



BID TO REMOVE PRESIDENT BNP at odds with student movement

Both sides holding talks with political parties

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The interim government's decision on whether to remove President Mohammed Shahabuddin from office is still awaiting a "political consensus", because the BNP believes removing him would unnecessarily stir things up in post-Hasina Bangladesh.

The party's position is in stark contrast to the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

Both sides have been cordial and agreeable, and have gone out of their way to point out that they do not want any confrontation, but they have been in talks with other parties to drum up support for their stances.

The students consider the president a relic of the 15 years of Hasina-led regime and believe that he must be deposed to complete their victory.

"At this moment, it would be inappropriate to take any hasty step that could create a constitutional vacuum."

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir
BNP secretary general



They have met Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islami Andolan Bangladesh leaders who agreed with the demand that the president has to be removed.

The BNP, on the other hand, has been opposing that, saying it did not desire a constitutional vacuum, which could be dangerous, potentially leading to a crisis.

Party leaders said they would not make any comment that could hurt the sentiments of the movement but would come up with an explanation as to how such a move could bring about a chaotic situation that might hamper the democratic process.

BNP Vice-Chairman Mohammad Shahjahan told The Daily Star yesterday, "Our position is not rigid."

Through talks with other parties, the BNP wants to reach a consensus that "there shouldn't be any crisis that hampers the election process," he said.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday reiterated his plea to the interim government that it should not make any rash decisions regarding the matter.

"At this moment, it would be inappropriate to take any hasty step that could create a constitutional vacuum," he said at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

A delegation of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and its aligned civic platform, the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, held a meeting with the BNP leaders on the removal of the president on Saturday evening.

Regarding that meeting, Fakhrul said the matter would be discussed at the party forum, after which the party would clarify its position.

"We have previously said that to consolidate the revolution in Bangladesh and secure the fruits of the people's uprising, national unity is essential.

Any decision should align with the constitutional process.

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(From L to R) Bangladesh's Tohura Khatun, Sabina Khatun, Mosammat Sagorika, Maria Manda and Rituporna Chakma celebrate a goal during their 7-1 thumping of Bhutan in the semifinals of SAFF Women's Championship at the Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu yesterday. The defending champions will square off against Nepal in the final on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SAFF

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY DURING JULY UPRISING

ICT shows 20 including 10 ex-ministers arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday showed 10 former ministers and as many others arrested on charges of crimes against humanity and genocide during the July-August mass uprising.

They were already behind bars in other cases.

Talking to reporters after the proceedings, ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said the prosecution had filed three petitions with the tribunal, and it granted all of them.

In the first petition, the prosecution sought to show

arrested 14 people on genocide charges. The ICT had issued arrest warrants for them earlier.

They are former ministers Anisul Huq, Abdur Razzaque, Lt Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan, Dipu Moni, Shahjahan Khan, Golam Dastagir Gazi, Kamal Ahmed Majumdar, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Rashed Khan Menon and Hasanul Haq Inu; former prime minister's advisers Salman F Rahman and Toufiq-e-Elahi

Chowdhury; former Supreme Court judge Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik; and former home secretary Jahangir Alam.

The ICT ordered the law enforcers to produce them before the tribunal on November 18.

In another petition, the prosecution sought to show six other people, who are behind bars in other cases, arrested on genocide charges.

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Set up separate secretariat for judiciary

Top court's proposal sent to law ministry

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court has proposed establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary to make it truly independent and effectively separate it from the executive branch.

This will end the law ministry's control over the lower courts, SC officials said.

The SC administration forwarded the proposal, along with a concept paper describing the necessity and objectives of a separate secretariat, to the law ministry.

Separation of the judiciary has not been possible over the years because the political parties in power never really wanted it, reads the paper.

A draft organogram of the secretariat was annexed to the proposal written by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed.

If approved, the law ministry will take steps to set up the new secretariat and appoint a secretary, additional and deputy secretaries, and other officials, SC Special Officer Muajjem Hussain told The Daily Star.

At present, the law ministry acts as the secretariat for the judiciary and therefore, it can interfere in recruitments, transfers and promotions of lower court judges, he said.

If the separate secretariat is established, the power of recruitments, transfers and promotions of lower court judges will go to the SC, Muajjem added.

Contacted, Law and Justice Division Secretary Sheikh Abu Taher said the proposal was conveyed to Law Adviser Asif Nazrul.

The law adviser could not be reached for comments on the matter.

On September 21, Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed in an address to lower court judges said he would take steps

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aló
by grameenphone

ঘরে না থেকেও ঘরের খেয়াল রাখুন সবসময়

ইনডোর সিসি ক্যামেরা

• ছবি আর বাস্তু পরিচালনা এবং অসংখ্য সিসি ক্যামেরা পার্বক আছে



Unbothered by the stench and tar-like hue of the water, children of poor families dive into a canal in the Purba Tongi area of Gazipur to find discarded objects to sell to recyclers. They usually sell their finds, mostly plastic and glass bottles, for as little as Tk 25 a kg.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

President has to go only after political consensus

Say 12-Party Alliance, Gono Odhikar Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More political parties have agreed in principle with the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement's demand for the president's removal but emphasised that any action has to be based on political consensus.

The development came after Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee yesterday held two separate meetings with Gono Odhikar Parishad and the 12-Party Alliance.

The issues of annulling the last three national elections, removing President Mohammed Shahabuddin and rewriting the constitution were discussed at the meetings, Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the movement, told reporters after the meetings.

While Gono Odhikar Parishad and the 12-Party Alliance agreed

on the issues, they stressed on reaching a political consensus regarding the president's removal so that the culture of imposing a decision exploiting constitutional frameworks by the Awami League is not repeated, he said.

The party leaders called for determining the process of removing the president through a political consensus and discussion among parties, Shakil Uzzaman, office secretary of Gono Odhikar Parishad, told The Daily Star.

Earlier in the day, the 12-Party Alliance, formed with members of the now defunct BNP-led 20-Party alliance, gave a similar statement after the meeting with the movement leaders.

"Our aim is for the entire nation to come together and reach a final decision. The interim government must not fail in any

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JULY 15 ATTACKS Complaint filed with Shahbagh police against 420 BCL activists

DU CORRESPONDENT

A complaint was lodged with Shahbagh Police Station yesterday against 420 Chhatra League leaders and activists over the July 15 attacks on quota reform protesters at Dhaka University.

This follows a case filed on October 21 by members of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, which named 391 leaders and activists of BCL, Awami League, and Jubo League.

The complaint lodged yesterday contained 220 new names, including those of female leaders and activists of BCL, a pro-AL student body. It was filed by Arman Hossain, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

After submitting the complaint, Arman, Umama Fatema, spokesperson for the movement, and coordinator Abdul Kader briefed reporters at the Shahbagh Police Station.

Police were yet to register the complaint as a case till filing of this report around 8:30pm.

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MY DHAKA

REDISCOVERING BIOSCOPE in the bustling heart of Dhaka

JANNATUL BUSHRA

In the vibrant and ever-evolving neighbourhood of Dhanmondi, where sleek cafés, trendy boutiques, cineplexes, and contemporary high-rises often eclipse tradition, the revival of the bioscope by Muhammad Hiru is a fascinating story!

I often pass by the lakeside roads of Dhanmondi and spot Hiru in different locations with his iconic red-covered bioscope box – a quaint, hand-cranked film projector closely tied to the early development of visual entertainment.

But as often as I see him, I somehow still fail to recognise him! One day, he's the familiar face by the lakeside, and the next, he's completely transformed, hidden behind a vibrant joker costume, trying to lure in curious onlookers. It's almost as if he becomes a different person altogether, blending into the scene so seamlessly that you wouldn't even realise it's the same Hiru with his red bioscope box. This puzzled me for a while, so I asked him about it.

Turns out, it's all about the heat! On cooler days, he wears that flashy outfit to catch people's attention. But when the temperature starts to rise, Hiru ditched the joker costume. "Too hot to wear that thing," he explained with a grin.

Makes sense. It's hard to entertain a crowd when you're melting in a heavy costume.

Seeing his passion and dedication, I couldn't help but ask him how he came to pursue a career with the bioscope. "I grew up in Bogura, in the far north of our country," he began. "My most vivid memories from childhood are of the village fairs, where the bioscope shows would light up the night. It was there that I first fell in love with the magic of storytelling through that magic box."



His words painted a picture of a simpler time. "I crafted my bioscope box entirely on my own, without any master to guide me," he said with quiet pride. "From the moment I first saw one, I just knew – I would make one someday. And here I am, living that dream."

"But following a dream comes with its own set of consequences," Hiru admits. "The reality of pursuing art in our country is that it rarely provides a sustainable income. I struggle financially every day. I usually stand here after 5PM. Some days, I have a steady stream of customers, but on others – especially when the weather is harsh – I hardly get any."

He lingers for a moment, then states, "To make ends meet, I also do decoration work, mostly for small parties. Recently, people have started hiring me to entertain children at birthday parties," he says with a faint smile. "But even that offers little stability in a city like Dhaka. No matter how hard I try, the weight of financial insecurity is always there. Yet, it's my passion for this art that keeps me going."

His eyes sparkle as he speaks of winter and the festive seasons. "There's a special joy in watching children rush toward my bioscope during this time. Their eyes, full of excitement, warm my

heart and remind me why I continue this work."

What truly moves me is Hiru's unwavering passion for the bioscope. It feels good to see him there, standing as a slice of tradition amidst all the modernity of Dhanmondi. Even in the sweltering heat, when he might forgo the joker costume, Hiru never abandons his passion or dedication. On those scorching days, you'll find him wearing only a simple, colourful cap – not as eye-catching, perhaps, but unmistakably Hiru!

Hiru typically sets up after 5:00pm in front of Anam Rang Plaza at 6/A Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi.

DB searches ex-minister Golam Dastagir's home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives early Saturday conducted a raid at the house of former textile and jute minister Golam Dastagir Gazi in Dhaka's Siddheswari.

As part of the regular operation of DB, a team searched the house as per the rules and regulations, according to a press release sent by Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Seeing the police, the building's security guard fled. Later, with the help of the local police station, the DB team entered the house and conducted the search operation, it also read.

"Based on specific information, the search operation was conducted as part of the arrest of the accused named in an FIR ...," added the press release.

However, an employee of the house told The Daily Star, "The cops broke the lock of the gate and entered the house and vandalised the CCTV camera first. Later, furniture in four rooms of the house was also vandalised."

Dastagir was arrested in Shantinagar area of Dhaka on August 25. He is now behind bars.

7kg gold recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials recovered 60 gold bars weighing around 7kg from a plane at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday afternoon.

The bars, wrapped in two packets, were left abandoned under two seats of a US Bangla Airline, says a press release by Mizanur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID).

The officials recovered the gold bars worth around Tk 7.86 crore after the aircraft landed at the airport around 4:00pm and all the passenger were evacuated, it added.

No one was arrested in this connection. CIID officials said smugglers sometimes leave gold in this manner to avoid arrest. Many with security passes work as their agents and take the gold out of the airport.

3 hurt in road mishap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A car hit a group of pedestrians near the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday afternoon, injuring three.

The accident occurred in front of the airport's third terminal around 1:30pm.

A video of the incident went viral on social media. Ershad Ahmed, officer-in-charge (OC) of Airport Police Station said three men were injured, with two sustaining broken legs and one minor head injury.

The car was being driven by its owner, Mustafizur Rahman, who was detained at the scene, the OC said. According to Mustafizur, a front tire burst caused him to lose control of the vehicle.

BNP at odds with student movement

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Towards that end, immediate reforms towards holding elections are necessary," Fakhru added.

BNP leaders held a meeting with the 12-party alliance at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office on Thursday, where they emphasised national unity, discussed the issue, and conveyed the message that they are against removing the president for the time being, sources said.

"We don't want any new complications centring the president's removal, as we are passing a critical time. Any new complication will only hamper the electoral process. So, what the BNP said is also very much our view," Shahadat Hossain Selim, spokesperson of the 12-party alliance, told The Daily Star yesterday.

BNP standing committee members Nazrul Islam Khan and Selima Rahman, vice chairmen Abdul Awal Mintoo and Mohammad Shahjahan were present at the 12-party meeting.

The BNP also held a meeting with the Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote and conveyed the same message.

Fariduzzaman Farhad, coordinator of Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote, said that they also did not want any move that would create a constitutional vacuum.

"We are very much aligned with BNP's stance. We want a clear election roadmap," he said.

Andaleev Rahman Partha, chairman of the Bangladesh Jatiya Party, said, "We are also of the view that creating a constitutional vacuum will not be wise. We are of the same opinion as that of the BNP."

He, however, said the parties were yet to talk about this issue formally.

Saiful Huq, general secretary of the Revolutionary Workers Party, and also a leader of Ganatantra Mancha, said if the president did not resign voluntarily, any initiative to remove him would complicate the already volatile political situation and that might hamper the election process.

"So, we don't want any such complications right now."

He, however, said the Ganatantra Mancha's official stance was yet to be decided.

On October 23, three top BNP leaders met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and warned of a potential constitutional crisis as a consequence of the president's removal.

Set up separate secretariat for judiciary

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for the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary.

Supreme Court lawyers have long been demanding a separate secretariat for the judiciary.

Before the proposal was sent to the law ministry yesterday, opinions of judges of both the Appellate and High Court divisions were solicited, officials said.

Although Bangladesh is a constitutional democratic state, there are limitations in implementing the principle of separation of powers and ending the executive branch's tendency to interfere in the judiciary, reads the concept.

"The manifestation of a culture based on the rule of law and constitutional obligations has been severely affected since independence. Article 22 of our constitution declares the separation of the judiciary from the executive branch as a basic principle of the state," it says.

"In the era of globalisation, the application and practice of the principle of separation of powers... in the democratic state structure to curb the absolute powers of the executive or the government is well known."

In a modern state, if the three organs are not separated, the coherent practice of the constitution faces obstacles. "As a result, the need to maintain a proper balance of powers between the various departments of the state is disturbed on the one hand, and the democratic foundation of the state as a whole is

weakened on the other."

"The highest court of Bangladesh in the judgement of the Civil Appeal Case No. 79/1999, better known as Masdar Hossain case, of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has cleared the way for the separation of the judiciary from the executive by making a complete outline. One of the basic foundations of the separation of powers outlined in the judgement is the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary. In the judgement of Masdar Hossain case, the issue of institutionalisation of judicial separation has come up several times to ensure judiciary's independence. And the best effective way to separate the judiciary is to establish an independent judiciary secretariat. For this reason, in the judgement, the Supreme Court has considered the establishment of a separate secretariat for the judiciary by completely abolishing the joint jurisdiction of the law ministry and the Supreme Court in running the current dual rule that is the subordinate court judges' recruitment, transfer, discipline etc as an important adjunct of the separation of powers."

In the context of the unforgettable July-August mass uprising, now is the best time to ensure true independence of the judiciary by implementing the verdict of the Masdar Hossain case, says the concept.

"The first step in this effort is to establish a separate judiciary secretariat completely independent of the executive branch. It is possible to establish the rule of law through

efficient, impartial and quality judicial work in our country only by establishing a separate judicial secretariat.

"In Article 109 of our Constitution, the power of supervision and control of all subordinate courts and tribunals has been delegated to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. At present, Bangladesh Supreme Court Registry provides secretarial support to the Supreme Court and High Court Division in the management and control of various matters of subordinate courts. But this supervision and control of the High Court Division is not absolute, because in the existing structure, the High Court Division exercises its supervision and control powers after receiving various proposals related to subordinate courts from the ministry of law. But in terms of Article 109 of our constitution, the supervision and control of subordinate courts and tribunals is the exclusive prerogative of the High Court Division. Therefore, the establishment of a separate judicial secretariat is essential for the smooth implementation of this constitutional obligation.

"Besides, the scope of work of the Supreme Court registry has increased at a fast rate due to various reasons, including the increase in the number of cases, administrative activities of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, and the rise in the number of subordinate court judges. Considering this context, it has become necessary to set up a separate secretariat."

Saudi opens resort island at futuristic mega-city

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia's planned futuristic mega-city known as NEOM yesterday announced the opening of its "first physical showcase": a luxury Red Sea island featuring restaurants, hotels and yachting berths.

The opening of the island, known as Sindalah, comes amid persistent doubts about NEOM's viability and ahead of a major investor forum sometimes referred to as "Davos in the Desert" which will begin in Riyadh on Tuesday.

"NEOM is committed to supporting the Kingdom's new era of luxury tourism, with the opening of Sindalah," chief executive Nadhmi al-Nasr said in a statement.

Russian army claims new advance in east Ukraine

AFP, Moscow

Russia said yesterday its military had advanced further in east Ukraine, capturing a frontline village just a few kilometres north of a key Ukrainian-held industrial hub.

Moscow has made steady gains on the battlefield for months, pressing their advantage against overstretched and outmanned Ukrainian forces.

Russian army units "liberated

the settlement of Izmailovka," the Russian defence ministry said in a daily briefing, using the Russian spelling for the village.

Izmailovka had a population of just under 200 people before the conflict.

It lies eight kilometres (five miles) north of the key industrial hub of Kurakhove and just a few kilometres north of Kurakhivka, a small town on a stretch of frontline Moscow is trying to surround.

ICT shows

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The six are former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, sacked army officer Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan and police officers Abdullahil Kafi, Arafat Hossain, Abul Hasan and Mazharul Islam.

The authorities were ordered to produce them before the tribunal on November 20.

Following the third petition, the tribunal issued arrest warrants for 17 former and current police personnel, including former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner Habibur Rahman, on similar charges of crimes against humanity.

