

Hills razed for 30 real estate projects in Ctg

Survey finds port city already lost 120 of 200 hills

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Chattogram city is losing its hills. The 80 or so hills that remain are increasingly under threat from real estate projects of influential businesses.

Department of Environment (DoE) data shows that at least 30 real estate projects flattened hills in the port city over the last five decades.

Documents from the DoE and a study titled "Locational Analysis of Hill Cutting Areas in Chittagong City" reveal that housing projects destroyed the hills over 100 years. The study was conducted by Prof Edris Alam of Chittagong University's geography and environment department in 2017.

According to a 2012 study titled "Hill Cutting in and around Chittagong City", hills had covered 32.37 square kilometres across five zones of the city in 1976. However, by 2008, this area had shrunk to 14.02 square kilometres, found a research by SM Sirajul Hoque, a former professor at Chittagong University's Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences.

This ongoing destruction poses a serious threat to the city's environmental health. It is also triggering landslide and deforestation.

The green cover of Chattogram city dropped to 36.51 percent in 2020 from 68.34 percent in 1990, found a study by the Department of Geography and Environment at Dhaka University.

The study titled "Green space dynamics in response to rapid urbanisation: Patterns, transformations and topographic influence in Chattogram city" was authored by Sumaiya Siddique and Md Mahin Uddin -- two then master's students at the department.

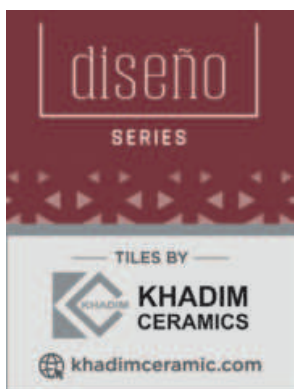
Real estate projects have been implemented in Chandranagar, Green Valley-1 and -2, Rupnagar, Lake City, North Khulshi, CCC VIP Housing, South Khulshi, West Khulshi, Sandwip Colony, and Thandachari Colony areas.

Also, at least 23 housing colonies have been built after razing hills in Khulshi, North Pahartali, Akbar Shah and Bayezid Bostami areas.

Visiting Khulshi, Akbar Shah and Bayezid Bostami areas recently, this correspondent found that hills were levelled to construct buildings and walls.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

The green cover of Chattogram city dropped to 36.51 percent in 2020 from 68.34 percent in 1990.



Family members of some of the July martyrs, along with some of the injured victims of the uprising, at the inauguration of The Daily Star's photo exhibition "36 days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts" yesterday at The Daily Star Centre in the capital. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Don't ever let an autocrat rule us again'

Families of martyrs, injured, student leaders, eminent citizens ask for an equitable nation devoid of oppression at Star exhibition on July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Harmony, reform, remembrance, and justice were the key demands of those who took to the streets and the families of those who laid down their lives during the July uprising.

The injured, families of the martyrs, and protesters yesterday came together at The Daily Star Centre for the inaugural ceremony of a week-long exhibition titled "36 Days of July -- Saluting the Bravehearts".

"I want to tell all the authorities, the police, the military and everyone: You will never again become slaves [to power]. You eat because of us, the general people ... so you cannot become slaves ever again," said Fatema Khatun, mother of Mamun Hossain, a chauffeur who was fatally shot on July 19 on the Mohakhali flyover.

"Do not ever let an autocrat at the helm of the country again. It fills me

"We are common people. We do not understand power ... We only want some empathy."

Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Priyo

with disgust to call the former rulers a government," she said. The words of the woman hailing from Jalial village in Noakhali's Binodpur thundered through the hall.

When she heard that her son was shot, she sank into deep prayer. "I prayed outside in the courtyard until 3:00am without speaking to anyone. I got the news of his death at 3:45am. At that moment, it began raining, and I truly believe it was a sign of Allah's blessing ... cleansing the country of an autocrat."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Star pays tribute to July heroes

7-day exhibition and storytelling sessions begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star yesterday launched a seven-day photo exhibition and storytelling week titled "36 Days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts" to honour the indomitable courage and sacrifices of the students and the masses during the historic July mass uprising.

The exhibition was inaugurated around 3:15pm at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

The event began with a one-minute silence paying tribute to those who lost their lives and who were injured during the uprising that led to the fall of the Awami League regime.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

REGIONAL RESISTANCE

During the 1971 Liberation War, dozens of regional forces emerged across Bangladesh. Just as the freedom fighters trained under the sub-sectors and the Bengal Regiment fought valiantly, these regional forces also put up a tough resistance against the Pakistan forces. In the month of victory, we bring you the stories of some of these heroic forces.

PART 1 Ohidur Bahini of Atrai

AHMAD ISTIAK

In the early days of the 1971 Liberation War, a formidable resistance movement emerged in the Rajshahi region, led by Ohidur Rahman, a prominent figure in the Purba Banglar Communist Party. This force, which later came to be known as the "Ohidur Bahini", played a crucial role in the struggle for independence.

As per the surviving members, the Ohidur Bahini orchestrated over 50 successful battles against

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36 days of
JULY
Saluting the bravehearts



Clockwise from bottom left, people browsing through the photographs at the inauguration of The Daily Star's photo exhibition "36 days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts" yesterday; the audience listening to the speakers at the event; Mosharraf Hossain, father of journalist Hasan Mehedi, who was shot dead by police on July 18, breaks down seeing the photo of his son's body.

PHOTO: STAR

SALUTING THE BRAVEHEARTS

36 days of
JULY

PHOTO EXHIBITION

DECEMBER 1-7, 2024
Time: 10:00 AM-8:00 PM
Venue: The Daily Star Centre

STORYTELLING WEEK

Time: 3:00 PM-4:30 PM

COURAGE AMIDST CRISIS

Stories from volunteers
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

PEDAGOGY OF PROTEST

University teachers on the frontlines
MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM

Political representation of women
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

BLACKOUT CHRONICLES

How journalists, activists navigated the Blackout
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

MARGINALISED VOICES OF JULY REVOLUTION

Stories of struggle, sacrifice and hope from workers
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

WRITE TO PROTEST

Writers and poets on their experience
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7



Hills razed

FROM PAGE 1
At Rupshi Hill of West Khulshi, walls have been built encircling plots.

"The plot owners first construct walls so that they can build buildings dodging the officials of the local administration," said a local, seeking anonymity.

Razing hills without permission from the DoE is punishable with up to two years' imprisonment or a Tk 2 lakh fine under the Environment Conservation Act.

DoE officials said they have filed 34 cases against land owners for cutting hills over the last two years.

Rubaiyat Tahreem Sourav, assistant director of the DoE in Chattogram city, said they were taking action against the lawbreakers almost immediately after receiving complaints.

A CU study revealed that more than 400 port city residents died between 2000 and 2017 in landslides.

Cutting of hills contributes to landslides and waterlogging in the port city, said Mohammad Kamal Hossain, former professor of the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science at CU.

"We should keep environmental health in mind while taking up development projects. Otherwise, our development initiatives will go in vain," he said.

Md Mohi Uddin, a land owner at Shapla Residential Project in Akbor Shah area, faces a case filed by the DoE over razing hills.

Denying the allegation of cutting hills, he told The Daily Star, "I will fight the legal battle in court."

'Don't ever let an autocrat rule us again'

FROM PAGE 1

Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Zaman Priyo, said, "We are common people. We do not understand power. The parents of martyrs do not want power, and neither do the injured. They only want some empathy. The media need to focus more on them."

Criticising some media outlets for enabling the Awami League rule, she said, "The media that helped Sheikh Hasina become more reckless need to be brought back on track."

She said she did not cry when she heard the news of her son's death. "To earn freedom, someone or the other's son must go. I didn't cry for Priyo, because by then, so many of our children had died."

Sabrina Afroz Sabonti, elder sister of Mahamudur Rahman Saikat, an HSC student from Mohammadpur Government Model College killed on July 19, said, "We cannot betray the blood of the martyrs in this new Bangladesh. After losing my 19-year-old brother, I found strength in knowing that he was not alone in making sacrifices. My brother was shot dead while trying to save his friend."

