siddiqui said the arrests were made following consultations with civil society and conscious citizens, who helped compile a list of individuals who might flee the country.

This list was sent to all international check posts, border outposts, and battalions to prevent their escape.

Despite these efforts, some Awami League leaders and activists have managed to flee.

Maj Gen Siddiqui admitted that BGB does not know how they crossed the borders. Recently, a satellite media has published reports of former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan being spotted in India.

The Special Branch of police confirmed there was no record of Khan's travel abroad through legal channels.

Siddiqui said if Khan's presence

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Workers weeding an Aman paddy field in Khulna, to help the plants grow faster and improve the yield. They are paid Tk 60 for each hour they work and are usually in the field for around eight hours a day. The photo was taken from the Boronpara village in the Batiaghata upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

WHO launches plan to rein in 'alarming' dengue spread

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization yesterday announced a global plan to battle dengue and other diseases carried by mosquitos as they spread faster and further amid climate change.

"The rapid spread of dengue and other arboviral diseases in recent years is an alarming trend that demands a coordinated response across sectors and across borders," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

The UN health agency said the number of reported dengue cases has approximately doubled each year since 2021, with over 12.3 million cases, including more than 7,900 deaths, reported in just the first eight months of 2024.

WHO's plan is aimed at fostering a coordinated global response, including through development of effective vaccines.

That is already almost double the 6.5 million cases reported throughout the whole of 2023.

WHO's plan is aimed at fostering a coordinated global response, including through disease surveillance, laboratory activities, vector control and research and development of improved treatments and effective vaccines.

The agency said it would require \$55 million in funding to implement the plan over the next year.

"From maintaining clean environments to supporting vector control and seeking and providing timely medical care, everyone has a role to play in the fight against dengue," Tedros said.

"This plan is a roadmap to turn the tide against this disease and other Aedes-borne arboviral diseases, protect vulnerable populations and pave the way for a healthier future."

Dengue can cause high fever and body aches, but most people have no symptoms.



Emergency personnel are seen in front of an apartment building hit by a Russian missile strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday. Russia's army has taken full control of the strategic hilltop town of Vuhledar in eastern Ukraine, its defence ministry said yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bhutan inks huge renewable energy deal with Indian firm

AFP, Thimphu

Bhutan has signed a deal with India's Reliance Group to build 1,270 megawatts worth of renewable electricity projects in the Himalayan nation as it seeks to become an energy-exporting powerhouse.

Tiny and landlocked, with a population of less than 800,000, Bhutan is wedged between China and India and is known for its policy of prioritising "Gross National Happiness" over growth.

That policy, however, has not helped the government deal with widespread unemployment, which has spurred

thousands of young people to leave the country.

The power project is part of broader efforts to reverse that trend by soliciting foreign investment to drive economic growth, including through a much-hyped special economic zone known as the "Gelephu Mindfulness City".

"Bhutan is rich in energy resources, and India's demand makes this partnership even more crucial," Ujjwal Deep Dahal, chief executive of Bhutan's state-owned Druk Holding and Investments (DHI), said in a press release late Wednesday.

The project commits Reliance Group, helmed by Indian billionaire Anil

Ambani, to build in conjunction with DHI 770 megawatts of hydropower and 500 megawatts of solar projects in Bhutan.

If realised, the projects would be equal to just over half of Bhutan's current installed capacity of 2,444 megawatts, more than 99 percent of which is hydropower.

The agreement did not specify the cost of the investment or when the hydro project, known as Chamkharchhu-1, would be completed. It aims to have the solar plant up and running in the next two years.

Part of the combined power output will be exported to India, Bhutan's main diplomatic and trade partner.

Trump 'resorted to crimes' to overturn 2020 polls

Says special counsel in a court filing

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump launched a "private criminal effort" to subvert the 2020 US election and should not be shielded by presidential immunity, Special Counsel Jack Smith said in a court filing unsealed on Wednesday.

Smith, in a 165-page motion arguing for the historic case against Trump to move forward, also provided new evidence of the former president's efforts to overturn the results of the election won by Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump, 78, the Republican candidate in November's White House election, had been scheduled to go on trial in March but the case was frozen while his lawyers argued that a former president should be immune from criminal prosecution.

The Supreme Court ruled in July that an ex-president has broad immunity from prosecution for official acts conducted while in office, but can be pursued for unofficial acts. Smith, in the filing unsealed by District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is hearing the case, said Trump should not escape prosecution because "at its core, the defendant's scheme was a private criminal effort."

India's SC pulls up authorities over air quality

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday asked authorities to report back within a week on what they were doing to stop farmers from burning crop residue as smog began to pollute the air in the capital Delhi and surrounding regions, local media reported.

Farmers in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh burn crop stubble after rice is harvested around October to clear the fields before planting wheat crops.

The smoke contributes to a toxic smog that engulfs Delhi, frequently making it the world's most polluted capital ahead of winter as calm winds and lower temperatures trap pollutants in the air.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়

মাঠ প্রশাসন-১ অধিশাখা

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স্মারক নম্বর-৩১.০০.০০০০.০৪৬.১১.০৯৯.২৪ (অংশ) -৭৬৬

তারিখ: ১৫ আশ্বিন ১৪৩০
৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৪

"সংশোধিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি"

ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়ের রাজস্ব খাতভুক্ত ব্যবস্থাপনা বিভাগের নিয়োগযোগ্য শূন্য পদের বিপরীতে জাতীয় বেতনস্কেল, ২০১৫-এর ১৪তম গ্রেডভুক্ত স্থায়ী পদে সরাসরি জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকদের মধ্যে যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের (পদের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত যোগ্যতা) নিকট হতে শর্ত সাপেক্ষে অনলাইনে (<http://minland.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে) আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন (online) ব্যতিত কোন আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

| পদের নাম, গ্রেড ও বেতন স্কেল | পদ সংখ্যা | প্রয়োজনীয় শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা | যে সকল জেলার প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন |
|--|-----------|--|---|
| (১) | (২) | (৩) | (৪) |
| সার্ভেয়ার গ্রেড-১৪ বেতনস্কেল ১০২০০-১৪৬৮০/- | ২৩৮ | কোনো স্বীকৃত কারিগরি শিক্ষা বোর্ডের অধীন সার্ভে ইনস্টিটিউট হইতে ০৪ (চার) বছর মেয়াদি ডিপ্লোমা ইন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং (সার্ভেইং) পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ | সকল জেলার প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন। ১৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৪ তারিখে জারিকৃত ইস্যু ৩১.০০.০০০০.০৪৬.১১.০৯৯.২৪ (অংশ)-৪০০ নম্বর বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী ইতোমধ্যে যারা এই পদে আবেদন করেছেন, তাদের নতুন করে আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। |

আবেদন ফরম পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলি অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবে:

- সাধারণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে ০১ মে ২০২৪ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩০ বছর হতে হবে। মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রদ্ধার সন্তান এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩২ বছর। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে কোন এক্সিডেন্ট গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- এই নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণিত ছকের (১) নম্বর কলামের শূন্য পদ পূরণে "ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়ের মাঠ পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারী নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০২১" অনুসরণ করা হবে। এতদ্ব্যতীত নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিদ্যমান সরকারি যাবতীয় বিধি-বিধান/ আদেশ/ নিয়মাবলি এবং পরবর্তীতে এ সংক্রান্ত বিধিতে কোনো সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে। সকল চাকুরিরত প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তি পত্রের মূল কপি জমা দিতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে কোনো অগ্রিম কপি গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
- প্রার্থী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রদ্ধার সন্তান/স্বামী/শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী/তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের হলে আবেদনপত্রে তা স্পষ্টভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- সরকারের সর্বশেষ জারিকৃত নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী কোটা সংরক্ষণ করা হবে।
- বর্ণিত পদে নিয়োগের জন্য প্রার্থী নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট নিয়োগ বিধিমালা অনুসারে লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। কেবল লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীগণ মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
- আবেদন আগামী ০৮/১০/২০২৪ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ টা হতে ০৮/১১/২০২৪ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ টা পর্যন্ত অনলাইনে দাখিল করা যাবে। সরাসরি/ডাকযোগে কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। সরাসরি বা ডাকযোগে প্রেরিত সকল আবেদনপত্র বাতিল মর্মে গণ্য হবে।
- প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিম্নবর্ণিত (ক্রমিক নং "ক" হতে "ছ" পর্যন্ত) কাগজপত্রের মূলকপি প্রদর্শনপূর্বক প্রথম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত সকল সনদের ছায়ালিপি দাখিল করতে হবে:
 - (ক) অনলাইনে পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্র;
 - (খ) ০২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ছবি;
 - (গ) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদ;
 - (ঘ) সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তিপত্র;

- (ঙ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/ পৌরসভার মেয়র/ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্ব সনদ ও জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদ;
- (চ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র;
- (ছ) মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরশ্রদ্ধার সন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রে প্রমাণক হিসেবে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ। শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী, তৃতীয় লিঙ্গ এবং ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ জারিকৃত পরিপত্র অনুযায়ী উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ

- যদি কোনো প্রার্থী বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক না হন কিংবা বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক নন এমন কোনো ব্যক্তিকে বিয়ে করেন বা বিয়ে করার জন্য প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ হন কিংবা কোন ফৌজদারি আদালত কর্তৃক নৈতিক মূলনজনিত অভিযোগে দণ্ডিত হন তবে তিনি আবেদন করার জন্য যোগ্য বিবেচিত হবেন না।
- প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোনো তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে চাওয়া ন্যূনতম শর্তের সাথে গরমিল/অসামঞ্জস্যতা পাওয়া গেলে/ভুল/প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসুপায় অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ভুল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্রাদি প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ যে কোন প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা পরীক্ষা চলাকালীন অথবা পরবর্তীতে যে কোন সময় বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
- যে কোন তদবির প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। কোন প্রার্থী তথ্য গোপন করে চাকরি গ্রহণ করলে নিয়োগপত্র বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- লিখিত, ব্যবহারিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য প্রার্থীদের কোনো প্রকার ভাতা (টিএ/ ডিএ) প্রদান করা হবে না।
- লিখিত, ব্যবহারিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার তারিখ ও সময়সূচী পরবর্তীতে ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়ের নোটিশ বোর্ড ও ওয়েবসাইটের www.minland.gov.bd মাধ্যমে জানানো হবে এবং প্রার্থীদের ব্যক্তিগত মুঠোফোনে এসএমএস এর মাধ্যমে জানানো হবে।
- অসম্পূর্ণ, ত্রুটিপূর্ণ ও বিলম্বে প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে সরকার কর্তৃক সর্বশেষ জারিকৃত বিধি-বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে।
- অনলাইনে-এ আবেদন ও নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয় নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- আবেদনকারীর নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম, জন্ম তারিখ ও নিজ জেলাসহ অন্যান্য সকল তথ্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সনদে যেভাবে লেখা রয়েছে অনলাইনে আবেদন ফরমে এবং পরবর্তীতে সেভাবে লিখতে হবে।
- নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/ বৃদ্ধি, বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে কোনো শর্ত বা অনূচ্ছেদ সংশোধন/ পরিবর্তন/ পরিমার্জন বা বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

*বিস্তারিত তথ্য ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.minland.gov.bd) পাওয়া যাবে। বিজ্ঞপ্তি পত্রিকা ছাড়াও <http://minland.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে এবং QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল <https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তি/ অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলী পাওয়া যাবে।

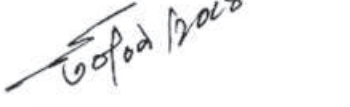
***শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে আবেদনকারীকে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করতে পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।



ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়ের
এর ওয়েবসাইটে
প্রবেশ এর
QR Code



ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়ের
এর টেলিটক
পোর্টালে প্রবেশ এর
QR Code


উপসচিব
(মাঠ প্রশাসন-১)
ও
সদস্য সচিব, বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি
ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়।

Iran warned Nasrallah of Israeli plot to kill him

Say three sources

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned Hezbollah leader Syed Hassan Nasrallah to flee Lebanon days before he was killed in an Israeli strike and is now deeply worried about Israeli infiltration of senior government ranks in Tehran, three Iranian sources said.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Hezbollah's booby-trapped pagers on September 17, Khamenei sent a message with an envoy to beseech the Hezbollah secretary general to leave for Iran, citing intelligence reports that suggested Israel had operatives within Hezbollah and was planning to kill him, one of the sources, a senior Iranian official, told Reuters.