Chief Prosecutor Tajul did not reveal the names of the other accused, saying they might go in hiding if their names were disclosed.

Upon arrest, they will have to be produced before the tribunal on November 20.

ICT Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Majumdar and members Justice Md Shafiqul Alam Mahmud and Mohitul Haque Enam Chowdhury passed the orders after hearing the petitions.

The reconstituted tribunal, on

the first day of its proceedings on October 17, issued arrest warrants for former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 45 others for their alleged role in crimes against humanity and genocide during the student-led mass uprising.

At least 863 people, as per the health ministry, were killed and thousands injured during the uprising.

More than 60 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide have been filed against Hasina, her party leaders and officials of her administration with the ICT investigation agency and the prosecution team so far.

The Awami League government had formed the ICT in March 2010 originally to try the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

It later constituted ICT-2, and at least six Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP leaders were executed following the judgments of the two tribunals. The two tribunals were merged later. The interim government reconstituted it in mid-October after taking charge in August.

President has to go

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way as such a failure would have dire consequences for the entire country," Mostafa Jamal Haider, head of the 12-party alliance and chairman of Jatiya Party (Kazi Zafar), told reporters emerging from the meeting.

He went on to call for speeding up the reforms so that elections could be held at the earliest.

He also called for unity among all parties, including the BNP.

BNP leaders on occasions have said that removing the president would create a crisis the nation does not desire.

The alliance leaders also enquired about the process of removing the president so that no constitutional crisis is created as a consequence.

Complaint filed with Shahbagh police

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Over a thousand unnamed activists of BCL, AL, and Jubo League were made accused in the case filed on October 21. The complaint lodged yesterday included "150-200" unnamed.

Yesterday's complaint named Saddam Hussain, president of BCL, Sheikh Wali Asif Enan, general secretary of the organisation, Mazharul Kabir Shayan, president of DU unit BCL, and Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, general secretary of the same unit.

On July 15, BCL activists attacked the protesters during the quota reform protests allegedly on the instructions of AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader.

"The complaint will be accepted as a case after scrutiny," said Shahabuddin Shaheen, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

In another development, detectives yesterday detained Khadiza Akter Urmi, president of Dhaka University's Shamsun Nahar Hall unit BCL, and its Surja Sen Hall unit Organising Secretary Moazzem H Rakib Sarker in Dhaka, said Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

On Thursday, police filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station under the Anti-Terrorism Act, accusing 11 BCL leaders.

On October 23, the interim government banned BCL amid demands from the student movement against discrimination.

Kalurghat Bridge reopens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Ctg

The authorities opened Kalurghat Bridge to traffic from 10:00am yesterday after the completion of repair works.

"We have officially opened the bridge to traffic," said Zishan Dutta, bridge engineer of the Bangladesh Railways (BR) eastern zone.

The BR kept the bridge — a major crossing across the Karnaphuli river — closed for traffic since the renovation work started in August last year, at the cost of Tk 43 crore.

The Roads and Highways Department had launched a ferry service next to the bridge for vehicles to cross the river as people from the port city and Chattogram's three southern upazilas — Boalkhali, Rangunia, and Patiya — have no alternative to crossing the river without using the bridge.

According to the RHD, around 22,000–25,000 commuters cross the

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

After being closed for renovation work for over a year, the Kalurghat Bridge over the Karnaphuli river was opened to traffic yesterday. The bridge was renovated at a cost of Tk 43 crore. According to the RHD, around 22,000–25,000 commuters cross the bridge every working day.

LOWER COURT HC questions legality of presidential control

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule questioning the legality of Article 116 of the constitution that gives the powers of control and discipline of the lower court judges to the president.

Article 116 says, "The control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial functions shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court."

In the rule, the HC asked the respondents to explain in four weeks why the provisions of Article 116 of the Constitution and the Bangladesh Judicial Service (Disciplinary) Rules, 2017 should not be declared contradictory to the constitution.

The court also asked the respondents to show causes why they shall not be directed to establish a separate judicial secretariat at Supreme Court premises.

The SC registrar general was ordered to submit a report on the progress of establishing a separate secretariat to the HC in 60 days. Secretary at the ministry of law and SC registrar general have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debashish Roy Chowdhury came up with the rule and order following a petition filed by 10 SC lawyers in this regard.

The law ministry on December 11, 2017 issued a gazette notification on

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GOVT CANAL IN HABIGANJ

In grabbers' clutches



MINTU DESHWARA, Moubibazar

Local influential persons have encroached upon and filled up a government canal in Lakhai upazila of Habiganj to construct different structures including shops and houses.

This in turn prevents the canal from providing adequate drainage, thereby causing waterlogging on the adjacent lands in the area after rains. The local agriculture is also being adversely affected as croplands remain submerged.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent observed that numerous structures have been constructed encroaching on the canal between Bekiteka and Bamoi Tinpool areas along Habiganj-Lakhai regional highway.

Some influential people have also been using the canal land for cultivation and fish farming.

Locals alleged that Awami League leaders, led by Lakhai

upazila AL president and former upazila parishad chairman Mushfiul Alam Azad, allegedly grabbed the canal land.

They alleged that Azad, who is on the run after the fall of the AL government on August 5, held significant influence in the area, and had encroached on a large part of the canal, including filling up a portion to enable vehicles enter his house there.

Contacted, Azad's younger brother Saiful Islam Sumon claimed that Azad had sold the property.

Besides, Bulla union parishad chairman and local AL leader Khokon Chandra Gop, a close associate of Azad, allegedly built a market on the grabbed land, while some other local AL men set up mills.

Contacted, Khokon claimed he set up market on his ancestral land.

Another local AL leader built a market and bus stand on the western side of Bulla

Bazar by grabbing the canal, while two local BNP men and their relatives have shops in Bamai Bazar area along the canal, alleged locals.

"There are several markets built grabbing the canal's land. There are also numerous houses, depots and other businesses. Also, all garbage produced in the locality is being discarded in the canal. All these led to the canal being filled up and causing waterlogging," said Salim Ahmed, a local trader.

Azad Hossain Faruk, chairman of Bamoi UP, said, "Since there is no political influence in the area at present, it is high time to take steps to save the canal." Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit, echoed him.

Contacted, Nahida Sultana, upazila nirbahi officer of Lakhai, said measures will be taken to reclaim the government canal.

Polybag ban to be imposed from Nov 1

Says Rizwana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Climate Change, has announced strict monitoring to end the use of polythene shopping bags from November 1.

She threatened legal action against supermarkets that use polythene shopping bags and warned of potential actions against the manufacturers of this banned product.

Rizwana made the announcement while attending a special meeting as chief guest held at the Ministry of Textiles and Jute in the Secretariat yesterday.

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JULY UPRISING

32 injured get Tk 1 lakh each

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Thirty-two individuals injured during the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and currently receiving treatment at the Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) in Savar have been provided with financial assistance of Tk 1 lakh each.

This financial assistance was provided by the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation yesterday evening.

On this occasion, Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdha, executive officer of the Foundation, Nahida Bushra Iy, convener of the Health Affairs Sub-Committee of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, and Mohammad Sohrab Hossain, executive director of the Savar CRP, were present.

Snigdha said the Foundation has committed to providing a maximum of Tk 1 lakh to each injured individual and Tk 5 lakh to the families of the martyrs. "I came to the CRP to fulfill this promise," he added.

A total of Tk 32 lakh has been distributed, with 27 people receiving funds via bKash and 5 through cheques, he said.

In response to a question from journalists about whether the Foundation has taken or will take any initiatives for those injured and currently at home, he replied, "We have a form that needs to be filled out properly. If other injured individuals contact us using the hotline number and website, we will take the necessary action."

"This one-time financial assistance is not the end; we will take all necessary steps to rehabilitate the injured," he added.

Kundubari Fair shortened to 3 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

This year, the over 200-year-old traditional Kundubari Fair in Kalkini upazila of Madaripur will be held for three days, instead of seven days.

The district administration has opted to shorten the fair's duration following demands from a group of locals who cited concerns over various "anti-social activities" occurring during the event.

The decision was taken yesterday. The fair is scheduled to commence on October 30 in Bhurghata village, coinciding with the Kali Puja festivities. The fair, named after the Kundu clan, is organised on the premises of Kundubari temple.


"We have given permission for a three-day fair following an application from the Kundu family," said Md Nazmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of Madaripur.

"In previous years, outsiders used to arrange the fair by taking lease from local upazila administration. But this year, the Kundu family will arrange the fair," he said.

"As they do not have the experience to organise the fair, they have sought permission for a three-day fair. Subsequently, we have given the permission," he added.

"We will provide all necessary security for holding the fair and the puja peacefully," he added.

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JAMUNA OIL COMPANY LIMITED
(A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
Jamuna Bhaban, Agrabad, Chattogram.

e-Tender Notice No-05/2024-25

Memo No : 28.24.0000.653.18.02.24 Date : 23.10.2024

This is notify to all concerned that the following tender has been published through e-GP Portal.

Sl.	Tender ID, Reference No. & Date of Publishing	Name Of Goods	Tender Document Last selling, Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
01.	Tender ID: 1023180 Reference No: AGMP/E-GP-02/24-25 Publishing Date :23-10-2024	Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Testing of Dedicated data connectivity and Broadband Internet connection for different depots/offices of JOCL for using Web Based Application software at JOCL. (on quarterly rental basis for five years)	13. 11. 2024 16.00 hrs	14.11.2024 15.00 hrs	14.11.2024 15.00 hrs

The interested bidders may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd for further details.

(Mohammed Helal Uddin)
DGM (Operations)

GD- 807

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Cumilla Road Division, Cumilla.

Phone: 081-64725

e-mail: ecom@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.1933.410.07.001.24-6733

Date: 27/10/2024

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal in Bangladesh (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following work mentioned in the table below:-

SL No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of Works	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
01	1027796, e-GP/CRD/ADP/ 4 Nos District Highway/WD-03	Construction of 38 nos (92.00 m) RCC Box Culvert with other ancillary works for Road Pavement into appropriate standard & width from ch. 0+000 k.m to ch. 35+000 k.m of Cumilla (Balutupa)-Koneshtola-Suagazi-Bijoypur-Adinamura-Amratoli (Z-1024) Road under Road Division Cumilla, during the year 2022-2023 (for WD-03 of the DPP).	12-Nov-2024 16:00	13-Nov-2024 12:00	13-Nov-2024 12:00

(Sunjiti Chakma)
ID No. 602147

Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Cumilla.
☎: 01730-782641

GD- 806

PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 28



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-50 12-45 4-00 5-32 7-15

JAMAAT 5-25 1-15 4-15 5-35 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

GD- 807

West Zone Power Distribution Co. Ltd.

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Dev. Board)

Office of the Executive Director (Operation)

Bidyut Bhaban, 35, Boyra Main Road, Khulna

Ph: 024477-726657, Fax: 02477-730484

Memo No. 27.22.4785.010.74.004.24/2742

Date: 24.10.2024

e-Tender Notice (NCT)

e-Tender for the office of the Chief Engineer (O&M) invites in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl	Tender ID	Name of tender	Last selling and closing date & time
1	1026557	Supply of Manpower for the Position of 100 Nos. CA (Complain attendant) in WZPDCL area for two year.	27-Nov-2024 14:00 BST 27-Nov-2024 16:00 BST

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank.

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

(Engr. Md. Abdul Moiz)

Engr. Md. Abdul Moiz
Chief Engineer (O&M), WZPDCL, Khulna

GD-801

Polybag ban

FROM PAGE 5

The meeting also discussed the implementation of the 2010 Mandatory Jute Packaging Act and encouraged the public to use jute bags as an alternative to plastic.

Public awareness is crucial, said Rizwana, adding that production will stop if people stop using plastic bags.

Initiatives will be taken to help people understand the harmful impacts of plastic bags so that they voluntarily avoid their use, she said.

Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain, adviser to the Ministry of Textiles and Jute, assured of necessary steps to ensure an adequate supply of jute bags.

Exports of raw jute will be halted if necessary, he added.

Md Abdur Rauf, secretary of the Ministry of Textiles and Jute, and Zeenat Ara, director general of jute department, alongside representatives from various business associations, attended the meeting.

HC questions

FROM PAGE 5

the disciplinary rules of the lower court judges keeping the president's authority to control the judges.

Article 116 of the original charter of 1972 had empowered the SC to decide on the posting, promotion and leave of lower court judges.

The top court had also control over the magistrates' exercise of judicial powers and could discipline the judicial service staffs when necessary.

Bangladesh unaware

FROM PAGE 3

relations with different parties, said Debapriya, also a distinguished fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Mentioning that the government-provided data doesn't reflect the real picture of the country, he said the government didn't allocate money to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics for conducting surveys.

"They need to depend either on foreign funds or a new project," he added.

In the keynote paper, Towfiqul Islam Khan, senior research fellow of CPD, said NGOs can help the interim government to undertake an objective assessment of the country's "state of development" and to highlight the achievements, challenges, and the next course of action.

Priority needs to be given to the collective roles of non-state actors, he said.

Bangladesh committed to submitting its third report incorporating five goals review -- health, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, life below water, and partnership for all the other goals, he said.

Speaking as chief guest, Lamiya Morshed, principal coordinator (SDGs Affairs) of the Chief Adviser's Office, regretted that the country's institutions, data ecosystem, and statistical capacity have been significantly weakened in recent years and do not capture the ground realities.

"The interim government is committed to starting a fresh path to

fixing and strengthening institutions and building statistical capacity and integrity. The focus will be on creating methods to collect data from more real-time innovative sources," she said.

"For reducing poverty and inequality, social protection measures and financial inclusion are important, alongside raising income levels and access to basic services," she added.

CPD Executive Director Prof Mustafizur Rahman said the role of international partners should be evaluated in the upcoming event.

"They were supposed to assist Bangladesh to achieve its goals, but they didn't do it, neither in business, investment, nor in finance," he said.

Gwyn Lewis, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh, said, "It's true that the globe is not making as much progress as they would like to be."

But it's time for Bangladesh to prioritise different aspects by using data from both the government and NGOs on marginal communities, indigenous communities, gender, environment, youths, and so on, she said.

Executive Director of Campaign for Popular Education Rasheda K Choudhury, adviser of BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health Ahmed Mushtaque Raza Chowdhury, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam, Global Vice President and Country Director of Hunger Project Badrul Alam Majumdar, and Executive Director of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association Salma Ali also spoke, among others.

Provide info on false

FROM PAGE 3

personal information about the journalists or recommendations from their editor.

Additionally, the release said verification or proof of the journalists' association with the media should be attached.

It also clarified that the term "journalist" refers to media workers as defined under Section 2(g) of the Press Council Act, 1974.

For audio-visual and digital/online media, definitions provided in relevant laws or regulations (if available) will apply;

Kundubari Fair

FROM PAGE 5

On October 16, about a dozen locals submitted a written demand to the Kalkini upazila nirbahi officer, urging the cancellation of the fair.

On October 22, the Kalkini upazila administration decided to stop the fair to prevent any potential violence or

otherwise, the definitions in the Press Council Act, 1974 will be used.

Furthermore, information on cases involving journalists' liabilities outside their professional duties should not be submitted, said the release.

On October 7, the government formed the committee, led by Mohammad Altaf-Ul-Alam, additional secretary (Broadcast) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to monitor harassment cases against journalists.

undesirable incidents, as confirmed by UNO Utthom Kumar Das. However, the UNO told The Daily Star that he was not aware about political affiliations of the people, who demanded cancellation of the fair.

The announcement of cancelling the fair sparked significant backlash on social media.

114 deaths and rising

FROM PAGE 3

the high prevalence of Dengue virus strain, multiple infections, and diagnostic errors.

Entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury warned that cases may peak in November but will not drop significantly afterward, suggesting dengue infections could continue until February.

GM Saifur Rahman, an entomologist from National University, criticised the lack of effective action by the Dhaka city corporations in identifying and eliminating Aedes mosquito clusters, pointing to insufficient surveillance in district towns as a key factor in the outbreak.

He recommended that the government implement robust surveillance to identify hotspots, enabling coordinated intervention by local authorities, community groups, and schools.

Dr Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), advised that anyone with a fever should consult a doctor

immediately and stay hydrated with fluids like coconut water, saline, and fruit juices.

She also stressed keeping surroundings clean by removing stagnant water, which prevents mosquito breeding.

Dr HM Nazmul Hsain, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital highlighted that high-risk groups -- elderly individuals, pregnant women, infants, obese individuals, and those with comorbidities -- are more vulnerable to severe outcomes.

He emphasised immediate hospitalisation for symptoms like severe stomach pain, breathing difficulties, extreme weakness, gum or nose bleeding, and vomiting, warning that failure to hospitalise at this stage could lead to shock syndrome.

Dr Ahsan recommended consulting a doctor at the onset of fever and getting a Complete Blood Count (CBC) test on the third or fourth day, even if the initial NSI dengue test is negative.

Cops asked to submit

FROM PAGE 3

commissioner Habibur Rahman and former DMP joint commissioner Biplob Kumar Sarkar are among the accused of the case.

On August 15, Rajon's brother Md Rajib filed the case against Hasina and others with the Court of Magistrate Ahmed Humayun Kabir.

According to the case details, Rajon, a 12th grade student of Dhaka Degree College, was shot in the chest near Mirpur-10 intersection during a crackdown on

the protests. He died at Dr Azmal Hospital later.

The complaint asserted that the accused were directly involved in or facilitated the violence that led to Rajon's death and injuries to other students.

Hasina is now facing 225 cases, including 194 for murders, 16 for crimes against humanity and genocide, three for abduction, 11 for attempted murder and one for attack on a BNP procession.

