



Pace of reforms will determine time for polls

Says Prof Yunus in interview with AFP

AFP, Baku

Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus yesterday told AFP that reforms are needed before his country can elect a government following the ouster of autocratic former ruler Sheikh Hasina.

The speed of reforms "will decide how quick the election will be," the Nobel Peace Prize winner and micro-finance pioneer said in an interview on the sidelines of the COP29 climate talks in Baku.

But he insisted that he would steer the country towards a democratic vote.

"That's a promise that we made, that as soon as we are ready, we'll have the elections, and the elected people can take over, run the country," he said.

He said the country needed to quickly agree on possible constitutional reforms, as well as the shape of the government, parliament and election rules.

"We are the interim government, so our period should be as short as possible."

Yunus was named to lead the government as "chief adviser" after a student-led uprising toppled Hasina in August.

Tens of thousands demonstrated in protests against job quotas that morphed into a nationwide struggle to end Hasina's 15 years of iron-fisted rule.

More than 700 people were killed, many in a brutal police crackdown, before Hasina fled to India on August 5.

Hasina rule saw widespread human rights abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killings of her political opponents.

"Any government would be concerned about stability. We are also," he said.

"We are hoping that we can sort it out and have a peaceful law and order," he added.

"It's only three months after the revolution."

In the three months since becoming Bangladesh's interim leader following a student-led revolution, Yunus has endured political turmoil, impatient cries for elections, and destructive flooding across the low-lying nation.

Impatience for elections in Bangladesh has gained pace since Hasina's ouster, and the silver-haired technocrat said he shared concerns for peace and security in the nation of 170 million.

Bangladesh is struggling financially and, earlier this month, Indian firm Adani slashed cross-border electricity supply by half due to some \$850 million in unpaid bills.



"We are the interim government, so our period should be as short as possible."
PROF MUHAMMAD YUNUS



A group of protesters, injured during the July uprising, stage a sit-in at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR), where they are currently being treated. The protesters, some in wheelchairs or with crutches, demand proper treatment and fast release of the July Smriti Foundation funds. The photo was taken early today. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

JULY UPRISING The injured take to the streets

Demand better treatment, funds; health adviser faces outrage at NITOR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of protesters who were injured during the July mass uprising and are now undergoing treatment, were blocking the road in front of the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) till midnight, demanding proper treatment.

They also demanded quick release of funds from the July Smriti Foundation for all the victims.

The protests began after Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum went to the hospital to visit them. She had to leave NITOR in a different vehicle after her car was blocked.

Accompanied by British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke, she went there around 11:30am.

When the two were leaving the hospital after talking to a few patients, the other injured victims gathered outside and blocked the adviser's car on the hospital premises, witnesses said.

Some lay in front of the vehicle, while others climbed onto it.

The protocol officers pushed them away during the protests, they alleged.

In response to the situation, the health adviser left in another vehicle. The UK high commissioner also had to leave the hospital in a different car.

The protesters said they will remain on the street until the advisers come back and talk to them all, and ensure proper treatment and the disbursement of funds.

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STUDENT MOVEMENT Grassroots committees to be formed soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The student movement against discrimination will form grassroots-level committees as soon as possible with students who participated in the July uprising.

Besides, central organising and central executive committees will be formed by next week, its leaders decided at a nearly four-hour-long meeting at their office at the capital's Banglamotor yesterday.

More than 80 of the 158 coordinators joined the meeting.

The appointments of new advisers to the government, the relation between the platform and the administration, the question of whether the president should stay, SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Star INTERVIEW

The Islami Andolan Bangladesh was founded in 1987 by Syed Fazlul Karim, the pir of Charmonai in Barishal, as Islami Shashontantra Andolan. It took its current name in 2008. In light of the recent realignment of political forces, it has become important to understand the stance and vision of key Islamist platforms. This interview of Islami Andolan chief Syed Mohammad Rezaul Karim, done on October 26, is the second in a series of interviews with leaders of Islamist parties.

Reforms first, then polls Says Islami Andolan Bangladesh chief

TANIM AHMED and RASHIDUL HASAN

The Islami Andolan Bangladesh prioritises reforms over elections but also believes the government should announce a timeline of its own accord. Still in talks with other Islamist parties for a grand coalition, Islami Andolan chief Syed Mohammad Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star during an exclusive interview that it favoured proportional representation instead of the prevailing 'first past the post' election system.

The Islamist party's chief stressed he was unwilling to compromise on reforms. "The reforms should be done well and quickly so that we can move on to elections. But the priority must be on reforms."

Ameer of the Islamist party established

in 1987 as the Islami Shashantantra Andolan (which later turned into the Islami Andolan Bangladesh), Rezaul Karim, said he was not willing to wait too long either, as reforms ploughed on. "In terms of a timeline, I would say a year or a year and a half."

"But it would be nice to hear some sort of a timeline from the interim government too," he said regarding the next national elections.

Also the pir of Charmonai, Syed Md Rezaul Karim, said all the Islamist parties were working towards a grand coalition. "We are holding discussions and hope to have a united front for the elections." He indicated that the Islamist parties would try to go to the polls under one umbrella and lend their support in favour of the

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CARBON NEUTRALITY GOAL World must hit target by 2030s Says report as leaders haggle over climate action at COP29

AFP, Baku

Global leaders offered competing visions on how to tackle climate change at UN-led talks yesterday as a new report warned that the world must reach carbon neutrality much sooner than planned.

Planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions from oil, gas and coal rose to record highs this year, according to preliminary research from an international network of scientists at the Global Carbon Project.

The report came as leaders gathered in Azerbaijan for COP29 climate talks aimed at reaching a deal to boost funding for poorer nations so they can adapt to climate shocks and transition to cleaner energy.

The research found that to meet the Paris agreement's ambitious goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the world now needs to reach net-zero CO2 emissions by the late 2030s - instead of 2050.

"This is what the presidency has been promoting since the beginning of this year - the time window is narrowing, shrinking - and we need to act urgently," Yalchin Rafiyev, Azerbaijan's lead negotiator for COP29, told AFP.

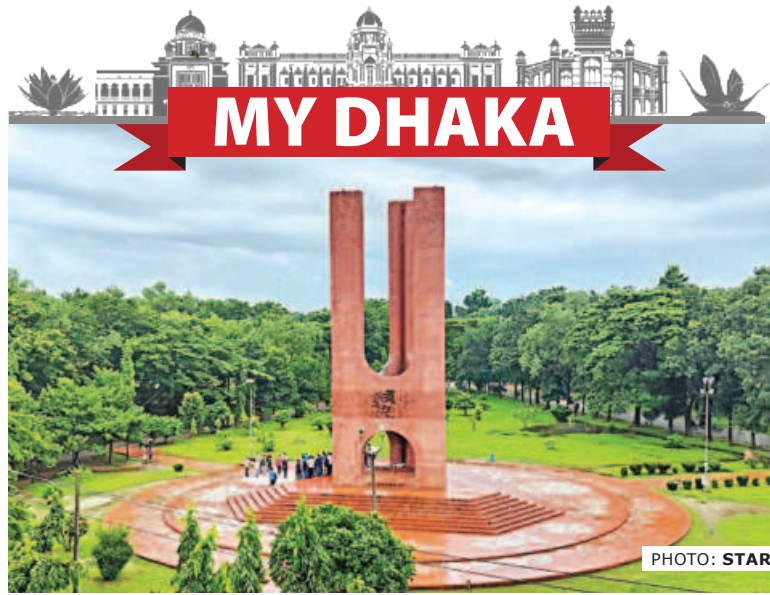
"There are still possibilities for keeping 1.5C within reach", and striking a deal on climate finance "will definitely pave the way for us to realise this opportunity".

The warning comes with growing concern about the future of global climate action after the election of Donald Trump, who has vowed to again pull the

Global CO2 emissions to hit record high in 2024

\$1.3 trillion climate finance sought from wealthy nations

স্বাস্থ্য পণ্য দেশের জন্য
স্বাস্থ্য টায়ালটিজ লিমিটেড



DHAKA WEEKEND GOALS Birds, fritters, and campus life at JU

RBR

In a thicket of Mahogany, Segun, and Raintrees, the Jahangirnagar University (JU) campus is a rolling 697.56 acres of topographical beauty. A few kilometres from the main city on the Dhaka-Aricha highway, the JU campus can be your next weekend outing.

The splendour of the campus doubles up with seasonal blooms of fiery red Krishnachuras, pretty mauve Jaruls, golden Sonaluts, Kanakchuras, and Radhachuras in the summer, and in winter, the shimmering lakes and ponds of the campus host the annual migratory flight of Whistling Teals, Pintail Ducks, and Mallards. The 20-bigha jungle inside the campus is also a haven for reptiles and rare animals.

Simply put, JU is a picturesque, ecologically diverse destination. Much has been said and written about the

attractions of the campus, but I want to simply put to the fore the unknown fun facts in and around the campus.

Dotted with thatched food stalls and tea stalls throughout, each vendor comes up with their specialty spin for the place to go trending.

Crispy oyster mushroom fritters, which is basically a version of tempura mushroom, is one surprise treat you will find in the stalls selling all sorts of fried vegetable yummys. Oyster mushrooms, dipped in a thick batter of flour, egg,

and spices, are addictive because of their crispy outer crust and tender meaty texture inside. This item is a hit with the students and they merrily share a plate.

Kodbel or Wood apple mush, served

in the hard shell of the fruit is such a palate cleanser. Mixed with hot chilli, fresh coriander, and mustard oil, the brown patchy fibrous pulp with crunchy seeds, sends out a mouth-watering tamarind-like scent. The mama who makes the bhorta is famous even among outsiders visiting the campus. His van, stationed under the canopy of a big tree, has all sorts of sour and citrusy delights.

Tea is a steady item everywhere in the city, but right beside the food stalls sits a young boy brewing his special tea with bay leaves and nigella seeds. Lightly sugared, this black tea is an instant energy booster.

"The mamas or food sellers here on the campus never compromise with the food quality because students eat

there. Fresh vegetables are used from nearby farms, oil is changed frequently and in their sense of the word, they try to maintain hygiene," says Shadhin, an ex-student who came to spend his weekend evening amidst the green.

Cashing in on weekenders visiting the campus, local fishmongers set up their pop-up retailers right at the turn of the main gates as you head out. With dim yellow light from the moshals or burning oil canisters held up by tall sticks, the set-up is spread out by big polythene sheets, where a group of non-nonsense fishmongers brings in their best catch from the Bhairab night fish market.

Giant catches of rohu, coral, the rare bagha ayer, or long-whiskered catfish, are up for sale and go off the racks like hotcakes. They also have a man with a big fish blade to cut the fish for you. You just have to be careful that no one else runs off with your purchase in all that chaos of scaling, cutting, etc.



Reforms first, then polls

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alliance candidates instead of trying to field their own candidates in each constituency.

But when asked who would be leading such a coalition, the Islami Andolan leader said most of the parties were leaning towards a proportional representation system. "In such a system there was no need for an electoral alliance and the parties were free to campaign on their own." He explained that in such a scenario, it would be more like a common platform, rather than an electoral alliance.

The benefit, he pointed out, was that each party would be allotted seats in the parliament according to the proportion of their votes. "That way, every single vote counts."

He said, "We have thought about this a lot and also discussed about it with others. This system is in effect in 91 countries. Everyone benefits from such a system."

Rezaul Karim said he believed that the prevailing system was not working out for the people. "We have seen that it only gives rise to fascism." He indicated that successive governments over the course of Bangladesh's existence have

exhibited fascist characteristics, and proportional representation would address that issue.

As for constitutional reforms, the Islami Andolan leader explained that the previous regime had passed a number of laws that were harmful to the people and the country. He said they had also made several changes to the constitution. "Those should be the first ones to be struck out."

Asked about the status of non-Muslims in a state that he aspires for, Rezaul Karim said Islam was the only means to a welfare state where everyone's rights are respected. He said, "I will just say one thing to allay any apprehensions. Islam dictates that the property and assets of a non-Muslim must be treated with equal respect and must be provided equal status as that of a Muslim." Rezaul Karim claimed that was why it had been documented in history that non-Muslims left their native lands and chose to live under Islamic rule.

When asked about women's rights, the *pir* of Charmonai in Barishal said, "Islam gives more rights to women." He continued saying that women's liberty did not mean the right to nudity. "But unfortunately, that is what women's liberty seems to mean.

It only brings destruction to society." However, this Islamist outfit's predecessor Islami Shashantantra Andolan under Rezaul Karim's father had criticised women's sport in 2004. In fact, the organisation had taken to the streets, protesting a women's football tournament. They declared that it was a "disgrace to women".

He said that women's status in Islam was, in fact, higher than that of men. "Islam dictates that if the father and the mother call their child, the child should answer the mother first."

Rezaul Karim said his party had hundreds of thousands of women workers but the policymaking bodies of the party — majlish-e-shura and the executive committee — do not yet have 30 percent women but on their way to getting there. When pressed for a specific number, he reiterated his previous answer that the party was in the process of having 30 percent women in its policymaking bodies.

Regarding President Mohammed Shahabuddin, Rezaul Karim said, "We think he should come forward and remove himself from office for the greater good. I think that would not be much of a problem for us."

Communication channels with US 'still exist': Iran

AFP, Tehran

Iran's top diplomat said yesterday that communication channels with the United States were still open, a week after Donald Trump was elected president.

"The communication channels between us and the Americans still exist," Abbas Araghchi said on the sidelines of a weekly cabinet meeting.

"We have differences with the Americans, which are sometimes very fundamental and central and may not be resolved, but we must manage them to reduce their costs and decrease the tensions," he added.

Araghchi said last month that there was no ground for indirect nuclear talks with the United States.

"We don't see any grounds for these talks, until we can get past the current crisis," Araghchi said on October 14 during a visit to the Gulf sultanate of Oman as part of a regional tour.

Oman has long mediated between Iran and the United States, which cut ties after the 1979 Islamic revolution that saw Western-backed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi ousted.

The remarks by the Iranian top diplomat were echoed by the country's president on Tuesday.

Grassroots committees to be formed soon

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extortion in the name of coordinators, lack of coordination among stakeholders of the uprising were discussed at the meeting.

Most participants said they want to incorporate all student forces that have parted ways after the mass uprising because of lack of coordination, according to multiple sources.

"It is our failure that we couldn't hold the forces together, but from now on, we will try to bring them back under one umbrella to uphold the spirit of our movement," said a coordinator.

The student movement will form district-, upazila- and institution-based committees across the country. "If we have a structure, there will be fewer complaints about individuals posing as coordinators," said a participant.

The student movement against discrimination spearheaded the uprising that led to the fall of the Awami League government on August 5. The student movement on October 22 announced a four-member convening committee. The members are Hasnat Abdullah, Arif Sohel, Abdul Hannan Masud and Umama Fatima.

District-level committees have been formed in Kushtia, Narail, Netrakona, Chuadanga, Sunamganj and Meherpur.

Another aligned platform of the

The injured take to the streets

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The injured protesters — some with bandages on their hands, legs or eyes and others in wheelchairs or with crutches — then left the hospital and blocked the adjacent road.

They declared they would not clear the road until the health adviser met everyone.

They also expressed frustration over not receiving the promised compensation of Tk 100,000 each.

Confirming the incident, Ziaul Haque, additional deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division Police, said the adviser had left safely and her car was not damaged.

As of filing this report around 1:30am today, the protesters were still on the road.

Around 10:30pm last night, Hasnat Abdullah, convenor of the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement, which spearheaded the July uprising, and Mir Mahbubur Rahman Snigdho, general secretary of the July Smriti Foundation and brother of slain student protester Mir Mahfuzur Rahman Mugdho, went to the spot to talk to the protesters.

