



The Daily Star
OTT
& DIGITAL CONTENT
AWARDS 2023

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Directors are often regarded as the captains of a project, steering the ship toward success and elevating it to remarkable heights. As the 'Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards 2023' draws closer, the best directors of the year have been recognised for their exceptional contributions to the world of OTT content. Celebrating creativity and vision, these nominations highlight the storytellers who brought captivating narratives to life. The nominated directors shared their thoughts on the honour, reflecting on their creative journeys and the artistry behind their acclaimed works.

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

DIRECTORS REFLECT ON THEIR NOMINATIONS AND CREATIVE JOURNEYS

Ashfaque Nipun

The Daily Star has shown consistency and neutrality over the past two years in hosting the *Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards*, and I am confident they will uphold this standard again this year. I'm thrilled with the 15 nominations for *Mohanagar 2* across both the Popular and Critics categories. Congratulations to all the nominees, especially the technicians, whose recognition here is second only to the National Film Awards.

Shankha Dasgupta

I'm ecstatic to see *Guti* receive 18 nominations across both the Popular and Critics categories. We poured our hearts into this project, and it's a huge honour to see it recognised in such a meaningful way. We're eagerly anticipating the event.

Shihab Shaheen

I am truly honoured to be nomi-

nated for the Best Director award in the Popular and Critics categories for my web-series *Myself Allen Swapan* and web-film *Baba, Someone's Following Me*. While the series holds a special place as one of my most successful works, the film is deeply personal to me. This recognition is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in these projects.

Vicky Zahed

The *Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards* is one of the most prestigious accolades in the OTT arena in our country. I'm proud to have three of my projects—*Ami Ki Tumi*, *The Silence*, and *Kajoler Dinratri*—nominated for multiple awards. This recognition motivates me to keep pushing my creative boundaries as a director.

Raihan Rafi

This award is one of my personal favourites, and I am immensely

grateful to The Daily Star for continuously supporting us, especially by honouring the behind-the-scenes teams. This recognition takes team spirit to a new level. I'm delighted that my film *Friday* has received multiple nominations in both the Popular and Critics categories.

Mizanur Rahman Aryan

I always strive to create work that resonates with the audience. Receiving several nominations for *Unish20* and *Punormilone* is incredibly rewarding, especially since both projects were well-received by viewers. Congratulations to all the nominees, and I look forward to the event.

Taneem Rahman Angshu

I'm thrilled to receive my second nomination at the *Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards*, especially for *Buker Moddhye Agun*. This project holds immense personal significance

for me, and despite the challenges, my amazing team gave it their all.

Rubel Hasan

Being nominated for *Nikosh* is particularly special, as it marks my debut in the OTT space. I'm also overjoyed that Farin and Mahima have been nominated in the Lead and Supporting categories.

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'FILMS, ONLY FILMS'

Irfan Sajjad on his vision for future

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Celebrated model and actor Irfan Sajjad made his cinematic debut with *Bhalobasha Emoni Hoy*, directed by Tania Ahmed, followed by his second release, *Mon Jane Na Moner Thikana*. This November 29, his latest film, *Voyal*, is set to premiere in theatres, with several other projects awaiting release.

In an interview with The Daily Star, the actor shared, "I have spent a decade working in television dramas, receiving immense love and appreciation from the audience. Now, I am focusing more on films, with my sights firmly set on cinema. Over the past one and a half years, I have significantly reduced my work in dramas."

Discussing his upcoming release, Irfan said, "My latest film, *Voyal*, is set to release on November 29. The storyline is unique, as is the character I portray. I play a village youth, and I genuinely enjoyed working on this project. It has turned out to be an excellent piece of work."

He added, "The film was shot in the Khasia village of Sreemangal. I am confident the audience will appreciate *Voyal*. The director has put in meticulous effort, and my co-actors have delivered remarkable performances."

When asked about his current projects, Irfan shared, "I have worked on three films consecutively. At present, I am prioritising cinema and am hopeful that another new film will hit the screens next year."

One of his upcoming films, *Ali*, is also directed by Biplob Hayder, the director of *Voyal*. Speaking about the project, he said, "*Ali* is entirely different. The audience will see a new side of me in this film. I've put in my

utmost effort to ensure the project turns out well."

Additionally, Irfan has completed work on a new film directed by Anam Biswas, which is now awaiting release. "Anam Biswas is an exceptionally talented and skilled director," he remarked. "I thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with him. The story of the film focuses on the 1971 Swadhin Bangla Football team. I look forward to working with Anam Biswas again in the future."

On his ambitions, Irfan stated, "I want to stay more involved in films. I want to see

myself grow in cinema. I am eager to see how the audience receives me and to what extent they appreciate and accept me in this medium."

When asked about his goals for the coming year, he shared, "Films. Only films. My focus for the next year is completely dedicated to cinema."

In the meantime, the versatile actor is actively promoting *Voyal*. "I am visiting different universities, newspapers, and television channels to spread the word," he said. "I want everyone to know that the film has an excellent story and will resonate with the audience."

Explaining the title of the film, Irfan noted, "At a certain point in the story, a terrifying situation develops due to various circumstances. That's why the name *Voyal* was chosen. Everything will become clear to the audience once they watch it in theatres."



'I can't imagine a more beautiful moment': Buby on her birthday

Yesterday, Shobnom Buby celebrated her birthday with her son, Shehzad Khan Bir, and her parents. She was dressed elegantly in a pastel green saree and radiated charm, while her son looked dashing in a greyish *punjabi*.

The actress posed alongside her son in a heartfelt photo, who surprised her with a bouquet of roses, and together they cut her birthday cake.

She expressed her joy using the photo's caption, -shared on Facebook, stating, "Is there anything more beautiful in life than this? My son watches over me like this, making every day feel like a birthday for me."

Chorki gears up for 'Dui Shaw', the sequel to 'Pett Kata Shaw'



The Chorki Original series *Pett Kata Shaw* by Nuhash Humayun, which debuted in 2022 to great acclaim, is returning for a second season. After months of anticipation, the teaser was unveiled last Tuesday on Chorki's official Facebook page, with the release date to be announced soon.

According to Chorki, the upcoming season, titled *Dui Shaw*, continues the format of the first instalment, as it will feature four captivating stories.

Blending elements of fantasy, horror, and mystery, the stories for *Dui Shaw* were penned by Nuhash Humayun alongside his mother, Gultekin Khan. Notably, this project marks the debut of poet Gultekin Khan as a writer for a series.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



ARMED FORCES DAY 2024

Special Supplement

Armed Forces in the Liberation War



সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দিবস-২০২৪ উপলক্ষে আমি বাংলাদেশ সেনা, নৌ ও বিমান বাহিনীর সকল সদস্যকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দিবসে আমি পরম শ্রদ্ধার সাথে স্মরণ করছি ১৯৭১ সালের মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধে আত্মোৎসর্গকারী সাতজন বীরশ্রেষ্ঠ ও ত্রিশ লক্ষ শহিদদের, যারা মাতৃভূমির জন্য অকাতরে প্রাণ বিসর্জন দিয়েছিলেন। আমি গভীর শ্রদ্ধায় স্মরণ করছি মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের বিভিন্ন সময়ে দেশ ও দেশের বাইরে পেশাগত দায়িত্ব পালনকালে আত্মোৎসর্গকারী সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর বীর সদস্যদের। আমি তাঁদের আত্মার মাগফিরাত ও শান্তি কামনা করি। আমি সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর যুদ্ধাহত সদস্য ও শহিদ পরিবারের সদস্যদের প্রতি গভীর সমবেদনা জানাচ্ছি। মুক্তিযুদ্ধে সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর অবদান ও বীরত্বগাথা জাতি গভীর শ্রদ্ধার সাথে স্মরণ করে।

মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের মধ্য দিয়ে গড়ে ওঠা সশস্ত্র বাহিনী আমাদের গর্ব ও আত্মার প্রতীক। মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধকালীন ১৯৭১ সালের ২১ নভেম্বর তিন বাহিনী সম্মিলিতভাবে হানাদার বাহিনীর উপর সর্বাঙ্গিক আক্রমণ পরিচালনা করে। তিন বাহিনীর সম্মিলিত এই প্রয়াস আমাদের বিজয়কে ত্বরান্বিত করে। তাই বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতা-সংগ্রামের ইতিহাসে ২১ নভেম্বর একটি স্মরণীয় দিন।

দেশের স্বাধীনতা ও সার্বভৌমত্ব রক্ষার মহান দায়িত্ব পালনের পাশাপাশি যে-কোনো প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগ ও জাতীয় সংকট মোকাবেলায় বেসামরিক প্রশাসনকে সহযোগিতাসহ জাতিগঠনমূলক কর্মকাণ্ডে সশস্ত্র বাহিনী গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে। এবছর জুলাই-আগস্ট মাসে ছাত্র-জনতার গণঅভ্যুত্থানে সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর দায়িত্ববোধ, ধৈর্য ও দেশপ্রেম সাধারণ মানুষের প্রশংসা অর্জন করেছে। কেবল দেশেই নয়, সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর সদস্যগণ জাতিসংঘ শান্তিরক্ষা মিশনে অংশ নিয়ে পেশাগত দক্ষতা, সর্বোচ্চ শৃঙ্খলা, সততা ও নিষ্ঠার সাথে দায়িত্ব পালন করে বহির্বিশ্বে বাংলাদেশের ভাবমূর্তি উজ্জ্বল করে চলেছেন।

একটি শক্তিশালী, আধুনিক ও প্রশিক্ষিত সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দেশের সার্বভৌমত্ব রক্ষার অন্যতম পূর্বশর্ত। সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর আধুনিকায়নে যুগোপযোগী প্রশিক্ষণের পাশাপাশি বাহিনীসমূহে যুক্ত হচ্ছে অত্যাধুনিক সামরিক সরঞ্জাম, যা নিঃসন্দেহে সশস্ত্র বাহিনীকে আরও আধুনিক, দক্ষ ও গতিশীল করবে। সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর উন্নয়নে নেতৃত্বের প্রতি গভীর আস্থা, পারস্পরিক বিশ্বাস, শ্রদ্ধাবোধ, পেশাগত দক্ষতা এবং সর্বোপরি শৃঙ্খলা খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর সদস্যগণ সর্বদা রাষ্ট্র ও নেতৃত্বের প্রতি পরিপূর্ণ অনুগত থেকে কঠোর অনুশীলন ও দেশপ্রেমের সমন্বয়ে সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর গৌরব সমৃদ্ধ রাখবেন- এ প্রত্যাশা করি।

আমি সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর উত্তরোত্তর সমৃদ্ধি এবং বাহিনীসমূহের সকল সদস্য ও তাঁদের পরিবারবর্গের অব্যাহত সুখ, শান্তি ও সমৃদ্ধি কামনা করছি।

বাংলাদেশ চিরজীবী হোক।

Moja Saahabuddin
মোঃ সাহাবুদ্দিন
রাষ্ট্রপতি ও সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর সর্বাধিনায়ক