People stand in front of a humanitarian flight that arrived from Lebanon, at CATAM military airbase, in Bogota, Colombia yesterday. Most Western countries have urged their citizens to leave Lebanon as Israel launched a ground incursion on Tuesday, escalating the risk of a wider war.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Food aid to Gaza falls as Israel sets new rule

REUTERS

Food supplies to Gaza have fallen sharply in recent weeks because Israeli authorities have introduced a new customs rule on some humanitarian aid and are separately scaling down deliveries organized by businesses, people involved in getting goods to the territory told Reuters.

The new customs rule applies to truck convoys chartered by the United Nations to take aid from Jordan to Gaza via Israel, seven people familiar with the matter said. Under the rule, individuals from relief organizations

sending aid must complete a form providing passport details, and accept liability for any false information on a shipment, the people said.

They said relief agencies are disputing that requirement, which was announced mid-August, because they fear signing the form could expose staff to legal problems if aid fell into the hands of Hamas or other enemies of Israel.

As a result, shipments have not been getting through the Jordan route -- a key channel in Gaza supplies -- for two weeks. The dispute has not affected shipments via Cyprus and Egypt, the sources said.

In a parallel move, Israeli authorities have restricted commercial food shipments to Gaza amid concerns that Hamas was benefiting from that trade, the people familiar with the matter and industry sources said.

UN and Israeli government data show that in September, deliveries of food and aid sank to their lowest in seven months.

Israel's military humanitarian unit, Cogat, which oversees aid and commercial shipments to Gaza, confirmed that no UN-chartered convoy has moved from Jordan to Gaza since September 19, but a spokesperson said Israel was not blocking goods.

UK hands Indian Ocean islands to Mauritius

AFP, London

Britain yesterday said it would give up sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius but under what US President Joe Biden called a "historic agreement" will keep its strategic joint military base with the United States on Diego Garcia.

Britain has been under pressure for decades to hand over the Indian Ocean islands but has resisted because of the Diego Garcia base, a key installation used to help US operations across the Indian Ocean and Gulf regions.

Tanzania suspends newspaper's online operations

AFP, Dar es Salaam

Tanzania suspended the online operations of a leading newspaper yesterday after it released cartoons featuring the president and referencing recent abductions and killings of dissidents.

One of the animated videos showed online earlier this week by The Citizen released President Samia Suluhu Hassan watching news broadcasts of dissidents and victims of state repression. Hassan faced criticism over allegations that the security forces are behind the murder of opposition figures.

Phasing out teen smoking could save 1.2m lives: study

AFP, Paris

Banning the sale of tobacco to people born between 2006 and 2010 could prevent around 1.2 million deaths from lung cancer by the end of the century, said a modelling study released yesterday.

Smoking is responsible for roughly 85 percent of all cases of lung cancer, the deadliest cancer worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

If current trends continue, there will be nearly three million lung cancer deaths among people born from 2006 to 2010, said the new study from the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

Govt finalises 5 of 6 reform commissions

FROM PAGE 1

gazette notifications to this effect.

It said the commissions will start work and will come up with reports in the next 90 days. The reports will be submitted to the chief adviser.

Four commissions -- the Public Administration Reform Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Judiciary Reform Commission, the Electoral System Reform Commission -- comprise eight members each while the Police Reform Commission has nine members.

Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman, a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, is the head of the Judiciary Reform Commission.

The seven members of the commission are Justice Emdadul Haque and Justice Farid Ahmed Shibhi, two retired HC judges; Syed Aminul Islam, former district and sessions judge and former registrar general of Bangladesh Supreme Court; Masdar Hossain, former district and sessions judge; Hussain Shawin, senior SC lawyer; Quazi Mahfujul Hoque Supan, associate professor of law department at Dhaka University; and a representative from students yet to be decided.

The Electoral System Reform Commission is led by Badiul Alam Majumdar while its seven members are Prof Tofail Ahmed, local government expert; Jasmine Tully, former additional

secretary and who have extensive experience in the Election Commission; Md Abdul Alim, election specialist; Zahed Ur Rahman, political analyst; Mir Nadia Nivin, international governance and institutional reform specialist; Md Sadek Ferdous; electronic voting specialist; and a representative from students yet to be decided.

Headed by Safar Raj Hossain, the Police Reform Commission will have eight members -- Abu Mumtaz Saad Uddin Ahmed, additional secretary of the home ministry's Public Security Division; Mohammad Iqbal, former director general of Department of Narcotics Control; Harun Chowdhury, former divisional commissioner and joint secretary; Sheikh Sajjad Ali, former additional inspector general of police, Golam Rosul, deputy inspector general of police, Shahnaz Huda, Professor of Dhaka University's law department; ASM Nasiruddin Elan; human rights activist, and a representative from students yet to be picked.

Iftekharuzzaman will lead the Anti-Corruption Reform Commission, which includes Masud Ahmed, former comptroller and auditor general; Mobasser Monem, professor of DU's public administration department; Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, professor of DU's law department; Mushtaq Khan, professor of economics at SOAS University of London, and Barrister

Mahdin Choudhury, Farzana Sharmin; Supreme Court advocate; and a student representative.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines Chairman Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury will head the Public Administration Reform Commission.

The other commission members are Mohammad Tareq and Md Ayub Miah, former secretaries; Mokhlesur Rahman, senior secretary to the public administration ministry; Halizur Rahman, former additional secretary; Rizwan Khair, senior secretary to the public administration ministry; Prof Aka Firoz Ahmad, former chairperson of DU's public administration department, and a representative from students yet to be picked.

In his speech to the nation on 11 September, Chief Adviser Prof Yunus announced the formation of six commissions to reform the electoral system, police, judiciary, public administration, the constitution, and the anti-corruption efforts.

He also announced the names of chiefs of the six commissions.

Initially prominent lawyer Shahdeen Malik was announced as the head of the Constitutional Reform Commission, but later he was replaced by Professor Ali Riaz.

A highly placed source inside the interim government told The Daily Star that the commission would be announced within two or three days.

Following the submission of the reports by the commissions, the advisory council of the interim government will discuss the recommendations with political parties, after which there will be a consultative meeting that will represent all sections of society.

This is how the government plans to finalise the reform framework.

ADVISORY COUNCIL DECISIONS

Shahiqul Alam, the chief adviser's press secretary, said the weekly meeting of the advisory council approved in principle the proposed amendment of the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority Ordinance 2024.

The council, with Prof Yunus in the chair, also approved the draft of an extradition treaty with the Maldives.

Currently, Bangladesh has extradition treaties with India, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates to exchange convicts from each other countries.

Once the ordinance is passed, the government will be able to remove and appoint managing director, officials or staffers of Wasa (Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Sylhet) in public interest, said a press release of the Cabinet Division yesterday.

The government can also cancel any Wasa board in public interest, it said.

Earlier, the MD and DMD of Wasa were used to be appointed or removed following board approvals.

Reform talks to start with BNP tomorrow

FROM PAGE 2

Immediately afterwards, the BNP formed six committees led by the party's top leaders to formulate the BNP's reform proposals.

Apart from the BNP, left democratic alliance, a combine of six leftists

parties, including Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), will also sit with the chief adviser tomorrow.

"The interim government invited the left democratic alliance for talks at 4:00pm on Saturday. We will join,"

said CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince.

"If we get the chance, we will raise the issues of labour unrest, security of minorities, price hike of essentials as well as some negative steps of the government. We will also

raise the issue of debatable comments from interim government as well as issue of changes in the textbooks and others," he said.

This is the third time the interim government is holding talks with major political parties.

Bangladesh to get electricity from Nepal thru India

FROM PAGE 2

Byapar Nigam CEO Deino Naran of India, Nepal's Ministry of Energy officials said.

Bangladesh's interim government's Adviser for Forest, Environment, Climate Change and Water

Resources Syeda Rizwana Hasan And Nepal's Energy Minister Deepak Khadka, Minister of State for Energy Purna Bahadur Tamang, witnessed the signing of the deal.

The deal allows Nepal to sell electricity to a third

country for the first time. So far, Nepal's energy trade has been taking place only with India.

According to the deal, Nepal will transmit the energy to India through the 400KV Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur cross-border

transmission line and India will transmit the equivalent amount to Bangladesh.

Nepal estimates an earning of around Nepalese Rs 330 million for the country through the sale of electricity.

ফরিদপুর পৌরসভা
স্থাপিত : ১৮৬৯
ফরিদপুর, বাংলাদেশ।
e-mail: mayorfaridpur@yahoo.com, website: www.faridpurmunicipality.com
ফরিদপুর পৌর সুপার মার্কেটের দোকান বরাদ্দের পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি
এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ফরিদপুর পৌরসভায় মুজিব সড়কে তৃতীয় নগর পরিচালনা ও অবকাঠামো উন্নতিকরণ (সেটর) প্রকল্পের অর্থায়নে নির্মিত ফরিদপুর পৌর সুপার মার্কেটের নীচ তলার ৪টি, ২য় তলার ৬টি এবং তৃতীয় তলার ২৯টি দোকান বরাদ্দের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের নাগরিকবৃন্দের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

THE SHELF

5 feel-good books to get you in the mood for fall



As our calendars flip to October, often reckoned as a transition period between summer and the crisp fall season, it becomes fairly hard to restrain ourselves from back-to-back reruns of *Gilmore Girls* and *The Secret History*. This list embraces the imminent autumn season with open arms and five cosy, feel-good books.