They said they found many of the injured were not protesters of the movement and were Awami League supporters, adding that the foundation was working to verify and crosscheck the list properly and this was why many of the victims did not yet receive their compensation.

Hasnat mentioned that the health adviser is a cancer patient, and her newly appointed assistant Prof Sayedur Rahman, former BSMMU vice chancellor, may be able to visit instead.

However, the protesters said they will remain on the street, whether they

lose another limb or not, until the advisers come back and talk to them all, and ensure proper treatment and the disbursement of funds.

One protester said he wants the resignation of the health adviser.

Meanwhile, the hospital authorities said those injured in the July uprising were being given the highest priority. Special wards and food have been designated for them.

Shahidul Islam, 19, a protester who was wounded by bullets and is now being treated on the second floor of the hospital, said the adviser and others arrived at the hospital and went to the third floor, where they talked to only a few of the injured.

"There are at least 42 of us receiving treatment on the second floor but the adviser was leaving the hospital without visiting us."

Upon hearing the news, the other injured July protesters, who are being treated at nearby hospitals, joined the protests as well.

At one stage, military personnel stationed near the hospital requested them to return to the hospital.

However, Md Masum, seated in a wheelchair, said they would not leave until the health adviser returned to meet them. "After three long months, she finally comes here but chooses to neglect us."

Expressing his grievances, Masum said, "She became an adviser over our blood. Many of us are yet to receive the promised compensation from the July Foundation."

Al Miraj, an MBA student of IUBAT, was injured in both eyes while protesting in Kakrail on the afternoon of July 19.

He has since been receiving

treatment at the National Institute of Ophthalmology & Hospital. "Doctors have said the treatment for my right eye is not available in the country. We took to the street to demand better treatment."

Currently, 84 injured protesters from the uprising are undergoing treatment at NITOR. Two separate wards are dedicated for them — one in level-2 and another in level-3, according to hospital officials.

Till date, 21 people have had their hands and legs amputated, while six patients have died.

Shahin Alam, a ninth-grader who was injured on August 5, and receiving treatment at NITOR, was also protesting yesterday.

"I was shot in the left leg and underwent four surgeries in NITOR. The doctor told me to come back after nine months. I don't think I'm getting proper treatment here."

Md Badiuzzaman, deputy director of NITOR, said, medical teams from China and Thailand visited them, and there is a team from the UK who are working to assess their treatment. Until yesterday, 15 people have undergone surgeries.

"Moreover, the foreign medical teams have expressed a great deal of satisfaction with our medical procedures. But it will take a long time for the patients' condition to improve, especially those with nerve injuries ... Any claims of us not giving proper treatment are false."

Regarding those who did not receive compensation from July Foundation, he said, "As far as we know, there were some problems with papers of some of the patients, which is why they haven't received the money yet."

World must hit target by 2030s

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United States out of the Paris agreement after taking over the presidency in January.

Some leaders in Baku defended fossil fuels during two days of speeches, while others from countries plagued by climate disasters warned that they were running out of time.

Some of the strongest words came from Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama, who complained that "our speeches full of good words about climate change, change nothing".

Rama skewered the many leaders who skipped this year's event, saying their absences added "insult to injury". Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, meanwhile, urged a "realistic global outlook" that did not prioritise decarbonisation over "our production and social system's sustainability".

"We must protect nature, with man at its core. An approach that is too ideological and not pragmatic on this matter risks taking us off the road to success," the far-right leader said.

"Currently, there is no single alternative to fossil fuel supply."

And Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis warned that countries

"cannot drive ourselves into industrial oblivion".

Those views stood in sharp contrast to the line from countries beset by climate catastrophes and rising sea levels.

Tuvalu's Prime Minister Feleti Penitala Teo insisted that for Pacific island nations like his, "there is simply no time to waste".

He urged countries to "deliver a clear signal that the world is promptly phasing out fossil fuel".

As leaders spoke, negotiators released a fresh draft deal on finance that includes a raft of options to raise funding but leaves unresolved sticking points that have long delayed an agreement.

Most developing countries favour an annual commitment from wealthy countries of at least \$1.3 trillion.

This figure is more than 10 times the \$100 billion annually that a small pool of developed countries — among them the US, the EU and Japan — currently pay.

Some donors are reluctant to promise large new amounts of public money from their budgets at a time when they face economic and political

Let Nizamuddin Markaz's followers hold 1st phase of Biswa Ijtema

Demand Maulana Saad loyalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Tablighi Jamaat faction loyal to Maulana Mohammed Saad Kandhalvi yesterday demanded the government allow the followers of Delhi's Nizamuddin Markaz to hold the first phase of Biswa Ijtema next year.

Speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, leaders of the faction also demanded the Kakrail Markaz, the main centre of Tablighi Jamaat in Bangladesh, be handed over to the followers of the Nizamuddin Markaz.

"It will be a big mistake if anyone tries to deny us our due rights and property," said Muhammad Azimuddin, imam of Kakrail Mosque.

He warned that if such attempts are made,

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Protection of freedom of expression essential for Bangladesh's democratic future

Says US state dept spokesperson

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US state department has said upholding and protecting the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly for all Bangladeshis is necessary to ensure a true democratic future of the country.

The US supports the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association for all, including dissenting and opposition voices, Vedant Patel, a state department spokesperson, told a press briefing on Tuesday.

"These freedoms, in our point of view, are essential elements of any democracy," he said in Washington DC.

He made the comments when asked about his take on a recent November 10 incident in which Awami League activists were not allowed to hold a rally in Dhaka. He was also asked what message the US has for the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus.

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HC scraps ICT case against Khaleda and Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday scrapped the proceedings of a case filed against three people including BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son and party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman in 2016 under section-57 of the Information and Communication Technology (Amendment) Act 2013.

Abdul Kader Sujon, an Awami League leader of Chattogram (South) unit, lodged the case with a court in the district on October 3, 2016 against them for their alleged involvement in issuing a death threat to the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina and defaming Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman via Facebook posts.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus poses for a photo with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres following a high-level LDC meeting at the COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

MIGRANT WORKERS IN MALAYSIA

Trapped in clutches of the syndicate

Speakers urge govt to dismantle the nexus, action against those responsible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rahim (pseudonym), a financially struggling man from Tangail, was lured by a recruiting agency with promises of a job in Malaysia, with a monthly salary of Tk 37,000.

Rahim managed Tk 4.5 lakh and left for Malaysia on March 21 last year, but he has yet to get any job.

Instead, he was kept in a camp with 250 other workers. Eventually, he escaped and is now living with a relative, trying to get back the documents withheld by his employer.

Another worker went to Malaysia in July last year, paying Tk 5.5 lakh. However, he returned three months later after facing torture and ill-treatment and had to borrow money to return home.

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) presented eight such cases at a discussion programme, titled 'Labour Market Syndicate in Malaysia: Loss Assessment and Ensuring Accountability', yesterday at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Speaking at the event, CR Abrar, executive director of RMMRU, said there are hundreds of thousands of such victims.

He urged the government to take effective measures against the syndicate. He also stressed forming a task force to ascertain the number of the victims of the syndicate.

For the past decade, this syndicate has dominated the Malaysian

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'Inclusiveness still a distant dream'

Anu Muhammad tells discussion on 'Bangladesh After a Mass Uprising: Reflections on Reforms'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite a massive uprising and deaths of thousands, the expectations and aspirations sparked by the movement have yet to materialise in rural areas three months later, opined speakers at an event yesterday.

They were speaking at a discussion, titled "Bangladesh After a Mass Uprising: Reflections on Reforms," organised by Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist) at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

At the programme, renowned economist Prof Anu Muhammad said, "I don't think the interim government's actions align with the hopes and expectations that arose after the previous government's fall."

"In my view, the aspirations expressed through graffiti on the walls appear more mature than the government's role. The inclusiveness represented on the walls is not being

reflected in the government's actions," he added.

He also said the dream of an inclusive and equitable Bangladesh, as expressed in art and slogans made by the public, is missing from the words and actions of those connected to the government.

The dream of an inclusive and equitable Bangladesh, as expressed in art and slogans made by the public, is missing from the words and actions of those connected to the government.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Author Altaf Parvez said democratic reforms are necessary in current Bangladesh. But the level of national consensus and inclusiveness necessary for implementing these reforms remains questionable, he said.

Citing the example of the proposed labour commission, Parvez said despite talks of its formation, no official notification had been issued a month after its announcement. "There is a gap in our commitment, and these gaps are becoming pronounced in several districts and upazilas across the country," he said.

"A sort of counter-narrative is also emerging. If you confine the revolution to Dhaka's Ramna

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'Caretaker govt, 2-term limit for prime minister'

Propose eminent citizens to constitutional reform commission as changes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday proposed the restoration of the caretaker government and introduction of a bicameral legislature in the constitution while holding meetings with the constitutional reform commission.

They also proposed limiting the tenure of a prime minister to two terms and a balance of power between the president and the PM.

They said this while attending separate meetings held in the parliament building.

Prof Robaet Ferdous and Dilip Kumar Roy placed written proposals on behalf of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik at one of the meetings. Later Shujan secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar explained the details of the demands.

According to the meeting sources, Shujan proposed the restoration of the caretaker system in the constitution, but the judiciary should not be included in it.

It proposed that the tenure of the caretaker government should be six months.

Shujan also made proposals regarding a prime minister not being in office for over two terms and the balance of power between the president and the PM.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Power balance between PM, president
- Introducing bicameral legislature
- Increasing constituencies to 400
- Making judiciary independent
- Ensuring freedom of expression, media

It also proposed a bicameral legislature, increasing parliament constituencies to 400, of which 100 should be reserved for women. Bicameral is a type of legislature that is divided into two separate assemblies, chambers, or houses.

According to the proposal, direct elections should be held in all seats. In 200 of those seats, a proportionate representation system will be followed. The tenure of the parliament will be four years.

Shujan said the constitution should be a document of truly non-communal characteristics with the recognition of all ethnic minorities.

"The constitution is the supreme law of the state, so it must always be upheld. The Constitution can be amended in the public interest. But as long as a matter is enshrined in the constitution, it has to be followed properly," Shujan said.

The reform commission held separate meetings with Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiuur Rahman and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam.

Mahfuz Anam at the meeting proposed making amendments to the constitution and not rewriting it.

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Petition seeks HC order to review power deal with Adani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a petition with the High Court seeking its directive on the government to review or cancel the electricity agreement with Adani Group of India.

Barrister M Abdul Qaiyum submitted the petition, challenging the legality of the agreement of government with Adani Power (Jharkhand) Limited signed on November 5, 2017.

Qaiyum said the HC may hear the petition next week.

On November 6, the lawyer sent a legal notice to the chairman of Power Development Board and the secretary of the Ministry of Energy, asking to review or cancel the deal with Adani Group in three days.

Qaiyum said many experts have opined that under the agreement, Bangladesh will pay significantly higher prices in comparison to what it pays for its other coal-based power for lower grade coal.

AL, Sheikh family should apologise for Mujib, Hasina's roles

Says Mahfuz Alam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser to the interim government Mahfuz Alam has said members of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's party and family should acknowledge, apologise, and face accountability for Sheikh Hasina's authoritarian rule.

"They should also recognise, apologise, and face trials for his daughter's fascist regime. She has made Sheikh Mujib a subject of sarcasm and ridicule. They should abandon the politics of 'Mujibism' and the idolisation of the Sheikh family," he wrote in his verified Facebook post early yesterday.

He said Sheikh Mujib and his daughter have faced the people's wrath and anger for their respective fascist regimes and the only difference is that, unlike Hasina, Sheikh Mujib was once a popular demagogue of the masses.

"The masses followed him against Pakistani tyranny, but he became a tyrant himself after '71. Due to his support and patronage of Mujibism, Bangladesh became crippled and divided after '71. For his fascist role, people didn't mourn his death in 1975," he said.

He said Mujib will be honoured for his pre-'71 role if his party and family members apologise to the people of Bangladesh for his post-'71 actions, including mass killings, enforced disappearances, corruption, famine, and the 1972 Constitution, which paved the way for BAKSHAL.

He further said Mujib's photo was removed by officers because of his daughter's "fascist rule" in the name and spirit of her post-'71 "authoritarian father".



As part of an initiative by the environment ministry, a raid was conducted in the Lalbagh area of Old Dhaka, targeting polythene factories, yesterday. Several factories were sealed off during the operation. Inset, protesting the drive, factory workers demonstrated in the area, which ultimately led to the magistrate halting the operation.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Inclusiveness still

FROM PAGE 3
area, this kind of narrative will inevitably develop in the margins," he said.

"The question now is -- who will implement these emerging aspirations? Without uniting all political parties on the national platform, effective implementation will not be possible," added Altaf Parvez.

English daily New Age Editor Nurul Kabir said, "After the Liberation War, the country was named the People's Republic of Bangladesh in English. However, in Bangla, it was called 'Gono-Projatontri Bangladesh'. But we were supposed to build the country breaking free from the mentality of being a 'Proja' (subjects). This is not merely a word; it's a concept."

"There are differences between the rights of a citizen and a subject. We have been treated as subjects. We need liberation from this mindset," he said.

Fifty-three years after independence, with a new system emerging through another uprising, it is time to bring these issues to the forefront of discussion, he further said.

"True democracy cannot be established without ensuring the

people's sovereignty. In any constitutional amendment or drafting process, public consent is necessary," he added.

Prof Salimullah Khan said if there is no democracy within political parties, you cannot practice democratic values in the state.

"Democracy doesn't mean exercising your voting rights only. It means a citizen should be able to apply every single right that the state ensures for its citizens in the constitution," he said.

He also said the current electoral system is not adequate. "We saw the election system being sabotaged in 2014, 2018, and 2024. So, it needs to be reformed," he added.

"To ensure democracy, we also need to ensure the right to education for all the citizens. For that, the education system from primary to secondary level must be declared free," said Prof Salimullah.

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, and Dhaka University teacher Moshahida Sultana, also spoke at the event.

Masud Rana, the coordinator of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist), presided over the event.

MA Rab's death anniv today

STAR REPORT

Today is the 49th death anniversary of Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Rab, Bir Uttam.



He was also chief of staff of Liberation Forces and first honorary managing director of "Mukti Joddha Kalyan Trust".

His relatives and well-wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul, said a press release.

Death anniv of Akhtaruzzaman

STAR REPORT

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury, a retired deputy general manager of Janata Bank, said a press release.



On the occasion, a doa mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after the Asr prayers. Prayers will also be offered at the Banani grave in Dhaka.

Akhtaruzzaman, son of late Gouharuzzaman Chowdhury, food secretary, passed away on November 14, 2018.

He left behind his two daughters and a son. He was also a banker of UBL (East Pakistan).

Mother, two kids 'poisoned to death'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A mother and her two children died at Brahmanbaria General Hospital after being admitted there yesterday morning.

Deceased Sharmin Akter, 24, wife of Ashraf Miah of Ghatura Sarkar Bari area, and her two daughters, Rawza, 5, and Nowrin, 3, were poisoned, according to doctors.

The children were brought dead, while the mother died shortly after being admitted, they added.

They were brought in by Ashraf, Sharmin's husband, and his family members, said on-duty doctor Riaz Uddin Mitul.

Sharmin's mother, Rezia Begum, blamed Ashraf over the incident, claiming that he is a drug abuser and the two often fought over family matters.

"We are trying to locate and arrest Ashraf, who fled the hospital knowing about the deaths," said Mozaffar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station.

The victim's family has not filed any complaints yet. Legal action will be taken after an investigation, the OC said.

The bodies have been kept at the hospital morgue for autopsies.

Constitution failed

FROM PAGE 5

remarking that despite its strengths, the constitution has failed to prevent fascism.