Demanding justice, she said, "When I see the slogan, 'My brother is in the grave while the killers roam free,' I can't keep it together."

She said it was surreal how someone one eats with, lives with, and grows up with vanishes one day.

Abul Bashar Anik, brother of Mohammed Sajal who was shot on August 5 in Narayanganj's Chashara, shared how his brother died happy knowing that Hasina had fallen.

"When he regained consciousness on the morning of August 6 after a major surgery, my brother, despite his critical condition, asked me, 'Did Sheikh Hasina resign?'"

"I was annoyed and asked why he was thinking about this in such a state. He still insisted. When I informed him that Sheikh Hasina had resigned and fled, he smiled and said, 'Alhamdulillah'."

"That was the last smile I saw on his face. He breathed his last that evening," recalled Anik.

He said the dictator, in a bid to remain in power, opened fire on innocent people, some of whom were in their homes or standing on rooftops. "I demand that those involved in these killings face trial and a Bangladesh free from dictatorship."

Ainun Nahar's daughter Naima

Sultana, 15, a 10th grader of Milestone School and College in Dhaka, was killed.

"I saw her brain spill out of her skull right in front of my eyes," she said, speaking to this correspondent at the event.

"During the movement, she used to draw cartoons and caricatures. She wanted to join the rallies ... I tried to stop her. She wouldn't listen. On the afternoon of July 19, she was drawing a flower. Without finishing it, she went to the balcony to bring in some clothes. At that moment, students, being chased, took shelter below our building. The police shot at her and killed her inside her own home."

Md Abu Sayed, nephew of the martyred Maya Islam, recalled how they were even unable to locate the hospital she was in for a whole day. Maya had been killed when she had stepped outside for a moment to buy her 7-year-old grandson ice cream. Her grandson Musa, who had also been shot, is still in a vegetative state in Singapore.

"We heard she was at Rampura Farazi Hospital, but we couldn't go there. We were already at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital trying to save Musa. The next day, we found her body at the hospital. Even the ambulance carrying her for burial was attacked on the road," said Sayeed.

Muhammad Imran Hossain, who lost his sight after sustaining injuries in Uttara, said he does not want to become a burden on his family.

"Everyone is busy pursuing their own political goals. I don't want to be a burden. If proper treatment is provided to the injured, their conditions can improve."

"I live with my aunt after losing my parents in childhood. I couldn't stay idle at home after witnessing the deaths of my brothers. On July 19, I joined the protests. We asked police not to shoot and to let us protest peacefully."

Describing a chaotic scene, he said, "Uttara became a war zone. After a loud bang, I fell unconscious ... An ambulance was arranged, but the police and Chhatra League didn't let it pass. I was finally taken to a hospital. Had they not given me IV saline I would have died."

The exhibition hall at The Daily Star Centre was filled with visitors, each slowly moving from one photo frame to another, examining the news clips and photographs on display.

Among them was Mosharraf

Hossain, father of slain journalist Hasan Mehedi. He walked slowly, paying close attention to each frame as if he was searching for something or perhaps someone.

At 3:38pm, Mosharraf stopped. He looked at the framed photo of his son Mehedi.

Mosharraf's hand trembled as he pointed to the photograph. The photo was of the body of his son on a gurney. The body was riddled with shotgun pellets.

Overcome with emotion, he gently touched the frame as tears streamed down his face.

Shyamoli, who played a key role in organising the students of her university, said people must respect the views they oppose because a lack of respect creates divisions.

"It is natural that everyone does not think alike. That does not mean we can disregard or disrespect others' opinions. Because when you fail to respect others' views, opportunities open up for certain groups that neither want the country to prosper nor its people to live in peace. They seek to exploit the nation for their own gain. We cannot allow this to happen."



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Fatema Khatun, mother of martyr Md Mamun Hossain, speaking at the event.

Slowly, he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small photograph of Mehedi, holding it up to compare. His voice choked with grief.

"This is my son's photograph ... My son Mehedi."

At the event, student protesters and coordinators urged people to work for national unity.

Masud Rana, a coordinator from Rajshahi University, said, "We need to protect 2024, because if we can't, we will see more bloodshed. We are all in this fight together for communal harmony. When we see people practising restraint, India tries to incite communal unrest in Bangladesh. They are trying to create divisions that are artificial. We respect sovereignty. Our neighbouring country should do the same."

Shyamoli Sultana, a student of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said, "Before talking about reforming the state, we must first talk about reforming ourselves."

The people, irrespective of their religion and ideologies, stood united in July, she said.

"But we are now becoming increasingly divided. We must ensure that this division does not persist. We need to be vigilant so that no one takes advantage of the divisions and leads us astray."

Shahinur Shumi, a coordinator from Eden Mohila College, said the people of Bangladesh haven't been able to speak freely in the last 16 years. "In 2024, as we strive for a free Bangladesh, we must ensure the freedom to speak, to protest."

Citing examples of recent incidents of chaos in front of the offices of some media outlets, Shumi said, "The environment for independent journalism is being harmed. In a democratic state, media is the fourth pillar. If the media cannot function independently and publish facts, we will be deprived of the truth."

People should also think how the

judiciary can function independently and the administration freely.

"The more we can reform these aspects, the smoother our journey will be from a fascist structure towards a truly democratic state," she added.

Sayma Sultana, a student of BRAC University, said the courage and unity she witnessed in people is something that must be preserved forever.

"The success of our movement was not solely due to the students. Our parents, teachers, rickshaw pullers, shopkeepers - everyone contributed. Without them, this achievement might not have been possible."

Nirab Hasan Shujan, a student of Government Titumir College, said, "Since August 5, we have been entrusted with a great responsibility. We have talked about reforms because there is no liberation without reforms."

The mass uprising of the 1990s failed solely due to the political parties, he added.

"In 2024, the student community has once again united. We will remain steadfast in one goal: We must ensure that no new fascist force arises."

Nusrat Tasnim Orna, a volunteer of Loraku 24, spoke about her experiences in working with the injured.

"We helped them, cared for them, and provided services to 91 injured. Sadly, four of them passed away. We also tried to offer financial support to rehabilitate some of them. Because of that, I can now sleep in peace."

Prof Gitara Nasreen, who teaches journalism at Dhaka University, urged all to remember the spirit of the movement, come what may.

"We must never forget the long July. The events of 2024 gave us the courage to speak out. Once, people didn't even dare to utter the word 'fascist'."

"Even after so much gunfire and violence, people couldn't be removed from the streets. Those who contributed to the July movement must be remembered. They taught us that change is possible. We must preserve that spirit."

After visiting the exhibition, Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam said, "Each picture of the exhibition has its own appeal. Every incident intensely hurts and overwhelms. My heart was heavy, and I felt that so much sacrifice should not go in vain. We must move forward."

Star pays tribute to July heroes

FROM PAGE 1

Family members of the martyrs, wounded protesters, teachers, student coordinators from various universities, active participants in the movement, and other distinguished guests attended the event, featuring scores of photographs, reports and video clips published by The Daily Star during the movement.

After the inauguration, the visitors explored the exhibition, moving through the photographs and news coverage on the ground floor and first floor of The Daily Star Centre.

A documentary titled "Droher July: Shongbade, Shongrame" was screened, where the newspaper's reporters and photographers recalled their experience while covering the July uprising.

Later, a storytelling session was held, where family members of the martyrs; injured individuals; and

student coordinators shared their experiences and expressed their visions for a new Bangladesh.

A dedicated corner was set up for guests to reflect on and share their impressions of the exhibition.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the newspaper organised this exhibition as part of remembering and paying tribute to the fearless souls who took the "36 days of July" ashore.

The exhibition highlights how The Daily Star reported on this historic uprising, including the editorial policies at the time and the various articles the newspaper ran.