NUR-E-JANNAT ALIF

The Pumpkin Spice Café (Dream Harbor #1)
LAURIE GILMORE
One More Chapter, 2023

Speaking of *Gilmore Girls*, the first addition to our list is a hearty romantic novel by Laurie Gilmore. This book is a written rendition of Stars Hollow itself—starting from the quirky characters to its eternally golden atmosphere. When Jeanie's aunt unexpectedly leaves her the cherished Pumpkin Spice Café in the quaint town of Dream Harbor, she seizes the opportunity to escape her monotonous desk job and kick off afresh. However, a local farmer by the name of Logan puts all her plans to waste. Logan, a cranky old-time resident of Dream Harbor, does everything in his power to avoid the town's constant gossip, but the new owner of the town's café sends his life into complete disruption. Although her upbeat nature grates on his nerves, there is something about her that he cannot quite ignore, no matter how hard he tries. For fans of the Lorelai-Luke ship, this would be the ideal pick-me-up!

In the Company of Witches (Evenfall Witches B&B #1)
AURALEE WALLACE
Berkley, 2021

For readers who aren't too keen on romance, perhaps a cosy mystery might be of interest. *In the Company of Witches* by Auralee Wallace is the tale of the Warren Witches. Thanks to their discreet use of magic, the modest and peaceful New England village of Evenfall has been blessed with wealth for four centuries. Thus far, no challenge has proven too difficult for them to handle. When Constance Graves, a notoriously difficult and argumentative local, is found dead at the bed and breakfast run by Brynn Warren and her aunts, it first appears to be a tragic accident. However, it does not take long to realise that something far darker is at play, and Aunt Nora is first on the list of prime

suspects. Desperate to clear Nora's name, Brynn finds herself frustrated by the realisation that two years ago, the task might have been easier. As a witch of the dead, she has the rare ability to commune with spirits, and while the dead rarely recall the circumstances of their own passing, they often remember fragments of their lives that could provide crucial clues. Since the death of her husband, Brynn has avoided using her powers and now doubts whether she even can. Relying on her aunts' magic and her personal investigative instincts, Brynn sets out to uncover the truth. In doing so, she may also rediscover the gift she once thought she could leave behind forever.

The Other Lives of Miss Emily White
A.J. ELWOOD
Titan Books, 2023

If gothic, sinister literature tickles your feel-good fancy, then *The Other Lives of Miss Emily White* is the book for you! In 1864, Ivy is sent away from her family's farm to a crumbling boarding school, where she feels utterly alone. Shunned for her working-class roots and mourning her sister's recent death, she finds solace in Mademoiselle Emily Blanc, a graceful new teacher who nurtures her artistic talent. Ivy's admiration deepens as her relationship with Emily develops, but soon, strange rumours begin to circulate—students claim Mademoiselle Blanc can appear in two places at once, teaching in the classroom while simultaneously strolling in the garden. As a mysterious book about a teacher with a doppelgänger comes to light, Ivy's obsession with Mademoiselle Blanc spirals out of control, rendering her desperate to protect the one person she sees as her only ally.

Monojder Odvut Bari (Odvutur #1)
SHIRSHENDU MUKHOPADHYAY
Ananda Publishers Private Limited, 1978

A cult classic in the realm of middle-grade Bangla literature, any book recommendation list is incomplete without a mention of

Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay's *Odvutur* series. An eccentric cast of characters resides in Manoj's sprawling, and somewhat straggling, ancestral home. Dukkhohoron babu, the tutor, insists on teaching only with his feet propped up. Satish Bharadwaj, the family priest, pets two ghosts—Handu and Bhundu—for company. Thakurjee, the hot-tempered aunt, is obsessed with keeping everything spotlessly clean, while Ganesh Ghoshal, the music teacher, attempts to hang himself two to three times every month. Chaos erupts, however, when Manoj's uncle discovers a revolver. As if things could not get any stranger, the bumbling detective, Baradacharan, stumbles into the scene, and the mystery of a missing prince only adds to the madness.

A Psalm for the Wild-Built (Monk and Robot #1)
BECKY CHAMBERS
Tordotcom, 2021

And lastly, tying this list off with a fantasy/sci-fi suggestion, *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* is a novella that digs profoundly into the quiet crevices of the human heart. The Panga robots became self-aware centuries ago, abandoned their tools, and disappeared into the woods, becoming a part of folklore and myth. One day, a tea monk's tranquil existence is upended by the unexpected arrival of a robot who has been sent to Earth to see how humanity is doing. The robot's sole objective is to ascertain answers to a specific question—"What do people need?"—and it cannot return until a satisfactory explanation is obtained. The response, however, is hardly straightforward, and the monk and the robot find themselves frequently asking each other this very question.

Nur-E-Jannat Alif is a gender studies major and part-time writer who dreams of authoring a book someday. Find her at @literatureinsolitude on Instagram or send her your book/movie/television recommendations at nurejannatalif@gmail.com.

৩৯-৩৯৯
কপ্তাই বাঁধ: বর-পরং
ডুবুরিদের আত্মকথন



সম্পাদনা
সমারী চাকমা

WHAT WE'RE READING THIS WEEK

AMREETA LETHE

Kaptai Baadh: Bor-Porong
Samari Chakma
The University Press Limited, 2024

"Lorana morana shoman," reads a Chakma proverb in the book's introduction: "Being forcibly displaced from one's land is akin to death." *Kaptai Baadh: Bor-Porong*, edited by Samari Chakma, collects the harrowing experiences of several inhabitants of the original town of Rangamati, which was entirely submerged during the construction of the Kaptai Dam between 1957-1962. The project led to a mass migration, known as "Bor-porong" or the Great Exodus in the Chakma language, and inundated over 50 thousand acres of land (40% of all arable land in the Chittagong Hill Tracts) and 100,000 people's homes, property, and possessions. *Kaptai Baadh: Bor-Porong* serves as an indispensable record of the region's indigenous oral history, with personal accounts shedding light on how mega projects such as the Kaptai Dam not only forcibly displaced tens of thousands, forever severing many from their communities and forcing even more to migrate, but also failed to deliver on grand promises of "development for all". Over 60 years following the dam's construction, its effects continue to shape the sociopolitical realities and enduring struggles of indigenous populations in the region even today.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

It's summer, it's New York, and the girls are dressed up (and broke)

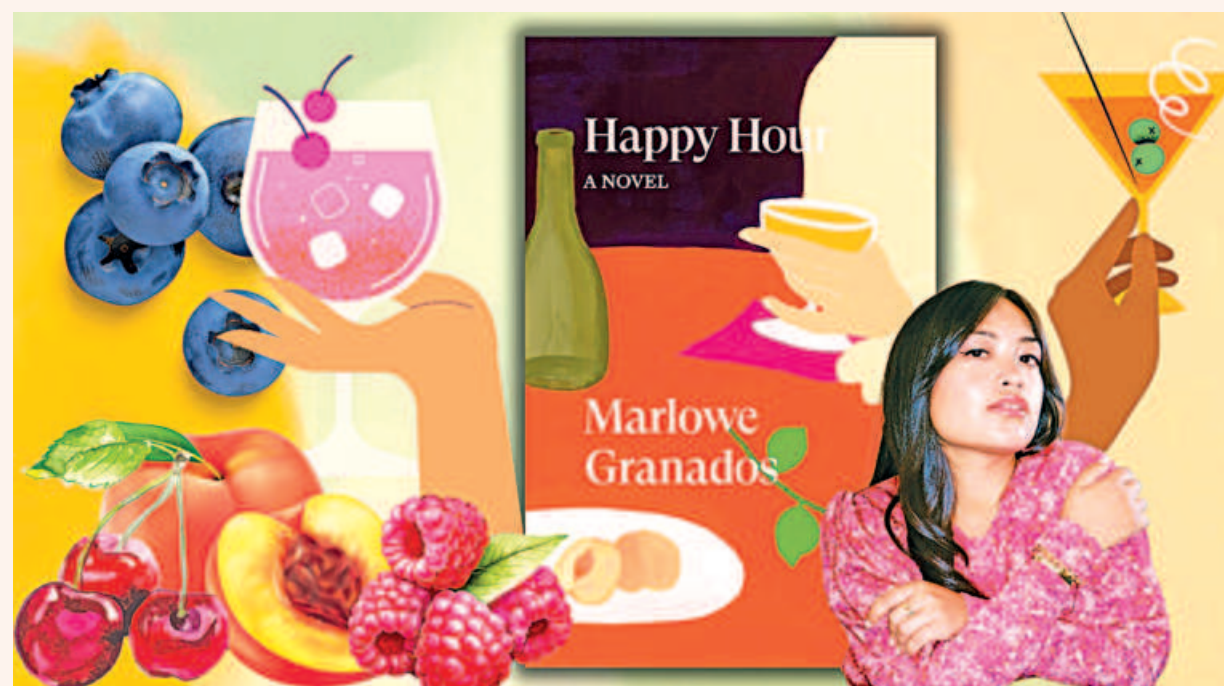
A book review of 'Happy Hour' (Verso, 2020) by Marlowe Granados

ARSHI IBSAN RADIFAH

Happy Hour greeted me like a warm hug. This is definitely one of the sweetest books I've read this year, and possibly one of the sweetest books I will ever read.

The book follows main characters Isa Ipley and Gala Novak along their five(ish)-month stint of trying to pay their way through summer in New York with mostly charm and wit, and occasionally some money on the side. They're subletting a room in an apartment which is wearing them thin on finances so they plan to go to the flea market and set up shop, only to go get drinks after and keep on struggling to pay rent.

Like the modern-day Lucy and Ethel duo, Gala is often a bit neurotic and gets on Isa's nerves, while Isa is more on the quieter side. Isa describes it as: "The amount of effort that goes into appeasing that girl is absurd. I am never thanked; it's just always expected." But that is not to say that Gala is made to be the villain of the story; there, frankly, is none. It is just a delightful tall tale of two young girls strutting about in the New York heat in their designer knock-offs. It's like if Carrie Bradshaw swapped out her closet full of Louboutins for thrifted ones, and instead of "wondering" away on her laptop in her big Manhattan penthouse, she gets busy selling second-hand, vintage clothes at the



flea market at a profit—it is one of the best things ever.

All the chapters of the novel are written like journal entries. It is Isa's diary and we get to take a peek into their life on a handful of days every month from May to September. We follow them through their misadventures and late night, and get acquainted with Gala's delinquency fairly quickly when she smacks a

beer bottle into a John-Henry's head because she is convinced that he is annoying Isa with his "timid" attempts at flirtation.

There is a large cast of characters that accompany the girls throughout the course of their stay in New York, but we don't always remember much about them because we don't really have to. The hero of the story is Isa and her faithful co-conspirator, Gala, and

everything else is mere decoration for the plot, which itself is also very erratic. But not in a disengaged way where it does not make sense, but rather fittingly, because this is exactly what the point of view would have been like for a pair of 20-year-olds navigating their way around a city they know nothing about. One minute we're sitting next to a gold-toothed taxi driver playing a song about love and

longing and next we're wondering if a fig isn't just an outside-in caterpillar.