Md Lokman Hussain discussed Ahmad's critique of the 1972 constitution, emphasising his advocacy for a truly democratic framework rather than a formal constitutional democracy.

In his closing statement,

Prof Rizwanul Islam noted that Ahmad's satirical works offer a window into Bangladeshi politics. Only an elected assembly should have the mandate to amend the constitution, he added.

During the seminar, students voiced critiques of various constitutional provisions and principles, calling for reforms to address current needs.

Trapped in clutches

FROM PAGE 3

labour market and recruitment process, he said.

"Aspiring and existing migrant workers are suffering significant financial losses. The governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia must work together to address this," he said.

He also demanded fivefold compensation for the damages caused by the syndicate and stressed the need for greater transparency in any bilateral agreements.

Fakhrul Islam, joint secretary of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), said although Malaysia recruits workers from 15 countries, only Bangladesh faces such a syndicate.

"Some dishonest businesses, instead of providing support online, are controlling the recruitment process, inflating costs for workers, and creating inequality among agencies," he said.

With proper government monitoring and adherence to the official list, it will be possible to send workers at a minimum cost, he added.

Despite spending excessively, many workers remain unemployed, he said, accusing recruiting agencies of extorting approximately Tk 1.5 lakh per worker and siphoning large sums abroad.

Fakhrul identified Ruhul Amin Swapan, owner of Catharsis International, and Nur Amin, a Bangladeshi-born Malaysian citizen, as the main figures in the syndicate.

He also alleged that

former ministers, MPs, and influential figures from Awami League were also involved.

BAIRA member Mostafa Mahmud said recruiting agencies were given the power to manage the process in Malaysia in 2021, with nearly 100 individuals working under government support.

He alleged that despite the change in government in August, there has been no effective initiative, and inequality has worsened.

He suggested that rather than focusing on launching lounges for expatriate workers, it would be more effective to reduce travel and visa costs.

He emphasised that a culture of impunity since 2016 has allowed the syndicate to grow stronger.

"US\$100 billion could be earned from the Malaysian labour market if a clear policy for sending migrants to Malaysia was formulated and syndicate members brought to justice," he said, holding the syndicate responsible for increasing the Malaysian visa fee from 1,000 to 10,000 Malaysian ringgit.

Syed Saiful Haque, chairman of the WARBE Development Foundation, said a commission should have been established by the current government to address the irregularities and syndicate control.

Caretaker govt

FROM PAGE 3

He proposed the restoration of the caretaker government system, making a provision that a person cannot be the PM for more than two terms, reducing the absolute power of the PM, and giving powers to the president in some cases.

He also proposed the restoration of balances of power among the executive, legislative, and judiciary.

He also sought a bicameral parliament, while making the judiciary completely independent. A mechanism should be devised to monitor whether the judiciary is functioning properly, he said.

He also proposed making the parliament a place that will ensure accountability of the executive and forming an independent constitution commission to oversee whether the constitution is being followed properly.

The Daily Star editor also said the Anti Corruption Commission, Human Rights Commission and Information Commission, should be made constitutional bodies and

the process of appointment of the heads of these agencies should be mentioned in the constitution.

Anam also proposed ensuring freedom of expression, press and media in the constitution.

In the current constitution, the freedom of media is subjected to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

Anam proposed the exclusion of the rest of the issues except national security. However, the definition of the national interest should be specific, he said.

The reform commission also held meetings with Prof Salimullah Khan, political analyst Jahed Ur Rahman, mufti Saiful Islam, and mufti Abdullah Masum.

Reform commission's head Prof Ali Riaz and other members attended the meetings.

HC scraps ICT

FROM PAGE 3

delivered the verdict following a petition filed by Chowdhury Irad Ahmed Siddiky, another accused of the case, in 2017.

Petitioner's lawyer Chowdhury Ishrak Ahmed Siddiky said the HC scrapped the case against the accused on the ground that it was filed on "preposterous allegations" to politically harass them.

Deputy Attorney General Md Jashim Sarker represented the state during hearing of the petition.

On October 30 and 31 this year, the HC has scrapped 12 cases against Khaleda Zia.

The BNP chairperson has been made accused in a total of 37 separate cases filed during the regimes of the then military backed caretaker government and Sheikh Hasina-led government on different charges including corruption, violence, arson, defamation and sedition.

Dua Mehfil

A Dua Mehfil for late Mr. Abdullah Haroon Pasha (former Secretary, Government of Bangladesh) will be held tomorrow, Friday, 15th November 2024, after Asr prayers, at Gulshan-1 Jame Masjid (old Bhola Jame Masjid), near Gulshan Shooting Club. Family, friends and well-wishers are kindly requested to attend.

WE ARE HIRING

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Last date of application: December 13, 2024

Number of position: 1
Age: Minimum 45 years.
Academic qualifications: MBA with secretarial course.
Experience: Minimum 10 years in relevant field.

For more information please visit: jobs.northsouth.edu

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Executive Engineer

Pirojpur
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.7900.000.07.001.2024- 2139 Date: 13.11.2024

Corrigendum Notice

e-Tender Notice No-06/2024-2025 (OTM)

This is for information to all concern that due to some unavoidable circumstance the date of deadline of Closing & Opening of e-Tender ID No. 1025600 & 1025601 will be 28.11.2024 (13.00 PM) instead of 14.11.2024 (13.00 PM).

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

(Ranajit Dey)
Executive Engineer
LGED, Pirojpur
Tel: 02478890486
Email: xen.perojpur@lged.gov.bd

GD- 945

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Chuadanga
E-mail: eechu@rhd.gov.bd Phone & Fax: 0761-63539

Memo No. 35.01.1800.409.05.001.24-2491 Dated: 13/11/2024 Eng.

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID	Tender No. and description	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time
1036061	e-GP/CHURD/10/2024-2025. Repair with SBST work at Ch. 34+200 Km (Banka) to Ch. 36+250 Km (Hashadah) (Total Length=2050.00m) of Chuadanga-Darsona-Jibannagar-Kotchandpur-Kaligonj Road (R-748) under Road Division, Chuadanga during the year 2024-2025.	27-Nov-2024 17:00	28-Nov-2024 11:15

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

Kh. Golam Mostafa
ID No. 602133
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Chuadanga
01730-782778

GD-950

NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO.1164 OF 2024

[An application under section 241(iii) read with section 245 of the Companies Act, 1994]

Maersk Bangladesh Limited and anotherPetitioners
- Versus -
..... Respondents

Maersk Terminals Bangladesh Limited and another Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 241(iii) read with section 245 of the Companies Act, 1994 has been filed for winding up of the Respondent No. 1 Company (**Maersk Terminals Bangladesh Limited**) and for obtaining other necessary declarations from the Hon'ble High Court as specifically elaborated in the prayer portion of the said Application. The said Application was moved before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh comprising his Lordship **Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel** on 27.10.2024. The Hon'ble Court, upon hearing the learned Advocate and perusing the Application along with documents annexed therewith, was pleased to admit the application and directed to issue notices to the Respondents vide order dated 27.10.2024.

Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on or before the date so fixed. Copy of the Application may be collected from the undersigned upon payment of necessary costs.

(**Gobinda Biswas**) Advocate,
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, ATTORNEYS, House No. 482 (1st Floor), Road No. 32, New DOHS Mohakhali, Dhaka-1206.

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি

POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Grid Bhaban, Avenue-3, Jahurul Islam City, Aftabnagar, Badda, Dhaka-1212 www.powergrid.gov.bd
স্মারক নং- ২৭.২২.০০০০.৪২৩.০৭.০০২.২৪.৭০২ তারিখঃ ১২/১১/২০২৪খিঃ

e-Tender বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিডের পূর্তকাজ দপ্তরের আওতাধীন নিম্নলিখিত দরপত্র e-GP পোর্টালে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে।

ID	Reference	Title of Works
1032550	27.21.0000.413.07.001.24.685; Date: 04/11/2024	Re-construction of Boundary Wall at Halishahar 132/33 kV Grid Sub-Station under GMD, Chattogram (Central), Power Grid.
1032551	27.21.0000.413.07.001.24.686; Date: 04/11/2024	Construction of Retaining Wall with Boundary Wall at Madanganj 132/33 kV Grid Sub-Station under GMD, (Dhaka-East), Power Grid.

আগ্রহী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে www.eprocure.gov.bd সাইটের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র অংশগ্রহণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মোঃ আজিজুল ইসলাম সরকার
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, পূর্তকাজ

Chittagong Port Authority

Office of the Deputy Chief Engineer(Electrical)

e-GP (Re-Tender Notice)

Memo No. 18.13.0000.421.07.002.23 Date: 06/11/2024

Sl. No	Tender ID No. & Method	Tender Ref. No.	Name Of Works	Tender Closing Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1	1011695 (OTM)	18.13.0000.426.07.103.22	Replacement of Existing Industrial Exhaust Fan related Accessories (Belt, Motor, Magnetic Contactor etc) in different Shed in Jetty area.	21-Nov-2024 10:30	21-Nov-2024 10:30

This is an online tender where only e-tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no Offline/Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Please register on e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)

6.11.24
Deputy Chief Engineer(Electrical)
Chittagong Port Authority

GD-944

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

ব্যবস্থাপক (পরিচালন) এর দপ্তর
জোলা ২২৫ মেঃ ওঃ সিসিপিপি
বিউবো, বোরহানউদ্দিন, জোলা
<https://www.bpdb.gov.bd>

e-Tender Notice

The e-Tenders are invited through e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following:

Sl.	Tender ID No.	Package No	Reference No.	Description of Goods/ Works	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	1035460	WR-24/ FY 24-25	27.11.0900.416.02.010.24-448 Date: 10.11.2024	Procurement of River Side Channel Dredging at intake pump station side for Bhola 225MW CAPP, BPDB.	26-Nov-2024 16:00	27-Nov-2024 12:30	27-Nov-2024 12:30

These are online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the e-GP portal and no official/ hard copies will be accepted.

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

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

Further Information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk. Phone: 01937-390498, E-mail: dm.opn.bhola225@bpdb.gov.bd.

১১/১১/২৪
818(২)/১০/১১/২৪

(S M Maniruzzaman)
Deputy Manager (Operation)
ID No.: 01-01912
Bhola 225MW CAPP
BPDB, Borhanuddin, Bhola.

GD-954

'Constitution failed to prevent fascism'

Speakers tell seminar; focus on Abul Mansur Ahmad's impact on constitutional, democratic ideals

STAR REPORT

The Department of Law at North South University (NSU), in collaboration with the Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad, organised a seminar titled "Contextualising Abul Mansur Ahmad: The Genesis and Evolution of Constitutional Aspirations in Bangladesh" on Tuesday.

Assistant Attorney General Arif Khan delivered the keynote speech, with researcher and journalist Dr Kazal Rashid Shahin, poet and journalist Emran Mahfuz, and NSU senior lecturer Md Lokman Hussain contributing as speakers. NSU Prof Md Rizwanul Islam delivered the concluding remarks, said a press release.

The seminar focused on Abul Mansur Ahmad's influence on the democratic and constitutional development of Bangladesh.

In his keynote speech, Advocate Arif Khan highlighted that Bangladesh's constitution is built on a rich historical foundation, shaped by intellectual figures such as Abul Mansur Ahmad.

Dr Kazal Rashid Shahin addressed Ahmad's impact on Bangladesh's constitutional and democratic ideals,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Fishers collect fish they caught by using the "char ghera" net in the Char Kachiya area of Bhola. Many of them are allegedly using such illegal nets for fishing in the Meghna river, as these small-mesh monofilament nets are capable of catching even the smallest of fish fries. All types of fish and aquatic life get entangled in these nets, which is threatening to aquatic biodiversity. The photos were taken recently. PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Banned but abundant

Use of illegal fishing nets threaten Meghna's biodiversity

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Fishermen in Bhola have allegedly been fishing in the Meghna river using illegal "char ghera", "behandi," and "mosquito" nets, threatening aquatic biodiversity.

These nets are small mesh monofilament nets, which are capable of catching even the smallest of fish fries.

Sources at the Department of Fisheries in Bhola said they are now conducting drives against such illegal nets following the end of the 22-day ban on fishing.

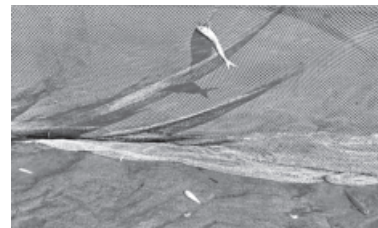
Already a large number of illegal nets have been seized from fishermen and subsequently destroyed.

These nets with fine mesh sizes are commonly used for setting barriers for livestock and on agricultural lands but are prohibited for use in fishing.

All types of fish in the river, including large, small, fish fries,

fish eggs, and other aquatic life get entangled in these nets, drastically reducing fish population and endangering the aquatic biodiversity.

Many fishermen in Bhola Sadar upazila said they set these nets during low tide, and remove those later. Numerous types of fish, small



and large, get trapped in the nets in huge quantities, which they later sell to wholesalers.

A char ghera net can catch around two maunds of fish at once, they also said.

The fishermen claimed that they have been using these nets

by paying a commission to local politically influential people.

Israil Pandit, president of Barishal Divisional Small Fishermen's Association, called for stern measures to stop the use of these illegal nets.

Biswajit Kumar Dev, district fisheries officer in Bhola, said, "Some 18-20 thousand metres of char ghera net have been seized during drives in last three days alone. We are working on strengthening the drives and launching a campaign against the use of these nets."

He refuted the allegation of fishermen paying commissions to politically influential people to use the nets.

"Since these nets are widely available for agricultural purposes, and are of relatively low price, some fishermen have been using these nets for fishing illegally. We have proposed making a list of sellers of these nets to identify those who buy the nets from them," he added.

Students demand advisers from the northern districts Block Rangpur-Dinajpur highway for 2 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Hundreds of students yesterday blocked Rangpur-Dinajpur highway to press home their demands for inclusion of advisers in the interim government from Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions.

Students involved with the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement took position on the road in Rangpur's Lalbagh area from 11:00am and left the place around 1:10pm.

Vehicular movement was disrupted for two hours after they blocked the road the second consecutive day.

Speakers including Rangpur coordinators Imran Ahmed, Jamil Hossain, and Nahid Hasan Khandkar raised voice over the government's discrimination against the northern districts.

They also said Abu Sayed, a student who lost his life during the uprising symbolises sacrifices made by the students from the northern part of the country.

4 die in pickup, autorickshaw collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh



Four people including two siblings were killed and three others injured in a head-on collision between a pickup truck and a CNG-run autorickshaw in Paishka Bypass area at Nakla upazila of Sherpur yesterday noon.

Quoting locals, Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nakla Police Station, said the accident took place when the Mymensingh-bound auto-rickshaw collided head on with the pickup in Gorergaon area.

The deceased are Subina Begum, 20, wife of Raju Mia, her younger brother Tajen Mia, 15, Tayera Begum, 10, daughter of Tofazzal Hossain, and Alauddin, 40.

The injured are Umme Salma, 40, her daughter Tora Begum, 16, and Chabid, 3. They have been admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Dengue claims five more lives

UNB, Dhaka

Five more deaths were reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in Bangladesh to 372 this year.

In the recent fatalities, three were reported in the Dhaka South City Corporation, one in the Dhaka division (outside the city corporation) and one in the Chattogram division (outside the city corporation).

During the period, 1,221 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Some 4,095 patients are receiving treatment in different hospitals across the country.

A total of 69,922 dengue cases have been reported since January 1, 2024.