It lays out how the newspaper's journalists and photographers risked their lives to bring the stories of people's sacrifices, courage, and heroism to the readers of the country and across the world.

Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Tahir Jaman

Priyo; Md Abu Sayed, nephew of martyred Maya Islam; Sabina Afroz Srabonti, elder sister of martyred Mahmudur Rahman Shoikot; Fatema Khatun, mother of martyred Mamun Hossain; Abul Bashar Anik, brother of martyred Mohammad Sajal; Hanif Dhali, father of injured Antor Dhali; injured Muhammad Imran Hossain; Prof Gitara Nasreen of Dhaka University; and Nusrat Tasnim Orna, a volunteer of Loraku 24, spoke at the event.

Among the student coordinators who spoke were Masud Rana of Rajshahi University; Saima Lubna of BRAC University; Shyamoli Sultana Zaddniy of University of Liberal Arts; Nirab Hasan Sujon of Titumir College; Shahinur Shumi of Eden Mohila College.

Coordinators Naim Abedin of East West University; Moinul Islam of Dhaka College; Farabi Jisan of BRAC University were present.

Simeen Rahman, chief executive officer of Transcom Group; Zariaif Ayaat Hossain, head of Strategy & Transformation of Transcom Group; Romo Rouf Chowdhury, one of the directors of Medialworld Limited; Imran Faiz Rahman, one of the directors of Medialworld Limited; Matiur Rahman, editor and publisher of Prothom Alo; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, founder editor and CEO of Bonik Barta; Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; lyricist Shahidullah Farazi; and television and theatre actor Masum Basher were present.

Dhaka University faculty members Professor Tasneem Siraj Mahboob, Associate Professor Moshahida Sultana and Assistant Professor Rushad Faridi; former VC of Begum Rokeya University Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah; Jahangirnagar University Professor Mirza Taslima

Sultana; writer Dr Shafiqul Islam; journalist Kazal Rashid Shahin; constitutional expert Arif Khan; communication expert Khan Md Rabul Alam; and Associate Professor of Colgate University USA Navine Murshid were also present.

Besides, Baharul Alam, inspector general of police; Mohammad Ruhul Kabir Khan, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division Police; and Muttazul Islam, senior assistant superintendent (media wing) of Rapid Action Battalion Headquarters also attended the event.

The exhibition will remain open to the public from December 1-7, from 10:00am to 8:00pm, except Friday.

Additionally, discussions will be held daily from 3:00pm to 4:30pm, where journalists, teachers, garment workers, and people from different walks of life will share their experiences of the movement.

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Once the lifelines of Dhaka, the city's canals are now mere shadows of their former selves—clogged with pollution, suffocated by encroachment, and neglected due to flawed urban planning. In this seven-part series, The Daily Star explores the current condition of the capital's canals, botched restoration attempts, and how the sorry state of these waterways is exacerbating the city's waterlogging woes. Together, these stories reveal what it will take to bring Dhaka's dying canals back to life. Here is the first part of the series:

Dhaka drowns every time it rains

HERE'S WHY

Encroachment of waterways, failure of authorities, poor waste management key reasons, say experts

HELEMUL ALAM

In Dhaka, rain comes as a call for chaos. Streets get submerged, water often invades homes in low-lying areas, and life in the capital slows to a frustrating crawl.

The reason? Encroachments of canals, poor planning, and ignored solutions.

The capital's waterlogging crisis, which is the worst in 35 neighbourhoods, can largely be traced to the encroachment and narrowing of 11 crucial canals. These waterways, meant to drain the city, have instead been squeezed by unchecked urbanisation, becoming obstacles rather than lifelines.

A case in point is the 130mm rainfall on July 12, which inundated vast stretches of the capital. According to findings from the River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), localities such as Pallabi, Shialbari, Rupnagar, and Eastern Housing face waterlogging due to significant narrowing of the Rupnagar Main Khal.

In Tolarbagh, Ahmednagar, and Paikpara, waterlogging stems from the complete encroachment of the Kalyanpur Main Khal behind Bangla College.

Similarly, Shewrapara, Kazipara, and Kafrul remain under water following rainfall as Ibrahimpur and Kalyanpur canals are now encroached on by 80 percent and 50 percent respectively.

Panthapath Box Culvert, largely blocked, causes frequent flooding in Kalabagan, Dhanmondi-27, Kathalbagan, Green Road, and Hatirpool. Meanwhile, the encroachment of Rayerbazar and Jirani canals—around 80 percent of which are occupied—leads to waterlogging in Hazaribagh, Nawabganj, Rayerbazar, West Dhanmondi, and Dhaka New Market.

Rampura and Badda endure waterlogging caused by the obstruction of natural water flow in Rampura Khal due to the Banasree Main Road.

Additionally, the low-lying areas from Banasree to Khilgaon Chowdhury Para have become reliant on inadequate storm drains after their natural drainage route through Banasree Canal was blocked.

Areas like Sutrapur, Wari, Nawabpur, Kazi Alauddin Road, Siddique Bazar, Narinda, and Tatibazar face waterlogging because the Dholai Khal, converted into a box culvert in 2007, is now 90 percent blocked.

Similarly, Jurain, Shyampur, and Rayerbagh grapple with the effects of the encroachment of Kadamtali and



Top, A portion of Rayerbazar canal, completely choked with garbage. Bottom, Mindless garbage dumping and illegal encroachments are killing the canals. The dying canals are exacerbating the capital's waterlogging woes.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Manda canals, with Kadamtali 70 percent occupied and Manda clogged with garbage and polythene.

LOSS OF CANALS, POOR MAINTENANCE

A recent study by the River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC) revealed that canals and river channels in Dhaka once covered 565 hectares of land, according to the cadastral survey.

However, 55 percent of this area has now disappeared. Of the 307 hectares lost, 33.75 percent has been taken over by various structures, 18.92 percent by farmland, and 16.94 percent by streets. The remainder has either been filled in or turned into stagnant wetlands, the report stated.

Although Dhaka's two city corporations took charge of the drainage network, including canals, four years ago, experts argue that their failure to prepare a master plan has hampered progress.

Instead, the city corporations have installed drains on an ad-hoc basis, that have proven insufficient.

Besides, the 2016 Dhaka Drainage

Master Plan prepared by Wasa has also been ignored.

The master plan had identified key issues such as: siltation and blockages in canals and drains, poor waste management, encroachment of flood plains and low-lying areas, indiscriminate land development, defective drainage structures and inadequate pumping and drainage facilities.

Despite two Dhaka city corporations spending Tk 262 crore over four years to install a combined 334.19km of drainage infrastructure, including box culverts and drains, the capital continues to face severe flooding during rains.

SOLID WASTE WORSENS DRAINAGE ISSUES

Poor solid and liquid waste management further aggravates the drainage crisis.

Dhaka city corporations said they collect only 60-70 percent of the city's waste, with the remainder often ending up in waterbodies and drains, causing blockages.

Moreover, Iqbal Habib, vice president of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA),

emphasised the urgent need to address polythene usage, describing it as a "disaster" for drainage systems.

Furthermore, untreated sewage, which pollutes canals and waterbodies, creates conditions ripe for further encroachment.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Wasa was supposed to construct five treatment plants to manage sewerage under its master plan but has completed only one, in Dasher Kandi, so far.

CONCRETE JUNGLE, INCREASED RUNOFF

Rainwater percolation into the soil has drastically fallen in Dhaka due to urban sprawl.

The city, now dominated by concrete, sees 80 percent of rainwater flowing directly onto roads, overloading the drainage network.

In 1995, waterbodies made up 20.57 percent of Dhaka's central area, but by 2023, this figure had shrunk to just 2.9 percent, according to the Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

Green spaces have also diminished from 22 percent to 9 percent in the same period.

Dr Akter Mahmud, a member of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners' advisory council, stressed the importance of harvesting rainwater in public and private buildings in line with the Bangladesh National Building Code.

However, compliance with this requirement remains low.