Bangladesh Army's valiant role in the Liberation War of 1971 stands as an indelible chapter in the glorious history of Bangladesh. It was a time when the brave Bengali officers and soldiers of the then Pakistan Army, alongside civilians from all walks of life, courageously fought against the occupation forces of West Pakistan. The Bengali members of the Pakistan Army, Navy and Air Force stood firmly against the brutalities and severe oppression inflicted on innocent and unarmed Bengalis during the 'Operation Search Light' on March 25, 1971. Colonel (later General) M. A. G. Osmani (Retd) was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief by the Provisional Government of Bangladesh in 1971. The country was divided into eleven sectors, most of which were commanded by Army personnel. 'S' Force, 'Z' Force, and 'K' Force and three regular Brigades of the Army were formed to expedite victory through integrated and coordinated attacks. The indomitable officers and soldiers of Bangladesh Army, as well as civilians from all walks of life, achieved victory against the Pakistan Army through determined operations in various regions of the country during the nine month long conflict. A total of 1460 personnel including 55 officers made supreme sacrifice in Liberation War. In recognition to the heroic role in Liberation War, the Army's 03 members were awarded with 'Bir Sreshto', 39 'Bir Uttam', 90 'Bir Bikrom' and 167 'Bir Protik' gallantry awards. Bangladesh Navy played a significant and glorious role in the great Liberation War of 1971. She officially began her operations in the Liberation War following the announcement of historic Sector Commanders' Conference. A notable number of Bengali officers and sailors fled West Pakistan and bravely engaged in direct combat and guerrilla warfare against the enemy at great personal risk. On August 15, a fearless diving team conducted devastating attacks at sea and river ports under 'Operation Jackpot', destroying 26 enemy ships and damaging many others, effectively crippling sea routes and sea ports. On the other hand, two gunboats, PADMA and PALASH of Bangladesh Navy, carried out 'Operation Hotpants' in the Passur river and destroyed several commercial vessels. The audacious operations of the Navy left the enemy disoriented on the waterways, and until the liberation of our motherland, these naval commando operations continued across the country. Many naval heroes sacrificed their lives during the Liberation War. In recognition to their bravery and self-sacrifice, Shaheed Ruhul Amin ERA-1 was awarded with the title of Bir Sreshto, 05 Bir Uttam, 08 Bir Bikram, and 07 Bir Protik gallantry awards. During the Liberation War (LW) with an aim to liberate the nation, the nascent Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) started its indomitable journey in the name of 'Kilo Flight' with one Otter aircraft, one Dakota aircraft and one Alouette helicopter with a total of 57 members (10 officers and 47 airmen) at Dimapur in India on 28 September 1971. 'Kilo Flight' began its maiden operational flight at midnight of 03 December 1971 through successful air attacks on the fuel depots of Chattogram and Narayanganj. In Liberation War, 'Kilo Flight' conducted fifty successful air attacks on the Pakistani targets that contributed a significant role in expediting the victory. As a recognition of their outstanding contribution to our Liberation War, 01 member from Air Force was awarded with 'Bir Sreshto', 06 'Bir Uttam', 01 'Bir Bikrom' and 15 were awarded with 'Bir Protik' gallantry awards. The nation remembers the contributions of Bangladesh Armed Forces to the great Liberation War with the most profound respect.

"সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দিবস ২০২৪" উপলক্ষে সেনা, নৌ ও বিমান বাহিনীর সকল সদস্যকে আমি শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন জানাচ্ছি। বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামে জীবন উৎসর্গকারী সশস্ত্র বাহিনীসহ সকল বীর শহিদদের প্রতি গভীর শ্রদ্ধা জানাই।

মুক্তিযুদ্ধের সময় সেনা, নৌ ও বিমান বাহিনীর অকুতোভয় সদস্যরা ২১ নভেম্বর সম্মিলিতভাবে দখলদার বাহিনীর বিরুদ্ধে পাকটা আক্রমণের সূচনা করেন। মুক্তিবাহিনী, বিভিন্ন আধাসামরিক বাহিনীর সদস্যগণ ও দেশপ্রেমিক জনতা এই সমন্বিত আক্রমণে অংশ নেন। হানাদার বাহিনীকে পরাজিত করে ১৬ই ডিসেম্বর আমরা চূড়ান্ত বিজয় অর্জন করি। মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধে বাঙালি জাতির অযাচারা ও বিজয়ের স্মারক হিসেবে প্রতি বছর ২১ নভেম্বর সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দিবস পালন করা হয়।

দেশের স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রাম থেকে শুরু করে বন্যা, খরা, ঝড়, বুড়ি, ঘূর্ণিঝড়সহ সকল প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগে সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দুর্গত জনগণের শেষ ভরসা হ্যান। বরাবরের ন্যায় এবারও দেশের ক্রান্তিলগ্নে বাংলাদেশ সশস্ত্র বাহিনী জনগণের পাশে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে।

ছাত্র-শ্রমিক-জনতার গণঅভ্যুত্থান এবং পরবর্তীতে বন্যা পরিস্থিতি মোকাবেলা, শিল্প কারখানায় নিরাপত্তা প্রদানসহ দেশের আইন-শৃঙ্খলা পরিষ্কৃতির উন্নয়ন ও অস্ত্র উদ্ধারসহ সকল কার্যক্রমে বেসামরিক প্রশাসনকে সহায়তা প্রদানের জন্য আপনাদের প্রতি কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাচ্ছি। আমি আশা করি, সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর সদস্যগণ দেশের স্বাধীনতা ও সার্বভৌমত্ব রক্ষার পাশাপাশি জনগণের সাথে একত্রে কাজ করে যাবে।

আমি "সশস্ত্র বাহিনী দিবস ২০২৪" উপলক্ষে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সার্বিক সাফল্য কামনা করছি।

Prfessor Muzahid Hossain
প্রফেসর মুহাম্মদ ইউনুস



21st November is the Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh. It signifies the glorious history of Bangladesh that epitomizes the spirit of patriotism, solidarity, courage and supreme sacrifices of Bengali Nation. On this day in 1971, the valiant members of our Army, Navy and Air Force along with the Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh launched a combined offensive against the Pakistani occupation forces from land, sea and air which accelerated the final victory on 16 December 1971.

By sacrificing millions of invaluable lives, Bangladesh achieved its sovereignty, an independent map and a national flag. The Armed Forces Day reminds us of those inspiring stories of selfless sacrifices, and revives the esprit-de-corps among the members of three services. On this special day, I pay homage to our greatest heroes who made supreme sacrifices for our independence. My special tribute to the valiant members of Bangladesh Armed Forces who laid down their lives during and after the Liberation War for the cause of our dear motherland. I pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of their departed souls, and convey my heartfelt gratitude and empathy to the members of all the bereaved families.

The Armed Forces is a symbol of unity, strength and pride of our nation. Besides, the primary role of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, members of Bangladesh Armed Forces, particularly Bangladesh Army are performing a wide variety of responsibilities including maintaining peace and stability in Chattogram Hill Tracts, national development activities, disaster management and assisting distressed people. On this auspicious day, I like to thank the people of Bangladesh for keeping their trust on Bangladesh Army, and extending full support during all national development and disaster management activities. I like to mention with pleasure that our Armed Forces could earn the trust and love of people beyond our borders.

Our Armed Forces personnel are also risking their lives every day to promote and sustain peace and stability in distant lands. Through our sincerity, dedication, relentless efforts and sheer professionalism, we have achieved our position as one of the top troops contributing countries in the United Nations which is a great accomplishment for all of us.

On this auspicious day, I convey my heartfelt gratitude and felicitations to all the members of Bangladesh Armed Forces who bear the indomitable spirit of our Liberation War in their hearts. I also extend my thanks and gratitude to all who have worked at different levels for publishing the special supplement to national dailies to mark the Armed Forces Day-2024. I solicit the divine blessings for the continued progress and prosperity of Bangladesh Armed Forces.

May Allah bless us all.

Waker-Uz-Zaman
WAKER-UZ-ZAMAN
General

The 21st of November holds special significance in the glorious history of Bangladesh. On this eventful day, the valiant members of the three services launched a coordinated joint attack on the occupying forces, ultimately leading to our long-awaited victory on December 16, 1971. This date added further momentum to the emergence of Bangladesh as a proud and independent nation. Armed Forces Day stands as a symbol of unique pride and enduring glory, not just for us but for the entire nation. Every year on this momentous day, the members of the Armed Forces renew their sense of patriotism, dignity and confidence.

As we honour the martyrs and heroes, like Bir Sreshto Shaheed Ruhul Amin, we express the nation's deep gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. Their legacy continues to inspire both current and future generations of the Armed Forces, fostering a strong sense of patriotism and duty.

The geography of Bangladesh demands a strong and credible Navy to safeguard its sovereignty, protect national interests, and promote peace. The Navy's modernisation efforts, such as the addition of Naval Aviation and submarines, have significantly expanded our operational capabilities. The integration of advanced technologies and arsenal has made our naval platforms more efficient. Furthermore, the establishment of BNS SHER-E-BANGLA, the largest naval base in Bangladesh, along with the Submarine Base at Pekua, marks a significant milestone in enhancing the defence of our southern frontier.

The Bangladesh Navy plays a crucial role in supporting the nation's economy by safeguarding maritime trade routes and ensuring security for Blue Economy initiatives, such as fisheries, tourism, and offshore energy. Committed to promoting self-reliance, the Navy's transformation into a "Builders' Navy" has advanced domestic shipbuilding capabilities, reducing dependence on foreign suppliers while boosting local industry.

The Bangladesh Navy's involvement in national security, diplomacy and peacekeeping operations demonstrates its steadfast dedication to both national and global peace. BN takes pride in its privilege to serve the nation, with a pledge-bound commitment to uphold national interests. Its efforts to combat illegal arms, drugs, and terrorism, 'In Aid to Civil Power', reflect a strong commitment to protecting national interests. The Navy's role in disaster relief and United Nations peacekeeping missions underscores its commitment to international humanitarian values.

Armed Forces Day reminds us of the sacrifices made by our military, driven by a deep sense of patriotism, and serves as an enduring legacy for future generations. It honours those who serve the nation, promotes unity, and strengthens our commitment to national welfare, inspiring the Bangladesh Armed Forces to continue their noble mission. May Allah (SWT) bestow His divine blessings upon all.

M Nazmul Hassan
M Nazmul Hassan
Admiral

Today is the 21st November, Armed Forces Day - a memorable and glorious day in our national life. This day abides enormous connotations in the history of Liberation War. On this day in 1971, the valiant soldiers of the Army, Navy and Air Force engaged in the fierce fighting for freedom with the vast masses of the country and launched a combined and concerted attack against the Pakistani occupation forces. This well-coordinated and organised attack embedded with patriotism and sacrifice accelerated our ultimate victory. Thus, 21st November has become a remarkable day in our history - a symbol of unity of armed forces and a lighthouse of united beacon to safeguard our independence and sovereignty of the country. On this dignified day, I solemnly remember those - whose sacrifices have earned our great victory. To uphold the dignity of our flag, the brave warriors of the armed forces have composed heroic poems that will certainly inspire their successors to sacrifice themselves for the sake of our beloved motherland.

Bangladesh Air Force expedited our desired victory by conducting numerous successful air raids in the name of Kilo Flight after its establishment during the Liberation War. It starts its journey as a modern and powerful Air Force after the Liberation War by inducting the then supersonic fighter jets, transport aircraft, helicopters and air defense radars to its inventory. With the aim of defending our motherland and making it suitable to face any challenges of the 21st century, the fourth generation fighter jets, long-range transport aircraft, helicopters, various types of radars, missiles, modern military equipment, several bases, units and international training institutes have already been added to the inventory of Bangladesh Air Force. Besides, combat trainers, jet trainers, transport trainers, basic trainers, helicopter trainers and various simulators have been added to enhance the training of the pilots. As a result, the capabilities of the Air Force have increased manifold than ever before.

The role of Bangladesh Air Force is immense in protecting the independence and sovereignty of the country, maintaining peace and order, disaster management, socio-economic development and building a developed nation. Being united in the spirit of the great Liberation War and the positive thoughts of the contemporary anti-discrimination movement, Bangladesh Air Force is working tirelessly to deal with any emergency situation in the country besides its noble task of air defence. Air Force personnel are ready for 24 hours for medical evacuation, casualty evacuation, and search & rescue operations anywhere in the country. I am grateful to Almighty Allah for continuing our effort to protect the people from severe damage and danger through various services including rescue, transfer, treatment, emergency medicine and relief distribution by BAF transport aircraft and helicopters in the recent terrible flood. In the present situation of the country, the members of the Air Force have improved the service state of every airport through relentless endeavors - which is being especially appreciated by all. The humanitarian assistance to various friendly countries including UN peacekeeping mission have brought the country's reputation in the international arena. I hope, with the spirit of the Armed Forces Day, Bangladesh Air Force will move forward by maintaining its unique contribution in the national and international arena.

Armed Forces Day is a significant chapter in the attainment of our great independence. The accumulated inspiration of this day will inspire us throughout the ages with a firm pledge to protect our independence and sovereignty of the motherland. I am very delighted to know that the Armed Forces Division is going to publish a special supplement in the national dailies highlighting the significance of Armed Forces Day. On this glorious day, I express my deepest felicitations to all members of Bangladesh Armed Forces and their family members. Finally, I wish continued prosperity and success for Bangladesh Armed Forces. May Allah bless us all. Allah Hafez.