Last year, 1,705 people lost their lives due to dengue, making it the deadliest year on record. The DGHS recorded 3,21,179 dengue cases and 3,18,749 recoveries last year.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Rapid Action Battalion Forces Headquarters
Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229
www.rab.gov.bd

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2.	Agency	Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) Forces.
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Director General, RAB Forces.
4.	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM).
5.	Source of Funds	Revenue Budget.
6.	Project/Program Name	Tender for Supply of Uniform & Uniform related Items for RAB Forces.
7.	Tenders Invitation Ref No & Date	RAB HQ/Admin (Supply)/508/Part-1/3347 Date: 12 November 2024.
8.	Tender Package No and year	S(G)-10/2024-2025
9.	Tender Last Selling Date	03-12-2024 at 1700 hours
10.	Last Date and Time for Submission of Tenders	04-12-2024 at 1400 hours
11.	Tenders Opening Date and Time	04-12-2024 at 1430 hours (Tenderers or their authorized representatives may attend.)
12.	Place of Opening Tender Document	Hall Room, RAB Forces HQ, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.
13.	Place, Date & Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	Hall Room, RAB Forces HQ, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229. Date: 27-11-2024 at 1100 hours.
14.	Name and Address of the office Selling, Receiving Tender Documents	RAB Forces Headquarters (Admin & Finance Wing) Civil Aviation, Cargo Admin Building, Kurmitola, Dhaka.
15.	Eligibility of Tenderers	a) Manufacturer, or b) Authorised by Manufacturer, or c) Minimum two years experience in relevant items supply (as mentioned in S/L No-6) to any Govt/Semi Govt/Autonomous/Reputed Organization with satisfactory performance in accordance with PPR-2008.
16.	Brief Description of Related Services	Mentioned in PG-3 (STD)
17.	Brief Description of Goods	Supply of Uniform & Uniform related Items for RAB Forces.
18.	Price of Tender Document (Non-Refundable)	Tk-4000/-
19.	Amount of Tender Security (Refundable)	9,66,000/-
20.	Time for Completion of Delivery	As per work order.
21.	Validity of Tender	As per Contract.
22.	For More Information please Contact	Assistant Director (Supply), RAB Forces Headquarters. Tel: 7913140-46 Ext-2116
23.	Special Instructions	a) Each of the above items shall be considered as a single Items. b) To purchase the tender schedule interested supplier/contractors are to apply in their respective pad. c) Up-to-date trade license, income tax clearance certificate, VAT registration etc. to be shown at the time of purchasing the tender schedule. d) Any Tenderer may submit tender for all the groups or any number of groups. e) Separate envelope along with necessary certificates and documents are to be submitted for each group. f) Suppliers will be selected on the basis of item wise (unit price) evaluation. g) Selected tenderer will supply the goods under a framework contract for required quantities. h) Suppliers shall submit at least 02 (Two) in numbers sample (original) at the time of submitting tender documents (sample re-fundable). j) Without assigning any reason the Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all items of the tender. k) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.

(KAMRUL HASSAN)
Commander, BN
Director (Admin & Finance)
RAB Forces Headquarters
Phone-02-48963104

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of The Director
Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.

Ref.- Mgmch/Admin/Annual Tender/24-25/2024/ 1813 Date: 12/11/2024

Invitation for Tender

Scaled tenders are hereby invited from bonafide experienced importer/ agent supplier distributor to supply MSR items (Goods), Chemical reagent as per PPA -2006, PPR 2008 & revised ppr 2023 for the year 2024-25 for Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj. Terms & conditions are as follows.

01.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and family Welfare
02.	Agency	Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.
03.	Procuring Entity Name	Director , Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.
04.	Procuring Entity District	Manikganj.
05.	Invitation for	Group-01 Medicine, Group-02 Surgical instrument, Group-03- Chemical reagent, Group-04 Gauge, bandage, cotton, Group-05 Linen, Group-06 Furniture & Group-07 Medical equipment & others Instrument.
06.	Invitation Reference No	Mgmch/Admin/Annual Tender/24-25/2024/ 1813 Date: 12/11/2024
KEY INFORMATION		
07.	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
08.	Budget & Source of Fund	Revenue Budget (GOB) & Others Fund
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
09.	Tender publication date:	14/11/2024
10.	Name & Address of the office	Office of The Director, Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.
11.	Place of Selling Tender Document	Office of The Director, Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj
12.	Tender Last Selling Date	11/12/2024 (2.00 pm)
13.	Tender Dropping Date & Time	12/12/2024, Time: 10.00am-12.00pm
14.	Place of Receiving Tender	Office of The Director , Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj
15.	Tender Closing Date & Time	12/12/2024, at 12:00 pm
16.	Tender Opening Date & Time	12/12/2024, Time:12:30 pm
17.	Place of Opening tender document	Office of The Director , Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
18.	Eligibility of Tenderer	a. The tenderer should have upto date valid Trade licence, VAT registration certificate & Income tax clearance certificate. b. The tenderer shall be a Manufacturer/Importer/Agent/Supplier/Distributor. If the tenderer is supplier then the tenderer shall have specific experience for supply of similar goods & related services As per Schedule. c. The tenderer must submitted a photocopy of his/her National ID Card. d. Others terms & conditions are enclosed in the tender document. e. For buying Schedule pray to the Director in official pad with original challan , online verification copy & (A- D) original documents by contractor or representative if representative need authorization letter .
19.	Price of Tender Document (Non refundable)	To be deposited Group (01-03) 4000 (Four thousand) taka & Group (04-07) 2000 (Two thousand) taka by Treasury Challan Code No- 1-2711-0000-2366 in favour of The Director , Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj, to the Bangladesh Bank /Sonali Bank Limited of any Branch.
20.	Name of group & Security Amount :	Group 01 Medicine, 400000 (Four lac), Group 02 Surgical instrument 300000 (Three lac) Group 03 Chemical reagent 850000 (Eight lac fifty thousand), Group-04 Gauge, bandage,cotton 50000 (Fifty thousand) Group-05 Linen 50000 (Fifty thousand), Group-06 Furniture 20000 (Twenty thousand) Group-07 Medical equipment & others Instrument 25000 (Twenty five thousand) All of the Bank draft or Pay order is Refundable from any schedule Bank on behalf of Director, Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
21.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Dr. Md. Shafiqul Islam
22.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director
23.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.
24.	Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Email: colonelmalequegmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd
25.	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender (s) without assigning any reason whatever.	

Note: (1) If the date of selling, receiving & opening of tender is disturbs under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.

(Dr. Md. Shafiqul Islam)
Director
Manikganj Medical College Hospital, Manikganj.

Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2023

LEAD ACTORS SHARE THEIR EXCITEMENT FOR THIS YEAR'S NOMINATIONS



The Daily Star
OTT
& DIGITAL CONTENT
AWARDS 2023

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ispahani Tea Limited and The Daily Star are back to celebrate excellence in OTT and digital media for the third consecutive year. The nominations for the Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards 2023 have now been revealed, marking a perfect moment to recognise and reward your favourite artistes for their exceptional performances on OTT and digital platforms.

Here's what the leading actors have to say about their nominations this year:

To vote, visit :

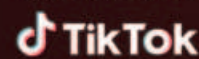
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The Daily Star

Entertainment Partner



MOSHARRAF KARIM

I'm thrilled by the incredible response to *Mohanagar 2*. As an actor, I'm grateful for the audience's appreciation. Our director's attention to detail and the team's hard work truly made this project shine. Being nominated in both the Critics and Popular categories for my role as OC Harun feels deeply rewarding.



ZIAUL FARUQ APURBA

Since working on *Buker Moddhye Agun*, I've looked forward to seeing the final outcome. Playing Golam Mamun was a wonderful experience, and I poured my heart into it. The audience embraced it enthusiastically, making this nomination all the more special. I hope they'll continue to support me on this journey.



NASIR UDDIN KHAN

Criticism is as valuable as praise, helping me learn and grow. But when harsh words linger, nominations like these bring comfort. I'm honoured to receive three nominations across Critics and Popular categories for *Mysself Allen Swapan* (lead role) and *Friday* (antagonist). My gratitude goes out to my audience and The Daily Star.



Scan to vote



FS NAYEEM

Two nominations are a real blessing! *Mission Hunt Down* let me step away from my romantic image and take on an action-hero role, which received an overwhelming response. My character in *Overtrump* was another unique challenge. I'm grateful for the nominations in the Lead and Supporting Actor categories and hope for continued support.



SHAMOL MAWLA

This is my first nomination for the *Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards*! Playing my role in *The Silence* required complete dedication, and seeing the audience's warm response has been incredibly rewarding. I look forward to taking on more complex roles in the future.

NEWS

Free election most urgent need now

FROM PAGE 12

letter. "We're working on it and will give our feedback very soon. What we have emphasised is that, in the current context, what is most needed in Bangladesh is a free, fair, and acceptable election."

He said they have repeatedly talked about the need to make the electoral system suitable for elections and create a level playing field. "An elected government and an elected parliament are crucial to addressing the country's political and economic crises. This is the point we have been stressing again and again."

The BNP leader said India, which has provided shelter to Sheikh Hasina, the main architect of fascism, is carrying out various harmful campaigns against Bangladesh. "We should be cautious about this, or else, as a nation, we will face great danger."

Fakhrul said the number of advisers to the interim government has reached 21, as there are no specific rules regarding the number of advisers. "They can be appointed as needed to run the country," he explained.

He said the decision on who will be

appointed as an adviser, or who will not, is entirely the responsibility of the Chief Adviser, Prof Muhammad Yunus. "However, I would like to request him to be careful in ensuring that controversial people are not inducted into the advisory council."

Stating that the fascist Awami League government has successfully divided the nation, the BNP leader said, "We want to eliminate this division and create a united nation. In a democratic society, there will be different opinions. But on the fundamental issues of Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty, democracy, and people's rights, there must be unity."

He added that the interim government must be given time, as it is not possible to clear 17 years of mess in 17 days or 17 months. "For this, those of you who are in the government have less responsibility. When a democratic government comes, that parliament will carry out those tasks."

The BNP leader said the interim government should not focus on all reforms, but rather only on those necessary for the election. "The rest

of the reforms should be carried out by the elected parliament. That's why we've been saying that the election must be held within a reasonable time frame, and the government must present a roadmap for it."

He explained that the main responsibility of this government is to create a level playing field for the election, ensuring that everyone can cast their vote and participate in the process.

"The issue of vote rigging must be eradicated, and measures should be taken to ensure that. At the same time, impartial people should be appointed to oversee the election process, the judiciary must be made independent, and the administration must be neutral," Fakhrul observed.

Fakhrul also pointed out that it is a very difficult situation for the ordinary people to cope with the rising prices of daily essentials.

"The current government should give more attention to this issue. We hope that there are highly capable individuals within the government. I expect that the government will take all the necessary steps to bring the market back to normal."

Cabinet expansion a ploy to remain

FROM PAGE 12

Sk Bashir Uddin, and special assistant to chief adviser Mahfuj Alam as advisers to the interim government on Sunday.

The chief adviser also reassigned some advisers and appointed three special assistants who would be of the rank of state ministers.

Party leaders decided that they must put pressure on the government over the election and would hold 10 rallies in different organisational divisions of the party, said meeting sources.

"We have to hold big rallies that will exert pressure on the government and then the interim government

will go for elections. Otherwise, the government won't do it," said another leader.

The party will organise a rally on December 16 to mark Victory Day.

Earlier in this month, the BNP decided to take to the streets in March or April next year if the interim government does not declare an election roadmap. The party also discussed it at the November 7 rally where tens of thousands of people joined.

In Monday's standing committee meeting, some party members also gave their views on the BNP-Jamaat relationship, said meeting sources.

In the changed circumstances after August 5, BNP's distance from Jamaat has widened, particularly regarding appointments to key positions in the administration and field-level offices. Certain statements from Jamaat leaders have caused a degree of "dissatisfaction" within BNP.

Despite this, some members commented that the BNP should not widen its distance from Jamaat for the sake of national unity, which is essential for the parliamentary election, said party leaders.

However, a few opined differently on the issue.

15th amendment

FROM PAGE 12

from the HC to restore article 142 (1A) of the constitution -- a provision for referendums to get the people's opinions before bringing any constitutional amendment. The provision was removed through the 15th amendment.

"This provision was repealed by the votes of those who became members of parliament through vote rigging," he said.

The attorney general said the insertion of article 7A and 7B into the constitution through the 15th amendment "destroyed the sovereignty of the state and supremacy of the constitution".

Article 7A deals with "offence of abrogation, suspension, etc" and 7B states that the "basic provisions of the constitution are not amendable".

Asaduzzaman also said, "We want the words 'socialism' and 'secularism' to be dropped from the constitution 'Democracy', not 'socialism', can be the fundamental principle of the state policy."

He argued against declaring Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the father of the nation through the 15th amendment, saying there is a serious debate about the issue.

The attorney general also said article 9 about "Bangalee nationalism" is contradictory to the constitution, as there are people of other languages in the country who fought for independence.

Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer Shishir Manir said during the hearing, "Socialism has never been the aspiration of our people. However, the 15th amendment restored the concept of socialism in our constitution."

Following a writ petition, another HC bench led by Justice Naima Haider on August 19 issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why the Constitution (15th Amendment) Act should not be declared unconstitutional.

The rule also asked why the previous actions taken under this act should not be treated as transactions past and closed.

Protection of freedom

FROM PAGE 2

Asked about the recent cancellation of press accreditation cards, including that of the AP bureau chief in Bangladesh, Patel said he had not seen reports on it, adding that it would be unfortunate if it was true.

"It is our strong point of view that an engaged free press is vital to

covering any situation, including, of course, the situation in Bangladesh.

"Press freedom and media freedom is important to the president, important to the secretary, and we would encourage and want to ensure that the rights and freedoms of all journalists are being appropriately respected."

Let Nizamuddin Markaz

FROM PAGE 2

laks of Saad Kandhalvi's followers will gather at the Kakrail Markaz from across the country, and no one will have the strength to stop that inflow of the followers.

"We will not hesitate to realise our rights in a very disciplined manner. We will do whatever necessary to run our Markaz following the correct rules in a timely manner," Azimuddin said while reading out a written statement.

The faction demanded ensuring the presence of Indian Tabligh Jamaat leader Saad Kandhalvi at the Biswa Ijtema to restore its tradition.

The first phase of next year's Biswa Ijtema, an Islamic congregation, is set to be held from January 31 to February 2, followed by the second phase from February 7 to 9.

The pro-Saad faction also demanded making arrangements for running the Kakrail Markaz by both the Tabligh Jamaat factions, and banning the participation of madrasa students in different "violent" programmes over the Tabligh issue.

Azimuddin alleged that followers of Maulana Zubairul Hasan are preparing to create an unstable situation by showing unwillingness to hand over the Kakrail Markaz to the followers of Maulana Saad after drawing inspiration from an announcement made at Suhrawardy Udyan on November 5.

"This is also in breach of the related government rules," he added. Azimuddin said the National

Qawmi Madrasa Education Board will hold an international grand conference titled "Way for the unity of the Muslim Ummah" at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan on December 7.

He said renowned Islamic scholars from Mecca and Madina of Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, United States, and England will join the event.

At the conference, the Islamic scholars will present an outline for addressing the ongoing crisis of Tabligh Jamaat and discuss the necessity of unity among the Muslim Ummah.

Azimuddin said those who want to keep the ongoing Tabligh crisis alive are not only the enemy of Tabligh but also of the country, its people and Islam.

8-yr-old girl's

FROM PAGE 12

the victim's family and police that they saw Sadia with Champa.

Police detained Champa around 11:30pm on Tuesday, and during the interrogation, she admitted that she killed Sadia to steal her gold chain and earrings, said Babbar.

An hour later, locals found Sadia's body.

Police said the body bore signs of strangulation, he said.

The body was sent to Jashore Sadar Hospital for autopsy and legal proceedings are underway, the police officer added.