ELEVATED ROADS: ANOTHER OBSTACLE

The indiscriminate elevation of roads over the years has exacerbated the waterlogging problem.

Dhaka's roads have been raised by over four feet in the last 15 years, rendering the levels of storm drains higher than those of houses and low-lying grounds, hindering water flow.

THE WAY FORWARD

To mitigate Dhaka's waterlogging, experts like Iqbal and Akter recommend the following: recovering and protecting canals, enhancing waste management, improving solid and liquid waste collection, enforcing strict policies against polythene use, rainwater harvesting and implementing the 2016 drainage master plan.

Without urgent intervention, Dhaka's waterlogging woes will only worsen, leaving its residents grappling with the aftermath of every downpour, experts added.

AUG 21 ATTACK

High Court to deliver verdict on appeals today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court is set to deliver its verdict today on the death references and appeals related to the August 21 grenade attack cases.

The death references and appeals have been included in the cause list of the HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain.

On November 21, the bench kept the death references (trial court documents for confirmation of death sentences), and the appeals, filed by the convicted accused in the cases, as curia advisari vult (meaning the verdict will be delivered any day), after it concluded hearing on those matters.

The cases were filed following a grenade attack on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka that claimed 24 lives and left about 300 injured.

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Political parties too have to be reformed

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reforms are needed not only within the police force but also in the political parties that control the police when in power, along with all institutions directly linked to police activities, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The event, titled "Why Police Could Not Become People-Friendly in 53 Years? Police Reform: Why and in Which Direction?" was organised by Humanity Foundation at the CIRDAP auditorium.

Former IGP Nurul Huda argued that a people-friendly police force requires a shift in the vision of those who control it. "Without a change in mindset at the top, reform is impossible," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Woman's bullet-hit body found on highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

The bullet-hit body of a young woman was recovered from Dhaka-Mawa highway in Munshiganj's Srinagar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Saheda Begum, 22, of Barian Begunbari in Mymensingh.

However, she lived in a rented house with her mother and brother in the capital's Wari.

Locals spotted the body on the Dogachi service lane around 7:00am. On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the body.

Srinagar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Qaiyum Uddin Chowdhury confirmed the body recovery.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Job scarcity, climate change driving up internal migration

Reveals a survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 71 percent of internal migrant workers in Bangladesh migrate due to livelihood challenges or a lack of job opportunities, while 69 percent are driven by lower wages, according to a new survey revealed yesterday.

The survey, which covered 2,505 individuals across 10 districts (five source and five destination), was conducted by People's Courage International and the Association for Community Development (ACD).

The findings were presented at a panel discussion, titled "Coping with Climate: How Extreme Weather is Already Impacting Internal Migrants", held at a private hotel in Dhaka.

Anika Azhar, representing People's Courage International and Sharmin Sabrina of ACD shared the study's results.

According to the research, 48 percent of internal migrants prioritise better healthcare when choosing a destination, with 85 percent seeking higher wages. The study also found that migration driven by debt repayment exacerbates migrants' financial challenges.

Climate change impacts 55 percent of migrants from source districts, with 13 percent of those at their destination also affected.

To cope with extreme weather, over 30 percent of migrants from source areas are using their savings. The study said that migration between districts is increasing

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Customers look through winter jackets, sweaters, and t-shirts at a footpath shop in the capital's Farmgate. With the winter chill setting in, demand for warm clothing is steadily increasing. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Fakhrul off to London to meet Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir left the country for London yesterday morning on a 10-day visit.

He along with his wife Rahat Ara Begum, departed from Dhaka airport on a Biman flight at 8:25am, said BNP media cell member Sayrul Kabir Khan.

He said the BNP leader is expected to return home on December 11.

According to BNP sources, Fakhrul is travelling to London to meet party Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman to discuss political matters.

Once Fakhrul returns, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia may travel to London for medical treatment.

The 79-year-old former prime minister is likely to first receive treatment in the UK, and may then travel to the United States for further care.

Akon, Sohnel new DRU president, GS



STAR REPORT

Abu Saleh Akon of Daily Nayadiganta and Mynul Hasan Sohnel of Daily Inqilab have been elected president and general secretary of the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) respectively.

Akon bagged 801 votes, while his nearest rivals Mursalin Nomani and Shariful Islam Bilu won 496 and 102 votes respectively in the election held yesterday.

Mynul secured 548 votes to defeat his nearest rival Shahnaz Sharmeen who bagged 364 votes contesting for the post of general secretary. Other contenders for the general secretary post Abdullah Al Kafi and Mahamudul Hasan secured 289 and 210 votes respectively.

Gazi Anwar was elected vice president with 698 votes and Nadia Sharmeen joint secretary with 723 votes.

Other elected office bearers are Finance Secretary Shakhawat Hossain Suman (uncontested), Organising Secretary Abdul Hai Tuhin, Office Secretary Rafiq Rafi, Women Affairs Secretary Rozina Rozi, Publicity and Publication Secretary Mizan Chowdhury, ICT and Training Secretary Shariful Islam, Sports Secretary Md Muzibur Rahman, Cultural Secretary Emdatul Haque Khan (uncontested), Hospitality Secretary Mohammad Salim Ullah (uncontested), and Welfare Secretary Rafique Mridha (uncontested).

The seven elected members of the new DRU executive committee are Junaid Hossain Shishir, Akhtaruzzaman, Borhan Uddin, Aminul Haque Bhuiyan, Faruk Alam, Suman Chowdhury, and Salim Ullah.

A total of 36 candidates contested for 20 posts in the DRU election. The voting began at 9:00am yesterday and continued till 5:00pm without any break.

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
JANAT 5:15	12:45	3:45	5:19	7:00
AZAMAT 5:50	1:15	4:00	5:22	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

TO-LET
3280 SFT Commercial Space for Rent. Uttara Sector # 04, Opposite of Rajlaxmi Kusal Center.
Mobile : 01714-374917
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Designation: Jewellery Machine Operator/Technician, Age-Minimum 30 Years, Salary-Negotiable, Qualification: J.S.C Equivalent (Experience Person Priority First), 3 Years Experience. Willing Candidate must be submitted to 01 copy pp size color photo, CV, NID with Educational certificate.
+880 17 4453 3333 (WhatsApp)
jinlongcompanybd@gmail.com



A farmer clears out all the dead plants and branches to prepare this land for planting IRI seeds. The photo was taken from Dhamsar village in Barishal recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Canal's land grabbed

FROM PAGE 5
sufferings with their paddy cultivation.

"The dams remain closed all year round. During dry season, we don't get any water in the canal, while in the monsoon, the dams cause waterlogging in the adjacent croplands. As such, we face difficulties to cultivate paddy on our lands," said Shahid Farazi, a local farmer.

According to locals, Kalam was among those on the forefront demanding construction of the dams. He did so in a planned move to eventually grab the canal's land, they alleged.

Mahbubur Rahman, another local, alleged that Kalam used his political influence during the then Awami League government to get the dam constructed with a motive to grab the canal's land.

"After the dam's construction, Kalam began grabbing land on the embankment by planting betel nut and timber trees. Now he has taken hold of a good chunk of land to set up a market," he also alleged.

Omar Faruq, another local, echoed him.

Kalam, who had previously claimed his madrasa will sustain damages due to erosion unless the dams are constructed, later changed his tone after the fall of the AL government.

Acknowledging the fact that many people are facing trouble for the dam,

Political parties

FROM PAGE 3
Speakers also said that colonial-era police laws must be urgently updated.

Supreme Court Registrar Iktedar Ahmed criticised the low conviction rate in Bangladesh, which remains below 5%. He attributed this to weaknesses in investigations, which are hampered by political interference.

He said that Public Prosecutors and judges are often appointed based on political recommendations, undermining impartiality in the justice system.

Zakia Shishir, the grandmother of Mir Mughdho, a martyr of the July-August mass uprising, questioned the reasons behind the police's perceived poor behaviour.

"Has there been any internal research to address these issues?" she asked.