Hasina resigned and fled the country in the face of a mass uprising on August 5.

Let court, people

FROM PAGE 3

Jamaat Ameer Shafiqur Rahman, speaking as the chief guest, said, "The Awami League government did not dare to deliver justice. Instead, they sought to maintain power by killing people. We want justice through the legal system, not retribution. The oppression inflicted upon us should not be repeated against them, and they should receive justice fairly and impartially."

He also said Jamaat will provide legal support to the families of those killed in the anti-fascist movement.

He said the "martyrs of the July revolution" are national heroes, whose sacrifices should be formally recognised by the state. He demanded the state to include their contributions in the national curriculum, from October 28, 2006, to the August 5 revolution.

The organisation's Naye-e-Ameer, Syed Abdullah Mohammad

Taher demanded that those responsible for the "genocide" be brought back to the country to ensure justice.

He said it is not enough to hold only the individuals accountable; rather, the AL as a party and its affiliated organisations must be banned immediately.

Members of families of martyrs also spoke at the beginning of the programme.

Kalurghat

FROM PAGE 5

bridge every working day. Constructed as a metre-gauge single-line rail bridge in 1931, the Kalurghat Bridge was later reconfigured in 1962 to allow vehicular movement too.

However, BR has long been working to replace the Kalurghat Bridge.

Ecnc recently approved a project for constructing a new Kalurghat Bridge.

Muggers rule Mohammadpur

FROM PAGE 3

In September, 17 murder and one snatching cases were filed.

According to sources, muggings and robberies are taking place in Mohammadpur almost every day, while the majority of them go unnoticed. Also, many victims do not want to go to the police, as they do not get any remedy even after complaining.

During a visit to Mohammadpur yesterday, this correspondent spoke to around two dozens of residents in different areas, including Geneva Camp, Nurjahan Road, Babar Road, and Beribadh.

Many said the situation remains unchanged due to limited law enforcement patrols after 10:00pm.

Iftekhhar Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur Police Station, said, "Since August 5, we have faced manpower and vehicle shortages, affecting our patrol duty. However, the situation is

gradually improving, and we are hopeful for further progress as we are getting manpower and vehicles soon."

Alongside mugging, the number of theft incidents also increased, said Md Firoz, a stationary shopkeeper on Tajmahal Road.

"Drug addicts and local youths are behind them. They are taking away manhole covers, shop signboards, cell phones, and even clothes from balconies," he said.

On Saturday, residents, including students, held a demonstration in front of Mohammadpur Police Station, demanding enhanced security.

Following the protest, a joint operation was carried out in Mohammadpur, resulting in 45 arrests.

According to an Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) press release, a coordinated operation involving the 46 Independent Brigade of the Army, Rab, and local police

was launched around 10:00pm on Saturday.

This led to the arrest of 45 suspects and the seizure of nine sharp weapons. "The joint operation was planned to restore security for Mohammadpur residents," the release stated.

The ISPR release said, "Since the acquisition of magistracy power, 152 criminals, 18 firearms, 271 rounds of ammunition, 172 types of local and foreign weapons, one grenade, and a lot of drugs were recovered from Mohammadpur, Adabar, and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police stations."

The ISPR statement emphasised that the army will maintain a firm stance to improve local safety.

Regarding the arrests, OC Iftekhhar said all the arrestees were shown arrested in previously filed cases. "These arrestees, in groups of four to five, used to roam different areas of Mohammadpur and mug people," he added.

EASTERN REFINERY LIMITED
(A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
North Patenga, Chittagong
www.erl.com.bd

Ref: ER/LP/LT/e-GP: 26,27,28,29/2024 Date: 27/10/2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders have been invited in the National e-GP System Portal for procurement of the goods as stated below:

Sl #	Tender Reference	Tender ID	Description of goods & related service	Tender doc last selling date & time	Tender closing opening date & time
1	ER/LT/e-GP-26/2024	1027276	Supply Installation Testing & Commissioning of Expansion of CCTV surveillance system for entire ERL area.	10-11-2024 16:00 hrs	11-11-2024 12:30 hrs
2	ER/LT/e-GP-27/2024	1027305	Supply, Installation, & Commissioning of Digital Photo Copier With Printer, Toner, Scanner & Other Accessories.	10-11-2024 16:00 hrs	11-11-2024 12:30 hrs
3	ER/LT/e-GP-28/2024	1027307	Supply of Automatic Penetrometer with all Ancillaries	11-11-2024 16:00 hrs	12-11-2024 12:30 hrs
4	ER/LT/e-GP-29/2024	1027321	Supply of Armored Telephone Cable	11-11-2024 16:00 hrs	12-11-2024 12:30 hrs

Procuring entity details: **Md. Tariq Hossain**, Manager (Purchase), Phone: 880-02 3333 01261-70 (382) Email: manager@erl.com.bd

These are online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted through National e-GP Portal <https://www.eprocure.gov.bd> and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in 9th National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd

Agrani Bank PLC.
Establishment & Engineering Division
Head Office, 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Bank and Financial Institutions Division																				
2	Agency	Agrani Bank PLC., 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka																				
3	Procuring entity name	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000																				
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka																				
5	Invitation for	Supply & Installation of 08 (Eight) Air Coolers for Agrani Bank PLC., Nawabpur Road Corporate Branch, Dhaka; Zonal Office, Gazipur; Bashundhara R/A Branch, Dhaka and Kamalapati Branch, Feni																				
6	Invitation Ref No.	E&E/Engg/Mecha-354/2024																				
7	Date	Date: 21/10/2024																				
KEY INFORMATION																						
8	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).																				
9	Budget and source of funds	Own fund of Agrani Bank PLC.																				
10	Tender publication date	21/10/2024																				
11	Tender last selling date	10/11/2024																				
12	Tender receiving date and time	11/11/2024 at 10:00am to 3:00pm																				
13	Tender closing date and time	11/11/2024 at 3:00pm																				
13	Tender opening date and time	11/11/2024 at 3:15pm in presence of Tenderers or their representatives (if any present)																				
14	Name & address of the office(s)																					
	Sending tender document	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.																				
	Receiving tender document	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.																				
	Opening tender document	DGM's Chamber, Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.																				
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER																						
15	Eligibility of tenderer	Supplier who have minimum 03 (three) years of general experience of similar nature of works. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT. Having experience in successfully completion of Air Cooler with a value of at least 5.00 lac. in a single Tender during last 03 (three) years (The year counting backward from the date of Invitation of this Tender (IFT)). The tenderer must process attested copy of: i) Up-to-date valid trade license, ii) Up-to-date income tax certificate, iii) Valid VAT registration certificate, iv) e-TIN certificate, v) In case of Limited Company, the certificate of Incorporation, Memorandum of Association, Article of Association & Power of attorney. vi) Having minimum amount of liquid assets or working capital or credit facilities shall be Tk. 7.00 lac. Letter of commitment for Bank's undertaking for line of Credit is issued from the concerned Bank in between publication date and submission date of STD. The tenderer must submit attested copy of: i) International Standard Compliance (CE/UL/ISO/Any other) ii) Catalogue/ Brochure must be submitted with Tender. iii) Necessary document of Distributor/ Authorized Dealer/ Importer of Mentioned Brand All other reputed qualification, terms and conditions of the tenderer are shown in the tender data sheet (TDS) of Tender documents and all experience certificates will be submitted as per format. Necessary supporting Documents to be submitted as per requirement of ITT Clauses and technical specification of the tender.																				
16	Completion time	04 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.																				
17	Brief description of goods	Any brand manufactured or assembled in Bangladesh/China/ Turkey/ Vietnam or equivalent to these countries accepted/ approved by the bank authority in accordance with fulfillment of the given specifications and having relevant certificates as mentioned & as per detailed specifications & standard as mentioned in STD.																				
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Sl. No.</th> <th>Capacity</th> <th>Type</th> <th>Quantity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>01</td> <td>12,000 BTU/Hr (1.00 Ton)</td> <td>Split</td> <td>01</td> </tr> <tr> <td>02</td> <td>17,000-18,000 BTU/Hr (1.50 Ton)</td> <td>Split</td> <td>02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>03</td> <td>22,500-24,000 BTU/Hr (2.00 Ton)</td> <td>Split</td> <td>02</td> </tr> <tr> <td>04</td> <td>34,000-36,000 BTU/Hr (3.00 Ton)</td> <td>Ceiling</td> <td>03</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sl. No.	Capacity	Type	Quantity	01	12,000 BTU/Hr (1.00 Ton)	Split	01	02	17,000-18,000 BTU/Hr (1.50 Ton)	Split	02	03	22,500-24,000 BTU/Hr (2.00 Ton)	Split	02	04	34,000-36,000 BTU/Hr (3.00 Ton)	Ceiling	03
Sl. No.	Capacity	Type	Quantity																			
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03	22,500-24,000 BTU/Hr (2.00 Ton)	Split	02																			
04	34,000-36,000 BTU/Hr (3.00 Ton)	Ceiling	03																			
18	Brief description of related services	As described in Tender document.																				
19	Tender document price	Tk. 1000.00 (Taka one thousand) only per set (non-refundable) by Pay Order/ Bank Draft from any schedule bank of Bangladesh in favor of Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office, Dhaka.																				
20	Tender security money (Tk)	The amount of the Tender Security will be 22,000/- (twenty-two thousand Taka only) in the form of Pay Order/ Bank Draft (refundable) from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office, Dhaka.																				
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS																						
20	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Abdur Rahman																				
21	Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy General Manager																				
22	Address of official inviting tender	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.																				
23	Contact details of official inviting tender	Deputy General Manager, Establishment & Engineering Division, Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. Tel: 02-223381674; e-mail: dgmeeed@agrani.com.bd																				
24	a. If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the schedule date & time for any unavoidable circumstances the same will be received/open on the next working date at the same time & same venue. b. All submitted documents must be signed by the tenderer in every page of tender all original/ photocopy must be attested as per prevailing Laws & Rules. c. If the tenderer submits any false/ incorrect or forged certificate, action may be taken as per PPA-2006 and PPR-2008 and its amendments. d. This tender shall be governed by the PPR 2008 and its amendments. e. The procuring entity reserves the right to modify any information of the tender. It also reserves right to reject all Tenders prior to acceptance without assigning any reason. Agrani Bank PLC. shall not be under any obligation to accept the lowest tender.																					

MD-802

Md. Abdur Rahman
Deputy General Manager

OFFICE SPACE RENT AT GULSHAN-1

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EMAIL: zakir.baraka@outlook.com ; hossain.anowar.m@gmail.com

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

ধানমন্ডি ৭/এ, ২২০০ বর্গফুটের নতুন ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় হার।

বিস্তারিত: ০১৯৯৫-৭৯০৪৯৯

Career Opportunity

"A leading multinational company is actively searching for an accomplished professional to step into the role of "Compliance Manager". The incumbent will be required to collaborate closely with the process oriented teams of the organization and especially with the Legal and Compliance teams. Being the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the organization, the incumbent will be responsible for enforcing regulations in all aspects and levels of business as well as provide guidance on compliance matters. The person will also be responsible to ensure the highest level of integrity in the way business is conducted, deliver value to business through quality assurance reviews, guidance, compliance process efficiencies, and data/information transparency. In addition to these the person will be preparing and delivering reports/dashboards to senior management on Quality Assurance Testing results, progress of corrective actions, and trends. The ideal candidate should hold a Graduate / post graduate degree in Law, Finance, Business Administration or related field from a reputable institution and possess a minimum of 3 years of experience as a compliance manager, preferably within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector of a multinational corporation. Furthermore, the incumbent must demonstrate strategic thinking skills, ideally through having worked in an environment with a compliance program managing compliance controls. Interested and qualified candidates are invited to submit their resumes, along with a cover letter and a passport-sized photograph, to the following address: GPO Box - 2999, Dhaka, Bangladesh, before the application deadline on November 10, 2024."

DESCO
POWER IS YOURS
ISO 9001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified

Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd. (DESCO)
22/B, Kobi Farukh Sarani, Nikunja-2, Khilkhet, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh
Tel. No: +88 02 8900110-11, 8900820-23, Fax No: +88 02 8900100
Email: pit@desco.gov.bd, Web: www.desco.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are being invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following packages as the detailed e-Tender Notices have been published therein:

Tender ID	Tender Name	Tender Document Last Selling/Downloading Date and Time	Closing Date and Time	Opening Date and Time
1022560	Construction of Bank Booth, Complain Center and Local Store at Shohalati 33/11 kV Substation for Turag S&D Division	05 November 2024 15:30	06 November 2024 15:30	06 November 2024 15:30
1024006	Construction of Cable Trench inside the Brac University New Campus, Badda	03 November 2024 16:00	04 November 2024 16:00	04 November 2024 16:00

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branch.

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

Interested Tenderers can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

22 October 2024
Memo No: 27.24.0000.021.07.037.24.1345

Engr. Mohammad Kamruzzaman
Superintending Engineer (P&T)

Kalurghat Bridge reopens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Ctg

The authorities opened Kalurghat Bridge to traffic from 10:00am yesterday after the completion of repair works.

"We have officially opened the bridge to traffic," said Zishan Dutta, bridge engineer of the Bangladesh Railways (BR) eastern zone.

The BR kept the bridge — a major crossing across the Karnaphuli river — closed for traffic since the renovation work started in August last year, at the cost of Tk 43 crore.

The Roads and Highways Department had launched a ferry service next to the bridge for vehicles to cross the river as people from the port city and Chattogram's three southern upazilas — Boalkhali, Rangunia, and Patiya — have no alternative to crossing the river without using the bridge.

According to the RHD, around 22,000–25,000 commuters cross the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



PHOTO: COLLECTED

After being closed for renovation work for over a year, the Kalurghat Bridge over the Karnaphuli river was opened to traffic yesterday. The bridge was renovated at a cost of Tk 43 crore. According to the RHD, around 22,000–25,000 commuters cross the bridge every working day.

LOWER COURT HC questions legality of presidential control

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule questioning the legality of Article 116 of the constitution that gives the powers of control and discipline of the lower court judges to the president.

Article 116 says, "The control (including the power of posting, promotion and grant of leave) and discipline of persons employed in the judicial service and magistrates exercising judicial functions shall vest in the President and shall be exercised by him in consultation with the Supreme Court."

In the rule, the HC asked the respondents to explain in four weeks why the provisions of Article 116 of the Constitution and the Bangladesh Judicial Service (Disciplinary) Rules, 2017 should not be declared contradictory to the constitution.

The court also asked the respondents to show causes why they shall not be directed to establish a separate judicial secretariat at Supreme Court premises.

The SC registrar general was ordered to submit a report on the progress of establishing a separate secretariat to the HC in 60 days. Secretary at the ministry of law and SC registrar general have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debashish Roy Chowdhury came up with the rule and order following a petition filed by 10 SC lawyers in this regard.

The law ministry on December 11, 2017 issued a gazette notification on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

GOVT CANAL IN HABIGANJ

In grabbers' clutches



MINTU DESHWARA, Moubibazar

Local influential persons have encroached upon and filled up a government canal in Lakhai upazila of Habiganj to construct different structures including shops and houses.

This in turn prevents the canal from providing adequate drainage, thereby causing waterlogging on the adjacent lands in the area after rains. The local agriculture is also being adversely affected as croplands remain submerged.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent observed that numerous structures have been constructed encroaching on the canal between Bekiteka and Bamoi Tinpool areas along Habiganj-Lakhai regional highway.

Some influential people have also been using the canal land for cultivation and fish farming.

Locals alleged that Awami League leaders, led by Lakhai

upazila AL president and former upazila parishad chairman Mushfiul Alam Azad, allegedly grabbed the canal land.

They alleged that Azad, who is on the run after the fall of the AL government on August 5, held significant influence in the area, and had encroached on a large part of the canal, including filling up a portion to enable vehicles enter his house there.

Contacted, Azad's younger brother Saiful Islam Sumon claimed that Azad had sold the property.

Besides, Bulla union parishad chairman and local AL leader Khokon Chandra Gop, a close associate of Azad, allegedly built a market on the grabbed land, while some other local AL men set up mills.

Contacted, Khokon claimed he set up market on his ancestral land.

Another local AL leader built a market and bus stand on the western side of Bulla

Bazar by grabbing the canal, while two local BNP men and their relatives have shops in Bamai Bazar area along the canal, alleged locals.

"There are several markets built grabbing the canal's land. There are also numerous houses, depots and other businesses. Also, all garbage produced in the locality is being discarded in the canal. All these led to the canal being filled up and causing waterlogging," said Salim Ahmed, a local trader.

Azad Hossain Faruk, chairman of Bamoi UP, said, "Since there is no political influence in the area at present, it is high time to take steps to save the canal." Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit, echoed him.

Contacted, Nahida Sultana, upazila nirbahi officer of Lakhai, said measures will be taken to reclaim the government canal.

Polybag ban to be imposed from Nov 1

Says Rizwana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Climate Change, has announced strict monitoring to end the use of polythene shopping bags from November 1.

She threatened legal action against supermarkets that use polythene shopping bags and warned of potential actions against the manufacturers of this banned product.

Rizwana made the announcement while attending a special meeting as chief guest held at the Ministry of Textiles and Jute in the Secretariat yesterday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

JULY UPRISING

32 injured get Tk 1 lakh each

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Thirty-two individuals injured during the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and currently receiving treatment at the Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) in Savar have been provided with financial assistance of Tk 1 lakh each.

This financial assistance was provided by the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation yesterday evening.