Hasan Mahmood Khan
HASAN MAHMOOD KHAN
Air Chief Marshal



Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Bir Sreshtho, Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman Bir Sreshtho, Shaheed Sepoy Mostafa Kamal Bir Sreshtho, Shaheed Engine Room Artificer-1 Md. Rubul Amin Bir Sreshtho, Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Matur Rahman Bir Sreshtho, Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rouf Bir Sreshtho, Shaheed Lance Naik Nur Mohammad Sheikh Bir Sreshtho

BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES DEDICATED TO THE COUNTRY

Bangladesh Armed Forces is Ever Ready to Safeguard the Sovereignty

ARMY: 'In war and peace, we are everywhere for the country' - this motto underscores the paramount duty of Bangladesh Army for safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation. Soon after the independence, construction of new infrastructures, training and modernisation of Bangladesh Army started despite limitations. As part of this, various Arms, Services and more than 100 units have been established in the Army. Besides, new cantonments have been established at Bogura, Savar, Mirpur, Mymensingh, Dighinala, Ruma and Alikadam. In the onward progression of Bangladesh Army, 17 Infantry Divisions in Sylhet, 10 Infantry Divisions in Ramu, 98 Composite Brigade in Tangail and 7 Infantry Divisions in Lebukhali, Barisal have been raised. To supervise the construction and security of Padma Bridge 99 Composite Brigade has been established. In addition, Special Works Organisation, National Defence College, Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT), Bangladesh Infantry Regimental Centre (BIRC), various Arms/Services Centers and Schools and Para Commando Brigade have been formed. With the aim of building a modern and advanced Army, this force has been equipped with modern weapons and equipment. With the passage of time, Bangladesh Army, today, has become a well-disciplined, efficient, experienced and exemplary force which is always ready to face any external enemy and protect the country's sovereignty and geographical integrity.

NAVY: 'In War and Peace, Invincible at Sea' - this motto embodies the immense role of the Bangladesh Navy in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and maritime boundaries. Considering the protection of marine resources and economic security of the Bay of Bengal after the independence, a capable, powerful and modern navy was envisioned. Over the time, Bangladesh Navy has evolved into a highly professional and formidable three-dimensional force. Submarines have been added to Navy fleet which have drawn the attention of military forces worldwide. Given the geographical location and to enhance naval capabilities, modern technologically advanced warships, including Frigates, Corvettes, Large Patrol Craft, OPVs, patrol craft and survey vessels have been incorporated into the fleet. BN special force namely SWADS is comprised of brave and daring Naval Commandos and Divers. Moreover, maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters have been included as part of the naval aviation wing. Shipyards and dockyards under the management of Bangladesh Navy are now equipped with indigenous technology which have transformed the navy from a 'Buyer Navy' into a 'Builder Navy' by constructing warships in Bangladesh. To ensure advanced training, simulator-based programmes, modern curricula, and training technologies have been integrated by establishing the Navy Training and Doctrine Command (NTDC). BN is in the course of progression with modern technology to guard the sovereignty of the country.

AIR FORCE: 'Free shall we keep the sky of Bangladesh' - being inspired by this motto, BAF has been performing her duties as the defender of our sky since inception. Right after the independence, BAF started its steadfast journey of modernisation by inducting modern supersonic fighter aircraft, transport aircraft, helicopters and air defence radars. Beside the reorganisation of the air force within a very short period, various reform activities were undertaken including the infrastructure of various bases, reorganisation of skilled manpower and improved training system. Within a very short time for a strong, skilled and modern Air Force, fourth generation fighter aircraft MiG-29, F-7 BGI, Grob-120 basic trainer, PT-6 basic trainer, modern C-130 transport aircraft, L-410 transport trainer, K-8W jet trainer, YAK-130 combat trainer, Mi-171SH helicopter, AW-139 maritime search and rescue helicopter, AW-119KX helicopter trainer, various types of radars, simulators, missiles and modern military equipment have been inducted in BAF. Considering the nature and scope of Bangladesh's geopolitical, strategic and air defence and above all natural disaster management and other functions, Air Force Base Cox's Bazar started its journey on 03 April 2011 as a full-fledged base. Very recently, Bangladesh Air Force has developed basic trainer aircraft for the first time using its own manpower and technical technology. Every member of BAF is determined to sacrifice his/her lives to uphold the hard-earned independence and country's sovereignty.

Bangladesh Armed Forces in Nation-Building and Development Activities

ARMY: Bangladesh Army plays a pivotal role in disaster response and recovery. It consistently demonstrates efficiency in tasks like emergency evacuations, rescue operations, distribution of relief supplies, medical services, and accommodation during natural calamities. Bangladesh Army is providing overall security and support to the people living in the Hill Areas. As a part of this, the Army used to seize arms, ammunition, drugs and illegal goods in Chattogram Hill Tracts as well as provide free medical services, medicines, financial assistance for medical treatment, sewing machines, solar panels and house building materials among helpless poor people. Recently, under the In-Aid-to-Civil Power, Bangladesh Army is playing a leading role in maintaining law and order, recovering illegal weapons, ammunition and drugs, rescuing flood-affected people, providing relief and medical services and ensuring the safety of people's lives, property and important state installations. Furthermore, Bangladesh Army is contributing remarkably to education sector through the reputed schools, colleges, universities, and specialised institutions operating under its guidance. Bangladesh Army is also involved in various nation-building activities and development projects. Notable projects include the protection of the Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant, maintaining security of Key Point Installations (KPIs), and participation in projects related to national voter list, national identity card, machine readable passports and e-passports. According to the needs of the country and people, the scope of work of Bangladesh Army has expanded. Implementation of Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, Padma Bridge Rail Link Project, Border Road Construction Project and other multidisciplinary infrastructural development projects are notable. In addition to the service and development activities, Bangladesh Army has expanded its scope of operations outside the country. In continuation of this, Bangladesh Army has played an unforgettable role in brightening the image of Bangladesh in front of the world through rescue, medical treatment, food distribution, distribution of emergency life-saving materials in the earthquake-affected areas at the request of the Turkish government. In addition, Bangladesh Army has played an important role in post-cyclone rescue operations in Myanmar and Libya. Moreover, Bangladesh Army's role in UN peacekeeping missions is globally appreciated. Currently, Bangladesh is playing a very important and leading role as one of the highest troops contributing countries in the world. The symbol of the nation's pride, Bangladesh Army is determined to protect the country's independence and sovereignty as well as continue the trend of peace, harmony and development in the country beside the development activities.

NAVY: Bangladesh Navy (BN) ever stands strong in ensuring any and every interest of the country. BN plays a vital role in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and supporting national development and interests in both peacetime and wartime. One of the essential functions of BN is to ensure the safety of maritime trade, which is crucial for our economy. The nation's economic lifeline heavily relies on uninterrupted shipping routes, making maritime security paramount. BN's efforts in propelling the 'Blue Economy' of the country start with maintaining 'Good Order at Sea'. To protect the blue economic infrastructures, activities and safeguard valuable resources like minerals, gas, oil and fisheries, naval personnel are ever prevalent at sea. BN ships operate continuously in the Bay of Bengal to prevent maritime crimes, drug and human trafficking, illegal fishing, marine pollution and protect maritime communities. Besides, BN conducts workshops, seminars and training activities with various maritime agencies and stakeholders to foster Maritime Domain Awareness for sustainable maritime development. Maritime University promotes a culture of maritime education leading to economic development with utilisation of maritime resources and skilled human resources. Moreover, BN is committed to assisting country's industrial growth through developing robust infrastructures, research and development facilities and achieving industrial excellence. BN has taken ample initiatives to maximise material and fiscal outputs from shipyards run by the Navy and transformed the shipyards into highly profitable enterprises since taking over the shipyards from the government. These shipyards have constructed many ships and craft for the Navy and other maritime organisations. BN is also striving to develop indigenous technology by establishing the Centre for Naval Research and Development (CNRD). During natural disaster like floods, cyclones, etc BN gives support and provide shelter, essential supplies, and medical assistance. Since 1997, Navy has constructed numerous resettlement centers to homeless families, notably with over 4,411 barracks built under the Asharyan-2 project and facilitates infrastructure development in Bhasan Char for the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals. BN also upholds the nation's interest in the international arena by enhancing diplomatic relations with the outside world. Under the UN, BN peacekeepers are deployed worldwide to ensure peace and stability. BN participates in and organises various international engagements to enhance cooperation with other countries' navies and countries. BN has carried out multiple Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Operations, Search and Rescue operations in the Philippines, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Myanmar which brightened the image of BN and Bangladesh to the whole world.

Special Supplement
Published by: Armed Forces Division

AIR FORCE: Transport aircraft and helicopters of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) are kept ready 24 hours a day and 365 days a year to deal with any disaster, search and rescue and relief operations including medical evacuation, casualty evacuation. Recently, in the severely flood affected areas of Sylhet, Comilla, Chattogram, Feni and Noakhali, members of the Bangladesh Air Force carried out rescue operations for the helpless people. In continuation to this, out of the 9 sectors of Dhaka city, Air Force is entrusted with the responsibility of 2 important sectors in post-earthquake rescue work. The Air Force regularly provides full cooperation to the civil administration of the country in fire fighting and rescue operations. Recently, BAF participated in the rescue operations of those trapped in terrible fire at Amurbunia Chhila area of Chandpai range of East Sundarbans, in the residential building near Cox's Bazar airport and in a Hotel in Jashore city. Again after the strong earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, cyclones and severe floods in Libya, rescue teams with humanitarian aid were sent to the affected countries through transport aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force. Besides, the members of the Air Force representing Bangladesh in various UN missions have brought an enviable achievement of glory and appreciation to the country. Apart from protecting the sovereignty, BAF is also playing a vital role in nation building process through producing good citizens. A total of 30898 students are taught at seven BAF Shaheen Colleges and one BAF Shaheen English Medium College. Aviation and Aerospace University has been established to enrich BAF and aviation sector of the country in the field of aerospace technology. BAF is providing all-out cooperation to Bangladesh Army, BGB and civil organisations since long for maintaining peace and harmony in the inaccessible CHT area. In order to provide well-controlled guidance to the patrolling aircraft in the country's vast sea area and the Mahisopan area, the latest technology YLC-6 Air Defence Radar was commissioned at Bangladesh Air Force Base Cox's Bazar on November 11, 2015. Moreover, two GM-403 model radars made by France have been installed in Bogura Radar Unit and 71 Squadron of Bangladesh Air Force to further strengthen air defence surveillance of the country. Besides, Mobile Gap Filler radar has been deployed in Bangladesh Air Force to detect high-flying targets from the surface. 'Air Defence Notification Centre' has been established which plays a significant role in country's air defence, security management and economic development. Recently, Bangladesh Air Force has been performing the security duties of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and other airports of the country with efficiency and speed which is appreciated by the entire nation.

EVOLUTION AND SPIRIT OF THE ARMED FORCES DAY
Major Khandokar Mostak Ahmed, AEC

The War of Liberation in 1971 is the most important event in the history of Bangladesh. The war began when the Pakistani occupation forces launched 'Operation Searchlight' against the innocent and unarmed people of Bangladesh on the night of 25 March 1971, initiating the unprecedented genocide. The 'Declaration of Independence' on 26 March 1971 was instrumental to unite the people of Bangladesh to fight the war against Pakistani military forces.

On 17 April 1971, Colonel M. A. G Osmani, later promoted as General, took oath as the Commander-in-Chief of Mukti Bahini. While the war raged on, the necessity of well-trained and unified Armed Forces was felt. During the first Bangladesh Sector Commanders Conference, held from 11 to 17 July 1971, the Bangladesh Forces comprised of Army, Navy and Air Force began its journey but the forces started to fight separately at various corners of the battlefield. On 21st November 1971, General M.A.G. Osmani called for the united attack by Bangladesh Forces to completely annihilate the Pakistani occupation forces which was broadcast in 'Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra'. On this historic day in 1971, the valiant members of Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force along with the freedom fighters from all walks of life launched an all-out offensive on the occupation forces from land, sea and air. Members of Bangladesh Army and East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) were organised under three Brigade Groups i.e. 'K' Force, 'S' Force and 'Z' Force. As the land force, they played the pivotal role during the War of Liberation and had significant contributions for the independence of Bangladesh. Commandos of Bangladesh Navy conducted the dauntless 'Operation Jackpot' and more than 45 operations in the rivers and channels to block the ports and stop the logistics supply for occupation forces. Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) started its journey on 28 September 1971 in Dimapur, India. Since 3rd December 1971, Bangladesh Air Force conducted 'Kilo Flight' and more than 50 successful air raids on Pakistani targets including bombing on the Eastern Oil Refinery at Patenga in Chattogram and oil depot at Godanail in Narayanganj. The simultaneous joint operations of the Bangladesh Forces proved decisive and were considered as a turning point of the 9-month long Liberation War. Recently, within three weeks or so from 21st November 1971 there was a total collapse of the combat effectiveness of the occupation forces. All these paved the way for achieving final victory on 16th December 1971 after a full-scale joint offensive of the Allied Forces which was formed by the Indian and the Bangladesh military forces. Thus, 21st November bears special significance in the history of Bangladesh Liberation War.