Dr Mazharul Islam, a history professor at Jahangirnagar University, called for a change in Bangladesh's political culture to end the concentration of power.

"This has led to the promotion of incompetent people in key positions to maintain control," he said.

Former DIG Mejbahunnabi expressed concerns over the Rapid Action Battalion's training, saying many officers receive less than the six months of training required by UN standards.

He also pointed to an increase in extrajudicial killings since RAB's formation.

DIG Golam Rasul called for a system to ensure state accountability, referring to a recent incident during the mass uprising where those responsible for ordering the shooting of protesters did not keep any written record of their decision.

The speakers said comprehensive reforms are necessary across the entire justice system to restore public trust.

Panchagarh

FROM PAGE 5
However, the biting cold has also brought a surge in winter-related illnesses.

Local hospitals, including Tentulia Upazila Health Complex and Adhunik Sadar Hospital, Panchagarh, are witnessing a rise in cases of fever, cold, asthma, and pneumonia, especially among children and the elderly.

Jitendra Nath, assistant officer at the Tentulia Weather Observatory, said that the temperature had dropped from 11.4 degrees Celsius recorded on Friday morning.

"As winter deepens, temperatures are expected to drop further," he added.

Elsewhere in the region, Dinajpur recorded the country's second-lowest temperature yesterday, at 12.5 degrees Celsius, according to the Dinajpur Met Office.

Construction yet to begin 6yrs on

FROM PAGE 5
fulfill her commitment to voters.

The NCC's Tk 590.75 crore project to construct the 1,385-metre bridge with 3.5km approach road was approved in the ECNEC meeting on October 9, 2018. It was decided that the bridge would be named Kadamrasul Bridge, after the Kadamrasul Dargah in Bandar upazila.

The stipulated deadline to complete the project was June 2022. However, the construction did even start after six years passed since the project's approval. The deadline was eventually extended, while the cost also went up, but the work simply did not begin.

"The project has become a difficult one to implement due to numerous obstacles that emerged, including land acquisition. By the time the complications were resolved, the deadline had expired. Even the design of the project had to be changed eventually," said Abdul Aziz, superintendent engineer of NCC.

Lands owned by the Railway and BIWTA on the west side of the river stood in the way of the project. Also, a part of land owned by Kumudini Welfare Trust of Bengal Ltd was another

obstacle. Complications also emerged with acquisition of land previously owned by food ministry on the river's east side, said sources at NCC's Engineering Department.

NCC officials said they recently managed to overcome these complications, and a new deadline of June 30, 2026, has been decided for the project's completion. Meanwhile, the cost of the project went up by 28 percent.

Local residents, however, grew skeptical as the construction of Kadamrasul Bridge failed to start multiple times.

"My hair has turned grey since I first started hearing about this bridge over the Shitalakshya. They just promise it every time an election approaches, then forget about it altogether once they get elected," said Md Kabir, 55, who runs a tea stall on the river bank.

Earlier, during BNP's tenure two decades back, a project was taken to construct a bridge on the river at Nabiganj area, but it never saw the light of day.

Meanwhile, the third Shitalakshya Bridge, named after late AKM Nasim Osman, a freedom fighter and former MP of Narayanganj-5, connects

Job scarcity, climate

FROM PAGE 3
due to rising temperatures, floods, and heavy rainfall.

Moreover, 80 percent of migrants at their destination face wage loss, with 41 percent experiencing wage cuts and 20 percent losing their jobs entirely.

In response to these challenges, the study calls for the identification of vulnerable communities and the creation of targeted action plans, including social protection programmes to mitigate the effects of extreme weather.

Experts at the event emphasised the need for further academic and

practical dialogue on the intersection of climate change and migration. They called for more collaboration among experts to address the growing challenges posed by climate-related migration and urged proactive measures to support affected communities.

Subrata Paul, Project Coordinator of ACD; Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan from Rajshahi University; Md Anwar Hossain of the NGO Affairs Bureau, and representatives from Winrock International, IOM, and the Ministry of Social Welfare were also present among others.

Cyclone 'Fengal' over

FROM PAGE 5
1,530km southwest of Mongla port, and 1,545km southwest of Payra port.

It is likely to move in the westerly direction further and cross North Tamil Nadu Coast.

The maximum sustained wind speed within 54km of the cyclone centre is about 62kmph, rising to 88kmph in gusts-squalls. The sea

will remain very rough near the centre of the cyclone.

BMD advised maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla, and Payra to keep hoisted Distant Warning Signal 2.

Besides, all fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay and deep sea have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice.

HC to deliver

FROM PAGE 3
Then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who later ran the country for 15 years as prime minister and was forced to resign and flee on August 5 this year following a mass uprising, narrowly escaped the attack on August 21, 2004.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018, sentenced 19 people, including former BNP state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death in the two cases filed in connection with the grenade attacks.

Nineteen others including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, now in London, were given life imprisonment and 11 were handed different terms in prison.

Eighteen of the convicted accused are absconding and 31 are in jail.

sicip **EAST WEST UNIVERSITY**

Executive Development Center (EDC), East West University (EWU)
Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP)

Call for Applications
Graduate Diploma in Leather, Leather Goods, and Footwear Management

Program Context
The leather and footwear sector in Bangladesh holds significant growth potential, driven by the country's abundant raw material supply, competitive labor costs, and increasing global demand for quality leather products. To facilitate the sector, the Government of Bangladesh has taken initiatives to produce a group of mid-level managers which will minimize the dependencies on the foreign experts. In compliance with this initiative, the Executive Development Center (EDC) of East West University (EWU) is offering a Graduate Diploma in Leather, Leather Goods, and Footwear management under the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP), Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh.

Program Objectives

- Enhance the technology-driven skilled workforce within the sector focusing on climate-resilient practices and green technologies.
- Cultivate world-class, mid and high-level industry-fit managers.
- Reduce reliance on foreign managers by encouraging industry-university collaborations.

Program Features

- The tuition fee is fully waived and additional allowances will be provided after successful completion.
- The nine-month long program.
- Industry Attachment is mandatory.
- Experienced resource persons from both industry and academia.
- Classes will be held on weekends and/or evenings of weekdays.

Eligibility Criteria

- A Bachelor's degree or its equivalent in any discipline from a UGC approved university or an institution.
- Applicant must have a minimum of 5 points in total based on past examination results. The calculation of the points is as follows:

SSC		HSC		Bachelor	
Div./ GPA	Point	Div./ GPA	Point	Div./ CGPA	Point
1 st / >=4.0	3	1 st / >=4.0	3	1 st / >=3.0	3
2 nd / >=3.0 & <4.0	2	2 nd / >=3.0 & <4.0	2	2 nd / >=2.5 & <3.0	2
3 rd / >=2.0 & <3.0	1	3 rd / >=2.0 & <3.0	1	3 rd / >=2.0 & <2.5	1

- Applicant's age must be less than 50 years as of the last date of application.
- Those who were enrolled in any programs under SEIP for two weeks or above during the last year, need not to apply.
- Females and Ethnic groups are encouraged to apply.

Application Procedure

- Application Link: <https://forms.gle/RwTkrPcqR6Vh6vBn6>
- It is also possible to collect and drop the form from the EDC-SICIP office, which opens every day from 11:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Last Date of Application: 12 Dec 2024

Selection Procedure

- Written Test: There will be a Written Test on 21 December 2024 (Saturday) at 11:00 am.
- Viva Voce: Applicants passing the written test will appear for Viva Voce.

Contact Details
EDC-SICIP Office, Room # 269, East West University, Aftabnagar, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh.

Supreme Court of Bangladesh

High Court Division
www.supremecourt.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

Re-Tender Notice No. 32/2024-25
Open Tendering Method (OTM)

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of the work	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	1042287	32/2024-25 BSC/Purchase -03/2024-25	Purchase of Desktop Computer Core 13 (500 Nos.)	22/12/2024 03:00 PM	23/12/2024 12:00 PM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenderers will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents can be deposited online through any bank's branch as per tender notice.