COP29 SUMMIT Climate cash should also go to nuclear Says UN atomic chief

AFP, Baku The head of the UN nuclear watchdog said Tuesday that atomic power should also be allowed to tap into climate change funds. International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said he wanted countries from Kenya to Malaysia to go for nuclear, while denying he was pushing for an "irresponsible race" towards civil atomic power. "It should. Already at COP28 in Dubai the international community -- not just nuclear countries -- agreed that nuclear energy needs to be accelerated," Grossi said. Meanwhile, US officials touted newly announced plans yesterday to triple nuclear energy by 2050 as a bipartisan project that could survive Trump's incoming administration.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. The UN aid chief told the UN Security Council that the world is "witnessing acts reminiscent of the gravest international crimes in Gaza." PHOTO: AFP

Taliban carry out 6th public execution since 2021

AFP, Gardez Taliban authorities in eastern Afghanistan executed a convicted murderer by gunfire at a sports stadium, the sixth public execution since their return to power. The condemned man was shot with three bullets to the chest by a member of the victim's family in front of thousands of spectators in Gardez, the capital of Paktia province, according to an AFP journalist at the scene. The evening before the execution the governor's office called on officials and residents to "attend this event" on social media. "A murderer was sentenced to retaliation punishment," said a statement from Supreme Court which named the condemned as Mohammad Ayaz Asad.

Israel strikes Hezbollah bastion in Beirut suburbs 6 killed; Hezbollah drone strike kills two people in north Israel

REUTERS, Beirut The Israeli military yesterday struck the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut for a second consecutive day yesterday, after pounding the area with airstrikes on Tuesday. Smoke rose over Beirut. Lebanon is awaiting concrete ceasefire proposals, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri was quoted as saying yesterday, after a senior US official said he saw "a shot" at a truce soon in the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. An Israeli airstrike in the early hours of yesterday also killed six people in Aaramoun, in the mountains some 15 km (10 miles) south of Beirut, Lebanon's health ministry said. The airstrike came following a warning by the Israeli army to evacuate parts of the Hezbollah bastion. A Hezbollah attack on Tuesday killed two people in the city of Nahariya in northern



Israel. Hezbollah later claimed responsibility for a drone attack that it said was aimed at a military base east of Nahariya. Israel launched a major air and ground offensive against the Iran-backed group Hezbollah in late September. White House envoy Amos Hochstein told Axios that he thinks "there is a shot" at a truce in Lebanon soon. "I am hopeful we can get it." His comments point to a last ditch bid by the outgoing administration of US President Joe Biden to secure a Lebanon ceasefire.

Air pollution in Delhi turns 'severe' Visibility falls

REUTERS, New Delhi Air pollution in India's national capital increased to 'severe' on an official index yesterday for the first time this season as temperatures and wind speeds dropped, reducing visibility and affecting some flights. Delhi overtook Pakistan's Lahore as the world's most polluted city in Swiss group IQAir's live rankings, and India's pollution control authority said the national capital territory's 24-hour air quality index (AQI) score had touched 418. The Central Pollution Control Board defines an AQI reading of 0-50 as "good", and above 401 as "severe", which affects healthy people and "seriously impacts" those with existing diseases.

Govt to decide when army will withdraw

FROM PAGE 12 effort to prevent such incidents." The army official mentioned that they were doing everything to ensure that human rights violations do not occur. He said more than 600 incidents of labour unrest were reported in the industrial sector alone, and many of those were violent. Alongside army, law enforcement agencies also carried out their duties to

maintain law and order, and if they did not make the timely interventions to pacify the workers, the situation could have been much more serious, Intekhab said. Replying to another query from a journalist, he said army personnel took necessary actions in certain cases, but no individual was beaten up after being taken as a target. The colonel staff said they were continuously

monitoring the law and order situation. According to Intekhab, a comparative analysis of the police's crime data, conducted by the army, shows that crime decreased after the army was given magistracy power. "This means the situation has not deteriorated. However, some might say that the situation hasn't improved enough to meet the expectations," he said, expressing hope that the situation will improve further. In order to improve law and order, the government on September 17 gave magistracy power to the commissioned army officers for 60 days. Intekhab said the army has recovered 6,000 illegal firearms and 200,000 ammunition during the ongoing operations, and 2,500 people have been arrested in this connection. "Our operations are still going on," he said.

Let's build a world

bluntly. Yunus said juggling a peaceful democratic transition and a flood response was "difficult" enough and adding a flight to Baku to feud over climate finance did not help. Addressing an LDC high-level meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Prof Yunus said the COP climate conference should not be held every year as it is time-consuming. "We know what the world needs, and we should make a long-term plan for that. It should be country by country. And we have to make the plan for long-term mitigation," he said. He called for a new approach to climate negotiations, saying the current approach has largely failed to meet the needs of much of the world. Guterres said the LDCs faced the greatest injustice as far as climate change is concerned. "We want to tell you that we care about you," Guterres said, adding that the LDCs need to do hard negotiations and "serious mechanism" to secure a bigger fund for climate adaptation and mitigation. At a meeting with the Social Business Group on the sidelines, Prof Yunus called for creating a South Asia grid to share hydroelectricity generated by Nepal and Bhutan. He said much of the hydroelectricity potentials of the Himalayan nations remain untapped due to a lack of electricity grids connecting Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Nepal has the potential to generate 40,000 megawatts of hydroelectricity, which can help lessen the reliance on fossil fuels in countries like India and Bangladesh. "Bangladesh can easily bring hydroelectricity from Nepal as it is only 40 miles from Bangladesh. Nepalese hydroelectricity will also be cheap," Prof Yunus said. He said Bangladesh has put the highest priority on water management to prevent floods and to make the best use of water to boost the country's economic growth. He said the Bangladesh government is putting emphasis on youth development and reforming the country's education system, and that the government would hold a festival for the youth in January when the country's cricket board will hold its annual T20 BPL cricket tournament.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Bank (বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক) recruitment. It includes the bank's logo, contact information, and a list of 265 job IDs for various positions. The text is in Bengali and mentions the application deadline as November 20, 2024.

Advertisement for MCA (Ministry of Civil Aviation) recruitment. It features a table with 18 numbered items detailing job positions, qualifications, and application procedures. The text is in Bengali and includes the MCA logo and contact details.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Rab must be rebuilt from the ground up

But without political reforms, any change risks being superficial

There is no doubt that reforming the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has become an urgent priority. After over a decade and a half of courting allegations of rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances—to the point of incurring US sanctions in 2021—Rab has undeniably lost public trust. And a mere rebranding or restructuring won't restore it. Against this backdrop, a report by this daily has revealed that Rab is considering changing its name, logo, and uniform, as well as drafting a new law to regulate its operations. Currently, as a specialised unit of police, it operates under the police ordinance.

But such cosmetic changes cannot bring about sustainable reform. The police force itself serves as a cautionary example. Like police, Rab was not solely responsible for the crimes it committed as it operated at the behest of an autocratic regime. According to Ain o Salish Kendra, Rab was involved in at least 467 crossfires between 2015 and 2023. Its image as a "death squad" owes as much to its poor accountability mechanisms as to the vested interests of the then-ruling camp. So, how can we prevent future abuses of Rab when political power so often overrides legal safeguards? Can Rab be reformed without addressing the underlying political culture?

This is a question not only for the interim government but also for all major political parties. For now, several rights advocates have suggested disbanding Rab and rebuilding it from the ground up. This would require not just reshaping its mission and operational guidelines but also putting all personnel through a rigorous orientation process to instil respect for human rights and lawful procedure. Ensuring justice for the officers guilty of past abuses would also set a critical precedent for future compliance.

Rab's recruitment model presents another key issue, as it involves seconding officers from different forces including police, army, navy, and air force. This setup places military officers in potentially compromising roles, raising concerns about not only the viability of Rab's mission but also the integrity of the military itself. Equally important is the matter of oversight. Rab's accountability mechanisms must be totally rebuilt to ensure that its errant officers cannot evade justice, regardless of their political affiliations.

Ultimately, we must remember that true reform requires transformation from within, and this is what we should be aiming for. Without genuine efforts from all stakeholders, we risk only going through the motions of reforms that may put the public at risk again in the future. We owe it to the past victims of Rab and to the future of law enforcement in Bangladesh to rebuild Rab with a clear mandate for justice and human rights.

Follow due diligence when recording cases

Why is there still no measure to stop the filing of wholesale cases?

On Tuesday, Law Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul expressed that the interim government was embarrassed by the continued filing of "ghost" cases—a troubling legacy from the ousted autocratic regime of the Awami League. We appreciate this candid acknowledgment from the law adviser, a transparency we did not see from the previous regime. The law adviser clarified that the interim government was not behind such cases; instead, it is ordinary citizens, many of whom were politically victimised under the previous regime, who are now filing these frivolous cases. He further mentioned seeking advice from the judicial reform commission on how to address this crisis. But with the harassment of potentially innocent citizens continuing, we must demand answers and greater efforts from the government.

Consider, for instance, the case of Mohammad Zaman Hossain Khan. Zaman, a former student leader of BNP, filed a case with a Dhaka court on October 29 against 196 individuals for attempted murder through firing at protesters during the July-August uprising. Among the accused are 53 former secretaries that Zaman alleged to be "agents of foreign intelligence" and "collaborators of fascism, harmful towards the state, and corrupt officials." According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, some of these accused individuals retired years ago. When questioned about this, Zaman suggested their role during the previous regime was questionable. But are his allegations based on concrete evidence? More importantly, why did the sheer number of accused not raise red flags for the authorities when this case was filed?

Zaman's case is not an isolated example. In October, this daily reported two First Information Reports (FIRs) filed with the Jatrabari Police Station that listed the same 442 individuals as accused for the deaths of two people who died on different days and under different circumstances in July. What justification did the police have for recording such dubious FIRs?

If the allegations are substantiated, the accused should indeed face consequences. But what about cases that are ultimately proven baseless and politically motivated? A veteran political expert told *Prothom Alo* that filing such cases is, in itself, a crime. Yet no legal action has been taken against those filing frivolous cases. This must change. To end this "culture of filing wholesale cases," which the law adviser said the interim government wants to do, it must take immediate action. Police must exercise due diligence before registering any case, ensuring that only cases with actionable claims and a reasonable number of suspects are recorded. And those who deliberately file "ghost" cases should be held accountable.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

APOLLO 12 launched

On this day in 1969, Apollo 12 was launched, and five days later the mission made the second landing on the Moon.



There can be little doubt about the sincerity of any government headed by Professor Yunus to carry out reforms.

PHOTO: AFP

Key questions for designing and implementing reforms



Prof Rehman Sobhan is chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

REHMAN SOBHAN

The interim government (IG) has commendably initiated a process of reforms designed to address the malgovernance associated with the outgoing regime. Commissions have been established to prepare an agenda for reforms in six areas: the constitution, public administration, judiciary, law enforcement, corruption, the electoral process. Two separate commissions/committees have been set up to: (a) define the key economic challenges immediately facing the country and (b) identify economic reforms needed to immediately address specific problems and to recommend longer term reforms. Recently, four other commissions have been set up covering health, women, media and labour. This is a heavy load to carry particularly for purposes of implementation. In each of these areas, we have in the past witnessed implementation failure of public policies as well as the progressive degradation of institutions of governance. It is presumed that the commissions and committees will come

the first caretaker government headed by Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed (December 1990-March 1991), in setting up 29 task forces (TF) to address the numerous problems related to the economy and governance process, which had accumulated during the Ershad era over the 1980s. The TFs



FILE VISUAL: REHNUMA PRASHOON

All of us need to be reminded that the malaise in each sector in need of reforms did not exclusively originate during the tenure of the last regime. In many cases, the problems date back over several decades. Over each regime, failure to address and correct problems aggravated the malaise. The 16 years under the Awami League deepened the malaise to cancerous proportions where severe surgical intervention is needed to save our body politic from irreversible damage.

up with a body of worthy ideas on what needs to be done in their respective spheres of responsibility to reverse this process of malgovernance.

What is less clear to the public at this stage is the process through which the reforms will be enacted and who exactly will be expected to execute the reforms. All of us need to be reminded that the malaise in each sector in need of reforms did not exclusively originate during the tenure of the last regime. In many cases, the problems date back over several decades. Over each regime, failure to address and correct problems aggravated the malaise. The 16 years under the Awami League deepened the malaise to cancerous proportions where severe surgical intervention is needed to save our body politic from irreversible damage.

Given the long-term durability of the problems to be addressed by the respective commissions, we should note that various proposals for reforms, whether through innumerable commissions/committees or from civil society as well as the academic/research community, have already been presented over the years. I myself was involved, during my tenure as a member of the advisory council, in

were headed and populated by 255 of the best professional talents then available in the country, representing a diversity of policy perspectives who worked exclusively on a voluntary basis to prepare these reports within two months. Professor Muhammad Yunus headed the TF on self-reliance policies, and Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud, currently adviser for education, headed the TF on macroeconomic policy. A number of members of various commissions or committees under the present government, such as Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury and Debapriya Bhattacharya, were members of various TFs under the first caretaker government.

The TF reports were designed to serve both the incoming government elected to office in the March 1991 elections and the opposition in parliament. Sadly, the elected incoming BNP government made little use of the reports. A similar effort, this time by CPD, just prior to the 2001 elections, commissioned

In the final analysis, meaningful reforms which impact the governance and lives of citizens will need to be carried forward on a sustainable basis by a government which expects to be in office for a period of 4/5 years. This would normally be possible only for an elected government.

16 TFs, drawing on 160 of our top professionals, to propose policies and reforms necessary at that period. These TF reports were also unaddressed by the then elected government. Other such policy reforms commissioned by particular governments have similarly remained largely unattended by the very government which commissioned the reports. Two such reports which come to mind include a report on Reform of Public Administration commissioned by the first government of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001) and the

report of the Education Commission set up by the AL regime in 2010.

The relevant point at issue remains the commitment of particular regimes to implement any process of reforms. There can be little doubt about the sincerity of any government headed by Professor Yunus to carry out reforms, particularly since it has come into office in the wake of a revolution headed by the youth of Bangladesh who as yet remain uncontaminated by the diseases which have infected the national polity over so many years. On the assumption that the IG remains bound to its commitment to pursue such reforms I present below, in synoptic form, some of the practical questions that need to be addressed by the IG in order to ensure that the reform

can only be implemented by an elected government.

- What is the position of the IG on this particular position?
- Will it only proceed to implement reforms if the political parties give it the go ahead?
- Should the IG go ahead and begin implementing particular reforms if it believes such reforms need to be prioritised whatever may be the position of the parties?
- iv. In the final analysis, meaningful reforms which impact the governance and lives of citizens will need to be carried forward on a sustainable basis by a government which expects to be in office for a period of 4/5 years. This would normally be possible only for an elected government. However, it can also be possible for an interim government to expand its tenure in order to implement its mandate for reform. Such a decision may encounter strong political resistance, particularly from the major political parties. Is the IG at all inclined to go down this route?

3. Implementation of reforms in the post-IG phase

If the IG is unwilling and/or unable to implement the reforms it may be appropriate to presume that the fate of any significant reform agenda will have to be dependent on its implementation by a prospective elected government. Keeping this in mind the IG will need to consider the commitment, willingness and capacity of the political party/parties, with any credible expectation of forming a post-election government, of actually implementing the reforms.

The implementation process will need to be sustained over the lifetime of the elected regime. This will not just need a sincere buy-in by the concerned political parties but the political vested interests of the party will also have to be in sync with the reform process and its intended outcomes.