At present, 21st November is marked as the Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh and the Day is observed every year with due solemnity and importance to honour the sacrifices made by the valiant members of Bangladesh Armed Forces. Earlier, the three forces i.e. Army, Navy and Air Force used to celebrate the Day differently at their own which conveyed the message that there was lack of cohesion, jointness and bonding among the defence services. So, the necessity of jointness was felt and consequently in 1986 for the first time Armed Forces Day was observed collectively by the three services through various events. Since then, every year Armed Forces Day is celebrated jointly on 21st November by the Armed Forces personnel under the auspices of Armed Forces Division.

Bangladesh Armed Forces has been transformed into a capable, credible and modern force which is a symbol of unity, strength and pride of our nation. Besides the primary role of safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the country, members of Bangladesh Armed Forces are performing a wide variety of responsibilities including disaster management, nation building activities and assisting distressed people. Bangladesh Armed Forces is entrusted with various national responsibilities like maintaining peace and stable security environment in Chattogram Hill Tracts, providing security to the Key Point Installations (KPIs), construction of mega development projects, infrastructure development and implementation of many other large scale socio-economic projects which have greater impact in building and developing our nation.

21st November is one of the most glorious and significant days in the history of Bangladesh which symbolises the patriotism, indomitable spirit, courage and supreme sacrifices of Bengali Nation. Every year the very sacred Armed Forces Day brings forth and focuses the spirit of the Liberation War. The Day also revives the esprit-de-corps between the members of the three services and cements their ties with the civil services personnel. The spirit of the Armed Forces Day gives us a deep sense of pride and honour and helps to strengthen trust and confidence among the members of the Armed Forces. This day specially marks an enduring bond of inter-service solidarity and amity.

It is worth mentioning that the members of the Armed Forces have earned the credentials both at home and abroad by sheer professionalism, devotion, sincerity and integrity. The significant contribution of Armed Forces serves as the catalyst in upholding the image of Bangladesh in international arena. As the Armed Forces Day is being observed with due solemnity and fervour, it is the high time for every member of the defence services to take a fresh vow to work together as a unified force for maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of our dear motherland.

NAVAL DIPLOMACY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH
Captain Mohammed Masudur Rahman Zahid, (N), BCGMS, afwc, psc, BN

Naval diplomacy is a subset of national power that guides a nation's domestic leadership in the context of national security and maritime strategy by using naval forces. It is the tool for achieving the objectives of naval strategy within the framework of security strategies. Furthermore, it also encompasses the idea of sourcing naval forces to secure and ensure the deliberate use of the sea to achieve national interest. Hence, Bangladesh Navy (BN) plays a significant part in the national security and nation-building. Ever since the birth of the BN in 1971, at the time of the Liberation War (LW), BN has been attempting to consolidate its power in the Bay of Bengal. However, with its small resources and number of men, it could only operate successfully near harbour mouths and in the rivers to disrupt sea lines of communication of the enemy forces by restricting merchant ships' entry to the ports of Bangladesh. Such bravery efforts of the BN at that

time took out of the operation of the sea and the river ports and disrupted the supply chain of the Pakistani forces substantially during the LW, which made way for the earliest possible emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state.

Since the independence of Bangladesh, BN has increased in size a great deal, and it has placed more emphasis on naval diplomacy to expand its influence and foster ties with regional states. The current effectiveness of BN in projecting and utilising sea power towards achieving strategic national goals actually dictates how much it is able to influence destiny in the context of Bangladesh. BN consistently participates in various joint exercises, maritime security agreements, counter-piracy operations, disaster response initiatives, etc., as part of a naval diplomacy role, which in turn also contributes the socio-economic development of the country.

BN regularly operates with regional and extra-regional navies both at home and abroad to build relationships and mutual trust. It promotes diplomatic relations through international naval exercises and conferences. In terms of interoperability and best practices, BN has also engaged in regional security mechanisms such as multinational exercises and training programmes, International Fleet Reviews (IFR), and exchange visits of hierarchical delegations. In 2022, BN hosted the inaugural IFR involving 28 countries' navies and coast guards to promote goodwill and strengthen cooperation whilst displaying the organisational competence of BN. This IFR of BN could connect naval diplomacy and tourism with other navies in Bangladeshi waters, which significantly influences the socio-economic and infrastructural development of the coastal areas of Bangladesh, specially, in Cox's Bazar region. The development of ports and maritime facilities are essential elements for the trade and economic growth of Bangladesh and BN plays a crucial role in supporting coastal infrastructure expansions by providing security and other supports.

Furthermore, BN's role in securing maritime boundaries is crucial for the sovereignty of Bangladesh, and it also maintains watch against other threats like IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing, piracy, smuggling and trafficking. In addition to its regular activities at sea, BN protects the sea lines of communication in Bangladesh to ensure uninterrupted trade and commerce, which directly ensures the national economic growth. To curb the IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea, BN conducts Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) with its neighbours and participates in other regional security efforts. Recently, Bangladesh joined the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) just to make the Bay of Bengal safer for seafarers and add more prospects for the economic development of the country by ensuring collective security measures against piracy and other criminal activities.

In the present day context, the buzzword 'Blue Economy' is a concept that involves the sustainable use of the sea resources for the economic growth and job creation while preserving the ecosystem. BN's active involvement in ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources, protection of marine biodiversity, providing technical training to the people and creating job opportunities in maritime domain, contributes significantly to the overall progress of Bangladesh. Besides, with such support in the fisheries sector, maritime security, and infrastructure developments, BN promotes tourism quite significantly, hence contributing much to the national economy of Bangladesh.

Apart from all the issues discussed above, BN's involvement in disaster management and in rehabilitation of the people both domestically and internationally, in addition to its classical role, has immense impact on national diplomacy. BN's such effort showcases not only its capabilities but also its commitment to regional stability. The image of Bangladesh as a responsible regional player also got boosted internationally through the BN's contribution to developing 'Bashan Char', where concrete housing structures, flood defence embankments, cyclone shelters, prefabricated food and storage warehouses, roads and solar power grid have been constructed for the use of Rohingya people in Bangladesh. Such a mega project also helped in infrastructural development of the coastal areas and may be utilised for the socio-economic development of the country in future.

Therefore, it will not be unjust to claim that the naval diplomacy of BN is linked hand in glove with socio-economic initiatives. In promoting regional security and cooperation, the navy not only bolsters national security but also opens up avenues for economic growth and development that will go a long way in the overall development of Bangladesh.

FLIGHT OF PROGRESS: A CHRONICLE OF BANGLADESH AIR FORCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE
Squadron Leader Md Mahmudul Haque

Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) has a storied history that reflects the resilience and aspirations of a nation born out of struggle. Since its inception in 1971, BAF has evolved into a formidable force, continually expanding its capabilities and commitment to national and international peacekeeping efforts. The essence of establishing a competent, robust and modern Air Force was earnestly felt immediately after the Liberation War (LW) as a part of founding a self-reliant and robust military force for independent Bangladesh. The urge was not only about defence but also about establishing an institution that would symbolise national pride and technological prowess. This vision laid the foundation for BAF, guiding its growth and development in the subsequent decades.

The genesis of BAF is deeply rooted in the LW of 1971. Despite its nascent stage, BAF as Kilo Flight played a crucial role in the LW. Valiant pilots and ground crews; operating with limited resources and training, executed daring missions that disrupted enemy supply lines and provided vital aerial support to ground forces. Their indomitable courage and ingenuity were instrumental in the eventual victory and the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

From its humble beginnings, BAF has continually expanded its capabilities. The post-independence era saw significant efforts to modernise the force, enhancing its operational readiness and strategic reach. Investments in training, infrastructure and technology have transformed BAF into a modern air force, capable of executing a wide range of missions, both within and beyond national borders.

One of the pivotal aspects of the BAF's evolution has been the continuous induction of new armaments and aircraft which have been proved time convenient. Over the years, BAF has inducted advanced fighter jets, transport aircraft, helicopters, training aircraft for ab-initio pilots, air defence RADARs and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These acquisitions have not only boosted the force's combat capability but also enhanced its humanitarian and disaster response operations. Modern aircraft like MiG-29, F-7 BGI, Yak-130, C-130J, L-410, Mi-17, K-8W and Grob G-120 TP have significantly and genuinely upgraded BAF aviators' aerial warfare capabilities and training efficiency. In recent years, BAF has made remarkable strides towards self-sufficiency in aircraft production. Initiatives to develop self-manufactured training aircraft and other aviation components within the country have been undertaken which reduce the dependency on foreign suppliers and most remarkably save our currency. This move towards self-reliance is a testament to the technological advancements and skilled workforce within the nation, aligning with the vision of a self-sufficient military.

As one of the primary roles, BAF has consistently contributed to both national and international peace efforts. Domestically, BAF has been at the forefront of disaster relief operations, providing crucial aid and support during natural calamities like cyclones and floods. The personnel of BAF are trained not only as air warriors but also as ambassador of peace. Their commitment to upholding peace and security is evident in their conduct and the successful execution of various peacekeeping missions around the world. Their professionalism and dedication in conflict zones across the globe have brought honour to the nation and demonstrated Bangladesh's commitment to global peace and security.

The motto of BAF, 'Free shall we keep the sky of Bangladesh' underscores its unwavering readiness to defend the country and support its citizens. Whether it is safeguarding airspace, responding to emergencies or participating in national development projects, BAF remains perpetually prepared to serve. This readiness is a cornerstone of its operational philosophy, ensuring that BAF can respond swiftly and effectively to any contingency. In doing so, the history of BAF is manifested by the supreme sacrifice of its personnel. Many have laid down their lives in the line of duty, whether in combat operations, peacekeeping missions or in disaster response efforts. These martyrs are remembered with profound respect and gratitude, their sacrifices serving as a poignant reminder of the cost of freedom and the enduring spirit of BAF.

The evolution of BAF since 1971 is a testament to the relentless dedication of its personnel. From its pivotal role in the LW to its current status as a modern and self-reliant force, BAF has continually adapted and grown to meet the challenges of the times with the sole guidance of the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. BAF's contributions to national defence, disaster response and national security and international peacekeeping emphasise its commitment to service and excellence. As BAF looks to the horizon of progressive future, it remains as a symbol of national pride and a beacon of hope for continued peace and progress.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

A tragic death on JU campus

Authorities must take strict action to ensure students' safety

We are deeply disturbed by the tragic death of a first-year student of Jahangirnagar University who was fatally injured after being struck by a battery-powered rickshaw on Tuesday evening. The passing of someone so young—that too in a place where they are supposed to be safe—is a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities that persist within our university grounds. According to a report, the victim, Afsana Karim (Rachi), was near the new Arts Building when the incident occurred. Despite being rushed to the university medical centre and later to a hospital in Savar, she succumbed to her injuries. Agitated students have since blamed the lack of adequate medical care and authorities' failure to regulate vehicle operations on campus for what they are calling a "structural killing."

The sprawling JU campus is no stranger to traffic collisions as it often attracts crowds driving cars and motorcycles from outside. The battery-powered rickshaw, commonly known as auto-rickshaw, has been a particular concern thanks to its rickety structure and unsustainably high speeds posing safety risks to both passengers and pedestrians. In 2022, after another student was injured in a similar incident, students called for a ban on these vehicles but their demand did not materialise. Instead, the authorities attempted to regulate their use. Currently, there are 310 licensed auto-rickshaws. Drivers have to pay a combined fee of Tk 4,000 for registration and outfitting. However, unlicensed auto-rickshaws often enter the campus which, combined with the lack of proper training and accountability for drivers, contribute to accidents.