(Signature)

(Meftahul Jannath)
Assistant Registrar (Finance)
Supreme Court of Bangladesh
High Court Division, Dhaka.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A man covers his head with a polythene sheet while walking through the cold winter rain. Cyclone Fengal, forming over the Bay of Bengal, brought rainfall to several areas, including Khulna, Dhaka, Chattogram, and Barishal. This photo was taken in Daulatpur area of Khulna yesterday.

KADAMRASUL BRIDGE OVER SHITALAKSHYA

Construction yet to begin 6yrs on

Cost escalates by 28pc

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM, Narayanganj

On a cold winter night, Md Nasir, a resident of Ekrampur, found himself desperately looking for a boat at the wharf. The clock had just struck midnight and no boats were in sight.

Nasir was desperately clinging onto his mother Taslima Banu, 60, who had just suffered a stroke and needed to be taken to a hospital as soon as possible. His brother was at his side.

The Ekrampur area is located on the east bank of the Shitalakshya river.

The nearest hospital was on the other side of the river, only accessible by taking a boat and then a car. But there was no boat at the wharf.

"It was a race against time. By the time a boat finally arrived, it was 12:30am. Then it took another 20 minutes to cross the river and find a vehicle to reach the government hospital in Narayanganj city," Nasir said.

Taslima Banu was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where she breathed her last at noon the following day.

"If there was a bridge over the river, my mother would have probably lived today, since she could then be taken to the hospital in less than 10 minutes," Nasir lamented in grief.

The Shitalakshya river flows between Narayanganj district headquarter and Bandar upazila. As such, thousands of people from these two areas have to cross the river regularly using boats from four wharfs, as there is no other alternative, except a ferry service that operates only from the Nabiganj area.

Accidents also happen on this river often, especially during the monsoon.

Local residents have long been demanding a bridge on the river to connect the two areas. In response, candidates always came up with promises to fulfill the demand every time a local or national election approaches.

But no action would happen after the elections, the locals complained.

Finally, Dr Selina Hayat Ivy, following her re-election as mayor of Narayanganj City Corporation, took up an initiative to build a bridge over the Shitalakshya to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



PHOTO: STAR

Local residents cross the Shitalakshya River by boat daily, as the long-promised bridge remains a distant dream. The photo was taken at Ekrampur recently.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
Shibalaya Govt. Technical School and College
Shibalaya, Manikganj.
E-mail: tscshibalaya2021@gmail.com
Website: tscshibalaya.manikganj.gov.bd

Ref. no : 57.03.5678.000.018.01.24.22 Date: 26/11/2024

e- Tender Notice (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal for the following items. Interested tenderers are requested to visit (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) website for details.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of the Goods	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
01.	1039011	Raw Materials and Spare Parts	01 - Dec - 2024 at 11:00:00	17 - Dec - 2024 at 16:00:00	18 - Dec - 2024 at 12:00:00
02.	1040235	Teaching and Learning Materials	01 - Dec - 2024 at 11:00:00	17 - Dec - 2024 at 16:00:00	18 - Dec - 2024 at 12:05:00
03.	1040265	Supply of Furniture	01 - Dec - 2024 at 11:00:00	17 - Dec - 2024 at 16:00:00	18 - Dec - 2024 at 12:10:00
04.	1040278	Supply of Computer Accessories	01 - Dec - 2024 at 11:00:00	17 - Dec - 2024 at 16:00:00	18 - Dec - 2024 at 12:15:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no official or hard copy will be accepted. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and form e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Khokan Chandra Debnath)
Principal
Shibalaya Govt. Technical School and College
Shibalaya, Manikganj.

MATHBARIA

Canal's land grabbed for market

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

A large area of land of Bharani canal has allegedly been grabbed illegally in front of the Begum Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mahila Kamil Madrasa in Mirukhali union under Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila for setting up a market.

Locals alleged that Abul Kalam Sharif, former principal of the madrasa, is behind the land grabbing.

Kalam also allegedly constructed a permanent road and iron bridge in front of the madrasa and another concrete bridge nearby.



He has been encroaching on the canal since 2010, after a cross dam was constructed on the canal around 20 years back by Mosharrarf Hossain Akan, former chairman of Dhanisafa union parishad, to connect the Phuljhuri and Patakata villages.

Later, Local Government Engineering Department constructed a paved road on the embankment, and another by Roads and Highways Department.

A total of four such cross dams have been constructed on the Bharani canal, and several more dams on other connecting canals, which have been hindering flow of water through the canals and thereby causing shortage of water for irrigating the Aman paddy fields there.

Despite protests from local farmers, local authorities went on with constructing the dams over the years.

The local farmers have since then been facing untold

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Panchagarh temperature drops to 10.3°C

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Winter made its presence felt in full force as the mercury plunged to a bone-chilling 10.3 degrees Celsius in Panchagarh's Tetulia early yesterday, marking the lowest temperature in the country so far this season.

The Tetulia Weather Observatory recorded the temperature at 9:00am yesterday, signaling the arrival of winter ahead of the traditional cold months of Poush and Magh.

Despite sunny skies, the cold was evident.

"The cold sets in after sunset, with gusts of wind from the north," said Sahed Ali, a local resident.

"Even during the day, warm clothes are a necessity," he added.

The pristine skies offered a breathtaking view of the Kanchenjunga peaks, drawing hundreds of tourists to Tetulia at dawn.

"It's mesmerising to see Kanchenjunga in such clarity -- winter adds a unique charm to the view," said one tourist.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Cyclone 'Fengal' over Bay

STAR REPORT

Dhaka city experienced a light drizzle yesterday evening due to the impacts of the cyclone "Fengal" (pronounced Feinjal) formed over the Bay of Bengal, according to an official of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

BMD Meteorologist Hafizur Rahman said alongside the capital city, several other areas of the country including Chattogram, Khulna and Barishal divisions have also experienced rain due to the cyclone.

However, the cyclone is unlikely to have any major impact on Bangladesh, as it was on course to cross the coastal area of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, he told this newspaper.

He added that temperatures will drop once clouds accumulated because of the cyclone are cleared.

Meanwhile, in its latest special weather bulletin, BMD said Cyclone Fengal over Southwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas moved west-northwestwards and now lies over the same area.

It was centred at 3:00pm yesterday, about 1,685km southwest of Chattogram port, 1,645km southwest of Cox's Bazar port,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

UNPAID WAGES

Tea workers rally in Sylhet

UNB, Sylhet

Hundreds of tea workers and union leaders staged a protest outside Sylhet Cricket Stadium yesterday, demanding immediate payment of their long-overdue wages and measures to safeguard the ailing tea estates.

At the rally, organised by the Bangladesh Tea Workers Federation, speakers talked about the plights of workers from estates like Lakkatura, Kewachara, and Daldali, all under the umbrella of the National Tea Company (NTC). For the past three months, these workers have endured the harsh reality of unpaid wages, plunging their families into dire financial straits.

The crisis, which erupted following the political transition on August 5th, has been met with indifference and inaction. Despite repeated protests and formal appeals to the district administration, the workers have been met with empty promises and broken assurances.

Union representatives said tea workers in Bangladesh face systemic neglect and are marginalised. "The change in government had kindled hope for a better future, but our struggles have only intensified," a union leader said at the rally.

The protesters accused the authorities of failing to fulfill their duty to protect workers' rights and ensure the sustainability of the tea estates.

3 die of dengue, 675 get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three dengue patients died in the last 24 hours while 675 patients were hospitalised till yesterday morning.

All three deaths were reported in the hospitals at Dhaka South City Corporation.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, with the new deaths and cases, the death toll rose to 488, while the total number of cases rose to 91,469.

Currently, 3,102 dengue patients are undergoing treatment, of which 1,764 are from outside Dhaka. A total of 87,879 patients have been released till yesterday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Rajbari
Phone: 02478807728

e-Tender Notice 06/RRD/2024-2025 (OSTETM, NCT) *

The below tenders are online Tenders where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details please contact help desk contact numbers.