It is this contradiction, both in regard to policies and reforms, between the interests of a prospective ruling party, its principal backers and influential social forces, that have historically frustrated the implementation of reform over the lifetime of successive regimes. Keeping such concerns in mind the following questions merit attention:

- i. If a government, mandated by a large electoral plurality, no longer finds it in its interest to initiate or persevere with the reforms, what can be done to ensure the sustainability of the reforms?
- ii. Will the reforms finalised by the IG be so designed as to ensure that prospective elected governments will remain mandated to carry out the reforms?
- iii. What oversight and accountability mechanisms can be built into the reforms to ensure continuous oversight of the reforms by:
 - Parliament
 - The judiciary
 - Civil society
 - Media
 - The young people who are today demanding reforms
 - Any other concerned body

From my limited experience in public affairs and rather longer exposure to the state of governance in Bangladesh, I have come to believe that the real problem faced by all governments has not been the deficiency of the policies or lack of reforms but the failure to implement its own policies. These failures originate from a lack of commitment, presence of vested interests which run contrary to the outcomes of policy, and a lack of competence due to the progressive degeneration in the quality of governance. Hopefully, Prof Yunus, the IG, and the various commissions will keep such a perspective in mind in finalising their recommendations for reforms and taking decisions on how to implement them.

The civil society must confront its past failures



Dr Kazi ASM Nurul Huda is associate professor of philosophy at the University of Dhaka.

KAZI ASM NURUL HUDA

Bangladesh's political landscape was dominated by the Awami League for the past 15 years. Under its prolonged rule, the government faced allegations of corruption, electoral manipulation, and authoritarianism. The ruling party bore direct responsibility for much of this, but I believe that civil society played a role as well. Intellectuals, academics, journalists, and human rights defenders often did not challenge the government effectually enough. Their inaction also allowed democratic values to erode.

Civil society is meant to hold the government accountable. In Bangladesh, certain individuals voiced their outrage, but civil society collectively remained passive on controversial issues. A clear example of this was the forced resignation of Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha in 2017. His ruling on executive power was significant for judicial independence, but instead of showing solidarity, many remained silent and some even distanced themselves. Though a few exceptions existed, the overall inaction of civil society left executive interference unchecked and set a dangerous precedent.

Another key event was the 2018 general election. Allegations of voter suppression and irregularities surfaced, yet civil society failed to respond with the necessary force. Organisations like Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) raised

concerns about ballot stuffing and voter intimidation, but these warnings were largely ignored. Most public figures avoided addressing these issues, thus weakening the push for meaningful electoral reforms. Their reluctance contributed to a sense of impunity around the election, further damaging democratic norms.

Human rights violations also multiplied during this period, including a rise in extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. The abusers often targeted political nonconformists, journalists, and activists. A horrifying example was the 2018 killing of Ekramul Haque, a local political figure who was shot dead in an anti-drug operation. Chilling audio recordings of his final moments, in which he and his family were heard pleading with officers, circulated on social media, yet civil society remained muted. International organisations like Human Rights Watch condemned the act, but many domestic voices hesitated to speak out. This failure to address human rights abuses contributed to a climate of fear that silenced many who might have otherwise challenged the government.

The Digital Security Act (DSA) targeted journalists and activists. This reflected civil society's lack of sustained action. Shafiqul Islam Kajol, a journalist who covered politically sensitive issues, was

abducted in 2020. Although his case gained some media attention, only a few organisations, like Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), spoke out. However, most intellectuals failed to engage with the broader implications of the law that led to his disappearance. This lack of sustained advocacy allowed the DSA to remain a powerful tool for silencing dissent. Without consistent

pressure from civil society, the law continued to be used to suppress freedom of speech. The student-led quota reform and road safety movements in 2018 further illustrated civil society's inaction. Students took to the streets, demanding transparency and accountability, but they were met with violent crackdowns by the ruling party's student wing, the Chhatra League. The repression, especially the attacks on students

at Dhaka University, shocked the nation. But some academics, who could have supported the students, stayed on the sidelines or stigmatised the protesters. Some professors sympathised privately, but the lack of collective action from the academic community, as seen during this year's movement, reflected a broader unwillingness to challenge the

Many university authorities refused to take a clear position instead of defending free expression and debate, which allowed the dangerous status quo to persist. Corruption during the Awami League's tenure provided yet another opportunity for civil society to demand greater government accountability, but those moments passed without

issue to be framed as an attack on the nation's dignity rather than a call for oversight, civil society missed an important opportunity to push for meaningful change.

The 2015 BASIC Bank scandal, where over Tk 4,500 crore was misappropriated through fraudulent loans, further exposed civil society's lack of action. Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu, the bank's chairman, was widely suspected of involvement, but his connections to the ruling party shielded him from serious consequences. Civil society could have pressured the government to act, but again, the issue faded from public discourse and no significant reforms followed, and corruption continued to thrive.

These examples demonstrate that civil society has not effectively fulfilled its role as a watchdog for the people. Its failure to speak out against judicial interference, human rights abuses, electoral fraud, and corruption contributed to the consolidation of government power. Individual voices tried to resist, but the broader civil society often stayed quiet. This silence allowed the ruling party to act with minimal resistance.

Rebuilding civil society's credibility will require acknowledging these past failures and committing to holding the government accountable, regardless of who is in power. An admission of its failure would not just be a symbolic gesture; it is a necessary step towards restoring public trust. Civil society must reclaim its role in defending democratic principles, human rights, and transparency. Only by confronting its shortcomings can it regain the moral authority needed to challenge the government and truly advocate for the people. The path to accountability begins with a simple admission: civil society has not succeeded where it should have, and it must now make amends.



The ruling party often targeted political nonconformists, journalists, and activists, but the majority of the civil society remained mute.

PHOTO: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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The student-led quota reform and road safety movements in 2018 further illustrated civil society's inaction. Students took to the streets, demanding transparency and accountability, but they were met with violent crackdowns by the ruling party's student wing, the Chhatra League. The repression, especially the attacks on students

government directly.

A particularly tragic case was the 2019 murder of Abrar Fahad, a BUET student who was beaten to death for criticising a government policy online. While the murder sparked outrage, most university officials and intellectuals remained quiet about the broader issue of political violence on campuses. This demonstrates how deeply the culture of violence and fear had permeated even the country's educational institutions.

sustained action. The 2012 Padma Bridge corruption scandal, which led to the World Bank pulling its funding, was an opportunity to push for transparency. Although the case was never fully proven in court, it raised concerns about corruption in large-scale government projects. Yet instead of insisting on government accountability, many intellectuals and commentators echoed the government's rhetoric of national pride. By allowing the

'Mercury Bomb': A gift from climate change



Dr Quamrul Haider is professor emeritus at Fordham University in New York, US.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

"Mercury Bomb," an unknown weapon until recently, yet a deadly one, is a gift to humanity from climate change. So, what is it after all? To answer this question, we have to know a little bit about this metallic element in liquid form, its properties and how it can affect, or more precisely, kill human beings, including animals, and threaten the food chain.

Known as "liquid silver" because of its shiny silvery appearance, mercury is a naturally occurring substance. It is also an inevitable by-product of coal-fired power plants and aqueous waste of the chemical industries. The element is highly toxic, acting as a potent neurotoxin by binding to and inhibiting the function of enzymes and proteins critical for nerve cell function.

When released into the atmosphere, mercury settles in nearby streams and rivers, thereby causing considerable damage to the aquatic ecosystem by polluting the rivers of the region. It eventually enters the food chain via algae and infects all forms of wildlife, in the rivers and on land, from fish to birds to mammals, whose diet includes fish.

The amount of mercury stored in the permafrost eclipses the amount in the oceans, soils, atmosphere and biosphere combined. Hence, keeping mercury, together with the GHGs, locked away in the permafrost is enough reason to make sure these landmasses do not melt.

The metallic element circulates in small amounts through the natural world too, because it is absorbed by plants, which then die and become part of the soil. Besides, because of an effect called the Cold Trap,

our planet's natural atmospheric circulation tends to funnel pollutants toward high latitudes, leading to mercury accumulation in the Arctic region, where it bonds naturally to organic matter in the permafrost, and remains trapped for thousands of years. It should be noted that the Arctic communities have no typical mercury-producing industries.

What is permafrost? As the name suggests, it is a layer of soil and rock, with some extending 1,500 metres



PHOTO: REUTERS

Keeping mercury, together with the GHGs, locked away in the permafrost is enough reason to make sure these landmasses do not melt.

into the ground, that remains frozen. There are about 23 million square kilometres of permafrost covering roughly 25 percent of exposed land surface not covered with glaciers. It is found mainly in polar regions and high-latitude areas, such as the Arctic, Siberia, Alaska and northern Canada. In summer, the top several metres melt, creating an active layer where plants can take root and refreezes in winter, while the deeper layers remain permanently frozen.

This unending icy mass and its impressive size is a vital feature of the Earth's coldest climates with important impacts on human and natural systems. It acts as a gigantic storage vault for mercury, various minerals, dangerous microbes, viruses and pathogens, alongside greenhouse gases (GHG), mainly carbon dioxide and methane that are responsible for rising global

temperatures. The amount of mercury stored in the permafrost eclipses the amount in the oceans, soils, atmosphere and biosphere combined. Hence, keeping mercury, together with the GHGs, locked away in the permafrost is enough reason to make sure these landmasses do not melt. That is why climate scientists consider the health of our permafrost a likely climatic tipping point.

However, as the Arctic continues to warm as a result of climate change—four times faster than the global average—due to the phenomenon of "Arctic amplification," which is enhancement of near-surface air temperature over the Arctic relative to lower latitudes, permafrost is thawing at unprecedented rates in many areas, reaching deeper into the ground. Permafrost is therefore not so permanent and is rapidly becoming unstable as the planet

becomes warmer. During a recent trip to Alaska with my family, we saw first-hand the physical effects of permafrost thawing—ground subsidence that buckled highways, damaged railroads, airstrips, homes and other structures, as well as uprooted trees.

As it defrosts, permafrost also releases whatever materials were locked inside of it, ranging from GHGs to toxic metals like mercury. Specifically, mercury that has been locked in the permafrost for millennia is being eroded by rivers and released into the environment. When released, it is often converted by microbes into methyl mercury, which is a neurotoxin that accumulates in the bodies of humans through the foods we eat.

A new study published in the *Environmental Journal Letters* (August 2024) concludes that the

released mercury will potentially set off a "mercury bomb" that could greatly impact some millions of people living around the Arctic Circle. According to the researchers, a "giant mercury bomb" in Alaska is being washed away by rivers such as the Yukon River, depositing copious amounts of mercury into the riverbanks.

What effects will the mercury bomb have on humans? The researchers note that "Decades of exposure, especially with increasing levels as more mercury is released, could take a huge toll on the environment and the health of those living in these areas." In fact, they believe that leaked mercury may endanger approximately three million people who live in areas where permafrost is predicted to vanish completely by the year 2050.

Of the many substances that interact negatively with our physiological systems, mercury is

the most dangerous because when ingested, it is stored in our body and has cumulative effect. The silvery metal can have serious effects on our nervous system, spanning from tremors, memory problems, cognitive thinking, brain and kidney damage, coordination issues (trouble walking) and mood changes to developmental issues in children, notably their motor skills. Pregnant women and children are primarily at risk of mercury poisoning. Eating fish from mercury polluted rivers can cause severe disability including deafness and blurring of vision, mental derangement, neurological defects and even death.

Mercury poisoning among indigenous people is of great concern. In Canada, traditionally fish-eating Aboriginal Peoples classed as Indians have been reeling from the harmful effects of mercury poisoning in

their fish, where the pollution has been linked to high rates of attempted suicide among youth. One of the deadliest episodes of mercury poisoning occurred in 1953 among people who ate seafood from Minamata Bay (Japan) into which large quantities of methyl mercury was released by a chemical factory.

A particularly disturbing study shows that one-fifth of all Americans may have mercury levels exceeding EPA recommendations of no more than one part per million. No other pollutant even comes close to mercury for violating federal standards.

Finally, for millennia, the Arctic has kept our planet healthy and happy by locking away GHGs, mercury and other toxic metals. But after two centuries of an unyielding fossil fuel addiction, the ticking mercury bomb is waiting to explode with far-reaching consequences.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Pirojpur
www.eedmoe.gov.bd

Tender No. XEN/EED/PIROJ/415

Date: 12/11/2024

e-Tender Notice No. e-GP/03/EED/PIR/2024-25, Date: 12/11/2024

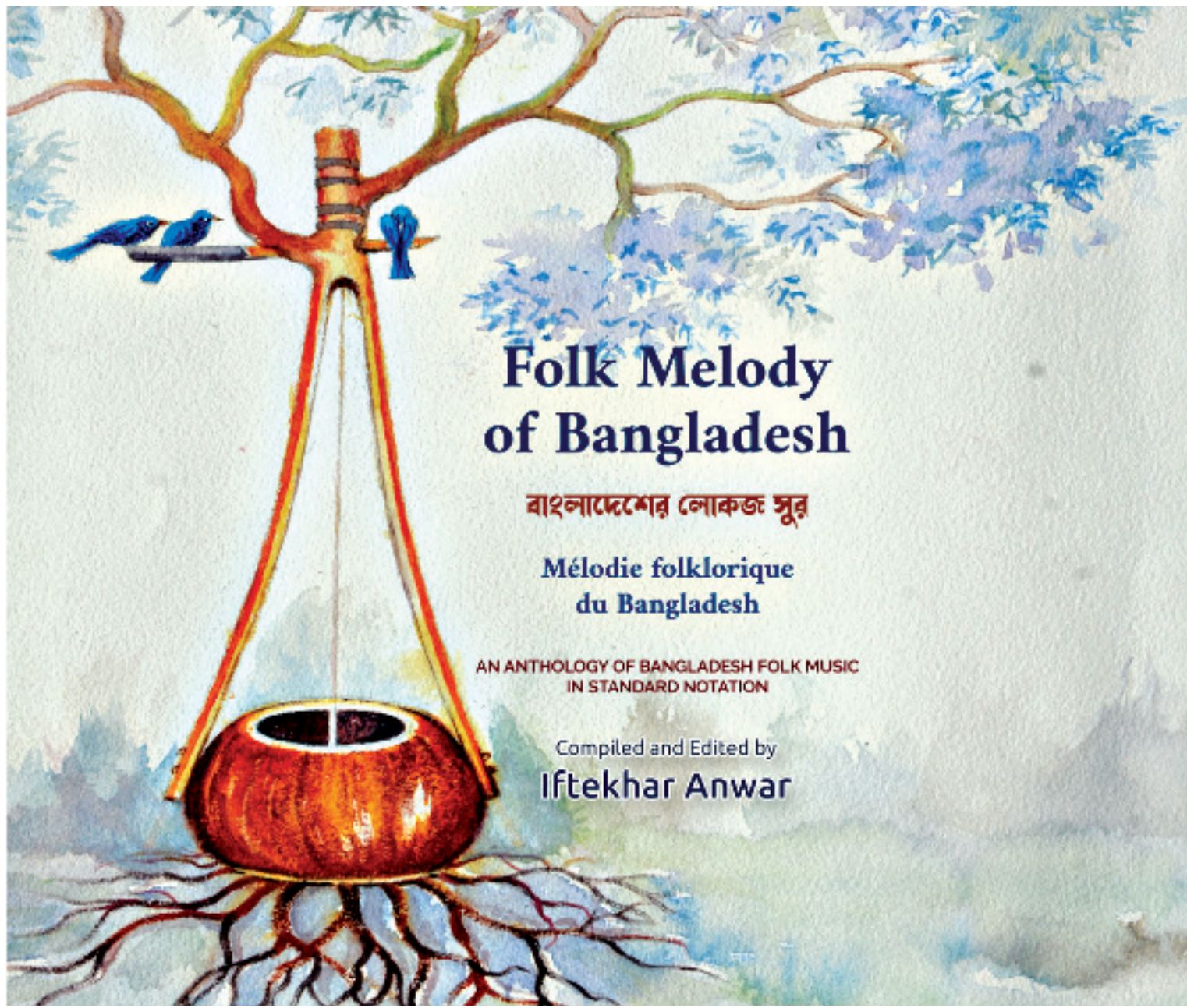
e-Tender is invited in the e-GP Web Portal (www.eprocure.govbd) for the procurement of following works. Details are given below:

SL. No.	Package No. & Tender ID No.	Description of works	Last selling date & time	Last submission (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time)
01	e-GP/EED/PIR/W-02/CRI/2024-25 Tender ID No-1031160	Remaining Works for Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation at Panchagram Sammiloni (P.S) Secondary School, Indurkani, Pirojpur.	26-11-2024 17.00	27-11-2024 12.30	27-11-2024 13.00
02	e-GP/EED/PIR/W-01/CRI/2024-25 Tender ID No-1031154	Remaining Works for Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With 4-Storied Foundation at Pasharibunia Adarsha Girls High School, Bhandaria, Pirojpur.	26-11-2024 17.00	27-11-2024 12.30	27-11-2024 13.00
03	e-GP/G-01/EED/PIR/Computer/2024-2025 Tender ID No-1014038	Supply of Desktop Computer, Laser Printer, Scanner, Online 1200VA UPS, Power Extension Board/Power Strip & Other Accessories in Bhandaria under Pirojpur District.	26-11-2024 17.00	27-11-2024 12.30	27-11-2024 13.00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Web Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Web Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branch up to avowed date & time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Web Portal & e-GP help desk and also from e-mail: ee_pir@eedmoe.gov.bd

Md. Zahirul Islam
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
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GD-943



Folk Melody of Bangladesh

বাংলাদেশের লোকজ সুর

Mélo die folklorique du Bangladesh

AN ANTHOLOGY OF BANGLADESH FOLK MUSIC IN STANDARD NOTATION

Compiled and Edited by Iftekhar Anwar

COVER ILLUSTRATION: LUBNA CHARYA

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Taking folk melodies of Bangladesh TO THE WORLD

Review of 'Folk Melody of Bangladesh: An Anthology of Bangladesh Folk Music in Standard Notation' (2004), compiled and edited by Iftekhar Anwar

The second hurdle was the oral tradition through which tunes and melodies passed down from one generation to the next. Over time and space, pronunciations and dialects, choice of words, lyrics, and melodies have changed, so it was very difficult to verify the authenticity of many folk songs today.

ASRAR CHOWDHURY

Folk Melody of Bangladesh: An Anthology of Bangladesh Folk Music in Standard Notation is a music anthology that compiles 204 carefully chosen folk songs of Bangladesh that date from the 16th century. Iftekhar Anwar headed a team that compiled and edited the songs. The team presented the songs in staff notation with an international audience in mind. Alliance Française de Dhaka distributed the anthology as part of their 65 years of cultural cooperation between Bangladesh and France.

The dream started in 2004. Iftekhar was an undergraduate student in music at Arizona State University in the USA. He fostered two desires: First, how could he spread Western classical music in Bangladesh? Second, how could he spread the ethnic music of Bangladesh to an international audience?

Iftekhar returned to Bangladesh in 2009. The next year, he started the Classical Music Academy of Dhaka. As time went, his second desire became stronger. The stage for *Folk Melody of Bangladesh* was set in 2014. However, the journey required epic teamwork to compile an anthology for an international audience.

The anthology starts with testimonials, a preface, an introduction, acknowledgments, and a pronunciation guide. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to different folk music schools in Bangladesh, instruments, and stylistic conventions. The section on instruments describes folk instruments well enough that a person from another culture can identify which of their instruments could be a substitute. For instance, the dotara could substitute an oud in Arabia. Chapters 2 to 7 present folk songs based on regions. Chapter 8 includes one popular song, the origin and creator of which could not be confirmed. However, local sources acknowledged it to Harashnath Ganguly. At the end, there are Bangla lyrics, a glossary, and a bibliography. Some parts are presented in Bangla, while others in English and in French.

For the writer, the first hurdle was to identify the genres of folk music in Bangladesh. The team used the demarcation AKM Shah Nawaz and

Masud Imran identified based on ancient localities in their *Manchitre Banglar Itihas* (first published in 2011).

The second hurdle was the oral tradition through which tunes and melodies passed down from one generation to the next. Over time and space, pronunciations and dialects, choice of words, lyrics, and melodies have changed, so it was very difficult to verify the authenticity of many folk songs today. To address this challenge, the editorial team chose popular songs whose tunes and melodies have become canonical over time.

Based on the above, the anthology includes songs of giants like Fakir Lalon Shah, Hason Raja, Jasimuddin, Abdul Latif, Sheikh Bhanu, and Hemanga Biswas. The anthology also includes songs of lesser giants. This made the anthology broad in its perspective.

The third hurdle was identifying a reference tune. Where possible, the team relied on official recordings. This included recordings of Abbasuddin Ahmed, Sachin Dev Burman, Abdul Alim, Amar Paul, Hemanga Biswas, Nirmalendu Chowdhury, Farida Parveen, Rathindranath Roy, Chandana Majumder, Kiran Chandra Roy, Momtaz Begum, Nina Hamid, Sayem Rana, Shamarin Dewan, and others. In other instances, the team visited different shrines and places where popular tunes have been preserved over generations.

The fourth hurdle was to present songs to an international audience. Standard staff notation can express notes, pitch, and tempo. It can also tell the reader how to perform a tune. Folk songs in Bangladesh evolve around four (or five) popular taals. These taals, presented through time signatures, were: 3/4 (Dadra, Jhumur), 4/4 (Kaharba), 5/4 (Jhaptal), and 7/4 (Teora). The tempo (loy) was presented through BMP (beats per minute) or through Prestissimo (quick tempo).

The next hurdle was determining notes and their duration within each bar. This took time. The team repeatedly listened to identify the correct notes and their durations inside each bar in reference to the chosen signature tune.

The staff notations were presented in a single layer. They are suitable for vocals and instruments that emphasise single notes like that

of a bansuri. For string (guitar) and reed (piano) instruments, additional layers can be added by musicians.

Where possible, each staff notation presentation included the name of the composer and/or lyricist, with their birth and death years, and which part of Bangladesh they originate from. The team also mentioned the source of the recordings with a short description of each song.

The next challenge was language. The team used the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The IPA broke down each word, syllable by syllable, to bring out nuances of the language. This was synchronised with the notes.

The final question—how could the team be sure that non-Bangla-speaking people would be able to pronounce Bangla with relative accuracy? A group of musicians from Columbia University performed two songs in a vocal and instrumental orchestration. Their performance gave confidence to the team that a non-Bangla-speaking audience can pronounce and perform Bangla folk tunes using the anthology.

The presentation of folk songs of Bangladesh in staff notation is not unique. Khandaker Nurul Alam went to what was then West Pakistan to learn notational music and compiled some folk songs in staff notation. However, they lacked academic depth. The notation was not suitable for performance in orchestration. This is where *Folk Melody of Bangladesh* stands out.

For the first time, *Folk Melody of Bangladesh* presents an anthology of folk music in Bangladesh in standard staff notation with IPA. It will now be possible for non-Bangla-speaking people to sing the lyrics and perform with instruments in orchestration. It can be an academic exercise, as well as a journey into a rich cultural heritage. The anthology is also a starting point for others to spread the folk tunes of Bangladesh to a global audience.

The writer of the book, Iftekhar Anwar, is the founder and director of Classical Music Academy in Dhaka; the academy has its chamber orchestra.

Asrar Chowdhury is a Professor of Economics at Jahangirnagar University. He is a music enthusiast and freelance contributor to The Daily Star. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu.

BOOK REVIEW: GRAPHIC NOVEL

Down the rabbit hole of science and art

Review of 'Einstein in Kafkaland: How Albert Fell Down the Rabbit Hole and Came Up With the Universe' (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024)

ISRAR HASAN

The city of Prague, now the capital of the Czech Republic, was once the breeding hotspot of the 20th century's greatest writers, scientists, scholars, and activists. Amongst Prague's intellectual elite would be the household names of Kafka, the anguished native son, and Einstein, the reluctant and perplexed immigrant, whose destinies would be entwined with the city itself in the pivotal years of both their trajectories.

Albert Einstein and Franz Kafka remain exemplary luminaries in their respective fields of science and art. Einstein, renowned for his discovery and articulation of the theory of relativity, is a celebrity in pop culture, with his name being synonymous with the word genius. The brooding Kafka is a trailblazer in world literature whose name is entwined with the unpleasant and deeply jarring literary genre that we now refer to as "Kafkaesque". These towering figures present a bygone era of intellectual flourishing before the destruction of European Jewry in World War II.

Ken Krimsten's charmingly dizzying graphic novel, *Einstein in*

This is during the same period that Kafka starts to pen his iconic short story, "The Judgment", that would propel him to literary superstardom.

Owing to frequent salon gatherings of Europe's foremost intellectuals, who happen to be mostly Jewish, Krimsten captures the philosophical undertones of the period with both of these two geniuses searching for "the truth", which means letting go of the past and challenging their own masters and the idea of "the creator" itself. Peering deep into their personal lives, Krimsten fleshes out the deep points of consternation in the lives of the two geniuses. These include interesting epithets in both their lives that are often glossed over. For Einstein, it would be tackling his arch nemesis, Max Abraham; the overbearing shadow of the loss of his first child, Lieserl; and his faltering marriage. For Kafka, whose early years were shaped under the domineering shadow of his father, it is in his friendship with Max Brod that he finds a safety valve of trust and understanding. Brod is the man responsible for safeguarding Kafka's works after being ordered by Kafka himself to burn them after his death.



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

Kafkaland: How Albert Fell Down the Rabbit Hole and Came Up With the Universe, delves into the time when Einstein and Kafka met in Prague in 1911-1912. Deep diving into personal archives, diaries, letters, and personal testimonials of Einstein and Kafka, Krimsten opens a portal to a time of intellectual flowering amidst individual anxious travails of self-loathing, self-discovery, and self-understanding.

Narrated by the famed skeleton of Prague's astronomical tower, the imagery employed in the graphic novel is drawn in shades of aqua blue, white, and black. The story opens where the patent clerk, Einstein, arrives with his wife, Mileva, and his two sons, hoping for an intellectual breakthrough in what will later come to be known as the famed "theory of relativity". Aside from that, the *TIME* magazine crowned "person of the century" has to save two other vital aspects of his life: his marriage and prospects of a good job. Kafka—the patron saint of anxiety for many of us, still a far cry from being the "prophet of literature"—is a struggling 28-year-old insurance executive tired of the monotonous routine of modern life.

While Kafka does feature in the story, the main character is Einstein himself. Drawing on symbolic gestures inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865)—from surreal treatments of time to whimsical character designs—Krimsten takes us on Einstein's journey to genius. Along the way, we encounter Einstein in emotive dialogues with God and Euclid, Kafka appearing as an enigmatic Cheshire Cat, and the imaginary expanse of a scientist grappling with questions of the universe, art, and logic. It's a captivating journey that blurs the lines between science and art, inviting readers into the mind of a genius through a wonderland of intellectual discovery.

The novel offers a deeply meditative exploration of the worlds of science and art, drawing readers into the same rabbit hole as Einstein, in search of something quite bigger than ourselves. In doing so, Krimsten once again establishes the graphic novel as a literary genre that synthesises the power of thought, art, and imaginative reasoning.

Israr Hasan is currently working as researcher in a public health institute.

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SHARE YOUR STORIES, RHYMES & LULLABIES OF CHADER BURI & FRIENDS
Audio record / write and email to kdon@herstorybd.org

Illustration by Kazi Inteza Ismail for Myth Bridge
a project of Gaebo-Institut Bangladesh and HerStory

Cabrera lost for words after 'painful' defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera had neither any explanation nor any excuse after his side lost a FIFA friendly match against Maldives 1-0 at home, dashing their hopes of getting a favourable draw in next year's Asian Cup Qualifiers.

The men in red and green had played with much positivity and attacking intent, creating a number of chances – something Cabrera had declared his side would do, but in the end it was veteran Ali Fasir's 18th-minute header which saw his side suffer their first home defeat against the islanders.

"It's difficult to explain, very painful in the end," exclaimed a visibly resigned Cabrera, who's extended contract runs out in December, at the post-match press conference following the defeat at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

While Cabrera vowed to egg his side on for a better result in the second match on Saturday, any realistic hope of moving into Pot 3 from Pot 4 for next month's Asian Cup Qualifiers draw were all but extinguished. The Spaniard said he could not explain the defeat after his team had created 'most chances of his tenure as Bangladesh coach during this match.'

"We did everything to score," the Spaniard said. "I don't know how many chances we created and I don't know what else we could do."

While Cabrera was right to rue the attacks that were not turned into scoring shots, and the one occasion Sohel Rana's shot hit the woodwork, the reality was that there were not many scoring opportunities created by the hosts due to a lack of



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

cohesion among the forwards as well as in defence from his charges, a stark contrast to the rousing 2-1 win a year ago at the same venue in a World Cup Qualifying playoff, which had seen his side sneak into main qualifiers at Maldives' expense.

The coach also bemoaned the lack of concentration of his charges for the decisive goal as Fasir was left unmarked by a napping defence on a free-kick from Hamza Mohamed.

Rakib Hossain and Faysal Ahmed Fahim, the two forwards operating down the wings, failed to put the right crosses

inside the box while at the other end, there was a clear lack of understanding in defence where young Abahani centre back Shakil Ahad Topu was handed his debut, leaving some 4000 spectators frustrated.

Cabrera had thrown in four pairs of fresh legs towards the end, injecting some much-needed pace but the final shot, be it from Rakib or Sheikh Morsalin or substitute Mojibor Rahman Johny was always missing.

The defeat also closes in on a dismal year for the Bangladesh team following an upward tick in performance and

results last year when they had reached the semifinals of the SAFF Championship and qualified for World Cup Qualifiers. In 2024, Cabrera's men have now six of the seven matches they have played, scoring just one goal and conceding 14.

Although Cabrera did not comment on speculations regarding his future with Bangladesh football, the Spaniard would need to find a positive and reassuring performance from his charges in the next match to survive as the team's head coach in the Asian Cup Qualifiers in March next year.

Security measures in focus in France-Israel encounter

AGENCIES



France will host Israel in a UEFA Nations League group-stage fixture at the Stade De France on Thursday, a week after supporters of Israeli club Maccabi Tel Aviv were subject to targeted assault in Amsterdam following a Europa League contest between Maccabi and Ajax.

The violent clashes in the aftermath of which about two dozen people were injured and more than 60 were arrested spurred on against a backdrop of high tension caused by the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

The France-Israel fixture has been deemed as high risk and in response Paris police have heightened security measures, deploying 4,000 gendarmes around the stadium, on public transport and across the French capital.

Paris police chief Laurent Nunez said that the national police force's elite unit would be tasked with protecting Israel's footballers.

French President Emmanuel Macron will be in attendance in a sign of solidarity.

Firm favourites going into the contest, France will secure their spot in the quarterfinals of the competition if they avoid defeat against Israel and Belgium fail to come out on top in their penultimate group fixture with Italy.

Italy need just a point, Belgium much more

AGENCIES

In-form Italy will need just a single point to secure a place in the UEFA Nations League quarterfinals when they visit Brussels to face hosts Belgium in a League A Group 2 game on Thursday night.

However, the game is a must-win for Domenico Tedesco's side in order to stand any chance of progressing to the quarters in March. Even if they manage to win, Belgium will have to hope for other results to go their way.

Having previously fought back to draw 2-2 in Italy, Belgium's sole win remains September's 3-1 success against Israel.

Occupying third place with just four points – five below France, and six shy of leaders Italy – Tedesco's side seem to be heading for a relegation playoff.