On this occasion, Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdha, executive officer of the Foundation, Nahida Bushra Iy, convener of the Health Affairs Sub-Committee of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, and Mohammad Sohrab Hossain, executive director of the Savar CRP, were present.

Snigdha said the Foundation has committed to providing a maximum of Tk 1 lakh to each injured individual and Tk 5 lakh to the families of the martyrs. "I came to the CRP to fulfill this promise," he added.

A total of Tk 32 lakh has been distributed, with 27 people receiving funds via bKash and 5 through cheques, he said.

In response to a question from journalists about whether the Foundation has taken or will take any initiatives for those injured and currently at home, he replied, "We have a form that needs to be filled out properly. If other injured individuals contact us using the hotline number and website, we will take the necessary action."

"This one-time financial assistance is not the end; we will take all necessary steps to rehabilitate the injured," he added.

Kundubari Fair shortened to 3 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Shariatpur

This year, the over 200-year-old traditional Kundubari Fair in Kalkini upazila of Madaripur will be held for three days, instead of seven days.

The district administration has opted to shorten the fair's duration following demands from a group of locals who cited concerns over various "anti-social activities" occurring during the event.

The decision was taken yesterday. The fair is scheduled to commence on October 30 in Bhurghata village, coinciding with the Kali Puja festivities. The fair, named after the Kundu clan, is organised on the premises of Kundubari temple.


"We have given permission for a three-day fair following an application from the Kundu family," said Md Nazmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of Madaripur.

"In previous years, outsiders used to arrange the fair by taking lease from local upazila administration. But this year, the Kundu family will arrange the fair," he said.

"As they do not have the experience to organise the fair, they have sought permission for a three-day fair. Subsequently, we have given the permission," he added.

"We will provide all necessary security for holding the fair and the puja peacefully," he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



JAMUNA OIL COMPANY LIMITED
(A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
Jamuna Bhaban, Agrabad, Chattogram.

e-Tender Notice No-05/2024-25

Memo No : 28.24.0000.653.18.02.24 Date : 23.10.2024

This is notify to all concerned that the following tender has been published through e-GP Portal.

Sl.	Tender ID, Reference No. & Date of Publishing	Name Of Goods	Tender Document Last selling, Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
01.	Tender ID: 1023180 Reference No: AGMP/E-GP-02/24-25 Publishing Date :23-10-2024	Supply, Installation, Commissioning and Testing of Dedicated data connectivity and Broadband Internet connection for different depots/offices of JOCL for using Web Based Application software at JOCL. (on quarterly rental basis for five years)	13. 11. 2024 16.00 hrs	14.11.2024 15.00 hrs	14.11.2024 15.00 hrs

The interested bidders may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd for further details.

(Mohammed Helal Uddin)
DGM (Operations)

GD- 807


Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Cumilla Road Division, Cumilla.
Phone: 081-64725
e-mail: ecom@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.1933.410.07.001.24-6733 Date: 27/10/2024

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal in Bangladesh (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following work mentioned in the table below:-


SL No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of Works	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Closing Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
01	1027796, e-GP/CRD/ADP/ 4 Nos District Highway/WD-03	Construction of 38 nos (92.00 m) RCC Box Culvert with other ancillary works for Road Pavement into appropriate standard & width from ch. 0+000 k.m to ch. 35+000 k.m of Cumilla (Balutupa)-Koneshtola-Suagazi-Bijoypur-Adinamura-Amratoli (Z-1024) Road under Road Division Cumilla, during the year 2022-2023 (for WD-03 of the DPP).	12-Nov-2024 16:00	13-Nov-2024 12:00	13-Nov-2024 12:00



(Sunjiti Chakma)
ID No. 602147
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Cumilla.
☎: 01730-782641


GD- 806

PRAYER TIMING
OCTOBER 28



Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-50	12-45	4-00	5-32	7-15
JAMAAT 5-25	1-15	4-15	5-35	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



West Zone Power Distribution Co. Ltd.
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Dev. Board)
Office of the Executive Director (Operation)
Bidyut Bhaban, 35, Boyra Main Road, Khulna
Ph: 024477-726657, Fax: 02477-730484

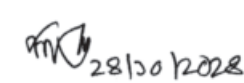
Memo No. 27.22.4785.010.74.004.24/2742 Date: 24.10.2024

e-Tender Notice (NCT)

e-Tender for the office of the Chief Engineer (O&M) invites in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

Sl	Tender ID	Name of tender	Last selling and closing date & time
1	1026557	Supply of Manpower for the Position of 100 Nos. CA (Complain attendant) in WZPDCL area for two year.	27-Nov-2024 14:00 BST 27-Nov-2024 16:00 BST

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration required in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).
The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



Engr. Md. Abdul Moiz
Chief Engineer (O&M), WZPDCL, Khulna

GD-801

Shilpakala Academy's catalytic role against polarisation and extremism

MAHIYA TABASSUM

In the complex dynamics of Bangladesh's sociopolitical landscape, the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) stands as a cultural cornerstone, wielding the soft power of the arts against the hard edges of political polarisation and religious extremism. Established in 1974, shortly after the country's independence, BSA has evolved from a fledgling institution into a robust national academy of fine and performing arts. However, its journey, much like Bangladesh's own, has been marked by periods of turmoil and renaissance.

The past two decades have seen a significant expansion of BSA's activities. In 2009, BSA's cultural initiatives received renewed focus. The academy's budget saw a tenfold increase over 15 years, reaching over Tk 100 crore annually by 2024. Despite corruption and lack of proper implementation, this financial incentive enabled BSA to extend its reach, establishing 486 Upazila Shilpakala Academies across the country—a move that democratised access to cultural resources.

BSA's initiatives in theatre, music, and visual arts have proven to be effective tools for bridging divides in Bangladesh's politically charged environment. The nationwide theatre programme has been particularly impactful. In 2022 alone, the academy sponsored 120 plays across various districts, with a budget of Tk 84 lakh. Critical analysis suggests that while government-centric productions risk alienating opposition supporters, the power of storytelling through universal themes allows BSA to humanise political opponents and foster empathy, countering the dehumanising rhetoric often employed in partisan politics.

BSA's music programmes serve a unifying function by celebrating

Bangladesh's rich musical heritage. The academy regularly organises festivals that showcase both folk and classical traditions, attracting thousands of attendees from diverse backgrounds.

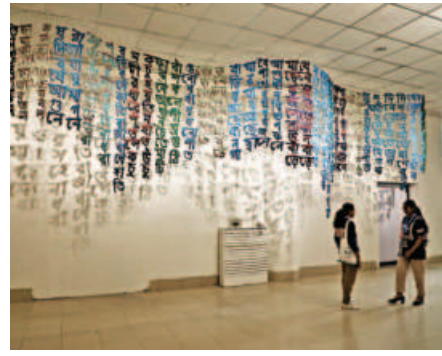
In the realm of visual arts, BSA's crowning achievement is the Asian Art Biennale. The 19th edition in 2022 featured 649 artworks by 493 artists from 114 countries, making it one of the largest art exhibitions in Asia. The biennale's themes are selected every year with an aim to encourage artists to explore complex social and political issues through their work.

As Bangladesh grapples with rising challenges to its secular fabric, BSA's role

the ruling party has sometimes led to accusations of politicisation. The recent transition in leadership following the July mass uprising brought the longstanding issues to the forefront. Liaquat Ali Lucky, who served as director general for 13 years, stepped down on August 12 this year, amid allegations of corruption and mismanagement. A recent report revealed discrepancies in accounts of over Tk 227 crore between 2016 and 2021, raising concerns about resource utilisation and transparency.

Following the resignation of Lucky, the appointment of Syed Jamil Ahmed as the new director general on September 9, marks a pivotal moment for BSA. Ahmed,

ideological framework. His commitment to championing diversity across languages, ethnicities, religions, and



schools of thought aims to create a more democratic and dialogical space for art.

To enhance its impact, BSA must address several key challenges. The urban-rural divide in programme quality and frequency limits the academy's ability to counter extremism in vulnerable rural communities. While BSA conducts research, its impact on policymaking remains limited. The academy must balance preserving traditional art forms while encouraging innovation and addressing contemporary issues.

Moving forward, BSA should focus on ensuring political neutrality through structural changes, improving financial transparency through regular external audits, and bridging the urban-rural divide through targeted programmes and digital initiatives.

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy stands at a critical juncture in its history. As Bangladesh navigates the complex terrain of the post-August 5 political landscape, BSA's ability to adapt and respond to changing social dynamics will be crucial. Under new leadership, the academy has the opportunity to transform into a more dynamic and inclusive institution, one that not only preserves culture but actively shapes a national identity embracing both tradition and diversity. By embracing reform, enhancing transparency, and balancing tradition with innovation, BSA can strengthen its role as a cultural bulwark against polarisation and extremism.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

in promoting and preserving cultural heritage has taken on new significance. The academy's focus on folk traditions offers a powerful counternarrative to extremist ideologies that seek to impose a monolithic worldview. Previously, BSA has undertaken several initiatives to document and revive endangered folk-art forms.

While BSA's contributions are significant, the academy faces several challenges that limit its effectiveness. The close alignment of BSA's leadership with

a renowned scholar and founding chair of the Department of Theatre and Music at the University of Dhaka, brings fresh perspective to the institution. In his first press briefing, he advocated for allocating three percent of the national GDP to the cultural sector and outlined plans for comprehensive reform. His vision emphasises transparency, with commitments to make expenditure breakdowns publicly available on BSA's website.

Ahmed's appointment signals a significant shift in BSA's approach, with his declaration that the academy will reject any singular national, state, or

Dhaka Intl Folk Festival unveils this year's venue and dates



The Dhaka International Folk Festival is all set to return to music lovers with renewed zest and excitement, after a four-year break.

Asifuzzaman Khan, the finance director of the organising company, Sun Communications Limited, has confirmed to local media that the sixth edition of Dhaka International Folk Fest will take place at the Bangladesh Army Stadium.

Tanvir Hossain, executive creative director of Sun Communications, said, "The Folk Festival is set for January 23 to 25. A press conference to follow soon, will cover details associated with registration, rules, and performing artists."

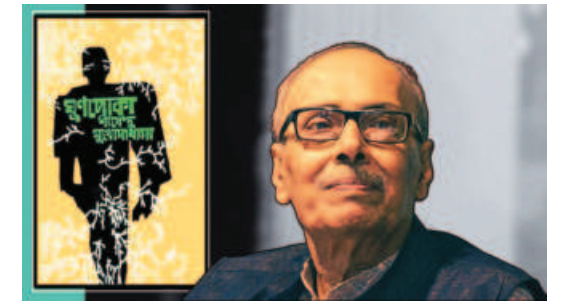
Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay's debut novel to come alive on the big screen

Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay's debut novel *Ghumpoka* is being adapted for the big screen.

Set in 1960s Kolkata, it follows Shyam, a young man who, after quitting his job over facing humiliation, confronts loneliness and unemployment in the city.

West Bengal-based director Palash Dey has acquired the rights to adapt this popular novel into a film.

In an interview about this upcoming project



with Anandabazar Patrika, Palash highlighted the novel's universal appeal, stating, "Although written in Bengali, it resonates globally, exploring individual journeys and celebrating life. I believe it deserves a cinematic adaptation."

COUNTRYWIDE

Rain damages vegetables on vast land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Untimely rain since the end of last month has caused severe damage to early varieties of vegetable plants in different districts under Rangpur region.

Farmers said the water from the untimely rain got stagnant at different vegetables and spinach fields, much to the worry of local growers.

Their vegetable plants may die if the accumulated rainwater cannot be fully drained out from the fields quickly, the farmer said.

Meanwhile, prices of winter vegetables and spinach have increased at different local markets due to inadequate supply of the items.

Currently, different varieties of vegetables and spinach are selling for at least 30 percent higher rates, compared to the prices about two weeks ago.

While visiting different local markets this correspondent found most of the consumers disappointed due to increase in vegetables and spinach prices, especially during this time of the year.

A number of consumers said spinach they bought at Tk 20 per kg over a week ago are now selling for Tk 30 at local markets.

Majidul Islam, who came to buy daily essentials at Goshala Bazar in Lalmonirhat town, said if prices of

vegetables and spinach keep increasing like this, it will be very difficult for them to survive.

Vegetable vendor Noor Hossain said supply of different varieties of vegetables and spinach has fall due to damages of the items, caused by the continuous rain.

Farmer Suren Chandra Sen of Karnapur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said he planted different varieties of vegetables and spinach on four bighas of land this season.

He used to collect 40kg to 50kg of vegetables and spinach from his field every day only two weeks ago, but the yield has drastically decreased due to the untimely rain.

Another grower Sabur Ali of Naodanga village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila said vegetables and spinach on one bigha out of his four bighas land has been completely damaged due to the rain.

Most of the early winter vegetables and spinach in his locality are getting damaged due to stagnant water caused by the untimely rain, he said.

According to officials at Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), different varieties of vegetables and spinach have been planted on 9,000 hectares of land in five districts of Rangpur region so far. Besides, DAE have a target to bring 26,000 hectares of land under vegetables and spinach cultivation.



A farmer tends his vegetable plants damaged by the recent rainfall. The photo was taken from Karnapur village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. PHOTO: STAR

Illegal migration

FROM PAGE 12

I want to say to the people of West Bengal, make a change (in state government) in 2026 and we will stop the infiltration. There can be peace in Bengal only if this infiltration stops..."

Meanwhile, in Guwahati, Biswa Sarma told a press conference that Indian states bordering Bangladesh must coordinate among themselves and with the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to foil infiltration bids in the wake of the political turmoil in the neighbouring country.

He said the Assam and Tripura governments are working together with the BSF already, but it will be a "well-orchestrated effort" only if West Bengal also starts

identifying the infiltrators, as those sent back from these two northeastern states may re-enter through it.

"In the last two months, almost every day we have detained foreigners in our state. I feel that due to the porous boundary, in spite of BSF's best efforts, some people are being able to come into India illegally."

The Assam chief minister said 138 infiltrators were identified and sent back from Assam in the last two months by the state police in operations carried out independently and jointly with the BSF.

"We are least bothered about the religion of the infiltrators. If someone comes illegally, they must be pushed back."

Ex-minister

FROM PAGE 12

Mosharrarf was elected lawmaker from the Chattogram-1 constituency several times. In the last general election, Mosharrarf did not run and his son Mahboob Rahman Rubel was elected MP from the constituency.

In a statement, the family of Mosharrarf, 82, said they were worried over his health.

The former minister underwent hip surgery two

years ago, which made it difficult for him to move without a wheelchair. Mosharrarf, who needs daily physiotherapy, is also diabetic and a heart patient.

The detectives went to his house and put him in the police van without a wheelchair, it added.

Meanwhile, ex-DMP commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq was barred

Trump holds rally

FROM PAGE 12

Election Day. More than 38 million votes have already been cast.

Trump has been seeking to tie Harris to the Biden administration's handling of immigration and the economy. Last week, Trump debuted a new attack line: "She broke it, and I promise you I will fix it."

The U.S. economy has outperformed the rest of the developed world since the COVID crisis, and stock markets hit record highs this year. But high prices of food, utilities and housing have roiled voters, who believe the economy is headed in the wrong direction.

Harris, who held a rally with Bruce Springsteen in

Atlanta on Thursday, will hold another high-profile event with a speech on Tuesday on the National Mall in Washington, where she will highlight contrasts between herself and Trump.

"He is full of grievance. He is full of dark language that is about retribution and revenge," Harris said in response to questions from reporters on Sunday in Philadelphia.

Trump, who held a rally in Long Island, New York, in September, has said he is making a play for the state. Ronald Reagan's reelection was the last time New York backed a Republican for president; Democrat Joe Biden won the state in 2020 by 23 percentage points.

Mother, daughter

FROM PAGE 12

The men also threatened to kill the women unless they kept mum about what had happened, it adds.

Inspector Abdus told The Daily Star that police were looking for the other suspects.

AK Fazlul Haq

FROM PAGE 12

For his outstanding contributions to Bangla literature, Kashem was awarded the Bangla Academy Literary Award in 1981.

Novelist Selina Hossain was the last president of Bangla Academy. She had been the president of the academy since February 3, 2022, before resigning on October 17, this year.

No plan to lift ban

FROM PAGE 12

recent decades," the notification added.

On October 23, writer Taslima wrote on X, "Mr Yunus is getting mad. He lifted the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami, and its student wing Shibir, but banned Chhatra League, the student wing of the Awami League, the oldest political party in Bangladesh. He lifted the ban on Islamic terrorist organisations like Hizb ut-Tahrir, Ansarullah Bangla Team, etc."

Besides Hizb ut-Tahrir and Ansarullah Bangla Team, seven extremist outfits in Bangladesh are currently banned. They are Ansar Al Islam, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh, Allahr Dal, Shahadat E al-Hikma and Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hind al-Sharqiya.

Jubo League man

FROM PAGE 12

the city around 7:30pm on Saturday.

The assailants accused him of attacking a student-led procession in Rajshahi on August 5 during the mass uprising against the Awami League government.

The attackers forcibly took Mim to the Panchavati area by an autorickshaw around 7:50pm, the witnesses said.

He was left in front of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition around 10:10pm.

Sankar K Biswas, in charge of the hospital's emergency department, said Mim was brought dead at 10:15pm.

There were several marks of severe injury on the body, including extreme beating and stabbing, according to Sankar.

Mehedi Masud, officer-in-charge of Boalia Police Station, said a team of the police station rushed to the spot on Saturday night upon getting information about the attack, but could not locate the place where Mim was taken.

He said police arrested two named accused in the case and were trying to arrest the others.

Mehedi also said that Mim was involved in Awami League politics.