Tender ID	Package No.	Name of works	Tender Document last selling Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
1042942	01/e-GP/PMP Road/RRD/20 24-2025 (Re-tender)	PMP (Road-Major) for Construction of DBST at Ch.1+200 to Ch.6+230, Ch.6+730 to Ch.7+075, Ch.7+185 to Ch.12+345, Ch.12+485 to Ch.16+475 & Ch.16+625 to Ch.18+975 ; Rigid pavement at Ch.7+100 to Ch.7+160 (Goaland level crossing), Ch.12+370 to Ch.12+430 (Khankhanapur level crossing) & Ch.16+500 Km to Ch.16+600 (Basantapur level crossing) and Wearing Course at Ch.02+047 to Ch.02+970 & Ch.03+020 to Ch.03+400 (Daulatdia four lane Right Side) of Daulatdia-Faridpur(Goalchamot)-Magura-Jhenaidah-Jessore-Khulna-Mongla (Digraj) National Highway (N-7) Road under Road Division, Rajbari during the year 2024-2025.	29-Dec-2024 17:00 hours	30-Dec-2024 13:30 hours

*Note: Procurement Method is "One stage Two Envelopes Tendering Method (OSTETM)"

28.11.2024

Md. Rajos Khan
ID No-602334
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD
Rajbari Road Division, Rajbari.

GD- 1081

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Architecture
Ministry of Housing & Public Works
Sthapatya Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
www.architecture.gov.bd
Phone No- 02-223350954.

Memo No-General-1610/ Stha

Dated-28-11-2024

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify for all concern that the following tender have Published through e-GP Portal.

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No	Name of Works	Publishing Date & Time	Last selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1.	1043280	DOA/egp/24-25/08	Computer Software	01-Dec-2024 10:00	18-Dec-2024 10:00	18-Dec-2024 12:00

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

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>) is required. Further information and guideline are available the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(S.M. Anisul Haque)
Executive Architect

(circle-co-ordination, Division-Services)

Sthapatya Bhaban
Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000
Phone No- 02-223350954.

GD- 1079

‘WAS IT WORTH IT?’ A First-Time Concertgoer’s review of Atif Aslam’s Show

The crowd size is simply too large for any available space. I, as a front-zone audience member, couldn’t even see Atif perform live and had to rely on the screen. I might as well have just opted for YouTube for that kind of experience.

MAISHA TASNIM SRESHTHA

For someone like me who has never been to a concert before in her entire life, attending Atif Aslam’s concert felt like a feast for the senses. When a friend of mine asked without a trace of forewarning, “Would you go to Atif Aslam’s concert? I’m buying the tickets because they will sell out soon.” I replied, “Count me in for a ticket as well,” without hesitation as I couldn’t let my once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness childhood nostalgia slip away like that.

Fast forward to the time when I reached the venue, Bangladesh Army Stadium, it was almost 5:15pm, and there was still a sea of people waiting in the queue to get inside. The lines seemed endless, breathing mass of anticipation, frustration, and sweat.

When the crowd couldn’t control itself, the army decided to show up at the very last moment. When we finally got in around 7:05pm, my firsthand experience was a mob coming toward me at full speed as they broke through the barricades. I could hear the people in charge saying, “Don’t we

have bats to fight them off?” without actually doing anything.

To add to the audacity, the police started assaulting audience members at the entrance with valid tickets without acknowledging what was happening in that situation. Although, they later managed to identify the assailants, beat them, and throw them out of the stadium.

Despite all the hassles, was Atif worth it? True to form, the artiste sang with a passion that made each note hit home. This time, his concert kicked off with a style that only he could pull off.

On the big screen, an opening video played where he boldly claimed, “My song has its own kind of creativity,” set to a tune we all recognised. And when he says it’s creative, you just nod along, because somehow, he makes it feel like it actually is.

Donning a grey hoodie that read, “Trust the process, success takes hard work,” he proved throughout the show how he lived up to this phrase. While the audience was eventually worn out, his energy never waned.

When he sang classics like *Tera Hone Laga Hoon* from the film *Ajab Prem Ki Ghazab Kahani*, I could clearly time travel 11 years back to 2014, when I would listen to the songs on my MP3 player or perhaps download it on my computer. Then, there I was, in a flash, witnessing the performance of the very man right before my eyes, that too, among a crowd where I truly belonged.

The proverbial ‘magical moment’ happened when he performed *Dil Diyan Gallan*. Just like in the music video where Katrina walked down the



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TRIPLE TIME COMMUNICATIONS

stairs, and charms showered around her. You wouldn’t believe me when I say the atmosphere was recreated to match the video exactly. Atif belted out the song, and those confetti from the music video fell upon the audience.

On Friday night, Atif was in full-on qawwali mode, performing *Tajdar-e-Haram* and *Kun Faya Kun*. The Bangladeshi organisers, however, were clearly inspired by his song *Kuch Is Tarah* (just like this) when it came to mismanagement and power cuts. Atif, ever the professional, seemed to pray

through his songs, as if saying, “No more mishaps, please.” Who were we to complain? When the artiste himself said, “Keep your spirits high, power cuts are just part of the concert experience.”

Even his smallest gestures during the concert were a treat for the eyes. While performing my all-time favourite, *Aaoge Jab Tum Saajna*, Atif made a heart sign with his hands, and at that moment, every struggle; the long wait, numb feet, and suffocation felt entirely worthwhile.

The experience as a whole was not

as rosy as I made it sound. If I were to speak from the perspective of an audience, Bangladesh is not yet an ideal place to host concerts, especially for international artistes like Atif Aslam.

The crowd size is simply too large for any available space. I, as a front-zone audience member, couldn’t even see Atif perform live and had to rely on the screen. I might as well have just opted for YouTube for that kind of experience.

The concert was divided into three sections; magical, front, and general zones. However, if you managed to buy a ticket worth Tk 10,000 in the magical zone, consider yourself lucky, because in reality, there was no such thing as general or front zones – Just a chaotic crowd with poor management.

Setting my emotions apart from Atif, the night wasn’t complete without another Pakistani artiste, Abdul Hannan, who poured his heart out in singing hits like *Iraaddy* that definitely set the bar for romance.

To top it off, our very own Kaaktaal and Tahsan gave their full efforts to make the night a memorable one for us, the audience.

I didn’t realise it until I got home, but writing this feels like speaking for every other Atifian who carries him as a core memory of their childhood. This man represents our childhood; he made our first heartbreaks somewhat easier through his tracks and accompanied us during those nights before falling asleep. And even a decade ago, our headphones were well-acquainted with his voice and tunes.

So, when I wondered again, was it worth the hassle? I would say, as a first-time concertgoer, I wouldn’t have missed the chance to relive that childhood nostalgia. When such an opportunity presented itself, how could I ever let it pass? But in the future, I would definitely not set myself up for this kind of experience again.

NEWS

Power sector’s indemnity act repealed

FROM PAGE 12
communicating and bargaining with one or more institutions.
In the ruling, which came following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyers Shahdeen Malik and Md Tayeb-Ul-Islam Showrov on August 28 citing public interest, the HC condoned the actions already taken in good faith under the two sections of the act to avoid legal complexities.
The president’s ordinance said the contracts signed under the 2010 act or the actions taken under the contracts would be counted as legal before the act was repealed.