However, one of the core foundations of the book is Isa and Gala's unrelenting friendship. This is possibly one of the most honest portrayals of female friendships I've come across, especially at 21. Their love for each other is fierce and sometimes they don't express it in the right way. They bicker and fight, but Isa knows she would not prefer anyone else's company but Gala's.

There are varied opinions when it comes to this book. Some have described it as aimless, with a sporadic plot that ultimately leads nowhere, calling it a less depressing version of Ottessa Moshfegh's novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (Penguin Books, 2019).

Because I remember being 11 years old and sneaking off after lights out to catch reruns of *Sex and The City* on AXN, before my mother ultimately figured it out and shooed me back to bed, the storyline of *Happy Hour* played into the mystique of it all for me—of New York City, and more particularly women in New York City.

Arshi Ibsan Radifah is a literature major who loves unreliable narrators and Wes Anderson movie sets. If she had it her way she would have liked to play bass for a girl band in the '90s, but for now she'll suffice by rewatching Empire Records.

There are varied opinions when it comes to this book. Some have described it as aimless, with a sporadic plot that ultimately leads nowhere, calling it a less depressing version of Ottessa Moshfegh's novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*.

Poor telecom service hurting customers

Regulators must ensure compliance with licence agreements

The poor performance of our telecom operators in the latest drive test conducted by the telecom regulator is disappointing, if not shocking, reinforcing the users' longstanding complaints of substandard service. The drive tests, conducted by Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) between February 14 and June 5, covered areas within Dhaka city corporations as well as Narayanganj, Keraniganj, and Savar upazilas, using a newly acquired system from Germany. The results clearly show that the quality of service—a fundamental requirement enshrined in telecommunications licenses—is largely inadequate.

Robi and Grameenphone performed relatively better in the test, failing in five and six key performance indicators (KPIs) respectively out of 40 across four areas. For internet services, only the state-owned Teletalk failed to meet the BTRC's benchmarks. In terms of area-wise performance, all operators in Keraniganj exceeded the BTRC's call drop rate ceiling of 2 percent for 2G voice calls. For 4G voice calls in the upazila, only Banglalink passed the test, while all other operators failed. In Savar, regarding the BTRC's ceiling of 7 seconds for call setup time for 2G voice calls, all four operators failed, while Banglalink and Teletalk also failed in Keraniganj, and Teletalk missed the mark in Dhaka and Narayanganj. There have been other comparable failures across the board, highlighting significant deficiencies in telecom service quality.

This is reportedly due to the operators not fully utilising the spectrum from the higher bands assigned to them in March 2022. Instead, they are relying on lower-frequency bands, which provide wider coverage with fewer base stations. While the higher-frequency band has a shorter range, it offers more bandwidth and better transmission capacity, but requires a higher concentration of base stations. The failure to properly utilise this spectrum is causing customers to experience poor signal quality, frequent call drops, and muted calls.

Over the past decade, the BTRC has introduced some measures like infrastructure sharing and unified licensing to optimise operational costs. Despite these efforts, the quality of services provided by mobile operators still falls short of expectations. Since 2011, these standards have been established through consultation and negotiation with licensees. According to one expert, the recent finding, if accurate, points to a significant failure to uphold the commitments made when these licenses were granted. However, operators have refuted the BTRC's test results, claiming that their own tests show different outcomes.

Nevertheless, customer complaints about their services have remained persistent. It is, therefore, imperative that the authorities get to the bottom of what is happening and resolve all telecom-related problems. All stakeholders must understand that customers deserve high-quality service in exchange for their hard-earned money, and regulators must ensure that telecom operators deliver nothing less.

Police must come out of their cocoon

Continued dysfunction a threat to public order, safety

We are alarmed by the continued turbulence within the police force even nearly two months after the ouster of the Awami League government. Despite the interim government making law enforcement a central plank of its policy, progress achieved so far—especially in terms of operationalising a force torn asunder by the violent fallout of regime change and preventing crimes—has frustrated many. Since August 5, there have been over 50 incidents of mob lynching, with some 45 killed. Political violence, attacks on minorities and shrines, and frequent protests and clashes have also marked the period, with police largely missing from the scene.

The question is, why is it taking so long to reverse this situation? As per a report by this daily, a number of factors are responsible for the continued paralysis within the force. At the heart of it is an overarching sense of fear and frustration that has proven difficult to address. Many officers, especially those complicit in enabling the excesses of the previous government, are apprehensive about facing public wrath or legal consequences. There are others who feel unfairly vilified for simply following orders, and still others who are trying to take advantage of regime change to secure favorable posts for themselves. The morale crisis and opportunism have combined with logistical challenges to reduce "a force on wheels" largely to a "force behind the desk."

This lack of mobility or action has been partly attributed to a lack of vehicles and other tools necessary to respond to emergencies. Because of the unprecedented public fury that saw hundreds of police vehicles and properties ransacked in early August, even routine policing is being compromised, with many officers still resorting to walking to their assignments or relying on public transport. The 999 emergency hotline is also struggling to provide timely assistance, with response times more than doubling or even tripling in some cases. Compounding these issues is the absenteeism or injuries of many officers.

The government has taken various measures, including forming a commission, to address these issues, but progress has been slow and insufficient. Given the continued threat to public safety as manifested by various events recently, the government must expedite its efforts to resolve the crisis. That means not only providing the logistical support needed for day-to-day operations but also addressing the deeper internal issues that have taken root within the ranks. An ideal reform process would focus on depoliticising the force, restoring public trust, and ensuring that officers are held accountable in a fair and transparent manner. Equally important is the need to boost their morale by acknowledging police contributions in our society.

CA's UNGA trip a critical turning point

Now is our best chance to strengthen international cooperation



THE THIRD VIEW
Mahfuz Anam
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MAHFUZ ANAM

Prof Muhammad Yunus' presence at the UN General Assembly last month, and more importantly at events on the sidelines, marks a new and significant shift in Bangladesh's global relations. His meetings with US President Joe Biden, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Netherlands Prime Minister Dick Schoof, European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, many heads of governments from South Asia except the Indian prime minister and Sri Lankan president (the latter because he did not come), US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and many other world figures indicate a dramatic turnaround in Bangladesh's place in the world.

The chiefs of multilateral lenders such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have also agreed to fast-track their assistance and take a deeper look into how to assist us more effectively at this critical juncture. USAID has also shown a renewed interest in Bangladesh and has already extended a loan of \$200 million. This is a significant improvement of our relations with global lenders.

To have a Nobel laureate as the head of government is quite in contrast to our past leaders, some of whom were military dictators or power-hungry politicians. Prof Yunus brings in a new and fresh sense of dignity not only to Bangladesh, but to the leadership of the developing world in general. The last such leader was Nelson Mandela. Prof Yunus did not spend 27 years of his life in prison or suffer the lifelong oppression and indignity of living under apartheid. He, on his part, spent his whole life serving the poor and trying to pull them out of poverty through his micro-credit scheme, with women at the centre of change. His model is now being replicated in many developing countries and some developed ones as well, including the US, where replication of the Grameen model is making a significant impact on the poor, especially urban.

The geopolitical implications of Bangladesh's newfound place on the global stage is shrouded in many uncertainties. Euphoria aside, how confident can we feel about

the durability of Bangladesh's new closeness with the US, which is with the Biden administration whose tenure ends in January? How strong is Prof Yunus's appeal with the Republicans? Will the friendship survive a Republican election victory? If Vice-President Kamala Harris does not win, much of our expected gains from the US support may fall by the wayside. But, of course, the other results of the visit need not be bound by the same.

How Bangladesh's immediate neighbour India and not so distant neighbour China will deal with the new reality here is something that we need



With Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus heading the interim government, Bangladesh right now enjoys a global goodwill that is both unprecedented and crucial.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

to follow very carefully.

Dhaka formally requested to New Delhi for a meeting between the Bangladesh chief adviser and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UNGA. It could not happen due to the mismatch in their traveling dates. This resulted in the unexpected situation of our leader meeting the president of Maldives and prime ministers of Nepal and Pakistan, but not the leader of our most important neighbour, India. The meeting between our Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain and his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar seemed to have gone well on the face of it, but how meaningful it really was, only time will tell.

The collapse of Sheikh Hasina's

government profoundly shocked India. It has not yet been able to fully assess what to make of the changes and understand its profundity. As reported by its media, from the outset, India got carried away with the view that foreign hands were behind the July uprising and that it was either the CIA or Pakistan's ISI or both that were behind what occurred. This prevented the Indian policymakers from understanding and then accepting the reality that the government that it was patronising in Bangladesh and whose election manipulation it knowingly overlooked had really lost its footing and had suffered a total loss of public support. To attribute the whole July uprising as nothing but the work of outsiders and to not see the massive mass participation and obvious popularity of the transformation amounted to India totally not seeing the ground reality and missing out on any realistic assessment of what had happened. This, in my view, has prevented Indian policymakers from making a fact-based

It has been my privilege to be interviewed by more than half a dozen important Indian media outlets on the recent developments. What deeply surprised and disappointed me was how casually they accepted whatever appeared on social media and presented that as facts in the interviews. They literally made no effort to check the story. I didn't mention the verification done by *The Daily Star* but used the results of fact-checking done by BBC to challenge their contentions. They believed what they wanted to and not what really happened.

India needs to deeply introspect about its relations with Bangladesh—maybe with others in the region, too—and recalibrate a genuinely win-win way forward. The recent remarks of India's Home Minister Amit Shah that "every infiltrator will be hanged upside down," meaning mainly Bangladeshis, will only alienate India further and cause internal divisions also. We, on our side, must realise that relations with India cannot be left to populism and that sweeping anti-Indianism will not get us to our desired goal of a balanced, mutually beneficial relationship that will drive advancement and regional peace and stability.

The meeting between our chief adviser and the prime minister of Pakistan and the sudden opening up with the country surprised many. This paper is in favour of normalising relations with Pakistan, but not without an acknowledgement and apology for the genocide that they conducted in 1971. If South Korea and China could extract apology for the Japanese atrocities in World War II, what is wrong with us demanding the same from Pakistan?

China has been very realistic and reached out—though the Chinese support that Sheikh Hasina enjoyed was well-known—to the new setup early and has consolidated it through the meeting between the Chinese foreign minister and Prof Yunus in New York.

reality check. The subsequent spread of "anti-Indianism" in Bangladesh may have further consolidated India's view.

Whatever we say about the policymakers, the important keys of bilateral relations are ultimately held by the bureaucrats with occasional reaching out to think tanks and experts. For bureaucrats, to acknowledge that they failed to see the deep and widespread unpopularity of the Hasina regime is to admit their massive failure and incredible incompetence. That the bureaucrats—anywhere in the world, including in our own country—will never do. Hence, finding "facts" that are tenuous and "logic" that are contrived have become the main contributors to India's "understanding" of the new reality.

Compared to where we were, what Prof Yunus has achieved in the international arena so far is a miracle. At the moment, Bangladesh enjoys a global goodwill that is both unprecedented and crucial. It is an opportunity that we cannot allow to slip through our fingers. Our foreign office needs to become sharper and faster, and equip itself more with expanded knowledge and quick training. We have a competent adviser who, we expect, will reach out to the academics, think tanks and the media—which he has not done yet sufficiently—to strengthen the process of linking ourselves to the world, especially our trading partners, and bring home the gains that the new opportunities offer.