However, Mim's mother Keya said that his son was not involved in any kind of politics and used to work as a day labourer.

Locals said Mim was close to Jubo League leader Zahirul Haque Rubel, who was spotted attacking student protesters with two firearms in his hands

during the uprising. Rubel was arrested and placed on remand several times after the fall of the Awami League government.

Requesting anonymity, a neighbour of Mim said Mim used to reside in the personal chamber of Rajib Mahin, a former finance secretary of Jubo League's Rajshahi city unit. Mim went into hiding after the fall of the Awami League regime.

"Mim returned to the area on Saturday and came under the attack in the evening," the neighbour said.



Golam Faruq

Moscow will respond

Putin warns of retaliation if West helps Ukraine to strike deep into Russia

REUTERS, MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Russia's defence ministry was working on different ways to respond if the United States and its Nato allies help Ukraine to strike deep into Russia with long-range Western missiles.

The 2-1/2-year-old Ukraine war has triggered the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the depths of the Cold War, and Russian officials say the war is now entering its most dangerous phase.

Russia has been signalling to the United States and its allies for weeks that if they give permission to Ukraine to strike deep into Russian



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced people in Beit Lahia, Gaza City yesterday. The directors of the CIA and Israel's Mossad intelligence agency will meet with Qatar's prime minister in Doha to discuss a ceasefire in Gaza. PHOTO: AFP

Israel hit Iran missile fuel-mixing facilities

Say researchers after analysing satellite photos

REUTERS, WASHINGTON

An American researcher said an Israeli airstrike on Saturday hit a building that was part of Iran's defunct nuclear weapons development program, and he and another researcher said facilities used to mix solid fuel for missiles also were struck.

The assessments based on commercial satellite imagery were reached separately by David Albright, a former UN weapons inspector, and Decker Eveleth, an associate research analyst at CNA, a Washington think tank.

They told Reuters that Israel struck buildings in Parchin, a massive military complex near Tehran.

Israel also hit Khojir, according to Eveleth, a sprawling missile production site near Tehran.

Reuters reported in July that Khojir was undergoing massive expansion.

Eveleth said the Israeli strikes may have "significantly hampered Iran's ability to mass produce missiles."

The Israeli military said three waves of Israeli jets struck missile factories and other sites near Tehran and in western Iran early on Saturday in retaliation for Tehran's October 1 barrage of more than 200 missiles against Israel.

Iran's military said the Israeli warplanes used "very light warheads" to strike border radar systems in the provinces of Ilam, Khuzestan and around Tehran.

In posts on X, Albright said commercial satellite imagery showed that Israel hit a building in Parchin called Taleghan 2 that was used for testing activities during the Amad Plan, Iran's defunct nuclear weapons development program.

The UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and US intelligence say Iran shuttered the program in 2003. Iran

denies pursuing nuclear weapons.

Albright, head of the Institute for Science and International Security research group, was given access to the program's files for a book after they were stolen from Tehran by Israel's Mossad intelligence agency in 2018.

On X, he said the archives revealed that Iran kept important test equipment in Taleghan 2.

Iran may have removed key materials before the airstrike, he said, but "even if no equipment remained inside" the building would have provided "intrinsic value" for future nuclear weapons-related activities.

Albright told Reuters that commercial satellite imagery of Parchin showed Israel damaged three buildings about 350 yards (320 m) from Taleghan 2, including two in which solid fuel for ballistic missiles was mixed.

He did not identify the commercial firm from which he obtained the images.

Eveleth said an image of Parchin from Planet Labs, a commercial satellite firm, showed that Israel destroyed three ballistic missile solid fuel mixing buildings and a warehouse in the sprawling complex.

Planet Labs imagery also showed that an Israeli strike destroyed two buildings in the Khojir complex where solid fuel for ballistic missiles was mixed, he said.

The buildings were enclosed by high dirt berms, according to the image reviewed by Reuters. Such structures are associated with missile production and are designed to stop a blast in one building from detonating combustible materials in nearby structures.

"Israel says they targeted buildings housing solid fuel mixers," Eveleth said. "These industrial mixers are hard to make and export-controlled. Iran imported many over the years at great expense, and will likely have a hard time replacing them," Eveleth added.



China holds 'combat' patrol after US arms sales: Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

China deployed fighter jets and drones as part of a "joint combat readiness patrol" around Taiwan yesterday, Taipei said, as Beijing slammed the latest round of US arms sales to the island.

The US State Department on Friday approved a \$2 billion arms sale package for Taiwan, including advanced surface-to-air missile systems and radar. The deal awaits approval by Congress.

Taiwan's defence ministry said it detected 19 Chinese aircraft yesterday, including fighter jets and drones, flying near the island over a nearly four-hour period as part of Beijing's "joint combat readiness patrol" with warships.

It was the third such patrol reported by Taiwan's defence ministry this month.

"Taiwan's military closely monitored the situation with joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems, deploying aircraft, naval vessels and shore-based missile systems as an appropriate response," the ministry said.

Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office said yesterday that the latest arms package showed that Washington "time and again contradicts the promises of its leaders not to support 'Taiwan independence'... and damages peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait region".

"'Taiwan independence' is as incompatible with peace across the strait as fire is with water," spokesperson Zhu Fenglian said in a statement.

"We urge the US... to stop arming Taiwan and stop sending the wrong signals to 'Taiwan independence' forces."

On Saturday, Beijing's foreign ministry condemned the arms package and said it had "lodged solemn representations" with the United States.

A ministry spokesperson said Beijing would "take all necessary measures to firmly defend national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity".

Georgia thrown into political turmoil after disputed vote

AFP, Tbilisi

Georgia plunged into political turmoil yesterday after the ruling party declared victory in parliamentary elections decried by the opposition as "falsified".

The European Union had warned that Saturday's vote, seen as a crucial test of democracy in the Caucasus country, would determine Tbilisi's chances of joining the bloc.

A group of international observers said the vote was "marred by an uneven playing field, pressure and tension," while noting that election day was generally well organised.

A mission from the EU parliament meanwhile expressed concern about "democratic backsliding", saying it had seen instances of "ballot box stuffing" and the "physical assault" of observers.

SNAP POLLS Japan ruling party misses majority

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's ruling LDP party yesterday fell short of a majority in snap elections for the first time since 2009, national broadcaster NHK projected, in a blow to new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

It was unclear whether Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party would be able to secure a majority in parliament together with its long-term coalition partner, the Komeito party.

Ishiba, 67, took office on October 1 after being narrowly selected last month to lead the LDP, and called a snap election within days of taking office.

The self-confessed defence "geek" and maker of model planes set as his target in the election the coalition winning a majority.

Missing this objective would seriously undermine his position in the LDP and mean finding other coalition partners or leading a minority government.

New Delhi's air pollution worsens Residents complain of breathing difficulties

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE



The air quality in Delhi has further deteriorated in the national capital yesterday, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) being recorded at 352, in the 'very poor' category, according to System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR).

AQI in areas such as Anand Vihar crossed the 400 mark, being recorded as 405 at 7:00 am, categorized as "severe", worse than the AQI of 367 recorded on Saturday.

This forecast is significantly worse than the average AQI recorded at 255 on Saturday, categorized as "poor". AQI at the Akshardham Temple deteriorated 261, whereas IGI airport recorded an AQI of 324, both categorized as "very poor".

The city has been covered by a layer of smog, which is most prominent early in the morning. In conversation with news agency ANI, Himanshu who is visiting Delhi, said the rising pollution feels "suffocating".



territory with Western-supplied missiles, then Moscow will consider it a major escalation.

Putin said on September 12 that Western approval for such a step would mean "the direct involvement of Nato countries, the United States and European countries in the war in Ukraine" because Nato military infrastructure and personnel would have to be involved in the targeting and firing of the missiles.

Putin said that it was too early to say exactly how Russia would react to such a move but that Moscow would have to respond accordingly and different options were being examined.

"(The Russian defence ministry) is thinking about how to respond to the possible long range strikes on Russian territory, it will offer a range of responses," Putin told Russian state TV's top Kremlin reporter, Pavel Zarubin.

With Russia advancing at the fastest rate in eastern Ukraine since the first months of the invasion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pleading with the West to allow Kyiv to fire deep into Russia with Western missiles.

The US has not said publicly if it will allow Ukraine to strike Russia, but some US officials are deeply sceptical that doing so would make a significant difference in the war.

Sundarban Gas Company Limited

(A Company of Petrobangla)
Operation Division
218, M.A Bari Sarak, Sonadanga, Khulna

জাতীয় সম্পদ গ্যাসের অপচয় রোধ করে জাতীয় দায়িত্ব পালন করুন

Tender Invitation Reference No. 28.21.0000.181.49.003.24.1

Date: 24-10-2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited through e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Operation Division, Sundarban Gas Company Limited for the procurement of the following work which will be available at e-GP website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) from date 29-10-2024 & time 10.00:

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Reference No.	Package No.	Description of works	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
01	1028417, 28.21.0000.18 1.49.003.24.1	28.21.0000.1 81.49.003.24	Coating Defect & Gas leak detection works of 10 inch dia x 1000 psig x 33 km high pressure gas transmission pipeline of SGCL in Bhola.	17 November 2024 17:00	18 November 2024 12:00	18 November 2024 12:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

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

Engr. Md. Tauhidur Rahman
General Manager
Operation Division
SGCL, Khulna

GD- 804

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
সংগ্রহ ও ভান্ডার শাখা
গাজীপুর-১৭০১।

কৃষি সমৃদ্ধি

Email: dd.procure@bari.gov.bd
Younusali.bari@gmail.com
Phone: 50350,49270140

Memo no: 12.21.0000.007.02.112.24.1398

Date: 23 October 2024

e-GP: Re-Tender Notice No. 02 (2024-2025)

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below :

Sl No	Package no.	Tender ID & Ref No	Description of goods	Tender Documents Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing date & Time	Tender Opening date & Time
01.	PN-GD-06	1028418 & IRN : 112	Field Equipment 03 (Three) Items.	03.11.2024 11:00	03.11.2024 12:00	03.11.2024 12:00

The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP system portal is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Budget Type : Farm Machinery Technology Development for Profitable Crop Production.

(Md. Younus Ali)
(BARI-0663)
Deputy Director (In-Charge)
On behalf of Director General

GD- 803

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

A lesson on how not to plan govt projects

Take steps to mitigate losses from the Karnaphuli tunnel

The fate of the much-hyped Karnaphuli Tunnel should serve as a lesson in how not to plan a megaproject. As reported by this daily, the tunnel has only seen a third of its projected traffic since it opened on October 28, 2023, with earnings falling short of even the maintenance costs. As of October 20, 2024, the average daily traffic through the tunnel was 3,910 vehicles. In contrast, a project forecast report from January 2023 estimated that an average of 18,485 vehicles would be using it daily. Furthermore, when the government approved the tunnel project in November 2015, it was projected that average daily traffic would reach 28,305 vehicles by 2025 and 37,946 by 2030. Yet, to date, daily traffic through the tunnel has exceeded 10,000 vehicles on only three out of the 359 days since it opened.

In 2015, the ECNEC approved the tunnel project at a cost of Tk 6,446.64 crore. Later, the cost rose to Tk 10,689.42 crore. Of this amount, the Exim Bank of China committed Tk 5,913.19 crore at an interest rate of 2 percent and a service charge of 0.20 percent, while the Bangladesh government—meaning the public—funded the rest. The government is currently paying the interest on the loan from China, but payments on the principal amount will begin within this fiscal year.

The tunnel has thus become a perfect example of the poor planning and forecasting related to megaprojects that became emblematic of the former Awami League government. In fact, the projections for the tunnel were so inaccurate that it has managed to earn only Tk 37.45 crore from 14.12 lakh vehicles since its inauguration, while the government has spent Tk 134.46 crore solely on its operation. And this is even before loan repayments start, when spending on the tunnel is expected to significantly increase.

According to the project's deputy director, the planned government and private development projects on either side of the tunnel have not been implemented. Its initial design was based on the vision of "one city, two towns," similar to Shanghai in China. Part of that strategy was to connect the Mirsarai Economic Zone with Matarbari Deep Sea Port and to expand the Chattogram port jetty, as well as to establish thousands of local and foreign industrial units in Anwara. But none of that materialised. With that being the case, on what basis was the tunnel constructed then?

Clearly, it was more of a prestige project for the previous regime that did not care about the various issues that should have been addressed to make it worthwhile for the public. Given the awkward position this places the current government in, we urge it to involve experts and other stakeholders to find ways to mitigate the project's losses, including by developing plans for the region that could eventually make it profitable.

Restore security in Mohammadpur

Repeated criminal incidents have raised concerns

Even since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5, there has been a marked increase in crime and violence in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area, along with many other areas. However, while the situation gradually improved in other places, organised gangs in Mohammadpur have continued to carry out criminal activities. On Friday night, in Bosila's Garden City, machete-wielding robbers wearing masks looted a supermarket. On Saturday night, a shooting incident left three people injured at the Geneva Camp. Last week, criminals looted a company vehicle carrying nearly Tk 12 lakh at gunpoint at the Mohammadia Housing Ltd area.

According to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), there have been four cases involving murders and three cases involving mugging and robberies between October 1 and October 25, while September saw 17 murder cases. However, as per a report by Prothom Alo, incidents of mugging and robbery are occurring nearly daily, with many going unreported. Victims often avoid involving the police due to fear of further harassment, resulting in a significant underrepresentation of the actual number of incidents. Clearly, these incidents have left residents living in fear, to a point that many staged a protest in front of the local police station on Saturday afternoon, leading to the army setting up temporary camps in Mohammadpur.

We welcome this step by the army which will help restore security to some extent. Since being granted magistracy powers in mid-September, the army has conducted a number of operations to seize illegal weapons, drugs, and ammunition. Even on Saturday night, a joint operation led by the army detained 45 suspected criminals from various areas. However, these measures, while commendable, do not eliminate the need for a more enduring solution with the involvement of police. Unfortunately, personnel shortages and lack of vehicles continue to hinder police response. Taking advantage of the security vacuum thus created, organised extortion rackets and teenage gangs have reportedly expanded their influence in certain neighbourhoods. The suspected involvement of a number of sacked and former law enforcers in robberies has complicated the situation, further straining law enforcement efforts.

Given this reality, the government must take steps to fully reactivate the local police force. Their involvement in regular patrols, backed by necessary resources, is essential to restore public confidence. Moreover, certain high-risk areas such as Geneva Camp, which continues to be a hub of crimes even after a number of raids, demand particular law enforcement coverage. Only combined and sustained law enforcement efforts can address the security threat facing Mohammadpur residents.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Statue of Liberty dedicated

On this day in 1886, US President Grover Cleveland officially dedicated the Statue of Liberty—a gift from the people of France to the people of the United States—on Bedloe's (later Liberty) Island in Upper New York Bay.

Can the economy achieve its revised growth projection?



Selim Jahan is the former director of UNDP's Human Development Report Office at UNDP in New York.

SELIM JAHAN

Some economic growth projections have been made for Bangladesh considering its current economic realities. In the latest projections, the World Bank has forecasted that the economic growth of Bangladesh for the fiscal year 2024-25 would be 4.1 percent. Earlier, the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) growth projection for Bangladesh for the same fiscal year has been 5.1 percent. These indicate three things: first, the numbers reflect the current economic realities of the country; second, even though there are differences in numbers, both the organisations have downgraded their earlier growth projections; and, third, economic growth projections have been made only by international organisations, but not by national entities.

The Bangladesh economy has shown some weaknesses in the last fiscal year and that has been reflected in the projections by the above organisations. For example, the ADB's forecast for economic growth for the current fiscal year has been downgraded from 6.6 percent to 5.1 percent. Similarly, the World Bank has downgraded its projection for the Bangladesh economy from 5.7 percent to 4.1 percent. The sluggishness in Bangladesh's economic growth has three dimensions—the legacy of global events during the last three to four years, the happenings in the Bangladesh economy in the recent past, and the current events in the country. In this context, it is pertinent to note that non-economic factors highly impact economic growth, even though economic forces mainly drive it, and future growth potentials must be discussed along with current growth patterns.

There is no denying the fact that like other economies of the world, global events over the past three to four years have affected the growth prospects of Bangladesh. Covid has paralysed the global economy as well as Bangladesh. It impacted the domestic economy, where the lives and livelihoods of people were at stake. Diversion of public resources to tackle the pandemic shrunk resources for both productive and social sectors, and Covid affected Bangladeshi exports to the outer world. For example, the

RMG industry of Bangladesh was severely affected because of Covid. All these factors impacted the country's growth trend. Next came the Ukraine war, which disrupted the global supply chain. As a result, food and energy prices went up considerably. Since Bangladesh is a food and energy importing country, the global commodity price hikes have contributed to the domestic inflationary pressures, adversely affecting the



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

country's growth prospects.

Besides, the economic growth scenario during the tenure of the last government should be analysed in terms of two issues. First, the reliability and the robustness of the growth data—so many official growth figures used to float around, with so many revisions and projections that trusting one single number for any fiscal year became quite difficult. Added to this was the multiplicity of growth data published by various official entities. Second, the economic mismanagement by the past government also made the country's economic growth quite volatile. Discretionary decisions at the state-level; crises in the banking sector in terms of defaulting loans, bad loans, and money laundering; and the absence of transparency and accountability in economic decisions

are both economic and non-economic reasons, which have slowed the economic growth in Bangladesh. On the economic front, continued high inflation has impacted the growth rate adversely. The inflation rate still remains near 10 percent. This rate is high compared to our neighbours. Over the past two years, Sri Lanka has been able to reduce its inflation rate from 70 percent to less than one percent. Even if the global inflation rate is on a downward trend, the inflation rate in Bangladesh is stuck at a high level for quite some time. High inflation erodes economic growth.