In the wake of the latest tragedy, JU students staged protests including a daylong blockade at all university gates on Wednesday. Their key demands include justice for the death of Afsana Karim, installing adequate street lighting and speed bumps, functional CCTV cameras across the campus, improving emergency services at the medical centre, banning all unregistered vehicles, ensuring proper training and registration for drivers, etc. The authorities have already suspended four officials for negligence. While we hope they will do everything necessary to ensure a safer campus and restore confidence among students, the High Court's directive on Tuesday—banning battery-run rickshaws on Dhaka's streets within three days—has added a layer of complexity that deserves judicious intervention.

It cannot be denied that the public sentiment is currently largely against such vehicles, with collisions being reported in many other places as well. But an outright ban, without offering viable alternatives for the drivers, risks pushing marginalised workers into deeper economic distress. A gradual phasing out, combined with opportunities for alternative employment, could help address this challenge more equitably. However, at JU, situated on the outskirts of the city, it is more urgent now to enforce strict regulations on their operations and meet other demands of the students. No student should have to be at risk on their own campus.

Protect Kuakata reserve forest

News of sand extraction for govt project is alarming

The callousness being displayed by local authorities towards the degradation of the Kuakata reserve forest is alarming. According to a report by this daily, a contractor involved in a road construction project of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Patuakhali is extracting sand from the forest, putting it at severe risk. This is happening right under the nose of the authorities, yet no action has been reportedly taken against it.

The Patuakhali LGED office is constructing the road on both sides of the Kuakata Zero Point to improve tourist mobility. In the first phase of the Tk 22.27 crore project, the contractor—a local firm called Younus and Brothers—is filling the project area with sand to pave half of the road. According to a sub-contractor, the sand should have been purchased from the market, but instead, it is being extracted from the forest. He, however, claimed this was being done "as per the rules." But what rules could permit the extraction of resources from a protected area? Or is the contractor just doing it to cut costs?

The Kuakata forest is protected for a reason: extracting sand from there would have detrimental effects on its fragile ecosystem. Already, a number of trees are dying due to large ditches created by the sand lifting. But it's not just the forest that is in danger. If sand lifting continues, the nearby flood control dyke—which protects the area from storm surges—could also be damaged. Are the authorities not aware of these consequences? Locals say they have complained about this to the authorities, but to no avail.

This is, of course, not an isolated case of governmental indifference towards environmental destruction. Last month, this daily reported how the Chattogram district administration had allowed a contractor to lift sand from the Ramgarh-Sitakunda reserve forest for a road widening project. Another report in August revealed how the authorities in Jashore's Chowgacha upazila turned a blind eye as local influentials lifted sand from the Marjad Bawar area, endangering nearby croplands, river protection dams, and so on.

This practice has to stop. The government must take swift action to stop extraction of sand and other natural resources anywhere it is reported. It is encouraging to learn that the Road and Highways Department has made environmental impact assessment (EIA) mandatory for all its projects. But this requirement must be extended to all kinds of construction projects. There must be no compromise when it comes to protecting our environment.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Robert Mugabe resigns

On this day in 2017, after some 37 years as leader of Zimbabwe—first as prime minister and later as president—Robert Mugabe resigned from office as the parliament began impeachment proceedings against him.

Our progress in human rights inspires cautious optimism



Tamanna Hoq Riti is coordinator of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) mechanism project at the Media & International Advocacy unit of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK).

TAMANNA HOQ RITI

One year has passed since Bangladesh's human rights record was reviewed under the United Nations Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), an important and widely acceptable mechanism designed to promote and protect human rights globally. On November 13, 2023, a total of 110 UN member states presented Bangladesh with 301 recommendations to improve human rights practices and establish the state's accountability. Following this, on March 25, 2024, Bangladesh expressed support for 211 of these recommendations, while noting 90 others.

The country's political landscape has undergone a profound shift recently, bringing renewed hope and presenting a crucial opportunity to implement meaningful reforms that could improve the human rights situation. While significant challenges remain, the anti-discrimination movement, along with the interim government's positive actions in recent months have raised expectations for a more just and accountable society.

The previous government faced widespread accusations of human rights violations, including restrictions on free expression, arbitrary detentions, and enforced disappearances by the United Nations Human Rights mechanism including the UPR. In contrast, the interim government has signalled a strong commitment to upholding human rights, ensuring accountability for past abuses, and implementing reforms to prevent further violations.

One of the most notable steps taken by the interim government has been the ratification of the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, a move that had been recommended in each of the past four UPR cycles. The prior administration had rejected the recommendation, arguing that there was no legal framework for addressing "enforced disappearances" in Bangladesh and that reforms were needed before adopting the convention. The new government's decision to ratify the convention marks a significant departure from past policies and indicates a willingness to address this pressing human rights concern. The government should now prioritise aligning its domestic legal framework with the provisions of the convention and establish a clear legal

definition of enforced disappearances under national law in line with the convention.

Another key development is the establishment of an independent inquiry commission by the interim government to investigate allegations of human rights violations committed by law enforcement agencies (LEAs). The former government had consistently rejected calls for an independent body to probe accusations of police and military misconduct, citing existing training programmes and penalties for misconduct as sufficient safeguards. In contrast, the new inquiry commission, led by a former justice, has already



The country's political landscape has undergone a profound shift recently, bringing renewed hope of implementing meaningful reforms to improve the human rights situation.

FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

begun its work and has reportedly uncovered evidence of enforced disappearances, demonstrating a more proactive approach to addressing human rights abuses.

The former government had also resisted calls to amend the controversial Cyber Security Act (CSA), despite widespread criticism from civil society, journalists, and international bodies. The CSA was seen as a tool to curtail freedom of expression, particularly targeting the press and online activists. The new government, however, has moved forward with plans to repeal the CSA. In a recent development, the advisory council gave provisional approval to a draft ordinance to repeal the CSA, signalling a shift toward

greater freedom of expression in the digital realm.

Such initiatives give hope that the government will take progressive initiatives to implement other UPR recommendations whether they were supported or noted by the former government. Thus, the government should continue taking concrete steps to protect journalists, media workers, dissidents, human rights defenders and civil society, political and cultural activists from harassment, arbitrary detention, mob attack or violence. This includes ensuring that media outlets are free to operate without government interference, journalists have the freedom to report on sensitive issues, and human rights defenders, political and cultural activists have the space to raise voices without fear of reprisals. Additionally, it is expected the government will urgently take measures to safeguard citizens' rights to access justice, ensure equality before the law regardless of their differences, and protect them from all forms of

lack of independence, primarily due to the restrictive framework set out in the National Human Rights Commission Act 2009. Despite previous efforts to reform the Act, little progress has been made. However, there is now an expectation that the interim government will prioritise reforming the NHRC Act 2009, enabling it to address human rights violations more effectively and independently. Additionally, with the recent resignation of the NHRC Chair and other members, there are expectations that the government will ensure a transparent, open, and participatory process for selecting new members of the commission.

Looking ahead, the government has an opportunity to create a more structured and transparent process for implementing its human rights obligations. One potential avenue is the development of a comprehensive action plan that integrates recommendations from various UN human rights mechanisms, including the UPR, and sets out clear timelines for their implementation. This plan could

torture, humiliation, or ill-treatment. In line with the goals of the anti-discrimination movement, which sought to build an inclusive society for all citizens, the government must also prioritise the implementation of recommendations to ensure the rights of indigenous, religious, and other minority and marginalised groups.

Another area where the government should focus is the strengthening of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). In the latest UPR, several recommendations were made to bolster the NHRC, with an emphasis on ensuring its independence and effectiveness in line with the Paris Principles. The NHRC has long been criticised for its limited mandate and

be accompanied by a monitoring mechanism to track progress and an inter-ministerial coordination body that includes representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs) and the NHRC to ensure input and accountability.

Such a mechanism will expedite the fulfilment of the government's human rights obligations and reinforce the process of ensuring accountability for human rights within the government. It would also provide a platform for continued dialogue with the UN and other international stakeholders, ensuring that Bangladesh remains on track to meet its human rights commitments and strengthen the rule of law.

Bangladesh's credit system needs to change



Adib Babul is director at National Group Bangladesh.

ADIB BABUL

Bangladesh is recognised for its economic progress and GDP growth. However, despite our "over-protectionist" policies on Credit Information Bureau (CIB) for individuals and businesses, we remain a country plagued by high levels of bank defaults, corruption, and inequality. We are well aware of the magnitude of defaulted loans and distressed debt, often disguised through window dressing to the central bank. But today, I pose the critical question: how did we get here?

This article is not a lesson in economics, but it is evident that Bangladesh's banking sector is broken—and has been for quite some time. Access to credit has been largely restricted to those with political clout, while entrepreneurs with a moral compass are left stranded on the sidelines. Middle-class consumers, too, face significant hurdles, unable to secure basic home or auto loans due to burdensome bureaucracy.

In Bangladesh, compliance is highly subjective. An applicant might have all the required documents yet still be denied a credit line because the

bank deems them "not satisfactory." Meanwhile, crony companies and infamous individuals continue to bypass these barriers effortlessly. To address this, we must ensure a proper separation of political influence from bank boardrooms. This means excluding MPs, ministers, and their family members—children, spouses, siblings—who have historically shaped the political-banking nexus in this country.

The central bank must recognise that the existing CIB laws are outdated and ineffective. Urgent policy reforms are needed. The current system incentivises companies and individuals to focus solely on their balance sheets, sanctioning more loans to service previous debts. This creates a vicious cycle, where borrowers aim to become "too big to fail," effectively holding banks hostage and evading accountability for financial malpractice.

So, what's so wrong with the CIB laws that got us here?

Well, the current law essentially depicts that if the historical list of ventures is financially solvent, then that

entity is eligible for more loans. But it gets complex when one of the entity's ventures fails. So, what happens when things hit the fan for any one of those? Can we call it quits on that venture and continue with the profitable ones? Absolutely not.

All of the business groups in Bangladesh have experienced this. The existing central bank laws essentially force entrepreneurs with more profitable, financially healthy companies to keep their other ailing entities afloat, ultimately jeopardising the once thriving ventures into bankruptcy. What do businessmen do to avoid that dreaded crisis? To avoid this, many businesspeople resort to over-leveraging, refinancing, restructuring, or consolidating debts, ultimately leading to a financial avalanche.

How can this be avoided? Well, we cannot essentially avoid financial crises. However, we can control the rate of defaults by taking strict fiscal policy measures. We can make sure that a snowball remains a snowball and that it does not take the shape of an avalanche.

If only the central bank would allow the separation of the limited companies from the other entities of the same sponsor, then we could have avoided economic disasters of this magnitude. The United States, for instance, has Chapter 11 bankruptcy provisions for a reason. It is definitely better to cut back on a losing horse earlier on versus to wager all that you have and by doubling down even further by borrowing more money in order to resuscitate the losing

horse, in this case the failing company.

Even publicly listed companies are not immune to these laws, which hold sponsors accountable for their failed private ventures. This means public shareholders, who often hold the majority stake, also suffer the consequences of the sponsors' missteps. This legal framework has stifled our stock market, yet we continue to question why it is failing.

Critics in favour of the existing laws might argue that "given how strict the laws are we still have so many defaults, imagine how many more would default if we adopted this 'lax' approach?" In response, I would say that the bankers would have to do their real work in conducting their due diligence and prevent their boards from approving loan sanctions on projects for suspicious or saturated industries and directly communicate with the central bank, if their board fails to acknowledge red flags. The failure to do so is why we are here today. Bangladesh Bank needs to wake up and realise that it's better to deal with smaller defaults on a yearly basis rather than the default of a financial juggernaut that may jeopardise the economy.

Bangladesh Bank needs to make serious amendments to the existing archaic CIB laws that stifle the spirit of entrepreneurship. These laws have fostered a post-apocalyptic capitalist system in our country. It may feel like it's too late now, but just like the resilient people of Bangladesh, we should not give up now and march forward for a better tomorrow.

WORLD PHILOSOPHY DAY

Philosophy's role in bridging societal divides



Faridul Alam
writes from New York City, US.