AMENDING THE BANGLADESH-MALAYSIA MoU ON WORKERS' EMPLOYMENT

A word that can trigger a sea change



ON THE SHORES OF (IN)JUSTICE
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C R ABRAR

The Malaysian prime minister is due to arrive in Dhaka today on an official visit. This is significant for two reasons: this is the first visit by a Malaysian premier to Bangladesh in nearly 11 years, and it will also be the first visit of a head of government during the tenure of the interim administration.

The foreign ministry informs that, among other issues of mutual interest, the bilateral discussions will focus on economic, political, trade and investment, and labour migration. The source emphasises that both countries want facilitation of labour migration through a transparent method.

Bangladeshi workers, particularly those in the low-skilled category, are making major contributions in the construction, manufacturing, plantation and services sectors in Malaysia. Through their hard work, they have earned the confidence of their employers in Malaysia who are keen to recruit more from Bangladesh. The Malaysian market, however, remains closed since May 31 this year.

The less fortunate segment of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, many of whom migrated after the so-called syndicate arrangement, have to pay

inordinately high migration costs. These workers are charged far above the government-set cost of around Tk 79,000 (about 2,940 ringgit), with the average cost being Tk 5.44 lakh (about 20,300 ringgit) to secure employment in Malaysia. This steep increase in the cost of migration from Bangladesh is directly linked to the destination country enjoying the prerogative of fixing the number of recruiting agencies in the source country that were allowed to send workers. After the flow of workers to Malaysia resumed in July 2022, only 25 of the 1,520 registered recruiting agencies in Bangladesh were granted the permission. Subsequently the number was increased to 100. As no criterion was set for the selection of recruiting agencies, many with fresh licence (allegedly granted under political and other considerations) became beneficiaries of this arrangement.

After the fall of the Awami League government in August this year, Bangladesh's anti-graft agency began an investigation into the alleged syndicate led by several former parliamentarians of the erstwhile ruling party. They were accused of embezzling Tk 24,000 crore (8.9 billion ringgit) under the

pretext of sending workers to Malaysia. Allegations are rife that the syndicate is led by a Dato of Bangladeshi origin in Malaysia and operated with the support of senior officials in both Bangladesh and Malaysian governments. A Verité-led consortium study reveals 96 percent of Bangladeshi workers going to Malaysia face high recruitment debt and exploitation.

The syndicate system has been a contentious issue in Malaysian politics. In June 2022, the then opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim demanded a full investigation of two companies, including Bestinet, following allegations of their involvement in a visa scheme and supplying of foreign workers. He raised doubts about the government's ability to manage misappropriation and malpractice. He referred to it "as modern slavery, where workers are blackmailed while traders and agencies act as oppressors who reap huge profits." In April 2023, Democratic Action Party leader Charles Santiago called on the government for "dismantling Bestinet and eliminating labour brokers." He demanded an "open and transparent recruitment process in both countries." After Anwar Ibrahim's assumption of power following the November 2022 general election, the human resource ministry came under scrutiny and five officials were sacked.

The new prime minister's resolve to overhaul the country's migrant worker recruitment system, particularly pertaining to a lucrative source country like Bangladesh, has come under strong resistance from industry high-ups, public functionaries, and a section of Malaysian political elite. Attempts

to replace Bestinet's hold over the proprietary IT system have thus far been successfully thwarted.

Both Bangladesh and Malaysia should strive to find ways to dismantle the syndicate arrangement. A possible way out lies in the amendment of a section of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on employment of workers signed by the countries. Section C (v) of the MoU sanctions that "the Government of Malaysia shall select BRAs (Bangladesh Recruiting Agencies) ... from the list provided by the Government of Bangladesh." Machinations of vested quarters with access to corridors of power both in Putrajaya and Dhaka led to insertion of such a provision in the MoU. It is only in Bangladesh's case that such a provision has been incorporated. None of the 14 other source countries has to endure such stipulation.

By amending this provision, if the responsibility of selecting the BRAs are shifted from the Malaysian government to the Malaysian employers (as is the case with the other source countries), the latter would be at liberty to choose their supplier companies, while all BRAs will enjoy fair competition to access the Malaysian labour market. Such an arrangement will generate fair competition, significantly lower the cost of migration, and create a situation in which Bangladeshi migrant workers will be able to enjoy the fruits of their hard labour.

We take this opportunity to urge the chief adviser to raise the issue of amending one word in the MoU that will bring a sea change for our migrant workers.

Peace remains elusive to CHT's Indigenous Peoples



Satej Chakma
is a writer and an Indigenous human rights activist.

SATEJ CHAKMA

The nightmare began on September 19, 2024. In Khagrachhari and Rangamati, two districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), an organised crime against the Indigenous Peoples was committed by a group of Bangalees, which left several dozens injured and at least four Indigenous persons dead. Anik Kumar Chakma, aged 17, was one of them; a video clip of his killing went viral on social media. The clip shows how the attackers brutally beat up Anik to death on the street in public. On September 19, Dhananjay Chakma (50), Junan Chakma (22), and Rubel Tripura (24) were killed in Khagrachhari by some Bangalees. Homes and shops of Indigenous Peoples were vandalised in both districts. In a statement, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs mentioned that the office of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council (CHTRC) and the district office of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samity (PCJSS) were set on fire, and a Buddhist temple, Moitri Vihar, was vandalised and looted.

Till date, no perpetrator has been brought under the law. In CHT's history, over a dozen massacres and communal attacks have been carried out against the Indigenous communities both before and after the signing of the historic CHT Accord in 1997. All these incidents against the Indigenous Peoples remained beyond justice. Will this culture of impunity be continued forever in the CHT?

The recent attacks in Khagrachhari and Rangamati have added a new dimension to the discourse of CHT issue with organised and targeted propaganda across different media platforms. Discriminatory slurs in different forms appeared on various social media platforms. People from Indigenous communities often face hatred, bullying, verbal abuse, and even physical assault where they reside for work and study purposes across the country. Recent events have amplified their negative experiences. Although the proclamation of independence of Bangladesh

promises to establish equality, equity, human dignity, and social justice for all citizens, the experience of Indigenous Peoples doesn't reflect the image of a society that holds the core values of peace and harmony.

Indigenous students and youth participated spontaneously in the July mass uprising hoping to get justice that they have been historically denied for generations. I can vividly recall the Indigenous youth upholding a banner that said, "Free CHT from Militarisation," among the mass gathering at Dhaka University on August 3, just two days before the fall of the autocratic Awami League government. Naturally, Indigenous communities, including the Jumma people of CHT, also dreamt of a better future under the leadership of Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus. However, the recent violence and atrocities, and the response of the government and local administration to those, certainly caused a huge disappointment among the Indigenous communities. The recent attacks on Indigenous Peoples, their houses, properties, business centres followed the pattern seen in the past.

There is a pattern of communal attacks

People from Indigenous communities often face hatred, bullying, verbal abuse, and even physical assault where they reside for work and study purposes across the country. Recent events have amplified their negative experiences.

in the CHT. It often starts with the killing/homicide of a Bangalee person, followed by processions by the local Bangalee community, and in the aftermath, we see

attacks on Indigenous communities—their houses, businesses, shops, etc are vandalised and looted, lands grabbed, individuals killed, Indigenous women sexually abused, and so on. September's unrest in the CHT that resulted in a widespread attack on Indigenous Peoples also started similarly—after the fatal beating of Mohammad Mamun in Khagrachhari on September 18, though his wife accused three local Bangalees in the case

book. The deep-rooted culture of impunity as well as the reluctance of local administration give the perpetrators the incentive to repeat such violence.

In a democratic country, isn't it natural for law enforcement agencies to conduct a free and fair investigation into the killing of any citizen? Should the person responsible for the killing not be taken into custody? Unfortunately, some Bangalees often use

inhabitants. His assurance of taking legal action against all the perpetrators behind these incidents failed to restore confidence among the Indigenous communities as they did not see any material change on the ground.

On September 21, a high-level government delegation headed by Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury paid a visit to Rangamati and Khagrachhari. The delegation met with local political leaders, traditional leaders, eminent personalities, representatives from business and trade bodies, media outlets, law enforcement agencies, CHT Regional Council and government officials, but did not visit the affected areas. As a result, the delegation's visit was insufficient in regaining the confidence and trust of the Indigenous communities.

How, then, would peace and justice be established in the CHT region? The interim government could have set an example by demonstrating the political will to implement the 1997 CHT Accord. In a recent interview conducted in Bangla with the Voice of America, Prof Yunus stated that his administration can't resolve the long-standing problem of CHT and conferred the responsibility to the next government. He also spoke about the need for a new treaty with the Indigenous communities of CHT as the current one could not be implemented for so many years.

The previous government's reluctance to implement the CHT Accord and the deceitful strategies to prolong the overall implementation process have led to frequent violations of rights of the Indigenous Peoples. The basic provisions of the accord, such as ensuring the traditional land rights of Indigenous inhabitants and empowering them through a democratic process would have established their right to self-determination and brought an end to the presence of security forces in the region.

This could have been an excellent scope for the interim government to show and prove that they are different from the past governments by immediately starting the implementation process with courage. Otherwise, years of grievances and oppression, and the culture of impunity for crimes committed against Indigenous communities will push the region into the pre-accord situation which will not benefit anyone. Unless the basic issues faced by the Indigenous Peoples are addressed properly by fully implementing the accord, various vested interest groups involved in the CHT region will continue taking advantage of small incidents and stir up bigger turmoil.



The experience of Indigenous Peoples in Bangladesh doesn't reflect the image of a society that holds the core values of peace and harmony.

FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

filed later. Knowing this pattern of violence, the question remains as to why the authorities did not take any precautionary measures.

The same pattern can be observed in the atrocities that took place against the Indigenous communities on October 1 in Khagrachhari Sadar. After Abul Hasnat Muhammad Sohail Rana, a teacher of Khagrachhari Technical School and College, was beaten to death for allegedly raping a 14-year-old Indigenous student, some group of Bangalees attacked houses of Indigenous Peoples, and looted and torched their businesses in Khagrachhari Sadar. While fatal mob beating is undoubtedly a condemnable act, the pattern of violence that followed shows that such incidents are happening repeatedly because perpetrators of previous incidents were not brought to

such killings in the CHT to incite communal aggression against Indigenous Peoples. Law enforcement agencies, responsible for the security and protection of civilians, often remain indifferent despite being direct witnesses of such atrocities in the CHT.

At the same time, the government's silence regarding the communal hatred against Indigenous Peoples and their lack of security in and outside the CHT further deteriorates and complicates the CHT issue. Therefore, the interim government should take urgent and immediate actions to resolve the CHT issue to ensure peace, harmony and justice in the region. Although the chief adviser issued a statement asking all residents of the CHT region to stay calm and maintain peace in the area, fear, insecurity and tension remain persistent in the minds of the Indigenous

We need inclusive and gender-responsive community policing

On June 27, 2024, a discussion titled 'Towards Gender Equality: Gender-Responsive Community Policing in Bangladesh' was organised jointly by UN Women and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre. Academicians, top female police officers, legal specialists, and gender activists participated in the event. Below is a summary of the key points from the discussion.