There has been a deceleration in economic activities for various reasons and are yet to be optimal. For example, the production in the RMG industry is yet to reach its normal level. Industrial

production in other sectors has to recover from the disruptions, it has gone through. As there are economic uncertainties, both domestic and foreign investments are not coming in as desired. The banking sector is still not in good shape. The law and the order situation face different vulnerabilities. As a result, there seem to be fewer growth opportunities. The recent floods, on one hand, have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of people as well as the wealth of households, and on the other, they have adversely impacted the production base of the affected areas. Even though the exact impact of the floods on the growth prospects is yet to be clear, the widespread floods in a vast area of Bangladesh are expected to affect the economy's future growth.

A deceleration of economic growth will shrink the economy and impact the country's social sector. The overall economic impacts would depend on the sectors which experience the maximum effects. Over time, the manufacturing sector has led to jobless growth, not leading to any new job creation. Under such a circumstance, a sluggish industrial sector may not result in large employment losses, while a slowdown in service sectors may have significant impacts on people's jobs and income. With high inflation and declining growth, social sectors such as healthcare, and education would be adversely affected. In the process, the poor and the marginalised would be affected the most.

These are the current realities of the Bangladesh economy. But even with all the uncertainties, volatilities and instabilities, the economy is expected to overcome all the growth hindrances in the coming days. With the continued improvements in the economic management on all frontiers, the Bangladesh economy is expected to be on an enhanced growth trajectory, with the trust and the confidence of the people on a solid base, higher investments both by local and foreign investors, and further improvements in the law and the order situations in the country. Reforms in the banking sector, stable policies in the external trade sector, and ensuring stability in the manufacturing sector would contribute to the process. If the supply of agricultural inputs including seeds and fertilisers is ensured, the agricultural sector may hold on to its past growth rates of four percent. In the ultimate analysis, if Bangladesh's economy achieves a growth rate of about five percent, that would be considered as favourable under the present circumstances.

Pushing businesses towards sustainable energy use



RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Bangladesh, a nation with a rapidly growing economy and a thriving garment export sector, is facing a critical juncture in its energy policy. Our increasing reliance on imported fossil fuels—petroleum, coal, and liquefied natural gas (LNG)—for electricity production and primary energy consumption is creating significant economic challenges.

These challenges threaten the stability of our finances, placing additional strain on the country's balance of payments and foreign currency reserves, and impact our ability to remain competitive in the global market, particularly in the garment sector, which is a vital contributor to the nation's economy. Importing large volumes of fossil fuels exacerbates these financial pressures, driving up energy costs for consumers and businesses alike.

Fossil fuels are a concern for the export-driven ready-made garment (RMG) sector too because global fashion brands, which source much of their apparel from Bangladesh, are increasingly demanding that their suppliers reduce carbon emissions across the supply chain. If Bangladesh fails to act, we risk losing our competitive edge in the global market, where sustainability is becoming a non-negotiable criterion.

To address these challenges, Bangladesh should shift its focus towards energy efficiency and the integration of renewable energy sources. Doing so will not only reduce our reliance on expensive fossil fuel imports but also help lower emissions, improve energy security, and enhance the competitiveness of the RMG sector in an environmentally conscious marketplace.

Interestingly, speakers at the recent Bangladesh Climate Action Forum 2024 discussed policy interventions that can help address these challenges and ensure a sustainable future by promoting renewable energy and enhancing energy efficiency. Five policy recommendations critical to this transition are discussed below.

One of the key barriers to energy efficiency upgrades is the high equipment cost. To encourage businesses to adopt energy-saving technologies, the government should reduce duties on specific equipment such as high-efficiency (IE4 or IE5) fans and motors, steam system accessories, and solar system components. Businesses will be more likely to invest in upgrades that reduce their overall energy consumption if the upfront costs of energy-efficient technologies are reduced. Also, it should be considered whether the

current tax rate for solar panels and solar equipment can be reduced to zero.

Tax breaks for companies that implement energy efficiency projects can further incentivise businesses. This could be achieved through accelerated capital allowances, which would allow businesses to deduct the cost of energy efficiency upgrades more quickly.

Bangladesh should shift its focus towards energy efficiency and the integration of renewable energy sources. Doing so will not only reduce our reliance on expensive fossil fuel imports but also help lower emissions, improve energy security, and enhance the competitiveness of the RMG sector in an environmentally conscious marketplace.

Net metering allows businesses that generate their own renewable energy, such as solar power, to sell excess electricity back to the grid. However, facilities within the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) are currently unable to take advantage of net metering, making it difficult for them to justify investing in renewable energy. Net metering in these zones would help companies also contribute to the country's renewable energy capacity. Additionally, prohibiting the shutdown of solar systems on

weekends and holidays would prevent the waste of freely generated electricity.

Access to financing is a major obstacle for businesses seeking to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. While some financing options exist, they are often difficult to access due to high interest rates and complicated application processes. The government should work with development financial institutions (DFIs) and other partners to create more accessible and affordable financing options. This could include low-interest loans and guarantees for specific risks such as currency fluctuations and credit defaults, which would encourage more businesses to invest in clean energy.

A comprehensive revision of the IEPMP is essential to ensure that Bangladesh can rapidly increase its renewable energy capacity. The government should set ambitious targets for renewable energy integration and develop clear implementation strategies to achieve these goals. One way to fast-track renewable energy adoption is through Corporate Power Purchase Agreements (CPPAs), which would allow businesses to enter into long-term agreements to purchase renewable energy directly from producers. This would create a stable market for renewable energy and encourage further investment in the sector.

Bangladesh is at a critical crossroads in its energy policy. By implementing the proposed policy interventions, we can secure a bright economic future, reduce our carbon footprint, and maintain our competitive edge in the global RMG market. The time to act is now, and the benefits of transitioning to a more sustainable energy system will be felt for generations to come.

Whom does education serve in Bangladesh?

Shahidul Islam
is an education policy and planning expert.
Dr John Richards
is emeritus professor at the School of Public
Policy in Simon Fraser University, Canada.

SHAHIDUL ISLAM and
JOHN RICHARDS

Politicians' goals for basic education in South Asia are different from parents' goals. Politicians want school construction, teacher recruitment, free textbooks, and a centralised system of education. Parents want a quality education that gives their children a better future.

It's no surprise, then, to see a consistent increase among parents in South Asia sending their children to non-government schools ("low cost" private schools, NGO schools, madrasas) with the hope that their children will learn, at a minimum, the ability to read the local language at a basic level and do basic arithmetic.

But even in these modest desires, we believe both the children and their parents are betrayed by South Asian school systems—with the exception of Sri Lanka. For example, the "learning poverty" rates in the three most populous countries in South Asia range from 56 percent in India and 58 percent in Bangladesh, to 78 percent in Pakistan. The outlier is Sri Lanka where the rate is only 14 percent, better than many high-income countries.

Why is this the case given that, over the last three decades, there has been near universal access to primary education?

To understand this, you have to appreciate that school systems are composed of institutions dominated by the education bureaucracy, by politicians, and by teachers' unions. The dominant goal of those groups is not children's learning, but the protection of their own interests.

Politicians see education as a tool to foster a common allegiance and national loyalty among citizens. That's why bureaucrats and politicians have gamed universal primary education in various ways. In 2009, India enacted an ambitious Right to Education Act for all children aged 6-14 years. At the same time, Bangladesh introduced the Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE). Both initiatives resulted in higher enrolment and a higher primary cycle graduation, but not better learning.

Gaming the system
Politicians see education as a tool to foster a common allegiance and national loyalty among citizens. That's why bureaucrats and politicians have gamed universal primary education in various ways. In 2009, India enacted an ambitious Right to Education Act for all children aged 6-14 years. At the same time, Bangladesh introduced the Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE).

The "game" in Bangladesh and India has been to lower the bar to pass the Grade 5 exam, and to frequently allow question paper leakage before the exam day.

As an example, for more than a decade, Bangladesh conducted the National Student Assessment (NSA), a very sophisticated in-school assessment on a representative sample of primary school students in grades 3 and 5. But, in 2022, Bangladesh

After 1990, Bangladesh started receiving more development assistance in education. Politicians and bureaucrats used the money to create more positions for more teachers, build more classrooms, distribute free textbooks to all primary school students, and expand teacher training facilities. Everything improved except actual learning. After the Jomtien conference, the bureaucracy and politicians met their desires; the parents did not.

foundational literacy and numeracy in the fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), but their efforts were not concerted and sometimes subverted. The multilateral banks were more interested in disbursing funds than adding any accountability measures to achieve quality educational goals in primary education.

The second PEDP (2004-2010) received 37 percent as development assistance from 11 bilateral and multilateral donors for a total primary education budget of \$1.8 billion. But through PEDP-3 and PEDP-4, this reduced as much as eight percent, despite the absolute value of donor contributions remaining constant, as the government substantially increased its primary education budget.

The government funded this significant increase by negotiating more loans from multilateral banks, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank—loans which would have to be repaid. In effect, additional domestic government revenue mainly served political and bureaucratic goals—not learning goals for children and their parents, which continued to decline. Moreover, the declining donor share of the primary education budgets in Bangladesh reduced their influence in discussions about learning outcomes.

Where now for basic education in Bangladesh?

Where does that leave basic education in Bangladesh under the new political dispensation?

Although education will not feature highly among Prof Muhammad Yunus's short-term priorities, there are opportunities to change and address the systemic failings highlighted above, not least through more consultative and inclusive processes.

Undertaking an assessment of students' foundational skills using the ASER process developed in India is one such opportunity. The results will reveal the scale of the problem and determine how to take action quickly to reduce learning poverty levels.

Investing in teachers is a second essential strategy. Teachers' professionalism and performance are drivers of change in education. A reimagined teaching profession should attract and retain the best talents in the profession, but that also needs changed performance standards, status, incentives, remuneration, and career paths. This rethinking about teachers will be a longer-term task, but it should begin in earnest now.

Decentralisation of education management under a single education ministry can open the process of reform to gain stronger traction and wider support. This will be important if a real impact is to be made on foundational literacy and numeracy.

There is a real opportunity now in Bangladesh to stop the betrayal of politicians and bureaucrats. By meeting the demands of parents through focusing on learning outcomes and reforming the education system to accommodate many voices, change can be made possible.

This article was first published by Re Education on October 8, 2024. The authors were part of a research looking into basic education systems in South Asia.



Bangladesh has a learning poverty rate of 58 percent, a research has found.

PHOTO: USAID

Both initiatives resulted in higher enrolment and a higher primary cycle graduation, but not better learning.

The most credible assessment of primary students' learning in India is ASER, a large-scale assessment conducted at students' homes with a statistically significant sample size. It's organised by Pratham, a large NGO. The most advanced questions posed are on the ability of sampled children to read a short story at Grade 2 level and divide a three-digit number by a one-digit number. The national averages of the latest ASER survey, in 2022, are dismal. At Grade 5, in government schools 39 percent of children can read the story and 22 percent can do the division. Though far from ideal, non-government schools perform much better: at Grade 5, about 57 percent can read the story and 37 percent can do the division.

But, this begs the question: why are children successfully graduating from school but can neither comprehend a Grade-2-level passage or solve a simple division problem?

compromised assessment integrity by offering special tutoring to Grade 5 students using the testing tools to demonstrate better performance in their latest NSA. Ironically, the national entity that oversees primary education service delivery played this "game" instead of protecting the integrity of the assessment. The international organisation that oversaw the 2022 NSA collaborated with the primary education department in Bangladesh and failed to protect minimum research integrity.

In Bangladesh, despite this kind of scam, international organisations have played an important role in expanding primary education opportunities for millions of children. Like many other developing countries, Bangladesh has received significant development assistance in education since the 1980s, following the elevation of education as an investment emanating from the Jomtien conference in Thailand and the subsequent Education for All commitment to universal primary education.

Education as investment—for whom?

Around the world, national governments and multilateral and bilateral organisations have initiated development programmes aimed at alleviating poverty. In this development effort, education has always been considered as the single most important means for increasing the household income of the poor. The importance of basic literacy and numeracy is so obvious, and the evidence so overwhelming, that bilateral and multilateral agencies, philanthropies—even private businesses—are all investing in education.

However, the development assistance to education in South Asia has never kept pace with the basic education needs. International organisations put emphasis on quality and equity in basic education and "reluctantly" shared strategies, without adequate evidence, to convince political and bureaucratic leadership to address chronic quality deficits in basic education in South Asia.

In Bangladesh, a few development partners tried to include interventions to improve

A new deal for Bangladesh-UK partnership in uncertain times

Dr Geof Wood
is a development anthropologist and author of
several books and numerous journal articles, with
a regional focus on South Asia. He is also emeritus
professor of international development at the
University of Bath, UK.

GEOF WOOD



Even before the recent change of government in the UK, its role in Bangladesh has been shifting, especially bilaterally. While it remains a funder to basic services and other programmes through its contributions to IFIs and UN agencies, as well as regional programmes and other global initiatives that include Bangladesh, such as the Girls Education Fund and climate change, its bilateral spending has reduced to a 20-year low. According to the Center for Global Development, a think tank based in Washington, DC and London, a further 900 million pounds will have to be diverted this year from the global UK aid budget to spend on asylum seekers in the UK. This represents a diversion of aid from overseas spending to meet domestic asylum pressures while still classifying that spending as ODA. Coincidentally, with Bangladesh approaching the developing country status, its social protection requirements are expected to be met by domestic revenue sources rather than aid. Due to its declining bilateral pot, UK Aid has shifted towards a stronger emphasis on strategic technical assistance to support policy reform—in other words, ideas and methods rather than cash.

The UK technical team in Dhaka focuses on strategic priorities like climate change, ongoing Rohingya emergency, gender, poverty among minorities and concerns for their political rights, civil society and conditions for democracy, and macroeconomic policies for growth within the SDG mantra of leaving "no one behind."

So much for where we are in terms of UK aid to Bangladesh. Given the desire in London for rethinking its position in the world, this is a good time for the interim government in Bangladesh to "place its order"! At the time of writing, the incoming Labour government has yet to share its approach to overseas aid. There are some hints, however. Foreign Secretary David Lammy has ordered a review of the DFID (i.e. UK Aid) and its current status in the Foreign Office as was. Also in a recent speech, he spoke of how he wants to modernise relationships with the Global South—more partnership, removing the paternalism of the post-colonial past. At the same time, former permanent secretary (2011-17), Sir Mark Lowcock, is about to publish a book with co-author Ranil Dissanayake, titled *The Rise and Fall of the Department for International Development*, attributing the DFID's "fall" to the capture of the UK Conservative Party by its right wing, populist factions. The book will offer proposals to the new incumbents at No.10 as they define the UK's position in a complex international landscape.

Exploring that Bangladesh-UK partnership is perhaps easier to do this side of August 5 than before. To me, as an independent observer, it comprises the following elements: expanding geopolitical alliances on key international issues which build on existing collaborations, e.g. over the Rohingya, but also over labour migration rights and protections; reform of global governance institutions (especially re climate change, planetary boundaries, and taxation

on international financial transactions as advanced by Tobin); corporate governance and responsibility, i.e. not just referring to the state, or corporate social responsibility, but towards a more acceptable face of capitalism where the accumulation of private profits no longer free rides upon public goods—the RMG sector being a case in point, with its low-waged insecure employees "subsidising" low-waged, insecure consumers in the West; and controlling and eliminating corruption—very

Bangladesh has much contemporary experience in engaging with poverty and has much practice to share alongside innovative action-research around supporting poor people's entry directly into market opportunities, not just via employment. And as Bangladesh approaches the developing country status, any notion of "development" becomes replaced by a notion of "social policy," entailing revenue-funded public intervention derived from rights, not just over-narrow targeting.

familiar in Bangladesh, and with implications for the UK; reducing the propensity and need to migrate permanently away from one's own culture, (thereby fracturing family life and identity) by inward combinations of socially progressive FDI and investment in human capital alongside facilitating circular temporary migration to the West or elsewhere; knowledge-building through encouraging university collaborations (as with India in the last decade or so through

the UK-India Education and Research Initiative—UKIERI) and student internships and exchanges, perhaps especially within the Bangladeshi diaspora in the UK; investing in gender-balanced secondary education and FE skills provision including access to training and learning opportunities; and sharing HE and FE management approaches as those sectors expand.

There are also spreading the principles of inclusive democracy (including the taxation/citizenship nexus, as the underpinning of stakeholding and functional participation); devolution to sub-state political arenas, perhaps necessary in days gone by when communications were difficult, but again necessary for participatory citizenship as it is for the UK; leapfrogging options for Bangladesh in a digital age (e.g. in health, but of course also for inclusive education, especially if the classroom teaching cadre remains underdeveloped); understanding the distribution of poverty between systemic and idiosyncratic explanations, so important for policy choices between fiscal levers and household level intervention; developing well-being indicators, not just income/spending ones, as a guide to policy (for both partners); exploring the state/market boundaries for the regulated pursuit of social objectives; thus understanding the political settlement between rights-based entitlements; philanthropy; voluntarism; not-for-profit services; market opportunities—whether labour or entrepreneurial ones; and support for the Bangladeshi diaspora in the UK, especially youth, and particularly girls.

(Aspects of this agenda might constitute an argument for retaining DFID within FCDO to keep diplomacy, development and humanitarian aid in mutual support, though I would regret the loss of cabinet rank for international development, per se. The UK Treasury does have two cabinet rank positions as a model for similar representation in foreign affairs and international development.)