FARIDUL ALAM

In a world marked by societal divides, philosophy stands as a crucial tool in confronting issues of justice, inequality, and community. It urges us to question assumptions, reflect on shared values, and engage in conversations that bridge cultural and ideological divides.

Philosophy's engagement with issues of social fragmentation resonates deeply with the literary and hermeneutic turns that reshaped 20th century thought. Paul de Man's assertion that philosophy is "an endless reflection on its own destruction at the hands of literature" captures this shift. By embracing deconstructive inquiry, philosophy is compelled to question its foundational assumptions, fostering introspection that strengthens its capacity to address complex social issues. In this self-critical light, philosophy mirrors literature's interpretive openness and inexhaustible reading practices, embracing Barthes' ethos of the "writerly text" as it moves away from the prescriptive "readerly text." This allows philosophy to examine and dismantle its own paradigms, enhancing its responsiveness to human complexities with agility and empathy. For instance, Lyotard's concept of the "loss of metanarratives" challenges the overarching, universalising stories that once provided coherence to society, advocating instead for localised, plural narratives that reflect diverse experiences and perspectives. Similarly, Adorno's "negative dialectics" calls for a rejection of simplified synthesis, insisting that philosophy must remain open to contradiction and tension rather than resolving them into harmonious conclusions.

In today's world, philosophy may seem an unlikely contender in bridging social divides, given the dominance of doxa—the unquestioned common sense that shapes daily life. Philosophy's capacity to challenge prevailing ideologies may appear as hindered as Baudelaire's albatross, whose grand wings, suited for the open skies, become heavy and awkward on the deck of the ship. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *doxa* describes ideologies that normalise social structures, making them appear natural and inevitable. Combined with Lukács' theory of *reification*, which objectifies social relations into seemingly fixed realities, this worldview stifles critical examination of power relations and social inequalities. Similar to this albatross (unlike Coleridge's, which has more mystical and moral implications), philosophy possesses a

far-reaching vision, yet when confined to the restrictive frameworks of *doxa* and *reification*, its grandeur risks being diminished by the weight of societal conformity. Moreover, *axioms* in philosophy create a double bind by both supporting and restricting inquiry. They provide a structured foundation, offering coherence and enabling systematic exploration of complex ideas. However, they can also stifle critical thinking by constraining perspectives, fostering dogmatism, and oversimplifying nuanced issues. This double bind—the tension between needing foundational principles and the risk of limiting openness to alternative views—highlights a central challenge in philosophical inquiry: balancing the clarity axioms with a critical stance that questions these very foundations.

Philosophy counters these constructs through reflective consciousness and critical inquiry. Michel Foucault's concept of *episteme* governs the intellectual frameworks that define truth in society, shaping what is accepted as knowledge. His *archaeology of knowledge* exposes the historical layers of discourse, revealing how power structures shape societal truths. His *genealogy of knowledge* traces the historical evolution of concepts, illustrating the coevolution of power and knowledge. These tools unsettle the "naturalised" status quo, creating space for alternative possibilities—a dynamic rooted in the insights of early thinkers like Parmenides, who explored the *fixity* of reality, and Heraclitus, who emphasised *flux* or perpetual change.

Alain Badiou's concept of "truth as a hole in knowledge" suggests that truth is not merely an addition to existing knowledge but a disruptive force that reshapes our understanding. This is vividly illustrated by the famous debate between Einstein and Bohr on quantum mechanics. Bohr's probabilistic interpretation revealed the limitations of both Newtonian and Einsteinian physics, pointing to an inherent indeterminacy in reality. Einstein, however, resisted this view, famously declaring, "God does not play dice with the world." Their clash embodies a profound rupture in knowledge, where quantum mechanics revolutionised our understanding of the universe. This shift toward an uncertain, probabilistic worldview aligned with Thomas Kuhn's *paradigm shift* in the theory of scientific revolutions and Stephen Jay Gould's "*punctuated equilibrium*," revealing that knowledge evolves through the tension be-

tween competing epistemes.

Popper's philosophy of scientific *falsifiability* emphasises that theories must be testable and open to being proven false, promoting the idea that knowledge is always provisional. In contrast, Saussure's *structuralism* argues that meaning is not inherent but arises from the arbitrary relationship between signs (the signifier) and their meanings (the signified), constructed through social con-

"clockwork universe" and introduced a worldview grounded in probabilistic, inferential reasoning, expanding philosophical reflection on knowledge and truth. Furthering this philosophical reach, *superstring theory* seeks to reconcile the super grand scales of general relativity and the super small scope of quantum mechanics, envisioning a universe unified in its fundamental forces. Similarly, *quantum entanglement*, revealing a pro-

in Kristeva's *intertextuality* and Derrida's, *différance*, and *dissemination*. Kristeva's concept of *intertextuality* highlights how texts and disciplines (re)shape each other endlessly without being beholden to a single, fixed meaning or authoritative interpretation. Derrida's *différance* embodies the interplay of presence and absence, where meaning emerges only through a network of relational forces, shaped as much by what is deferred or missing as by what is directly present. This evolving, non-static meaning is enriched by trace, which introduces the ontological presence of absence—fragments of past contexts or meanings that leave an imprint, shaping current interpretations while pointing to something beyond immediate grasp. Finally, dissemination reflects how these interwoven traces and deferred meanings scatter across contexts, ensuring that meaning remains fluid and non-fixed. This interplay of presence and absence emphasises that understanding is not about locating a single truth but rather engaging with an open-ended matrix of interpretations that span disciplines and continuously reshape each other.

Understanding philosophy's role in bridging social gaps is incomplete without unpacking key ideologies such as *commodity fetishism*, *false consciousness*, *creative destruction*, *simulacra*, and *spectacle*, that discreetly obscure social inequalities. Marx's concept of *commodity fetishism* explains how commodities are imbued with intrinsic value, masking the labour and exploitation that produced them. This distortion fosters *false consciousness*, where the working class inadvertently supports a system that benefits the ruling class—reinforced by media, culture, and religion. Schumpeter's idea of *creative destruction* generates an illusion of progress, diverting attention away from the real sources of exploitation. Baudrillard's theory of *simulacra* asserts that representations replace authentic reality, constructing a *hyperreality* that obscures the true social conditions. Meanwhile, Debord's *spectacle* explores how media culture transforms social life into a performance, turning individuals into passive spectators of their own existence. Together, these ideologies reinforce capitalism's dominance, making it seem like an unchallengeable natural order.

In times when society fractures both with a resounding "bang" and a quiet "whimper," echoing Eliot's portrayal of a world ending not with grandeur but with silent collapse, philosophy stands as our last best hope. As the gaps in society widen and the darkness deepens, Hegel's words resonate powerfully: "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk." This imagery of wisdom emerging in times of darkness reminds us that, even as challenges mount, philosophy offers a guiding light, helping us reimagine a world founded on inclusivity and shared understanding.



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

ventions. Peirce, on the other hand, presents a triadic *semiotic model* in which meaning is dynamic, shaped by the relationship between the sign, its object, and the interpretant, with an ongoing, fallible process of interpretation.

Philosophy's role, once central to intellectual and ethical discourse, has been marginalised over time, particularly as universities prioritise market-driven pursuits. Bill Readings, in *The University in Ruins*, critiques how economic imperatives have overshadowed philosophy's critical role in fostering ethical discourse, relegating it to the sidelines. However, it has been proven time and again that a renewed commitment to philosophy can bridge social divides, fostering a Socratic dialogue that promotes critical thinking and ethical reflection on societal norms even outside the ivory towers of academia.

In science, particularly in physics, mathematics, and statistics, pioneers like Heisenberg, Einstein, Bohr, Gödel, and Fisher introduced philosophical challenges that questioned conventional understandings of causality, certainty, and knowledge. Heisenberg's "*uncertainty principle*" and Einstein's "*theory of relativity*" questioned the nature of reality and certainty, while Gödel's "*incompleteness theorem*" exposed interpretive complexities and limitations within formal systems. Fisher's innovations in statistical inference added further dimensions, emphasising the role of probability and interpretation in knowledge production. These developments dismantled the positivist

found interconnectedness among particles, serves as a metaphor for the interconnectivity of modern societies

These scientific advances resonate with 20th and 21st-century philosophical movements, where thinkers began challenging the certainty of rational knowledge. Post-modern and post-structuralist philosophers like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari emphasised the fluid, contingent, and socially constructed nature of truth and reality. Deleuze and Guattari, for instance, rejected hierarchical structures in favour of a *rhizomatic* model of knowledge, where multiple, non-linear connections shape understanding and societal organisation. This aligns with the collapse of certainty in science, loss of metanarrative in literary theory, and social research, in which unpredictability challenges conventional norms. The boundaries among the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences have increasingly blurred, reflecting a growing recognition that complex social issues cannot be adequately understood through isolated disciplines. As these fields converge, they provide a more holistic approach to understanding human agency, ethics, and the structures that govern societies.

Edward O Wilson's concept of *consilience*—the idea that all knowledge, regardless of its disciplinary origin, can ultimately be unified—offers a powerful framework for understanding this convergence. This reconstellation is attuned to the nuances captured

Chandabaji, mamla baniya can't be our only future



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MD MAHMUDUL HASAN

Except for Sheikh Hasina, her ministers, and a privileged few who were close to the corridors of power, the rest of us—including ordinary Awami League supporters—were at the receiving end of her misrule. Though to different degrees, none of us were out of its harm's way—directly or indirectly.

The Hasina regime was characterised by Pikhana and Shapla Chattar carnages, enforced disappearances, election fraud, destruction of government institutions, plundering of banks, capital flight, favouring a neighbouring country at the expense of our national interests, and similar other corruptions and crimes. Despite media censorship, these were occasionally reported—but there were many other forms of oppression and abuse of power that did not receive media attention.

It was an open secret then that the neighbouring hegemonic country got the better of us in all bilateral deals. The transit facilities that the Hasina government gave it are tantamount to a violation of our sovereignty. Innumerable people from that nation held highly paid jobs in our country, while our youths were living a despicable and respect-less life without employment, bearing the stigma that comes with not having a career upon graduation. We knew all these though they were under-reported in the media.

What most Bangladeshis didn't know at all was that our printing sector was excluded from government contracts and our textbooks were printed from the neighbouring country at a higher price. As time goes by, more misdeeds and anti-Bangladesh measures of the Hasina regime may come to light.

What is most surprising of all is that, while Hasina and her cabal of sycophants were exploiting us, plundering our land and siphoning off our money to foreign accounts, she didn't have any shortage of (sell-out) intellectuals to confer upon her the badge of patriotism. They often used the 1971 sentiments to protect her



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPILOB CHAKROBORTY

government from criticisms.

The worst sufferers were our student population. College and university students of our country were rarely given the dignity that they deserved. They were abused, exploited and mistreated at campuses and dormitories by thugs affiliated with successive governments. However, on Hasina's watch, their ordeal reached the most excruciating levels of suffering and pain.

Chhatra League thugs and hired miscreants (known as *Tukai League*) made the life of our students unbearable. Ordinary students—both male and female—have stories of harrowing suffering and misery at the hands of

Hasina's hooligans. What is more deplorable is that media people were not very interested in reporting their suffering.

The example below may shed some light on this.

On behalf of the Forum for Bangladesh Studies (FBS), in April 2023 I helped put together a webinar on repression of students at Bangladesh's universities. Guest speakers of the webinar included Dr Mohd Saiful Islam

The student-led formidable movement against Hasina's misrule reached its climax in July 2024 and achieved its goal on August 5, 2024. The bravery that our young people exhibited on the streets of Bangladesh is unprecedented in its history.

Hasina ordered our security forces to kill our young people with the bullets bought with our money. Eventually, her cruelty was defeated by their selflessness and sense of sacrifice.

butchered by the Hasina government suddenly turned into bullies themselves. They started following in the footsteps of Awami League thugs and hooligans.

First, like their Awami League counterparts, they started committing the crime of *chandabaji* (money extortion) from business people and others right after the fall of Hasina's fascist regime. Second, they embarked on *mamla baniya* (lawsuit deals)—this needs some explanation.

The reprobrates among the affiliates of this major political party have given the police an impression that they are coming to power soon so that the law enforcers feel it important to abide by their wishes. They identified Awami League brutes who were involved in killing our youth in July and August 2024 and allegedly brokered deals with them to protect them from murder cases in exchange for money. No wonder most Awami League killers and assailants are still at large while our young people are living with life-changing injuries and trauma.