Policing is crucial for maintaining peace, stability, and security in a society. However, with the ever-changing security challenges of this century, it is essential to ensure a community approach to policing, with a focus on inclusivity and gender sensitivity. This calls for more female representation in law enforcement.

One of the key benefits of having more female law enforcement officers is the building of trust and institutional credibility among community members, especially women and girls. According to a 2020 study carried out by UN Women, only 10 percent of the police forces in the Asia Pacific region are women. Within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), women's representation in the police ranges from around 6 to 20 percent. The limited numbers of women's representation in the police can be attributed to certain perceptions of policing being a masculine job that demands physical strength, and gender norms and stereotypes regarding women's role in society and the definition of good law enforcement leadership.

To explore these challenges, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific conducted a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of gender-responsive community-oriented policing (COP) in four countries—Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand—from September to December in 2023, in collaboration with the UN Standing Police Capacity (SPC).

On June 27, 2024, UN Women and The Daily Star organised a roundtable discussion, titled "Advancing Gender-Responsive Community-Oriented Policing in Bangladesh" to share the key findings of the study in Bangladesh. The discussion was held at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka with a wide array of representation from the government, Bangladesh Police, UN agencies and other development organisations, academicians, and legal practitioners.

The study recognised the key elements in COP from a gender lens, namely community consultation with women, responding to the needs of women and other marginalised groups, women's participation for crime prevention and problem-solving, ensuring



There is an urgent need for political will to make policing more inclusive rather than an opportunity to abuse power.

SOURCE: UN WOMEN

female leadership in both policy making and training for police, gender responsive action and accountability towards community. The study findings acknowledge the importance of legal and policy frameworks for COP to address diverse needs. Two national-level strategies are in the process of being finalised. However, given that The Police Act, 1861 is not updated according to modern policing standards, the aforementioned plans cannot be implemented properly, making it harder to institutionalise COP and women's participation in it.

Then comes the issue of representation. Women are underrepresented in law enforcement. As of April 2024, female police personnel constitute only 8.63 percent of the total police in Bangladesh, according to the Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN) website. Speakers at the roundtable highlighted the different needs of women—like maternity leave, availability of toilets for female police staff—in the remote posting

areas, which require investments. While they are expected to excel in their jobs, their reproductive and caregiving responsibilities are not considered. Deploying female officers in remote areas has become a challenge due to mobility and security concerns that also hinder them from taking challenging assignments despite their willingness.

To combat these challenges, speakers recommended incorporating a gender lens to analyse requirements that are needed to recruit women in the police force and an intersectional approach to consider multiple other sets of challenges arising from age, class, ethnicity, and geographic locations. There should be impact analyses of relevant policy frameworks after implementation.

While discussing the current challenges in the COP, speakers also pointed out that in urban areas, COP committees see an underrepresentation of marginal women. However, data from the police personnel present at the roundtable shows that there

are over 49,000 Community Policing Forums (CPFs) in the country and female participation is significantly higher at the district level compared to Dhaka. Police organise four open houses every year with these committees, where female participation has increased from 26 percent in 2022 to 33 percent in 2024 so far.

Meanwhile, the police department remains severely understaffed, which makes it even harder for the existing workforce to deal with cases with gender sensitivity. 38.83 percent of the online survey participants in the UN Women's 2023 study thought gender sensitivity in daily work is important to a great extent and 25 percent thought it to be important to a limited extent. What's alarming is that 17.48 percent perceived this concept to be entirely irrelevant to their policing work.

Survey results also reveal that 84 percent of the participants believe that Bangladesh Police has taken adequate measures to ensure gender sensitisation among police personnel, while 65 percent mentioned receiving introductory training on COP. However, 70 percent of those who received training did not participate in COP activities in last two years. Those involved in community awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence, cybercrime, crime prevention etc account for 66.67 percent of the respondents, and 28 percent remain inactive on this front. Meanwhile, 13 percent of respondents are unaware of such activities.

Currently, the existing gender-responsive mechanisms include help desks for women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and victim support centres. Speakers also highlighted non-functionality of these help desks in many areas and emphasised reviving the existing mechanisms of COP. Simultaneously, they have asked for more resources, capacity enhancement of community and beat police, and a close evaluation of gender-sensitive budgeting and its proper utilisation.

The study also identified some good practices in implementing gender-responsive COP in Bangladesh. For example, Bangladesh Police Women Network (BPWN) has launched an online gender-responsive training module,

where field officers of different ranks can learn about gender responsive policing and implement the learnings in their work. This initiative also made its place in the regional list of promising practices in the UN Women's study.

Speakers at the roundtable emphasised the importance of partnership among the police, NGOs, civil society and the general people to strengthen and institutionalise COP. They have also recommended introducing more inclusive practices in police training for inclusive service delivery, such as using sign language to help it become more accessible. There is an urgent need for political will to make policing more inclusive rather than an opportunity to abuse power. Police need to be more connected to women from the grassroots level, while BWPN needs to align itself with civil society and women's movements to achieve the goals of gender-responsive policing, according to the speakers at the roundtable.

Recommendations

- A comprehensive national-level COP strategy should be implemented
- Existing COP mechanisms need to be strengthened
- Women and other marginalised communities need to be given access to COP activities and related information
- The safety of female police officers in remote and crisis-prone areas should be ensured to increase meaningful participation
- More capacity enhancement training for police should be facilitated, including a focus on gender-sensitive attitude and behaviour
- There should be a close evaluation of gender-responsive budgeting and its proper utilisation
- Impact analyses of policies need to be ensured
- It is critical to continue with the advocacy on redistributing household duties and caregiving work.
- Inclusive practices like using sign language in COP training should be introduced. There should be an intersectional approach to ensure the representation of all age groups, classes, and ethnicities



LAW REFORM

Calls for overhauling the Cyber Security Act 2023

Above all, the CSA should be revised to align with international human rights standards, ensuring that Bangladesh's legal framework remains coherent with global norms and conventions.

DR. MD. TORIQL ISLAM

Whilst reviewing the Cyber Security Law of 2023, we should first analyse the Digital Security Act (DSA) of 2018. Since its inception, the DSA has faced widespread criticism for being used as a tool to suppress freedom of speech, expression, press, and human rights. Critics argued that the law failed to ensure effective online safety, safeguard critical national infrastructure (CNI), or protect personal data and fundamental rights. The vague definitions of crimes and broad scope for interpretation within the DSA led to the targeted criminalisation of free speech, causing immense suffering for individuals. This, in turn, fostered an atmosphere of fear, self-censorship, and insecurity, particularly among the media, academia, researchers, and civil society organisations. In reaction to growing criticisms, the then Awami League government replaced the DSA with a new piece of legislation – the Cyber Security Act 2023 (CSA). However, the pressing question is: does the CSA truly surpass its problematic predecessor?

In fact, the CSA is largely an updated version of the DSA with only minor modifications. Some of these changes include the removal of penalties for second-time offences in certain sections, while others only reduce prison sentences or increase fines in specific cases. With these rather trivial changes, in most cases, the contents of the two laws are identical, meaning that the CSA essentially presents a rebranded version of the DSA with minimal substantive differences—akin to the idea of 'old wine in new bottles.'

The DSA faced extensive criticism, particularly for restricting the freedoms of thought, conscience, speech, expression, and the press, as recognised in Article 39

of Bangladesh's Constitution and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Bangladesh is party. Hence, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Editor's Council of Bangladesh, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Amnesty International, and European diplomats have repeatedly called for the repeal or substantial amendment of several sections of the DSA. These include sections 8, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 43, and 53.

Since the CSA appears to continue the repressive nature of its predecessor, retaining almost all its provisions with only minor changes, organisations such as Amnesty International, the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), the Forum for Freedom of Expression Bangladesh (FExB), along with individual writers have recently called for its repeal.

Under Chapter VII, sections 39-54 of the DSA (aligned with sections 38-53 of the CSA), which share similar headings, subheadings, and content, the DSA granted extensive powers to law enforcement agencies. Moreover, the previous regime used the DSA as a tool for intimidation, with many cases being filed by its party activists under this law. Consequently, the DSA came to be widely regarded as a 'draconian' law, significantly affecting the lives of numerous individuals.

Arguably, by retaining most of the notorious provisions of the DSA, the CSA is also viewed as a similarly draconian law. In light of the aforementioned contexts, we advocate either the repeal or substantial amendment of the problematic sections of the CSA. If the interim government chooses to amend the

Cyber Security Act 2023 (CSA) as promised by the current Advisor to the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology, we call for its comprehensive review involving legal experts, human rights groups, journalists, and other stakeholders. The interim government should also consider the following recommendations:

To combat cybercrime effectively without suppressing freedom of speech, expression, press, and human rights, the CSA should focus exclusively on addressing cybercrimes and avoid encompassing broader content-related offences. Clear and precise definitions for key terms and offences should be included in the enactment to avoid misinterpretation and misuse.

The classification of bailable and non-bailable offences should also be reevaluated to ensure individuals are not subjected to prolonged pre-trial detention for non-violent offences. While addressing cybercrime is critical, the CSA's punishments should be proportionate and not excessively punitive. The law should emphasise rehabilitation and deterrence rather than solely focusing on retributive measures.

Above all, the CSA should be revised to align with international human rights standards, ensuring that Bangladesh's legal framework remains coherent with global norms and conventions. Implementing public awareness campaigns, strengthening the independence of the judiciary, and establishing a mechanism for periodic reviews are also essential to ensure the effectiveness and fairness of the CSA. Most importantly, systems for government accountability and oversight in enforcing the CSA should be established to prevent its misuse for political purposes.

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EQUALITY AND LAW

On menstrual leave policies

FARHAT LAMIA MOURI

Menstrual leave implies time offs for female employees while they experience menstrual pain. Dysmenorrhea or period cramp is a common phenomenon for a vast swathe of menstruating women. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, menstrual pain is so severe for some people that they are unable to perform regular activities for several days.

Many countries have already implemented menstrual leave policies and shown a steadfast commitment to addressing and prioritising women's health in the workplace. Indonesia, for instance, has incorporated a menstrual leave policy. The policy, which was introduced in 1948 and restructured in 2003, states that female workers experiencing menstrual pain are not obliged to work on the first two days of their cycle. In South Korea, Article 73 of the Labour Standards Act provides for monthly "physiologic leave," under which all female workers can avail of a day's leave every month. Similarly, Zambia, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Spain have also introduced progressive menstrual leave policies in recent times.

In India, there are no governing laws or centralised directions for 'paid menstruation leave'. However, Bihar and Kerala are two Indian states that have introduced menstrual leave policies for women. On 8 July 2024 the Supreme Court of India directed to frame a model policy on menstrual leave for women employees by consulting States and other stakeholders.