No doubt other items could be added to

this list. But its main characteristic is that these issues no longer represent the idea of "aid" as flowing in one direction, from a rich to poor country within some postcolonial framework of institutionalised philanthropy, combined with an element of self-interest or historical guilt. Rather, this agenda occurs with a genuine framework of mutuality—these issues are shared issues, and sometimes interactive ones. Bangladesh, for example, has much contemporary experience in engaging with poverty and has much practice to share alongside innovative action-research around supporting poor people's entry directly into market opportunities, not just via employment. And as Bangladesh approaches the developing country status, any notion of "development" becomes replaced by a notion of "social policy," entailing revenue-funded public intervention derived from rights, not just over-narrow targeting. Both countries, therefore, need to explore together welfare regimes comprising notions of citizens' income, universal basic services, and a Polanyian "de-commodification" of labour. I have also interacted with sharp minds in Bangladesh around the idea of the smart economy, indeed the smart political economy.

There is a sense here in Bangladesh of creative excitement, hence leapfrogging in the list above. At the same time, the UK has institutional baggage to overcome from its own development past in terms of outmoded trading assumptions in a climate-sensitive world, and investment priorities/practices overinfluenced by comparative advantage thinking, which neglect "decent" work. Such baggage continues to fuel privileged "rents" via regional, class and gender inequalities both globally and within the UK. Bangladesh's future should not be to replicate that institutional baggage, while the UK with its new Labour government should now be trying to discard it. There is a rich partnership agenda. Let's embrace it.

From Sultanate to Mughal: The Architectural Legacy of Bengal



In conversation with Professor Perveen Hasan, a distinguished historian and expert on the architecture of the Indian subcontinent.

The Daily Star (TDS): You have extensively researched the architecture of the Sultanate period. Could you share your thoughts on Bengal's pre-Sultanate architecture?

Perveen Hasan (PH): The existing ruins from Paharpur and Mainamati speak of a rich architectural heritage from pre-Sultanate times. These viharas for resident Buddhist monks corresponding to present day student dormitories were built around a central monumental temple. Recent excavations have also uncovered new evidence of smaller temples which served the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain population of the area. The National Museum of Bangladesh in Dhaka has stone sculptures and architectural members of stone and wood that give us an idea of what some of these temples looked like. There are also illustrated Buddhist manuscripts in museums around the world that have depictions of temples in various sites in Bengal. Externally there was little difference to mark the denominations of Hindu/Buddhist/or Jain temples, the icon inside being the identifying factor. Usually temples comprised of a small square chamber which housed the deity and had a roof that was either tiered, or had one or multiple tall towers, or a combination of both. The sanctuary was not very large because the space was meant to accommodate just the deity and the officiating priest. Sometimes there would be a porch in front from where the devotees followed the rites performed by the priest inside. There were also various folk religions which must have had their own places of worship, but whose architectural forms remain unclear. Extant and excavated temples indicate that the primary building material was brick although the manuscript illustrations as well as the architectural members

diminishing, as there is a preference to build with more permanent material. Most of the extant brick mosques built during the Independent Sultanate, early 14th till the middle of the 16th century, were small square structures made of brick commissioned by prominent or wealthy individuals. Among their distinguishing features was a dome, arched entrances in front, and a curved cornice which resembled the curved cornices of the bamboo framed eaves of the rural huts. Arches and domes were largely absent from the architectural vocabulary of Bengal before the Turkish conquest. As traveling was not easy and usually involved the navigation of numerous waterways, small mosques sufficed for people living in small village communities. Extra efforts were made to attend the larger Jami mosques on Fridays and religious festivals. Contemporary temples, of which there are no extant examples here but several in Myanmar, were likely also constructed following the basic residential hut form.

TDS: What is the significance of the arches?

PH: Although the arch form was common, arches built in the keystone

their deterioration. The thick brick walls had a veneer of dressed brick with lime mortar, while the inside was filled with brickbat masonry and mud mortar. These could not withstand the heavy rainfall and humidity of the region specially during the monsoon season. In some sites underground salinity has resulted in mossy floors and structural deterioration as can be seen in the Shait Gombuj Mosque in Bagerhat. Human actions also contributed to the ruin. For instance, it is believed that the city of Malda in West Bengal, India built during British rule used bricks from the ruins of Gaur, unearthed through excavations. Thus, the combination of climate, human activity, and construction methods led to the limited number of surviving temples and mosques in Bengal.

As I have elaborated in my book, *Sultans and Mosques* (paperback edition now available, Bloomsbury, LB. Tauris, 2024), the domes of mosques and other buildings were low, lacking a drum, and minarets were largely absent. While minarets can be seen in structures like the Shait Gombuj Mosque, they were not as tall as those in Delhi, partly because limited communication meant that the call

jami mosque was a very significant act for a Muslim king after the conquest of a new region. It symbolized a new presence and an authority which was established by reading the khutba (Friday sermon) in the new ruler's name. In many instances the king also served as the imam or prayer leader. Another significant act of a new ruler was the minting of new coinage bearing the king's name. The khutba also served to announce new laws and regulations, making the mosque a central place for public gatherings. Initial mosques were therefore often built using materials from destroyed temples, which not only provided ready material, but also reinforced the idea of the new building as a symbol of conquest.

A distinct feature of mosques in Bengal is the presence of multiple mihrabs, uncommon in other regions. The mihrab or niche indicating the qibla, is perhaps the only indispensable or key element in a mosque. Interestingly the earliest mosques in Islam from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not have mihrabs. They were introduced into later mosques to indicate the place where the imam stood to lead the prayers. Even today it is often considered a specially sacred place as devotees place candles and incense inside the niche, although theoretically, in the absence of an icon every place in the mosque is of equal merit. The idea of multiple mihrabs in Bengal often placed opposite entrance doorways may have been a carryover from the structural element of niches in temples, where the sacred idol was placed inside a niche and was always opposite a doorway.

Over time, these foreign rulers recognized the importance of compromise and coexistence with the local population. From the fifteenth century onwards, this shift became evident as many non-Muslims were appointed to high-ranking positions in the royal cabinet. As foreign rulers, the sultans could not rely solely on the military force and officials from their native country as their numbers were limited, so collaboration with the local population became essential. Bengal, being geographically isolated and politically independent, faced repeated invasions from Delhi, and this constant threat significantly influenced the region's architecture and political dynamics.

Maintaining independence was vital for the rulers of Bengal, as was the establishment of a distinct identity. Later Sultans actively patronized the Bangla language, leading to the translation of Sanskrit texts like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as the writing of Mangal-Kavyas, the latter being highly integrative texts. Muslim writers who authored Islamic texts such as Rasul Charita and Nabi Vangsha (stories on the life and lineage of the Prophet) presented their works in ways that were deeply influenced by local culture. They narrated stories of the Arab world, including those of Fatema, Hazrat Ali, and the battles of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but told them in a setting that was familiar to Bengal, an environment replete with storms, cyclones, and tigers. For example at Hazrat Ali and Fatema's wedding feast people chew betel leaves as is customary in Bengal, and at the news of her husband's death, Fatema removed the vermilion from her forehead and broke her bracelets, traditional mourning practices in Bengal. Syed Sultan, who knew the original stories well, deliberately adapted them for the local audience. He explained that native Muslims were familiar with the Ramayana and Mahabharata but knew little about their own religious stories. To bridge this gap, he wrote these stories in Bangla, hoping that the Almighty would forgive him for his modifications. This mission became his life's work, with Nabi Vangsha being a very significant text of the punthi genre. We might not have known about these texts had it not been for the meticulous editing of the punthi manuscripts by the late Professor Dr. Ahmad Sharif published by the Bangla Academy, Dhaka.

TDS: Islamic civilisation is typically seen as city-centric, yet in Bengal, it has been predominantly rural. How has this been possible?

PH: The census of 1872, the first official one conducted under British rule shockingly disclosed that Muslims were more numerous in Bengal compared to other parts of India and that even within Bengal, its eastern part, the more rural one held the majority of the Muslim population. Richard M. Eaton ties this phenomenon to the predominance of agriculture in the eastern region; this in turn being related to the gradual eastward shift of the Ganges River. The creation of a fertile new delta made it more suitable for agriculture, while the western part where the capitals of Gaur and Pandua were located became relatively less productive agriculturally. Eaton also attributes the large scale

conversion to Islam in the east to the influence of pirs or spiritual leaders, described as "charismatic individuals" rather than strictly religious figures who came and settled among the rural agricultural communities. Many of them also spearheaded agricultural efforts, clearing forests or settling of land. For example, Khan Jahan Ali (d. 1459), the famous saint of Bagerhat is described in his tomb inscription as a military officer who defeated local Hindu kings, cleared the jungle, and constructed mosques. Subsequently he became venerated as a pir, pushing his original military identity as indicated by his inscription title of ulugh, to the background. These leaders inspired the local population to pursue agriculture and facilitated their conversion to Islam. Conversion was easier as the rigid caste system of Brahmanism was less prevalent in this region and there were many who followed cults of local deities. These individuals, already engaged in various agricultural activities, had more fluid religious practices and were more receptive to converting to Islam. Conversion too, was more of a 'cultural adaptation' than a radical change to a different and foreign religious order.

TDS: How did the architectural landscape in Bengal change during the Mughal period compared to the Sultanate period?

PH: While the Sultans were fiercely independent and fought every effort of take-over by the powers that ruled from Delhi, they patronized an architecture with a distinct regional identity. Contrarily, the Mughals, themselves an imperial power ruled the provinces from their north Indian capitals of Delhi, Lahore or Agra. Bengal under the Mughals was just another province or subah of the Mughal empire, albeit one that yielded the highest revenue to the imperial coffers. From an independent sultanate, it was reduced to provincial status. The marked difference in architectural styles between the Sultanate and Mughal eras springs from this change in status. The extant monuments of Dhaka, the Mughal provincial capital clearly bears allegiance to the architectural style of the capitals.

During the Mughal period brick continued to be the predominant construction material. This was in contrast to north India, where the monuments were in a grand scale and the material, stone, red sandstone and marble. As an imperial power governing all of India from their capitals in the north, the Mughals maintained a consistent architectural style across their empire. So Mughal buildings everywhere even from the exterior are easily identifiable because of their plastered surfaces often broken into rectangular panels, high domes and imposing entrances. The lime plaster used in Bengal used to be polished to a shine to resemble the marble surfaces of imperial prototypes. It is significant that while mosques and other official architecture sponsored by the ruling Muslim elite followed the imperial Mughal style, contemporary temples opted for the Sultanate mode of the preceding period. So that the brick temples of this period stand in sharp contrast to Mughal mosques, palaces, gates and caravansaries. The brick and terracotta temples of Bengal have arched entrances, curved cornices and their exteriors are encrusted with terracotta panels depicting tales of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Some continue to have the chala ceilings of Sultanate times, now covering the entire building instead of a particular part, while others have spires which usually hide a dome below.

TDS: Beyond royal and religious structures, what was the general housing situation for people in Bengal during the Middle Ages?

PH: Bengal was and still is primarily an agricultural society, with most people living in rural areas. Landownership was limited, and urban centres were few. Majority of the people resided in simple huts, and as noted by Niharranjan Ray in his seminal work *Bangalir Itihas: Adiparba*, the living conditions for the general population in Bengal remains largely unchanged over time. People lived hand-to-mouth, and their houses of clay were often vulnerable to decay from rain and wind. The architectural structures we have cited were exceptions as they were built with care and commissioned by influential individuals. While royal residences have not survived, historical accounts from foreign travellers describe some Nawabs (provincial rulers) residing in tents and wooden houses, which have not endured. In contrast, mosques and temples, constructed as places of veneration and with meticulous care, have lasted longer.

The interview was taken by Priyam Paul



Shait Gombuj Mosque, Bagerhat



Central Prayer Hall, Adina Mosque, Pandua, Malda District

and voussoir technique, also known as the 'true' arch was a rare architectural technique in India before the arrival of the Turks. In Bengal, the indigenous construction depended on a trabeate system which used posts and lintels or beams to span openings such as doors and windows in walls. The arcuate method popularized by the Turks is technically more advanced and allows the spanning of larger wall openings as well as the construction of vaults and dome. This new technique may account for the survival of some of the mosques from the Sultanate period, although their vaults and domes were the first to fall.

TDS: You mentioned in your book that the presence of a large number of rivers in Bengal had not been a barrier to communication but rather

to prayer (azan) could not be heard over long distances. Minarets also symbolised the presence of Muslims in an area; their scarcity in this region also seems to be influenced by geographical factors. Villages, often accessible only by boat are almost invisible from the rivers due to the dense vegetation that surrounds them and seem isolated from each other specially when there are floods. Constructing tall minarets are unnecessary if they are not visible or if the azan cannot be heard from afar.

TDS: What is the historical significance of the mosques commissioned by the kings in this region, and what materials were typically used in their construction?

PH: Mosques built by kings or high ranking officials are usually larger, better built, and use higher quality or more expensive material. They are usually dated and therefore serve as a primary source of history. Their inscriptions and styles are also keys to the taste of the elite and often a clue to the particular identity that the patron chose to highlight. The Adina Mosque (1375) in Pandua, Malda district of West Bengal, India is a good example to illustrate this point. This mosque was constructed in the capital city by Sultan Sikandar Shah, an early independent sultan after he had twice defeated Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq of Delhi in battle. In the mosque inscription, Sikandar Shah proudly referred to himself as the greatest ruler among the Arabs and Persians, with no mention of Bengal or India, making it clear that he sought to draw legitimacy from the central Islamic lands.

We know that brick was the traditional building material in Bengal. The massive structures at Paharpur and Mainamati were constructed with brick. As the region lacked natural stone, mosques built entirely of stone are rare. The Adina Mosque is the largest mosque in India and uniquely follows the classical Islamic architectural mosque plan of Western Asia. It is notable for its lavish stone facing. This uniqueness and identification with the well known style of West Asia was deliberate and the logic for choosing this style is borne out by the historical events of that time.

It is important to acknowledge that, in the early years, temple destruction was almost a consequential act following the conquest. As prominent religious symbols of a conquered people temples were the primary targets. This practice was not unique to Muslim rulers; destruction of temples of rival kingdoms and carrying away of images of patron gods as trophies was also known in pre-Muslim times in India. In the Adina Mosque, one notices how the external stone veneer has been sourced from Hindu structures. Similarly, many images of deities can be seen around the plinth of the Tribeni Mosque mentioned earlier. Construction of mosques, specially a

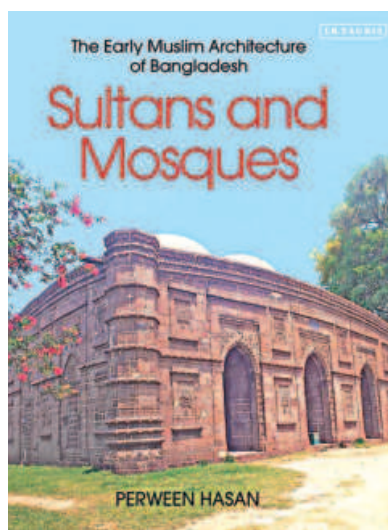
in the National Museum suggest that wood was also used. Stone columns, lintels, as well as blocks to sculpt icons were obtained from Bihar, as there was no stone available in Bengal. Apart from brick or wooden examples, there must have been others—small, informally built temples made of mud, bamboo and thatch that resembled the residential huts of much of the rural population.

A distinct feature of mosques in Bengal is the presence of multiple mihrabs, uncommon in other regions. The mihrab or niche indicating the qibla, is perhaps the only indispensable or key element in a mosque.

The primary difference between temple and mosque is dictated by its function. Whereas in a temple the central chamber housing the deity is designed to accommodate only the officiating priest, a mosque must accommodate people for the five daily prayers—collective performance of which is not mandatory but preferred. A congregation is mandatory for the Friday afternoon prayer which requires the collective participation of all male Muslims. To accommodate the Friday prayer a larger space is required and that is provided by the Jami mosque.

Although there is evidence of Muslim presence in Bengal before the Turkish conquest of 1204, the earliest architectural record dates back to 1221 to an inscription of a khaṅqah (hostel for pious men) in Birbhum district of West Bengal. The earliest extant monument is the Mosque at Tribeni in Hughly, West Bengal, India built in 1298. This is a typical large mosque enclosing a rectangular space with a row of arched niches (mihrabs) in the west which indicate the qibla or direction of Mecca. As historically and strategically this is a very important building its plinth, piers and parts of the external surface are faced with stone.

Most village mosques were single chambers made of mud, bamboo and thatch as in temples, perhaps larger in size, but much like the rural homes of the villagers; the only distinctive feature of the mosque being the projection of the mihrab on the west (qibla) side. Such mosques exist even today, although their numbers are



facilitated connectivity. How did geographical features like heavy rainfall and the distinctive climate impact its architecture?

PH: In this riverine terrain the villages are like small islands, specially during monsoons, and travelling by country boat was the only way to travel long distances. A natural mode of communication was in place, but as a mode of transport it was slow, specially when long distances had to be negotiated. So it was more practical to have small mosques to service small rural communities. Perhaps on Fridays and on religious festivals people would make the extra effort to travel to the nearest Jami mosque.

The distinct architectural style of Bengal was shaped by its unique geographical features. Clay found most abundantly in the delta was formed and fired to make brick, the primary building material. The curved cornice of Sultanate brick buildings was a distinctive feature that was derived from the curvature of the bamboo frames that roofed the indigenous huts made of more temporal material such as bamboo, thatch and mud. Although many mosques were built, the hot, humid climate largely contributed to

Pakistan appointed Mohammad Rizwan as skipper yesterday for the white-ball tours of Australia and Zimbabwe, replacing Babar Azam who stepped down this month. Rizwan will lead the squad with Azam and Shaheen Shah Afridi also named after being dropped from the last two Tests against England in the series Pakistan won 2-0 on Saturday. "It is an honour to lead Pakistan. We will fight hard to bring good results on the tours, said Rizwan.