A top-two finish is required to reach the knockout phase for a second time, so their task is straightforward on Thursday: they must win to stay in contention.

That would take it down to Sunday's game, when they will meet rock-bottom Israel in Hungary.

However, the Belgians have failed to beat Italy in a competitive match since 1972.

Meanwhile, after putting up a dismal defence of their title at the last Euros, a new-look Italy under Luciano Spalletti have been a breath of fresh air in Group 2 thus far. They have racked up 10 points from a possible 12 to inch within a whisker of securing progress, which they will do just by avoiding defeat against Belgium.

The curious case of NCL's older stars

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Being in and around the national team periphery can help cricketers remain in contention to earn their place in the national team, but not if they are of a certain age. Players who have played a few matches in the national team but have not earned their place back are usually above 30. The case of Imrul Kayes, who played his last Test for Bangladesh in 2019 and is set to retire from first-class cricket on 16th November, is of that same ilk.

The performances in the National Cricket League (NCL) are not a barometer; the specific nature of the challenge in selecting players from a month-long tournament perhaps overlooks that red-ball stars need more exposure throughout the year. Current selector Abdur Razzak was perhaps the only example of an older star returning at the age of 36, albeit for one Test against Sri Lanka in 2018, through NCL performances.

Imrul feels that there is no plan in place regarding

players of a certain age in Bangladesh's cricket culture.

"You can see what priority was given to age-level players in the BPL [Bangladesh Premier League], even ones who did not play a single season of BPL. To come up the ranks, we had to play well in two to four editions. Sometimes people get things easily, and that's our problem. We always think that the class of 19 will bring solutions, but ultimately the older stars have to perform," Imrul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Imrul argued that he has not been playing first-class cricket frequently in recent years, as his intention was not to return to the national team anymore.

"I used to play previously because there was a plan to get into the national team, and I felt there was a plan regarding me. But honestly, that's not there anymore. I play now because of my career, the feel-good factor, and because young players enjoy playing with us," he added.

The NCL's challenge has increased over the years, and Imrul agrees but points out that only stats-based assessment is made.

"Player-wise, our quality has increased in our first-class cricket... but some players don't survive long in internationals. The plan we play cricket in, that's not done in any other country."

"Ultimately, we just see flat-out how many runs someone scored or how many wickets someone got. We don't see in what situation those runs or wickets were taken. We don't verify those things," he said.

National team selector Hannan Sarkar yesterday mentioned players such as 35-year-old Marshall Ayub, who scored

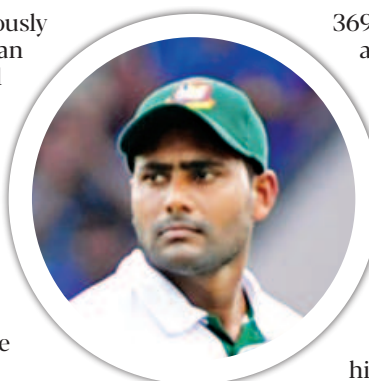
369 runs at an average of 61, alongside the likes of Imrul, Shamsur Rahman, and Naeem Islam, during a press meet, suggesting they will be considered in future.

However, Hannan also pointed out the quality gap between the NCL and international cricket, as someone like Mominul Haque had highlighted after a Test against Sri Lanka recently.

Imrul argued that players need exposure to play international Tests.

"You can't base [selection] on the NCL to think about the Test team. You need to have 30-40 players under BCB [Bangladesh Cricket Board] to get performances throughout the year. These players need to be playing longer versions throughout the year."

"You can't rely on a one-and-a-half-month tournament and think you can select players from there. It's difficult. You see that players who don't play BPL are only watching games. Why can't we build a curriculum so they are amid games?" Imrul said.



Argentina's Lionel Messi prepares during a practice session in Buenos Aires on Wednesday ahead of their trip to Asuncion to face a tricky Paraguay in a World Cup qualifying game on Friday. Argentina, who sit atop the South American qualifying standings with 22 points, will hope to build on their momentum from a 6-0 thrashing of Bolivia last month and get three points to have one giant foot in the finals already. Meanwhile, just hours before Argentina get into action, Brazil will play away to Venezuela, and the five-time world champions will look for nothing but a win to boost their chances of qualifying as they sit fourth in the standings, six points behind leaders Argentina. PHOTO: REUTERS

District swimmers treading in shallow waters

ANISUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Army dominated the recent national swimming championships, securing all 42 gold medals and leaving district and club teams, apart from BKSP and the Bangladesh Air Force, without any podium finishes.

For years, the swimming pool in the national championships has been ruled by service teams like the Navy, Army, Air Force, and Bangladesh Ansar. Occasionally, district and club teams have made it onto the medal table, hinting at swimming talent beyond these better-resourced teams. However, a shortage of facilities and training opportunities restricts their potential.

Unlike previous editions, only four teams out of nearly 50 participating teams – Navy, Army, BKSP, and Air Force – shared all medals in the 33rd national swimming championships, raising fears of swimming fading out at the district level.

"Usually, district and club teams struggle to compete against swimmers from service teams who are given round-the-year training facilities," said Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) treasurer Rezaul Hossain Badsha, who also took care of four Pabna swimmers in the just-concluded championships.

"Besides, there are no DSA [District Sports Association] committees in many districts, while some ad hoc committees have been formed in others, so there has been no training at the district level. Most districts participated in the championships without financial help from the DSA,"

noted that his district currently lacks a functioning sports association committee, which has led to a next-to-nothing preparation for the championships.

"I brought four swimmers to the championship at my own cost, and two of them met the set time.



said Badsha, who brought four Pabna swimmers to the championship at his own expense.

"To be honest, sports at the district level remain stuck, and it is also challenging for both district sports associations and clubs to conduct swimming," said Badsha.

Echoing Badsha's views, Jotindra Nath Biswas, a coach from Bagerhat,

They have therefore been given the promised facilities by the federation, but the other two were covered by me," said Jotindra, adding that the federation should provide financial support to clubs to develop swimmers at the grassroots level to prevent extinction.

Nazim Uddin, general secretary of Jhenaidah Swimming Club,

highlighted the unique challenges faced by district-level athletes. Unlike their service team counterparts, district swimmers often train in ponds or rivers and lack access to proper diet and fitness resources.

Asked why district and club teams participated only nominally in the national championships, Nazim said, "You can't hold the national championships with only four or five services teams. Besides, the districts and clubs are invited by the federation to participate. There is also the question of councillorship in the federation."

Former national swimmer Karar Samidul Islam noted that swimmers at the district level do not have the capacity to clock the times needed to win a medal at the senior level, so proven swimmers continue to excel in every competition.

Samidul, however, informed that district and club teams are producing swimmers at the junior level, and the service teams are recruiting these talented swimmers at a young age to groom them for senior competitions and for national representation.

Interestingly, 11 swimmers shared all 19 gold medals in the men's events, while only five swimmers shared 16 gold medals in the women's events of the senior championships, highlighting the widening gap between service and district teams.

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Let's build a world with zero waste

Yunus says nations asking for money is humiliating

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has called for making a world where there is zero waste.

"We have created an economic framework based on consume, consume, and consume, and it only generates waste, waste and waste. We need to create a world of zero waste," he said in his address to the World Leaders Action Summit at the COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, yesterday.

Leaders of 200 nations and territories attended the event. The Nobel laureate also called for mobilising the intellectual, financial, and youth power to lay the foundation for a new civilization. He said the current civilization is at grave risk because of its "self-destructive values".

"We justify this with an economic framework which is considered as natural as the planetary system. That economic framework thrives on limitless consumption. The more you consume, the more you grow. The more you grow, the more money you make.

"The maximisation of profit is treated as the force of gravity which lets everything in the system to play its role according to our desire."

He said in order to survive, humans need to create another culture based on a different life-style, which will limit consumption to essential needs, leaving no residual waste.

Yunus proposed an economy based primarily on zero personal profit, for example, on social business, which is defined as a non-dividend business addressed to solve

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PHOTO: REUTERS

US President Joe Biden meets with President-elect Donald Trump in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington yesterday.

8-yr-old girl's life taken for gold jewellery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Belapole

Police in Jhikargacha upazila of Jashore arrested a woman on charges of strangling an eight-year-old girl to death to steal her gold earrings and necklace.



Police recovered the body of Sadia Khatun from a bush at Matikumra village around 12:30am yesterday.

Sadia was a madrasa student. Police arrested Champa Begum, a resident of the village, who also has a daughter of the same age as Sadia.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said Sadia went missing Tuesday afternoon after she went to play near her home.

In the evening, her father Babu Moral and locals looked for her across the village but could not find her, said Bablur Rahman Khan, officer in charge of Jhikargacha Police Station.

At night, several villagers informed

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Free election most urgent need now

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Thakurgaon

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir



has said the country's most urgent need is now a free, fair, and acceptable election, as various conspiracies and campaigns are being orchestrated against the nation.

Talking to journalists at his residence in Thakurgaon town yesterday, the BNP leader said the proportional representation electoral system is not feasible in Bangladesh context.

"We're not concerned about Awami League's participation in the upcoming election. Our worry is about when the next election will be held, as the interim government has not yet presented any roadmap for the polls."

Fakhrul added that the government has formed a commission to reform the electoral system, which has already sent the BNP a

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Cabinet expansion a ploy to prolong stay in office

Some BNP leaders say at standing committee meeting; party to put pressure on govt for polls

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The BNP believes that the cabinet expansion is an attempt of this interim government to prolong its stay in power. Considering this, the party plans to beef up its street programmes to put pressure on the government to call for elections, said party leaders.

The issue of making the cabinet larger was discussed in the standing committee meeting, the highest policymaking body of the party, held at its Gulshan office on Monday night.

At the beginning of the meeting, a standing committee member raised the issues of expansion and the Interim Government Ordinance 2024.

The BNP leaders discussed the draft ordinance that specifies that the caretaker administration will remain in power until the 13th parliamentary election is held and a new prime minister takes charge, with no fixed term outlined. Questions cannot be raised over the appointments of the chief adviser and other advisers as per the draft ordinance.

Party leaders in the meeting said that such a draft was expected but some members expressed concerns about the lack of clarity on the specific number of advisers in the interim government. Regarding the appointments of three new advisers, BNP leaders said that as questions were raised from different quarters about the appointments of two advisers, the party must move cautiously.

If they were appointed after proper scrutiny, controversy could have been averted, said a standing committee member, wishing not to be named.

Earlier, the BNP expressed reservations about another adviser, Ali Imam Majumdar. The interim government appointed renowned filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, AkijBashir Group Managing Director

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

'Welcome back'

Trump, Biden shake hands in White House; Musk, Fox News host gets key posts as GOP 'retain control of House'

AFP, Washington

Joe Biden welcomed Donald Trump back to the White House yesterday, in a show of civility to a bitter rival who failed to extend him the same courtesy four years ago.

The US president and president elect shook hands in front of a roaring fire in the Oval Office as they pledged a smooth transition -- a stark contrast to Trump's refusal to recognize his 2020 defeat.

"Welcome back," Biden, 81, said as he congratulated the 78-year-old Trump and offered brief opening remarks to the man he has repeatedly slammed as a threat to democracy.

Biden, who dropped out of the election in July but saw his successor Kamala Harris lose to Trump last week, said he was "looking forward to having a smooth transition" and pledged to do "everything we can to make sure you're accommodated."

As the two presidents with a combined age of 159 years shook hands, Biden appeared to look down while Trump leaned forward and looked him in the eyes.

Trump riled up a mob that attacked the US Capitol in 2021 and ran a brutal and divisive election campaign this year -- but sought to strike a gracious tone

on his return visit to the White House.

"Politics is tough, and in many cases, it's not a very nice world. It is a nice world today and I appreciate it very much," Trump said.

Trump added that the transfer of power would be "smooth as you can get" -- despite the fact that his transition team has not yet signed some key legal documents ahead of his inauguration as president on January 20.

Absent from the occasion was incoming first lady Melania Trump, who was a shadowy presence on the campaign trail and spent much of Trump's first term away from the White House.

Outgoing First Lady Jill Biden joined Biden in welcoming Trump and "gave Mr. Trump a handwritten letter of congratulations for Mrs. Trump," the White House said.

The only other people in the room for talks after the handshake were Biden's chief of staff Jeff Zients and Trump's incoming chief of staff Susie Wiles, the White House said.

Biden was expected to push during the meeting for Trump to continue US support for Ukraine's fight against Russia, which the Republican has called into question.



Elon Musk



Pete Hegseth

15th amendment ruined democracy

Attorney general tells HC hearing on the rule that questioned the amendment's constitutionality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman yesterday pleaded for the restoration of the election-time caretaker government system during a hearing at the High Court on a rule that questioned the legitimacy of the 15th constitutional amendment, which abolished the system.

Describing the 15th amendment law as a legislation that was intended to deceive the people, he said it was formulated to prolong the one-party fascist regime.

The "grave of democracy" was dug by abolishing the caretaker government system, Asaduzzaman remarked.

The top legal officer of the state called for declaring the 15th amendment unconstitutional, arguing that it violated the people's fundamental rights to voting, and destroyed democracy and other basic structures of the constitution.

He said the amendment cannot be kept as part of the constitution since it is "directly contradictory" to the spirits of the Liberation War, the 90's anti-autocracy movement, and the July-August mass uprising of 2024.

"If this amendment is not scrapped, the souls of the martyrs, including Abu Sayeed and Mughdo [Mir Mahfuzur Rahman], won't rest in peace," Asaduzzaman said.

The attorney general was presenting arguments before the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury during the fifth day's hearing on the rule.

The 15th amendment in 2011 scrapped the 13th amendment, which had introduced the non-party caretaker government system in 1996.

After concluding the day's proceedings, the HC bench adjourned the hearing until today.

Earlier in the day, Asaduzzaman sought a directive

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Govt to decide when army will withdraw

Says army HQ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will decide how long the army will remain deployed at the field level to help the civil administration, said Col Intekhab Haider Khan, colonel staff of the Directorate of Military Operations at the Army Headquarters.

He was speaking at a press conference at the Dhaka Cantonment yesterday. The event was organised to inform the media about the army's activities in maintaining law and order.

Responding to a query, he said it is not true that the army was deployed to assist the civil administration for 60 days.

The army was deployed as per the government's decision, and the government will determine how long the deployment will be needed, Intekhab added.

He said the army is fully aware of the importance of preventing human rights violations or extrajudicial killings.

"Our top leadership has given clear instructions that we must not allow any extrajudicial killings to take place under any circumstances. We will make every

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Workers of Bastuhara slum near Chattogram's Karnaphuli river are busy drying a variety of fish. The months from November to March are ideal for drying fish to make the popular Bangladeshi delicacy -- shutki. After the shutki is prepared, it is sent to the Asadganj Shutkipatti wholesale market and from there, it goes to different parts of the country. Those involved in the drying work usually earn Tk 300-500 per day. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Harvey wins Booker Prize for 'Orbital'

REUTERS, London

Britain's Samantha Harvey won the 2024 Booker Prize for her novel 'Orbital', a story about a single day aboard the International Space Station which she wrote during Covid-19 lockdowns.

The novel, Harvey's fifth, was the top selling book on the shortlist of six finalists and has sold more copies than the past three Booker Prize winners combined, as readers lapped up her depiction of earth's beauty as seen from space.

Judges of the prize, now in its 55th year, praised her writing for the "intensity of attention to the precious and precarious world".

Past winners of the prestigious Booker, which is open to works of fiction written in English, include Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie and Yann Martel.

Harvey said she wrote the novel while stuck at home during the pandemic watching footage of the earth in low orbit on her screen. She likened the experience of her six characters "trapped in a tin can" to that of lockdown.