A three-judge Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India acknowledged that a judicial mandate on menstrual leave could potentially discourage employers from hiring women. Instead, it suggested that the government should take the lead in formulating a policy that balances the needs of women with concerns about

As menstrual awareness is a significant concern for women's right to health, it is high time that Bangladesh adopted policies or enacted laws relating to menstrual leave. Such policies can potentially contribute to a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

workforce participation.

In the context of Bangladesh, there is no comprehensive legal framework governing menstruation leave. The Labour Act of 2006 which regulates the country's labour and employment conditions, has no mention of menstruation leave. This leaves menstrual health issues ignored within the legal landscape. Article 32 of our Constitution provides the protection of the right to life and personal liberty. Adequate provisions for menstrual health, including menstrual leave, could be argued as necessary to ensure that women can fully exercise their rights to health and work without undue hardship. In the case of *Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association v Bangladesh (2009)*, it was emphasised that fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution, which include the principle of gender equality, should cover a wide range of gender-related needs. Although this decision did not expressly address menstrual leave, it highlights the necessity for legislative measures encompassing all aspects of gender equality, which may include menstrual leave.

As menstrual health is a significant concern for half of our population, it is high time that Bangladesh adopted policies or enacted laws relating to menstrual leave. Such policies can potentially contribute to a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

The writer is LLM candidate, University of Dhaka.

LAW VIEWS

Crimes during and after a revolution

ARAFAT IBNUL BASHAR

With the participation of students and people from all walks of life, the students and masses have brought down the previous regime. While we look forward to a new start, we must not forget the atrocities, violence, and crime spree that took place during and after the uprising.

There is a common understanding that no liability is incurred during a revolution if the revolution is successful. This understanding does not represent any general principle of law, but rather a necessary reality. It is understandable that while a revolution is underway, revolutionaries and protesters usually

prohibits the trial of such offenses now, it is obvious that a successful revolution will not regard such actions as crime, as they were "the necessary evil" to topple the regime. A failed revolution will surely result in such crimes being tried and severely punished but a successful one will choose to elude them either by inaction or a general amnesty.

However, mindless acts of vandalism, arson, killings, etc., having no connection to the goal of the revolution, can and should certainly be tried, whether they are perpetrated by protesters, the agents of the toppled regime, or any third party with other motives. Political offences do not involve the most serious and violent



charged with genocidal murders or rapes committed during our Liberation War.

Regarding the atrocities and crimes that take place in the event of the success of a revolution, and thereafter—all perpetrators, whether they are the revolutionaries, agents of the toppled regime, or any third party—everyone can and should be held liable. It is a common scenario that a revolution's success most often leads to people venting their suppressed anger and frustration violently, against the people who have wronged them in the past or

were somehow connected with the toppled regime. However, such acts, if they lead to crimes, can and ought surely to be tried in a court of law. Regrettably, revolutionaries most of the time enjoy impunity. It is necessary to punish all perpetrators of post-revolution violence, as it is a sine qua non for sustaining the continued success of the revolution.

Moreover, regime change following a revolution can result in the enactment of new laws. Ex post facto laws, i.e., laws that retroactively change the legal

consequences of acts committed before the enactment of the law, cannot be enacted in Bangladesh to penalise any act. Article 35 (1) of the Constitution of Bangladesh prohibits conviction of any act if it did not result in a violation of a law in force at the time of the commission of the act. Similarly, the provision also provides that no one can be subjected to a penalty greater than, or different from, that which might have been inflicted under the law in force at the time of the commission of the offence. However, a combined reading of articles 47 and 47A suggest that these protections do not apply to those who have been accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other crimes under international law. As such, genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, etc. committed during a revolution could be tried with ex post facto laws as well as the existing laws.

By and large, all revolutions aim to remove the prevalent injustices and discrimination in society and to establish the rule of law. And it is imperative to hold all the perpetrators of violent crimes accountable, to achieve this goal.

The writer teaches law at Chittagong Independent University.

resort to measures that violate existing laws and government directives. For instance, unlawful assembly, violations of curfew, riots, etc. are common occurrences during a mass uprising. Although no law

crimes of a legal order. Following the independence of Bangladesh in 1971—a successful revolution, the Government of Bangladesh granted a general amnesty, but the same did not extend to those

With the participation of students and people from all walks of life, the students and masses have brought down the previous regime. While we look forward to a new start, we must not forget the atrocities, violence, and crime spree that took place during and after the uprising.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh: 119-7 (Sobhana Mostary 36, Shathi Rani 29, Nigar Sultana 18; Saskia Horley 3-13)
Scotland: 103-7 (Sarah Bryce 49 not out; Ritu Moni 2-15)
Result: Bangladesh win by 16 runs
Player of the match: Ritu Moni

It was a decent wicket so I just wanted to bowl wicket-to-wicket and use my variations. We have put in a lot of hard work in the last year and we were really prepared. It is a great moment and a very proud moment for me and my team.

Bangladesh seamer **Ritu Moni**

Left-arm spinner Nahida Akter became the first Bangladesh woman and the second-youngest overall to take 100 T20I wickets, reaching the milestone in her 88th appearance yesterday. Rwanda's 20-year-old Henriette Ishimwe is the youngest to the feat.



Bangladeshi expats in the UAE usually gather in numbers to watch their country in action, and yesterday was no different as around 2,000 fans -- from young kids to adults -- were present at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium to watch Bangladesh play Scotland in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup opener. Bangladesh did not disappoint, snapping their 16-game winless streak with a 16-run win as Ritu Moni shone with the ball to scalp two wickets and help the Tigresses restrict Scotland to 103 for seven after setting a 120-run target.

PHOTO: ICC/COLLECTED

Heat and scenic views await Gwalior stadium's debut

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Gwalior

The area around Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Cricket Stadium in Gwalior, set to stage the first of three T20Is between Bangladesh and hosts India, is on "high security alert" ahead of the venue's first-ever international exposure.

Built in the middle of nowhere, between the mountains and hills of Madhya Pradesh, the stadium has a no-entry policy unless proper gate passes or IDs are presented. Cars were seen turning around some four kilometres away from the main entrance, where checkpoints have been set up to cordon off the area.

Security officers were overheard saying, "High security alert, so you understand we have to check," before allowing a cab carrying media personnel to pass.

While Bangladesh are set to be part of the scenic stadium's history, they will be feeling the



'Blown with the wind' but Sachin's Roop Singh etched in history

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Gwalior

"It's blown with the wind, so Sachin's name isn't there. We had left it like it was in the game," said scorer Sunil Gupta while looking at the dilapidated scoreboard at the Roop Singh Stadium in Gwalior.

This was the venue where the great Sachin Tendulkar had notched up ODI cricket's first double hundred and as the official scorer of that India vs South Africa game back in 2010, Sunil saw it all unfold right in front of him. It was the last international fixture to be played at the ground as well.

Once the main hub of cricket in the region, the first international cricket stadium in Gwalior now stands in near ruins. A better and more modern venue—Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Cricket Stadium—has been built in the outskirts of the city, where Sunil would be scoring the first T20I between Bangladesh and



India on October 6.

Entering the venue, one can feel the power of tradition and the ambience a sportsperson like Tendulkar can attach to even a small venue such as the Roop Singh Stadium, named after a former hockey player who was part of India's Olympic gold medal winning teams in 1932 and 1936.

Its swansong saw the changing of times in ODI cricket, the first double hundred in the world by a batter, arguably the greatest in history, tormenting South Africa in a 153-run win.

Sunil recalls the build-up to the game.

"The atmosphere was dramatic. The match had to be shifted from Kanpur due to some issues. They came to us and the ground was ready so we said we would host. So, with about two weeks of preparation we hosted.

"During the nets, he [Tendulkar] was trying out different shots. He called some bowlers and [Anil] Kumble was among them. He asked them to stop him from sweeping by any way possible. Kumble left after bowling six to seven deliveries, perhaps saying 'your concentration is going ok but I'm losing mine'. If you look at the 200, there were a lot of sweeps and

reverse-sweeps," he said and a majority of Tendulkar's runs did come from glances.

In a ground of small stature, Tendulkar must have been eying big runs like the Indian fans and the media were anticipating.

"There was hype among media and fans on whether he would get a century in Gwalior, since he had not scored a ton here, previously getting out on 97 against Pakistan in 2007," Sunil said.

There are other stories associated with the venue as well like the great West Indian side playing an ODI here in 1988. In the 1996 World Cup, West Indies and India played another game here where some 30,000 food packets were brought in from Delhi's Nathu's Sweets.

"We wanted to do something new, so we gave food packets, 1.5 litre coke and Yash mineral water bottle for tickets priced at just 100 rupees. It was for 22,000 people. Each lunch packet cost at least 500 rupees," Sunil said.

This ground also held the first ever day-night Ranji Trophy final, a five-day white-ball affair in 1996.

The dressing room, where once Sachin treaded contemplating his double ton, has seen better days. A few of the stands are almost unusable now. Once a hub of cricket, it is currently run by the municipal of the city not the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association.

The scoreboard paper slabs showing what had happened on that fateful day may have been blown away by the wind but the name Roop Singh Stadium will be etched in cricket history no matter what.



Villa shine brightest on underdogs' night

AGENCIES

Holders Real Madrid suffering a shock 1-0 loss to Lille in the Champions League would have been the most talked about on any given day but it was Aston Villa's stunning 1-0 win over Bayern Munich with a last-gasp goal in a repeat of the 1982 European Cup final that probably made more ripples.

Jhon Duran's audacious chipped goal in the 79th minute saw Villa celebrate in style their first home game in Europe's elite club competition for 41 years.

With the Germans dominating possession but squandering chances, Duran ran onto a high ball, spotted goalkeeper Manuel Neuer off his line, and scooped the ball over him to send Villa Park into delirium.

It was the 20-year-old Colombian striker's fifth goal from the bench this season after four in the Premier League.

"He's [Duran] an excellent substitute. The first time he touched the ball, he chipped Neuer -- one of the most beautiful goals in history," said Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, whose saves also played a vital part in securing victory.

The win was a throwback to one of Villa's most glorious days when they beat Bayern to lift the European Cup in 1982.



Duran's goal came against the run of play as the visitors enjoyed two thirds of possession and the best chances but found World Cup-winning goalkeeper Martinez at his best.

"It's unreal. It's a night that we will remember for a long time. It's a statement," Martinez added. "It was hurting my ears. This is a club that's moving forward. I love playing here. I love the fans."



Lille halt Real Madrid's unbeaten run

Kylian Mbappe made his return from injury for Madrid in France as a substitute but he was upstaged by Jonathan David, whose penalty condemned Carlo Ancelotti's side to a first loss in all competitions since January -- a run spanning 36 matches.

The outcome also ended Real Madrid's 14-game unbeaten run in

the Champions League, in which they last lost to Manchester City 4-0 in the semifinal second leg in May, 2023.

"It hasn't been a very good night for us, we shouldn't look for excuses," said Ancelotti.

"We could have equalised at the end but it wouldn't have been deserved."

Canada international David, scorer of a hat-trick in Ligue 1 at the weekend, buried his spot-kick at the end of the first half after Eduardo Camavinga used his arm to block a strike from Edon Zhegrov.