Chaotic off the pitch, sublime on it

SPORTS REPORTER

Success and controversy are apparently walking hand in hand for Bangladesh in their title defence of SAFF Women's Championship in Kathmandu.

The charges of Peter Butler had started their campaign with a frustrating 1-1 draw against Pakistan, and have ever since created controversies off the field, all the while putting up stunning displays on the pitch, the latest of which was in the semifinals at the Dasharath Stadium yesterday in a 7-1 thrashing of Bhutan.

Following the emphatic 3-1 win against five-time champions India, which ensured Bangladesh their passage to the last four as group winners, it was expected that the team would put an end to the controversies there and stay united till the end of the campaign.

Yet, captain Sabina Khatun created more controversy with a Facebook post, apparently a dig at the coach, before coming up with an apology post pretty soon. Former coach Golam Rabbani Choton shared his opinion on media, riling up Butler even further, just ahead of the semifinals.

There was uncertainty over whether Sabina would play a part in this match after having skipped Saturday's training, reportedly with a bout of fever. Well, she started and scored a brace, silencing the criticism and controversy surrounding the team.

It was, however, Tohura Khatun, the wizard from Kalsindur who starred for the defending champions with a hat-trick as Bangladesh ran riot against a team they had routed 8-0 at the same stage of the competition two years ago.

The 21-year-old striker scored her first in the 15th minute of the match, after

"I have been in Bangladesh for eight-nine months and I have realised that it was always going to be trouble, so I just take it with a pinch of salt. I am far too professional to be irked by or be provoked by people who have not played at the level I have played at, who have not coached at the level I have coached at and don't have that level of professionalism and common decency"

BANGLADESH COACH PETER BUTLER

Rituporna Chakma had given Bangladesh a seventh-minute lead with a bullet of a shot, with a wonderful curling effort from the edge of the box following a bewildering pirouette to shrug off her marker.

Sabina, the top-scorer of last edition, opened her account with a tap-in on 27 minutes before Tohura doubled her tally with a strike almost identical to her first eight minutes later.

Sabina rounded off the Bhutanese keeper to grab her second of the game two minutes later before Bhutan pulled one back, thanks to some defensive miscommunication from Bangladesh on 41 minutes.

While the coach took off a number of forwards and brought on some fresh legs in the second half, Tohura still had the legs to complete her hat-trick with a placing shot in the 58th minute before defender Sheuli Azim completed the rout with a header in the 72nd minute.

The Bangladesh coach praised the team's effort and the work he has done since taking charge eight months ago.

"It was nice to come here today and pull up a performance with a group of girls who have not disappointed. We have worked extremely hard for the last six-seven months to create that competitive nature and environment that you need if you want to progress," Butler told reporters at the post-match press conference while pointing finger at people who are trying, according to him, to destabilise the team.



BARCA slay hosts Real

Two goals inside two minutes from Robert Lewandowski and strikes from Lamine Yamal and Raphinha – all goals being scored in a one-sided second half – saw Barcelona crush hosts Real Madrid 4-0 inside a closed-lid Santiago Bernabeu in a LaLiga game on Saturday. Lewandowski's strikes stemmed the flow of attacks from Real Madrid, who were caught by Hansi Flick's offside trap 12 times with eight of those calls against star forward Kylian Mbappe. The Clasicos win saw Barca stay on top of the league with 30 points, six ahead of second-placed Real.



I would say at the moment we're in a flow. We can celebrate this win, I gave the players two days off... it's a good day to celebrate this, but also to be focussed, focussed on the next matches we have.

— Barca coach Hansi Flick

We don't have to throw everything in the bin, we just have to forget the last 30 minutes – we can't give up, we just have to learn. We came out of the last defeat well and we have to do the same, I am certain we will do better.

— Real coach Carlo Ancelotti



Hansi Flick is the first coach to win his first Clasicos clash by more than three goals in any competition since Jorge Valdano with Real Madrid in January 1995 (5-0). He is also the first Barca coach to make his Clasicos debut at the Santiago Bernabeu with a win since Terry Venables on 2 September 1984 (0-3).

Real Madrid ended a run of 42 straight games unbeaten in LaLiga (W31 D11), only one game behind the historical record in the competition by Barcelona between April 2017 and May 2018 (G43 W34 D9).

Aged at 36 years and 66 days, Robert Lewandowski became the oldest player to score a brace in El Clasicos in the 21st century in any competition.

Robert Lewandowski has scored 14 goals in the ongoing LaLiga season, three more than any other player in the top five European leagues (Erling Haaland – 11 goals).

Real were caught offside 12 times over the course of the match, their most in a league game since March 2013 (also 12 vs Celta Vigo), with two of those incidents seeing Kylian Mbappe goals disallowed.

A two-fold challenge for Shanto

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh's all-format captain Najmul Hossain Shanto expressed a wish to step down from captaincy after the ongoing South Africa Test series, the first match of which the Tigers lost by seven wickets in Mirpur last week and the final game to be played in Chattogram from tomorrow.

Shanto is understood to be waiting for a discussion with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque

Ahmed before making up his mind regarding captaincy. Bangladesh have produced positive results under Shanto – the Tigers' maiden Test



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

series sweep over hosts Pakistan in Rawalpindi in August-September being the highlight. However, pressure can be telling for someone who has to oversee a team in all formats.

Even someone like Mominul Haque, who was captain only in Tests, was made to relinquish his role after a string of bad performances with the bat.

Like Mominul, Shanto too is a key top-order batter. If Mominul's batting had become an issue, Shanto might as well feel that the toll of captaincy might hamper his batting

in the long run. Thus, not only the team management but even on a personal level, Shanto would desperately want his willow to do the talking in the second Test against South Africa.

In the last 12 months, Shanto has played nine Tests and averaged just above 25. His only ton during this period was also as the skipper – during the home Test series against New Zealand in November-December last year when he had to stand in as a replacement for then Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan.

However, in the six Tests prior to that New Zealand series, Shanto had averaged just over 48, a purple patch where he scored three of his five Test tons.

But since he officially took over the captaincy role, his batting took a hit, drawing criticisms, even though his tactical nous as a leader has been praised.

Shanto's last big contribution with the bat came last month in Chennai in the first Test against India in which he hit 82.

Shanto's batting method and technique, however, looked similar during and before his captaincy. The question remains whether he is feeling the pinch of having too much on his plate now.

The final Test against South Africa is a series decider with World Test Championship points up for grabs.

Shanto and Co had a gruelling training session in Chattogram yesterday. Chattogram has offered good batting surfaces over the years and it could be what is needed to ease Shanto's predicament as a batter.

For Shanto, having a positive outing with the bat in the final game against the Proteas might just help him get his form back and acquire the mental assuredness to make a call on his captaincy.

New hope in football revolves around Tabith

ANISUR RAHMAN

When legendary footballer Kazi Salahuddin was elected as the president of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) some 16 years ago in 2008, hopes were that the former footballer-turned-organiser would revive the country's declining football and elevate it to a new height. But unlike his playing days, Salahuddin failed to deliver by and large as an administrator. By announcing he would not compete in the BFF elections, Salahuddin ended his 16-year tenure as the BFF boss, opening the door for Tabith Awal to get elected as the president in the polls held in Dhaka on Saturday.

Tabith, a businessman, politician, and former footballer, won the elections by a landslide, receiving 123 of the 128 votes casted by

the delegates and will be the BFF president for the next four years.

After four consecutive reigns under Salahuddin, former footballers and members of the country's football fraternity are expecting something good from the newly elected committee, especially from new president Awal and senior vice-president Imrul Hasan, in the next four years.

"After Imrul was elected senior vice president unopposed, it was widely expected that Tabith was going to become president and it happened yesterday [Saturday]. I think this pair can be good for our football," former Bangladesh footballer Golam Sarwar Tipu told The Daily Star.

The former national coach also explained the logic behind his thinking, "Tabith himself was a player. He is a capable organiser



as he runs a football club [NoFel Sporting Club]. Besides, he is passionate towards football, a well-behaved person and doesn't impose any decision on anyone. So, I want to keep my faith in him. Let's see what happens.

"Imrul is an experienced organiser

who is running Bashundhara Kings brilliantly and built up a good sports structure there. So, the pair of Tabith and Imrul can do something different for football," Tipu added.

Even though Salahuddin has stepped aside, seven members of

the previous executive committee – Tipu Sultan, Mahi Uddin Selim, Jakir Hossain Chowdhury, Mahfuza Akter Kiran, Satyajit Das Rupu, Imteaz Hamid Sabuj and Bijon Barua – were elected in the new 14-member committee.

Four fresh faces were elected as vice-presidents – Nasser Shahrear Zahedee, Wahid Uddin Chowdhury Happy, Sabbir Ahmed Arif and Fahad Mohammed Ahmed Karim. "I thought the incumbent members would go through difficulty but they hardly faced any problem in getting into the committee again. Let's see what they do under new leadership," said Tipu, who is however not familiar with the four vice-presidents who were elected for the first time.

Former footballer Ashraf Uddin Ahmed Chunnun wants to reserve his judgement on the new

committee for now, saying, "It's too early to comment on the newly elected committee but I hope the country's football bounces back under new leadership."

The former national forward also emphasised on grassroots football which has been overlooked over the years.

"There is no alternative to going back to the grassroots football – setting up district, school and university competitions. The current committee should first make short, mid and long-term development plans," said Chunnun, adding that vice president Zahedee could be an important figure in developing the country's football.

"Zahedee has been running Shams Ul Huda Football Academy for a long time. He is dedicated to football and the committee should utilise him," said Chunnun.

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No plan to lift ban on extremist groups

Says CA's press wing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government does not have any plan to lift the ban on extremist groups that were outlawed in recent decades.

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing Files issued a notification clarifying the government's stance on the issue on its Facebook page yesterday.

"Extremist outfits, Hizb ut-Tahrir and Ansarullah Bangla Team are banned in Bangladesh. The Interim Government led by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has a zero-tolerance policy towards all extremist groups in the country," the notification said.

It said the government's attention had been drawn to a social media post by writer Taslima Nasreen, who "falsely claimed early this week that the Interim Government had lifted the ban on the two groups".

"Bangladesh does not have any plan to lift the ban on the two groups or other extremist groups, which were outlawed in

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People waiting in front of a TCB truck to buy essentials at subsidised prices on Abdul Goni Road near the Secretariat yesterday. The number of people purchasing commodities increases with their market prices going up.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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Mother, daughter raped in Noakhali

Two land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Noakhali court yesterday sent two men to jail on charges of abetting the gang rape of a woman and her daughter on the night of October 21 in Companiganj, Noakhali.

Police arrested Char Elahi residents Hasan, 36, and Harun, 32, on Saturday night after the mother filed a case under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, said Inspector Abdus Sultan of Companiganj Police Station.

The other accused in the case are Rashed, Saiful, Raju and Ibrahim.

Police and locals said the woman, her daughter, and grandchild live in a secluded area. Her husband is a lorry driver in Chattogram and her daughter is a single mother.

According to the complaint, the accused men broke into the victim's hut around 11:00pm and two of them dragged her outside and raped her beside a nearby pond and two others raped her daughter in the house as the arrestees stood guard.

The men raped her daughter in turns until 3:00am, and before leaving, they took away the little money the women had in the house and other valuables, adds the complaint.

AK Fazlul Haq new Bangla Academy president



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent intellectual and writer Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq has been appointed as the president of Bangla Academy.

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs issued a notification announcing his appointment yesterday. Kashem, a former professor of Bangla language and literature at Dhaka University, will serve in this position for the next three years, it added.

Speaking to this newspaper, Kashem said, "Bangla Academy is the national institution of intellectual thinking. But for a long time, it has not been utilised properly. Now, we will aim to revitalise this institution and restore it to its former glory through a collective initiative."

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Trump holds rally at Madison Square Garden

Harris in Philadelphia

REUTERS, New York/Philadelphia

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump headlined a rally at New York's Madison Square Garden yesterday, a high-profile event in a state that last backed a Republican president in 1984.

Opponent Vice President Kamala Harris traversed Philadelphia, the largest city and a Democratic stronghold in must-win Pennsylvania.

Speaking at the Church of Christian Compassion in the morning, Harris didn't mention Trump by name. "In this moment we do face a real question: what kind of country do we want to live in?" she said.



Trump's rally in Manhattan, like Harris' event in Houston on Friday with Beyonce, hopes to lean on star power to support local congressional candidates ahead of the Nov. 5 election.

U.S. billionaire Elon Musk, who is supporting Trump's reelection bid with his X social media platform, enormous wealth and cash giveaways that have raised legal questions will be among the featured speakers, the Trump campaign announced.

Trump, a New York celebrity for decades, will use the event at the iconic venue known for Knicks basketball games and Billy Joel concerts to deliver his closing argument against Harris.

"We want to close it out with a beautiful bang," he said last week. Polls show the rival candidates are neck and neck in the battleground states that will decide the next president with just over a week until

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Ex-minister Mosharraf arrested

Former DMP chief Faruq barred from leaving country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested former housing and public works minister engineer Mosharraf Hossain in the capital's Bashundhara Residential Area yesterday in a case filed over the death of BNP activist Mokbul.

Mosharraf, also a presidium member of the Awami League, was sued over the death that took place on December 7, 2022, in Platan area.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ziadur Rahman sent him to jail after police produced him before the court, seeking confinement in jail, said a court staffer.

On September 30 this year, Mahfuzur Rahman, a BNP activist, filed the case against 256 people, including former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and 700 unnamed persons over the murder with Paltan Police Station.

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Mosharraf Hossain

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel bombarded Hezbollah and Hamas targets in Lebanon and Gaza yesterday, with no respite in the conflict one day after its strikes on Iran raised fears of a broader war.

The Israeli military said it had killed 70 Hezbollah fighters and struck 120 targets in southern Lebanon and carried out "precision strikes" on weapons factories and storage facilities in the Iran-backed group's southern Beirut stronghold over the past day.

In Gaza, it said, it had eliminated "40 terrorists over the past day". Correspondents and witnesses in Gaza confirmed that the north of the Palestinian territory had been hit.

Following Saturday's Israeli air strikes, which killed at least four soldiers, Iran said it had a "duty" to respond, but its military said it was prioritising a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also seemed to indicate that Israel was done striking Iran, saying the attack on Saturday was "precise and powerful, achieving all of its objectives".

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei took to social media to say that the attack "should neither be exaggerated or minimised".

In his post yesterday, Khamenei said Iran should make Israel "understand the strength, will,

and initiative of the Iranian nation and youth".

In Gaza, which UN human rights chief Volker Turk says is facing its "darkest hour", Israeli forces are again carrying out a ground and air campaign in the north that they say aims to prevent Hamas from regrouping.

At least 42,924 Palestinians, a majority of them civilians, have since been killed in the Israeli offensive on Gaza, according to figures from the Hamas-ruled territory's health ministry, which the UN considers reliable.

The war has since drawn in Iran-backed groups across the region, most notably Hezbollah in Lebanon, where Israel has launched a major aerial campaign and ground incursions since late September.

Smoke hung over the suburbs of Beirut after overnight strikes, which came after the Israeli military issued new evacuation warnings.

The Lebanese news agency reporting bombing in the southern cities of Tyre and Nabatiyeh.

The war has left at least 1,615 people dead in Lebanon since September 23, according to an AFP tally based on official figures, though the real number is likely to be higher due to gaps in the data.

The Israeli military said four of its soldiers were killed in southern Lebanon, bringing to 36 the total number of Israeli soldiers killed since the start of ground operations on September 30.

Israel pounds Gaza, Lebanon

Claims 70 Hezbollah fighters killed; IDF strikes 120 targets in southern Lebanon

- 40 Palestinians killed in 24 hrs in Gaza
- Gaza facing its "darkest hour": UN rights chief
- Death toll in enclave rises to 42,924

Jubo League man stabbed to death

Two arrested

A CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police have arrested two suspects in the murder of an activist of Jubo League, the youth body of the Awami League, in Rajshahi city.

The deceased, 25-year-old Mohammad Mim from the Ramchandrapur area, was beaten and stabbed to death on Saturday night, according to a case filed by his mother Keya Begum at Boalia Police Station yesterday evening.

Sabina Yeasmin, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, said Keya filed the case against 13 named and eight to 10 unnamed accused.

Witnesses said a group of 10 to 15 youths aged between 20 and 30 first caught and beat up Mim in the Sagarpara area of

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A woman walks with children while crossing from Lebanon into Syria on foot at the Masnaa border crossing as they flee the ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, in Al Masnaa, Lebanon yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Illegal migration harming Indo-Bangla peace'

Says Amit Shah; Assam chief minister seeks coordinated effort to stop 'infiltration'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Two senior leaders of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, said yesterday that infiltration from Bangladesh was on the rise and that

coordinated efforts to stop it were needed to ensure regional peace and stability.

Shah, on his first visit to West Bengal in six months, raised the issue of cross-border infiltration at two separate events, at one of which he accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's government of being involved in "state-sponsored infiltration" and corruption.

At both events, Shah urged the voters in West Bengal to bring about a change of guard by putting the BJP in power in the next assembly elections in 2026 to put an end to infiltration.

"Illegal migration harms India-Bangladesh peace.

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Amit Shah Himanta