These two crimes—*chandabaji* and *mamla baniya*—wreaked havoc in the lives of innocent people of our country during the Hasina regime. Our young people didn't give their lives to liberate our country from the oppressors of one political party only to hand it to those of another. Nor did they do so to enable another group of miscreants to exploit us. Previously, our brave freedom fighters also didn't liberate our country from Pakistan in 1971 to be enslaved by—or to serve the interests of—another country.

We must not forget that opposition political parties during Hasina's rule tried several times to depose her. But they failed for various reasons—including cowardice and corruption of some opposition leaders (rumour had it that they were on the payroll of the Hasina government).

Our brave and valiant youth succeeded in achieving what political parties failed to do for 15 years. It will be very unfortunate if thugs and hooligans of another political party are allowed to extort money or to negotiate with killers (for monetary gains) assuring them absolution from murder charges.

I hope exploitation by one or the other political party is not the only future of Bangladesh. Committing the financial crimes of *chandabaji* and *mamla baniya* is not the right way to repay the debt of gratitude to our young people who made phenomenal sacrifices for our country.

They didn't hesitate to lay down their lives for their country.

Over a thousand young people who were killed in July and early August 2024 and are still dying of injuries and tens of thousands of others who were ready to die finally liberated our country. They gave it back to us through pools of their blood. We owe them a deep debt of gratitude.

However, unfortunately, some incidents that have been happening in parts of Bangladesh since August 5 are a betrayal of the colossal sacrifices made by the youth of our country.

Affiliates of a particular political party who were routinely bashed, bludgeoned, and

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

An intellectual debt WORTH REMEMBERING

A review of 'Our Debt to the Four Professors' (Prothoma Prokashon, 2023) by S. Nazrul Islam

The crucial roles they played in the movement for autonomy only gave way to their determination to fight for the liberation war, in any capacity possible. Mosharaff Hossain had been part of the planning cell in the provincial government in Calcutta.

JAHANGIR ISLAM

The history of Bangladesh's conception is incomplete without recognising the multitudes of sacrifices and labour that academics and intellectuals had poured into their aspirations for Bangladesh, often at the cost of their own safety and livelihood. In S. Nazrul Islam's *Our Debt to the Four Professors*, we find a primer that does some justice in acknowledging the determination and hard work of four professors who played pivotal roles in Bangladesh's making and subsequent development.

S. Nazrul Islam is a distinguished academic himself, who had taught at various universities and had been chief of research at the department of Economics of the UN. He makes good use of his expertise in constructing what he terms a "treatise on the socio-political history of early Bangladesh." Indeed, as one reads through the book, they get a unique sense of how the nation in its early stages grappled with the myriad of problems that it inherited, some due to its geography, and others due to international realpolitik, such as when the country had to take debt liability for some of Pakistan's international debt, regarding projects undertaken before independence.

The four professors here are the economists Nurul Islam, Mosharaff Hossain, Md. Anisur Rahman, and Rehman Sobhan. Interestingly, we get a glimpse of their ideological similarities and differences regarding each other quite pointedly through the author, who reflected in his preface that he had the "good fortune of knowing and interacting" with all of them. We are gifted an inside look of how these intellectuals grappled with the prevailing political sentiments of the time, such as the impetus for nationalisation and for socialist principles.

The earlier sections of the book recount how the professors had been instrumental in the makings of

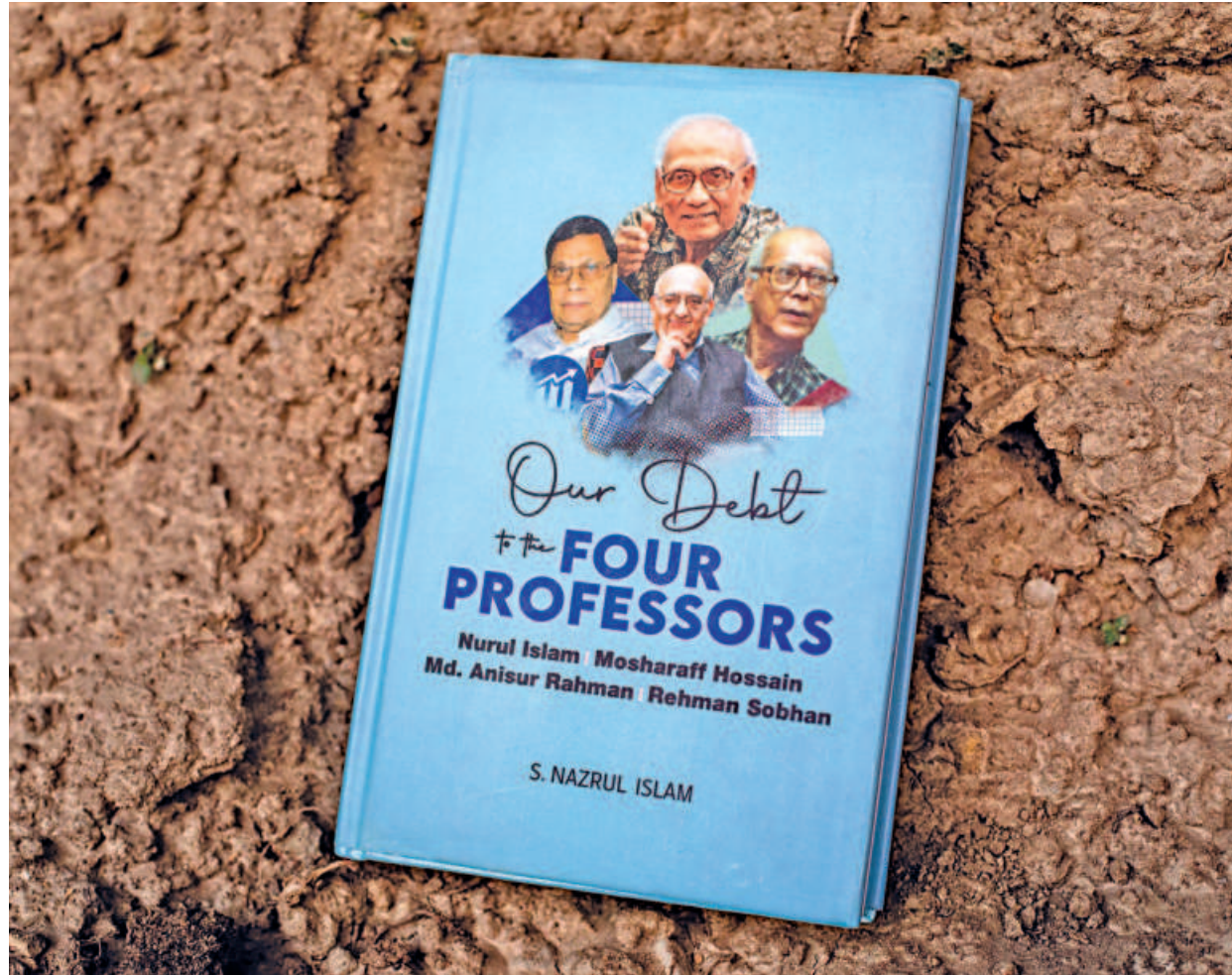


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

the idea of the two economies in erstwhile Pakistan. With Professor Nurul remarking: "The labor from East Pakistan could not thereby participate in and benefit from the expanding employment and income opportunities created in West Pakistan through higher rates of investment, financed, to a great extent, by savings siphoned off from East Pakistan."

The crucial roles they played in the movement for autonomy only gave way to their determination to fight for the

liberation war, in any capacity possible. Mosharaff Hossain had been part of the planning cell in the provincial government in Calcutta. Rehman Sobhan had been instrumental in swaying the international community toward the idea of an independent Bangladesh. When he returned in the August of 1971 in India to present his reports, the cabinet had thanked him, designating him "Envoy Extraordinaire, in charge of Economic Affairs." The book is full of interesting

information: Rehman Sobhan, during his return, realises that the Mujibnagar Government was headquartered in 12 Theater Road in the same house where his maternal grandfather, Khawaja Nazimuddin (who would later go on to become Prime Minister of Pakistan) had stayed during his stint as Chief Minister of Bengal.

Post independence, all four of the professors had worked in the Bangladesh Planning Commission, where Nurul Islam held the chair of

deputy chairman. The academics' resilience in working through the bureaucracy and navigating through the ministries and often challenging party-leaders is well-documented in this book. Nazrul Islam notes how they had to be given ranks (Professor Nurul was given the rank of a minister, while the other three were provided the rank of state-minister) because the bureaucrats at the time were not willing to accept the authority of outside experts.

The book also chronicles the ideological wrangling that the young nation was embroiled in. The different factions of politics such as those espoused by some in the then ruling party as "Mujibbad" and the "Scientific Socialism" of Sirajul Alam Khan clashed with each other and the professors often had to traverse through these ideas while making policy.

Nazrul Islam's book ends around the time of the 1975 assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which had a profound effect on all four personalities, as they had often worked closely with the leader. The author makes a fascinating observation about how Nurul Islam and Rehman Sobhan's relationship with Bangabandhu had opposite dimensions. The former was "ideologically somewhat distant but personally closer", while the latter had close ideological ties but was personally distant from the leader.

Our Debt to the Four Professors is remarkably important at a time like this, when the country is reevaluating and revamping many of its historicity. The achievements and sacrifices of all who had made the country a better place to live in surely should be documented and this book does a splendid job at celebrating the extraordinary individuals who had left an inevitable mark on Bangladesh for the better.

Jahangir Islam is an occasional contributor at Star Books.

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Regional cooperation and the challenges Bangladesh faces

Review of 'The Tortuous Evolution of South Asian Regional Cooperation: Bangladesh's Travails for Sub-Regional Cooperation' (World Scientific Publishing Company, 2025) by Ambassador Tariq Karim

FAISAL M. RAHMAN

Bangladesh is currently going through turbulent times as it tries to find its way out from dictatorial political rule towards an uncertain future. During the past decade, Bangladesh did achieve significant economic progress, but it came with increased economic inequality, unparalleled corruption, and loss of personal freedom. The past government tried to manage a tough balancing act with India around 80 percent of its border, China being its biggest foreign investor, USA still the biggest market for Bangladesh products, and Russia building its first nuclear power station.

With 170 million people and an ambitious young population with the highest participation of women in the workforce compared to all its south Asian neighbours, Bangladesh's path for the future theoretically belongs in emulating successful models for regional cooperation. Theoretical modelling and reality are two different things. In that context, Ambassador Tariq Karim's book on regional cooperation is a timely publication for the current and future policy makers as well as students of politics and economics.

Ambassador Tariq Karim is intimately familiar with the regional cooperation matrix having served as High Commissioner to India, Ambassador to the United States, South Africa, and Iran. A career diplomat, he is also considered a distinguished academician having taught at University of Maryland (where he served as Distinguished International Executive), George Washington University and Virginia International University. He is currently associated with Independent University of Bangladesh (as Director of the Center for Bay of Bengal Studies) and National



DESIGN: AMREETA LETHE

University of Singapore.

The book has an interesting history and perspective on how colonial South Asia went from most to least integrated "overnight" after the Second World War. The integration was forced upon the colonies of Great Britain to serve its mercantilist objectives. Great Britain also managed to do this by meticulously planting the seeds of "divide and rule" both among the colonies and within the colonies. It is, therefore, not an accident that the newly independent countries with their new elites and new institutions quickly became each other's enemies and instead of regional cooperation there were more regional conflicts.

The last section of the book deals with

the immediate past in which Ambassador Karim had a front row seat and had input in shaping the various models and experiments to bring about regional cooperation and integration among the countries within and surrounding the subcontinent. He notes correctly that the new elite and leaders in the newly independent countries deliberately deepened the divide by focusing on the differences and, particularly in the case of India and Pakistan, became each other's sworn enemies. While EU and ASEAN countries were setting their differences aside and enlarging their spheres of influence by admitting new members, the two largest powers in the subcontinent embarked on shutting down "connectivity

with each other, whether in the realm of trade and commerce" or people-to-people exchanges.