Lille goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier produced a string of late saves as the French club clung on for a famous win over the record 15-time European champions.

Juve resilient, Atletico flop while Slot makes history

Meanwhile, Arne Slot became the first Liverpool manager to win eight of his opening nine matches as Mohamed Salah's brilliant strike sealed a 2-0 victory against Bologna at Anfield.

Juventus won 3-2 in a thrilling encounter against RB Leipzig in Germany despite having goalkeeper Michele Di Gregorio sent off for handling outside his area in the 59th minute.

Atletico Madrid fell to a humiliating 4-0 loss at Benfica.



Inter Miami captain Lionel Messi celebrates scoring the second of his two goals -- curling a laser-precision free-kick into the corner from 24 yards -- during his side's thrilling 3-2 win over the Columbus Crew at Lower.com Field in Ohio yesterday, clinching the Supporters' Shield awarded for the best regular season record in Major League Soccer (MLS). Messi, returning from a two-month injury, now boasts 17 goals and 15 assists in 17 MLS matches.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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'CSA will be repealed'

All black laws to be struck down in phases, says law adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Asif Nazul yesterday said the government will move towards repealing the controversial Cyber Security Act.

"Discussion will be held to make a decision.... Ultimately, it will be repealed. A new law will be formulated later to truly ensure citizens' safety in cyberspace. There must be special security measures for women and children.

"All black laws will be repealed in phases in order to make the people of Bangladesh free," he told a discussion at Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in the capital.

He said these after other discussants -- mostly legal experts, rights activists, academics, and journalists -- urged him to get rid of the "repressive" law.

Prof Asif said it was not possible for the interim government to do anything about those who were convicted during the Awami League regime, even if the court acted as per the will of those in power.



Asif Nazul

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Bangladesh players celebrate a wicket in their 16-run win over Scotland in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup opener at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: ICC

Tigresses end winless run in T20 WC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh put an end to a decade-long winless run in the Women's T20 World Cup with a 16-run victory over Scotland in the tournament opener of the ninth edition at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

This was Bangladesh's third win in 22 matches in the competition and the first in 17 games, with their last victory dating back to 2014 when they beat Ireland in Sylhet.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a long time. We had in our minds that this is our moment. It means a lot," skipper Nigar Sultana Joty, who became the first Bangladeshi

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Nahid makes it to Time100 Next 2024

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam has been named as one of Time Magazine's 100 emerging leaders in the world in 2024.

Nahid, one of the key coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, has been named in the Time100 Next 2024 list in the "Leaders" category.



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Israel strikes Beirut, south Lebanon

Orders more evacuations; Hezbollah attacks Israeli forces near border

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel's military urged residents of more than 20 towns in south Lebanon to evacuate their homes immediately yesterday as it pressed on with incursions after suffering its worst losses in a year of fighting the Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah.

The latest warnings took the number of southern towns subject to evacuation calls to 70 and included the provincial capital Nabatieh, suggesting another Israeli operation that could lead thousands more Lebanese to flee.

More than 1.2 million Lebanese have already been displaced by

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KHAGRACHHARI GIRL

Medical test finds evidence of rape

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Doctors have found evidence of sexual assault on the schoolgirl from the Tripura community who was raped allegedly by her teacher in Khagrachhari on Tuesday, said police.

Now, the DNA samples collected from both the student and the teacher, who was beaten to death following the incident, will be cross-matched, a senior police official told this newspaper

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MOB ATTACKS At least 28 beaten to death in Sept

16 killed in political violence: HRSS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 28 people have died in mob beatings in September, said a report by the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS). At least 14 people were injured in these incidents.

In the report published yesterday, HRSS said although there have been some improvements in specific areas of human rights under the interim government, overall progress remains insufficient. "In fact, in some areas, the human rights situation has deteriorated," it said.

In addition, at least 16 people were killed in 83 incidents of political violence, said the organisation. Of the incidents, 45 were caused by

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



THE HISTORIC HOWLERS ... A majestic golden jackal strikes a pose after being spotted on the outskirts of Dhaka recently. This wolf-like canid is native to Southeast Europe, Central Asia, western Asia, South Asia and regions of Southeast Asia, and prefers dry open country, arid short grasslands and steppe landscapes as habitats. The ancestor of the golden jackal is believed to be the Arno River dog – an extinct species that lived in southern Europe 1.9 million years ago. Studies indicate that the golden jackal expanded from India around 20,000 years ago. The oldest golden jackal fossil is 7,600 years old and was found in Lebanon.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF SHURER DHARA AND Dr. REZWANA CHOWDHURY BANNYA

Chairman, Shurer Dhara.

Shurer Dhara is a non-profit music school that promotes cultural activities such as music, dance, and other performing arts. Established in 1992, its office is located at 2/7 Lalmatia Block B, Dhaka-1207. In 2009, it was registered as a company limited by guarantee under The Companies Act, 1994 (Registration No. TO-708). Ms. Rezwana Chowdhury is currently serving as the Chairman of Shurer Dhara.

In 2009 Shurer dhara commenced the Music For Development programme. The goal of this project was to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds in achieving their full potential and enriching their lives through the beauty of music and performing arts.

In 2011 Shurer Dhara launched Shrutigitobitaan, a compilation of the audio version of total Gitobitaan. This unique project was the first of its kind in Bangladesh where 450 vocalists across the country took part.

In 2012 Shurer Dhara introduced the Sohroskon-the Borshoboraan show in Dhaka where artists from all over Bangladesh joined in welcoming the Bengali New Year.

As the organization and its members grew, Shurer Dhara's positive contribution towards society through cultural enrichment was recognised by the Government.

To enable Shurer Dhara to continue its developmental projects as a charitable organisation, a land measuring 0.5120 acres was allocated by the DC of Dhaka under a long-term settlement deed dated 04.05.2017 after approval from the Ministry of Land (Memo No. 31.00.0000.042.41.134.16-26 dated 08.02.2017). Subsequently, the schedule of the said deed was amended by a deed of rectification (No. 5320 dated 12.06.2022). Since then, Shurer Dhara has been in peaceful possession of the property and has established its office there. The property has been mutated in favor of Shurer Dhara, and land tax has been paid up to date.

Afterwards, Shurer Dhara applied to the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) seeking a lease/permission to use approximately 0.3528 acres of their acquired land as a connecting road for Shurer Dhara's property, which was approved by B WDB (Memo No.42.01.0000.203.34.017.23-597 dated 19.11.2023). An agreement dated 29.01.2024 was made between BWDB and Shurer Dhara to use 18.45 decimals of land from Daag No. C.S. 670, R.S. 1896, Mohanagar 11418, and 11665 as a connecting road to the property for residential purposes and 16.83 decimals for agricultural use under specific terms and conditions.

It is pertinent that Shurer Dhara has obtained all necessary permissions from relevant government authorities for the peaceful possession of the property and the construction of the building, including:

1. Approval from the Ministry of Land (Memo No. 31.00.0000.040.41.134.16.137 dated 27.04.2022).

2. Approval from DNCC (Memo No. 46.10.0000.020.00.1283(1).23-08 dated 04.01.2024).

3. Approval by RAJUK for Large and Special Project Clearance (letter dated 16.05.2024).

Therefore, the 0.5120 acres of land in Ramchandrapur Mouza have been legally owned and peacefully possessed by Shurer Dhara. The construction of the office and the operation of the organization therein have been conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions of the aforesaid agreements and following the guidelines provided by the relevant authorities. Shurer Dhara has regularly paid the land tax and obtained all necessary approvals and clearances from the relevant authorities for the rightful use of the property.

Unfortunately, some false and fabricated news reports have been published against Shurer Dhara and Dr. Rezwana Chowdhury in print and electronic media without verifying the truth and relying on mere speculation, which were also later circulated on a few social media platforms.

Regrettably, Dr. Rezwana Chowdhury's name was entangled in the rumour simply because she is the current Chairman of Shurer Dhara.

The property does not belong to Dr. Chowdhury or anyone else in the organization; she only represents the organization as the Chairman. The land is owned and possessed by Shurer Dhara music school to conduct music classes and other cultural activities.

Shurer Dhara has created a platform for music enthusiasts across the country to nurture their cultural interests and showcase their talents. Since its inception, it has significantly contributed to the cultural growth of the country and created numerous artists who have made their marks globally, representing our country and making us proud. The Chairman of the organization, Dr. Rezwana Chowdhury, one of the finest artists in the country, is celebrated beyond our borders for her soulful voice, especially in the genre of Tagore music. Recently, she was honored by the prestigious PadmaShri, the fourth-highest civilian award in India.

We hope that our media will extend their support to Shurer Dhara and Dr. Rezwana Chowdhury to clear the misunderstanding, which was created during the recent drive by the DNCC against an unlawful occupant for illegal possession of a different area of land within the vicinity of Ramchandrapur Mouza.

With deepest concern, we would like to announce that the land allocated to Shurer Dhara has been recently forcefully confiscated by Bangladesh Inter City Truck Drivers Shomity.

A copy of this statement is provided to journalists to ensure transparency and accountability.



বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি বিভাগের চুক্তিসমূহ পর্যালোচনা সংক্রান্ত ন্যাশনাল রিভিউ কমিটি গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

(ঢাকা, ১৮ আশ্বিন ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ, ০৩ অক্টোবর ২০২৪)

বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানির দ্রুত সরবরাহ বৃদ্ধি (বিশেষ বিধান) আইন, ২০১০ (সংশোধিত ২০২১) – এর অধীন সম্পাদিত চুক্তিসমূহ পর্যালোচনার নিমিত্ত গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার অত্র ন্যাশনাল রিভিউ কমিটি গঠন করেছেন। সুতরাং, অত্র আইনের অধীন চুক্তিবদ্ধ দেশের বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি উৎপাদন ও সরবরাহকারী সংস্থা কর্তৃক দূর্নীতি সংক্রান্ত যে কোন তথ্য-উপাত্ত, প্রমাণাদিসহ যে কোনো ব্যক্তি কমিটির ই-মেইলে আগামী ০৪/১০/২০২৪ হতে ৩১/১০/২০২৪ পর্যন্ত অভিযোগ দাখিল করতে পারবেন। অত্র কমিটি কর্তৃক পরবর্তীতে প্রয়োজনবোধে অভিযোগ দাখিলকারী ও অভিযুক্ত ব্যক্তি বা তাঁর প্রতিষ্ঠান বা সংস্থার সহিত যোগাযোগক্রমে পরবর্তী কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করবে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানির দ্রুত সরবরাহ বৃদ্ধি (বিশেষ বিধান) আইন, ২০১০ (সংশোধিত ২০২১) – এর অধীন সম্পাদিত চুক্তিসমূহের অধীনে নানাবিধ কার্যক্রম পরিচালনাকারী সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান ও সংস্থাসমূহের সঙ্গে পৃথকভাবে যোগাযোগপূর্বক অত্র কমিটি প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহ ও সহায়তা গ্রহণের উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করবে।

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