Ambassador Karim, clearly an advocate of regional cooperations, puts forward several new propositions in his book—uniting along environmental and ecological challenges or common fear of nuclear war with its devastating consequences. He also suggests fewer countries should try cooperation on narrow issues. Both the EU and ASEAN evolved to their current successful model in stages. In this context, Ambassador Karim also cautions about the "India factor" (the overwhelming size of India with its billion people, huge industrial base, and clear military superiority) and suggests that India needs to be more magnanimous toward its smaller, weaker neighbour partners.

Among other interesting insights in this fascinating book, Ambassador Karim suggests that SAARC operationally could be a success if it organised along three distinct sub-regional groups—A) Bangladesh, Bhutan, the contiguously located Northeastern states of India, West Bengal, and Nepal (BBIN); B) middle zone comprising of Southern India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka (IMS); and C) a western sub-region comprising of West and Northwest, Pakistan, and Afghanistan (IP). His logic being: What is of immediate interest to one sub-region may not necessarily be of interest to the other region.

The book notes a number of examples of bilateral cooperation between India and Bangladesh in terms of railway and road connectivity, but those initiatives have also been criticised as being one-sided and disproportionately favourable to India. These criticisms would be less credible if such bilateral successes could be broadened to include land-locked

countries like Nepal and Bhutan.

What is interesting and what sets this book apart from a pure academic exercise is how Ambassador Karim discusses operational challenges and provides a framework of how regional cooperation can work. He advocates a Bay of Bengal Community focusing on common environmental and ecological challenges. Such regional cooperation is a matter of survival for the millions of people who live on the coasts of treacherous Bay of Bengal.

The book has one of the most extensive annexures sections which includes original charter and various declarations from SAARC summits as well as documents on the bilateral trade between Bangladesh and India. Those are useful templates for future initiatives and policy makers. The most important ingredient remains a non-quantifiable factor—trust. Trust must be nurtured by the political leaders instead of fuelling suspicion or overt attempt of domination if regional cooperation has the possibility of success. To use an overused adage—it must be WIN-WIN for all parties.

This book is a "must read" for all South Asia watchers, whether they be academics or practitioners. The publishers have reportedly arrived at an understanding with UPL on making it available soon in Bangladesh.

This is an excerpt. Read the full review on Star Books and The Daily Star website.

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Tennis world bids adieu to 'CHAMP' NADAL

Rafael Nadal retired as a player on Tuesday as Spain were eliminated in the Davis Cup finals, ending a career that yielded 22 Grand Slam titles. Unsurprisingly, the exit of the superstar drew a host of messages from Tennis greats across the globe, a snippet of which are as follows:

“Congratulations on a career that most won't dare to dream of. Your legacy will never die. Wow to see your career from the beginning to today was an honour champ! Long live Rafa!”
-- Serena Williams, American tennis great

“Thanks to you I have become a professional tennis player. It has been a blessing to be able to live your career as a child for whom you were an idol and then as a teammate! The best possible ambassador who leaves an eternal legacy.”
-- Nadal's Davis Cup teammate Carlos Alcaraz

“Your legacy will endure as one of the greatest to ever grace the game. Thank you for the countless unforgettable moments and for setting a standard of excellence that will inspire generations to come.”
-- Australian tennis great Rod Laver

“What an absolute icon of sport, period! There will never be another one like Rafa! Role model for so many kids all around the world!”
-- German Boris Becker, a six-time Grand Slam champion

India not ruling out Gill playing first Aus Test

India will give Shubman Gill every chance to prove his fitness to start the opening Test against Australia at Perth Stadium with the batter showing improvement after fracturing his left thumb, bowling coach Morne Morkel said on Wednesday.

Gill, 25, sustained the injury while fielding at slip last week as India were gearing up for the match, which starts on Friday, with squad sessions instead of a tour game against a local side.

“Shubman is improving every day. Obviously he picked up a nasty blow in that intra-squad warm-up game. I think with him it's going to be a day-to-day process,” Morkel told reporters.

“Fingers crossed for that improvement. We'll wait to take a call on him up until the morning of the Test match.”

With skipper Rohit Sharma set to miss the match following the birth of his second child, Gill's absence could heap more pressure on India's less experienced batters on fiery Australian pitches but Morkel backed them to rise to the occasion.

“It's going to be great learning for these young guys, who can front up against a quality Test bowling attack,” Morkel said ahead of the five-match series. “But in saying that there's good leadership within the group that can help and settle the nerves with that. As a group, we're all excited for the challenge.”

Liton's opportunity to recapture form

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Liton Das goes into the West Indies tour, which gets underway in earnest with the first Test match beginning on November 22 in Antigua, as one of only two senior batters in the squad alongside Mominul Haque.

Injuries to Mushfiqur Rahim and regular skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and the absence of Shakib Al Hasan have put the Bangladesh team in a difficult spot, especially in a country where batters have struggled the most on recent tours.

Without such senior batters, Bangladesh drafted in Shahadat Hossain Dipu and Mahidul Islam Ankon, and the responsibility falls on Mominul and Liton, alongside a young batting line-up, to negotiate West Indies' pace attack.

However, Liton's form vaporised since his half-century and a century against Pakistan in Rawalpindi in August. In the last six innings since the ton, Liton managed double figures only twice, scoring 45 runs. His record in West Indies also stands against him, averaging just over 21 in eight innings with one fifty.

Suffering from a fever, Liton was absent during the Afghanistan ODIs but he will be a key all-format player this series. His 32-ball 61 in Lauderhill in 2018 seized the T20I series in Bangladesh's favour and he will like to recapture his batting form with the Tests since it was his prolific scoring during 2021-2022 season, averaging over 46 in Tests during that period, which saw him become an integral part of the batting unit in all formats.



More importantly, spending time at the crease helped him get his technique tuned. Before the series, Liton's Comilla Victorians coach Mohammad Salahuddin joined the Tigers' coaching staff. Liton was seen keenly discussing things with the seasoned coach.

Rishabh Pant's coach Devender Sharma had talked about the key facets of a coach while talking to The Daily Star during the India series earlier this year.

Liton has blown hot and cold recently, his inconsistency a burning issue in Bangladesh's national team context. Devender said that at Sonnet Cricket Club -- where Pant began his trade -- they make assessment of which player would serve the national team through technique at first but then work begins on mentality, a

key aspect Liton may need to focus on. “Cricket is just about planning. We work on mental strength of the children. You have to motivate them that they are the best and you will win the match for the team,” Devender had told The Daily Star.

“Players can become mentally down after one bad performance, so you have to talk about their game with them. You have to encourage them to learn about the challenges they face. It's key in modern cricket. I put my effort to make sure Rishabh Pant plays for the country and the results are in front of you. Liton is a very interesting player and I think he will fix those issues,” the coach had added.

With Salahuddin now in the fold, looking at batting side of things, Liton's challenge is also an opportunity to find his groove.

Archrivals in same Fed Cup group

SPORTS REPORTER

Country's footballing rivals Abahani and Mohammedan were pitted in the same group of the 36th Federation Cup, which also unveiled a format styled after the Indian Premier League, at a draw ceremony at the BFF House in Motijheel yesterday.

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings will play against promoted Dhaka Wanderers in the opening match at Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla on December 23 while the final match will take place on May 2, 2025. Bashundhara Kings Arena in Dhaka and Rafique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh are the two other venues of the 10-team event.

It is the third time in last five seasons that the two popular outfits have been placed in the same group. However, the Sky Blues will be playing without foreign players this season, which will get underway on Friday with the newly-introduced Challenge Cup between Bashundhara Kings and Mohammedan.

Mohammedan manager Intiaz Ahmed Nakib believes Abahani will get out of the five-team group despite not having any foreign player.

“It is always interesting to be in the same group with Abahani, who I think will play well with local players. I hope they will take foreign players in the mid-term window,” Nakib said, adding that they have a strong squad with a couple of foreign players alongside some proven local campaigners who led the team to runners-up position in last edition.

GROUP A: Bashundhara Kings, Bangladesh Police, Fortis FC, Brothers Union, Dhaka Wanderers Club

GROUP B: Mohammedan, Abahani, Chittagong Abahani, Rahmatganj, Fakirerpool YMC

Abahani manager Satyjit Das Rupu also believes that Abahani are capable of performing well in the Federation Cup, a tournament they won 14 times against Mohammedan's 11.

“Abahani always play for titles. This time there will be no exception. We believe we have a team to get out the group stage and play in the final,” said Rupu.

The league committee also brought change to the tournament format -- designing it like the IPL -- with 10 teams split into two groups and playing round robin matches. The top two teams from each group will advance to the qualification round instead of semifinals. The two group champions will square off and the winners will advance to the final while losers will play against the winners between two group runners-up for a place in the final.



Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan, Bangladesh Air Force Chief and Bangladesh Hockey Federation president, yesterday greets players at a jersey unveiling event of Bangladesh teams ahead of the AHF Youth Asia Cup. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Contrasting ends to 2024 for Argentina, Brazil

STAR SPORTS DESK

Archrivals Argentina and Brazil ended this year in contrasting fashion, with the Albiceleste managing a 1-0 win over Peru while the Selecao got held to a 1-1 draw by Uruguay in their respective South American World Cup qualifiers on Tuesday.

Lautaro Martinez was on target for Argentina, scoring 10 minutes after the break in front of the home crowd in Buenos Aires. Martinez, who is now tied with legend Diego Maradona as the country's fifth all-time scorer with 32 goals, fired home a half-volley into the top-right corner after availing a fine cross from skipper Lionel Messi.



joint-top with USA's Landon Donovan for most international assists (58).

The win also helped Argentina finish the year as the top-ranked side in FIFA rankings and lead the CONMEBOL standings with 25 points, five clear of second-placed Uruguay.

Brazil, meanwhile, have dropped a spot down to fifth in the World Cup qualifiers -- with 18 points -- after a Gerson striker helped the five-time world champions draw at home with Uruguay, who got the lead through a Federico Valverde strike.

“We had a good performance in these last two matches, we could have had better luck, one more goal would have given us a chance to finish this year in second place [in qualifiers],” said Brazil coach Dorival Junior after the game.

Tigresses' World Cup path hinges on Ireland series

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh will brace for a difficult journey to secure direct qualification for next year's ICC Women's ODI World Cup, with the upcoming Ireland series marking their first major hurdle.

The Tigresses are currently placed ninth out of 10 teams in the ICC Women's Championship (IWC) 2022-2025 cycle, with 13 points from 18 games.

To secure direct qualification for the eight-team tournament as one of the top six sides in IWC, Bangladesh must win all three home matches against Ireland, starting on November 27 in Mirpur, and defeat West Indies in at least two of their final three fixtures next month in the Caribbean.

According to the qualification scenario, India have already gained direct entry by virtue of being hosts, while Australia, England, and South Africa have already booked their place in the marquee event.

The seventh and eighth spots will be decided through a global qualifier featuring six teams -- the bottom four from the IWC and two additional teams based on rankings.

In 2022, Bangladesh women made their ODI World Cup debut as one of the three qualifying teams, alongside Pakistan



and West Indies, based on rankings when the qualifiers were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

“As a team, we must earn all six points from this Ireland series,” experienced campaigner Jahanara Alam, who recently returned to the ODI fold after 18 months, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Tigresses, however, face a tough task against an in-form Ireland, who recently beat England and Sri Lanka, while the hosts are winless this year and last played a 50-over match in March.

Vice-captain Nahida Akter acknowledged the series would be “challenging”, noting Ireland's strong recent performances. Bangladesh, however, have won three

WODIs against Ireland, losing only once.

“We have the determination and hunger to beat the Irish side in the series. We have a series against the West Indies next, but right now we are focusing on this series and planning how to win it,” Nahida told The Daily Star.

“I think in all the series we've played on home soil, we have done really well. I think we have the confidence to win this series as well. It will be our first series against Ireland in Mirpur. We have a good idea about the Mirpur wicket.”

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Cricket Board's women's wing head, Habibul Bashar, claimed the team had taken decent preparation ahead of the Irish assignment.

“We have been preparing for the series for a long time. Since November 1, our girls have been taking part in a preparation camp. I think they have improved a lot,” Bashar said yesterday, during the title sponsor declaration ceremony of the series in Mirpur.

“There will be some nerves and pressure to perform well; it's quite normal. Everyone wants to do well and play in the World Cup. As we will be playing on home soil [against Ireland], I hope we will do well,” added the former Bangladesh captain.