However, the government will preserve the rights to review all the activities done under the act and to take actions in this regard in public interest, the ordinance added.
Using the act, which was passed by parliament in 2010 initially for five years but amended several times to extend its validity to 2026, the previous Awami League government awarded power and energy projects without floating tenders.
In so doing, Bangladesh’s power generation capacity soared to 27,000 megawatts (MW) even though the demand is around 17,000 MW. And

due to a fuel supply shortage, the government failed to produce more than 15,600MW of electricity.
Subsequently, the state had to give capacity charges amounting to Tk 130,000 crore to the idle power plants over the last 15 years, according to the data from the Bangladesh Power Development Board. Of the sum, about Tk 32,000 crore was given in fiscal 2023-24 alone, a major leap from Tk 5,600 crore handed out in fiscal 2017-18.
In addition, major decisions in the energy sector like making deals to import high priced liquified natural

31 journalists suffered

FROM PAGE 12
emphasising the importance of objective journalism and media freedom, but these incidents continued.
“Besides these, vested interest groups targeting different media outlets in the country with threats, attacks, vandalism, arson, demonstrations, and Ziafat programmes is an ominous sign for the freedom of the media.”
However, no effective action by the government was visible despite the repeated statements on the freedom of the media, said the rights group.
The MSF said its compilation of information published by various media outlets showed that 18 of the 31 journalists, who faced rights violations last month, were injured in attacks while performing their professional duty.

Nine others were subjected to threats or assault, another was accused in a case under the Explosives Act, and three journalists of daily the Jugantor faced a contempt rule by the High Court over an article. Five journalists were injured while covering violent clashes.

According to the MSF report, BNP leaders and activists were involved in six of the 32 incidents of attacks or harassment of journalists; police and accused individuals in two each; sand miners and influential individuals in three each; drug dealers, government officials and miscreants in four each; and engineers, teachers, doctors, and students in one incident each.

The MSF said that the information and broadcasting ministry can cancel any journalist’s press accreditation upon getting evidence of specific allegations. But the cancellation of the accreditation cards of many journalists by the Press Information Department without any specific allegation or evidence was an obstruction of media

freedom.
Moreover, the filing of cases against journalists in a wholesale manner, labelling them as associates of the former government, further hampers independent journalism, the MSF said.
Four cases were filed against 19 journalists in November in connection with the movement that toppled the Awami League government. One of them was arrested, the MSF report said.
According to the MSF, casualties in mob beatings have continued at an alarming rate in November.
Based on media reports and MSF’s data, at least 19 incidents of mob violence occurred last month, leaving 10 people dead and 11 seriously injured. October saw 24 incidents of mob beatings.

Such incidents have raised serious concerns about the sense of security among the public, the rights group said.
Shrines and Baul Akhras in different parts of the country came under attack in November as well, the report said, describing the incidents as “a disgraceful assault on religious and cultural sentiments.”

The MSF said 22 incidents of attacks on religious minorities were reported in November. It believes such incidents will destabilise the country’s communal harmony, which is not good for the people of Bangladesh.

It said 72 cases were filed last month in connection with acts of violence by the AL regime during the July mass uprising, and previous instances of misconduct, corruption, attacks, and murders. The number of such cases was 102 in October.

The total number of accused named in the cases filed last month is around 5,856 individuals were named as accused in the cases filed last month. The number of unidentified suspects in these cases totalled over 5,517.

Giving support

FROM PAGE 12
“We’re fully supporting the interim government and intend to continue doing so. Peaceful transfer of power through this interim government is the only path to return to democracy.”
He also talked about recent protests outside the Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh in Kolkata, the capital of India’s West Bengal state.

“There was no reaction in Bangladesh, which demonstrates the strength and resilience of our nation. Unlike others, the people of Bangladesh do not engage in such acts. This is the Bangladesh we aspire to build.”

Mujahidul Islam Selim, former president of the communist party of Bangladesh; Nazmul Haque Pradhan, general secretary of Bangladesh JaSad, and Saiful Haque, general secretary of the Bipobi Workers Party, also spoke at the programme.

After the opening session of the council, the Gono Forum announced an 151-member partial committee, keeping Dr Kamal as emeritus president.

Mostafa Mohsin Montu was made president and Mizanur Rahman general secretary of the party.

Noor assaulted

FROM PAGE 12
“Later, officials from the jail and police, with help from doctors, took Noor and Tanvir to safety,” he said.

The attackers were later taken to the office of BSMMU Director Brig Gen Dr Md Rezaur Rahman.

A family member of the former minister said, “Noor was hospitalised with severe pain in the lower part of his body and doctors said he needed regular physio. His spinal degeneration has gotten worse and he’s experiencing weakness in his legs.”

“But today he couldn’t even get any therapy because of this [attack].”
BSMMU Director Brig Gen Dr Md Rezaur Rahman said, “We heard about the incident and a team is trying to know the details.”

The team would investigate the incident to determine what happened and the reasons behind it, he added.

Noor, the ex-cultural affairs minister, was arrested in the capital’s Bailey Road area on September 16 and sent to jail in a murder case while Tanvir was arrested in Gulshan area on September 18.

Delhi needs to address

FROM PAGE 12
weakening its bargaining position. The previous government also falsely tried to give an impression that militancy would rise in Bangladesh.
He said if anyone is accused of any crime, the person’s arrest should not be viewed from a religious perspective. India’s concern over the recent arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das constitutes interference in Bangladesh’s internal affairs, he added.
Lt Gen (ret) Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, former principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division, said India as a regional power feels nervous about China’s influence on the South Asian countries.

That is why, he said, it is challenging for Bangladesh and other small countries in the region to maintain relations with the regional powers. “We need to be smart.”
Prof Mohammad Abdur Rob, vice chancellor of Manarat International University, said Indo-Bangla relationship should be founded on fairness and equity. He, however, regretted that India has been interfering in Bangladesh’s internal affairs.
“India is publicising Bangladesh’s mass uprising in a negative light.”
Stressing the need for developing Bangladesh’s military deterrence, he said strong unity among the political parties would enable Dhaka to navigate diplomatic issues more effectively.

AB Party Joint Member Secretary Asaduzzaman Fuaad, former diplomat Saquib Ali, NSU Vice Chancellor Prof Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, SIPG Director Sk Tawfique M Haque and NSU Associate Professor M Jashim Uddin also spoke at the event.

Joty and Co seal Ireland ODI series

FROM PAGE 12
steady the ship.
Fargana and Supta then departed in quick succession, putting Bangladesh in a spot of bother with the score at 107 for three after 29.2 overs.

Sobhana Mostary (16) did not hang around much longer, becoming Laura Delany’s second scalp. However, skipper Joty, alongside Shorna Akter, then stitched a 53-run stand off just 40 balls to place the team on the verge of victory.

Joty, who hit four fours and a six in an entertaining knock that also earned her the player-of-the-match award, departed in the 41st over, bowled by Arlene Kelly.

Shorna, however, remained unbeaten on 25 alongside Fahima Khatun (four) to take the remaining runs and complete the victory with 37 balls to spare.

Earlier, despite Amy Hunter’s 68 and contributions from Orla Prendergast (37) and Laura Delany (33), Ireland could muster only 193 for six in their 50 overs after winning the toss. Sultana Khatun took a couple of wickets for the home side.

In the series opener, Bangladesh won by 154 runs – their biggest ever victory in WODIs in terms of runs – riding on Supta’s 96. The third and final match of the series will take place on Monday at the same venue.

Cops release Munni Saha

FROM PAGE 12
Considering her condition and that she is a female journalist, we released her under section 497 of the Criminal Procedure Code,” Mallick said.

She was handed over to her family on bond and she must appear in court to seek bail and comply with future police summons, he added.

Section 497 of the CrPC allows the release on bail of any person under the age of 16 years or any woman or any sick or infirm person accused of an offence punishable with death.

Earlier, around 9:20pm, a group of people blocked Munni Saha when she was leaving a media office at Janata Tower in the capital’s Kawran Bazar by car.

Video footage of the incident on social media showed people accusing Munni Saha of spreading misinformation during the BDR mutiny in 2009 through her reporting.

Mobarak Hossain, officer-in-charge of the Teigaon Police Station, told The Daily Star at that time, “Munni Saha was wanted in a case filed earlier. She was arrested after police rescued her from locals in the capital’s Kawran Bazar area.”

The case against Munni Saha, six other journalists and another 185 individuals was filed on July 22 over the death of 17-year-old student Nayeem Howlader in the capital’s Jatrabari on July 19 during the quota reform protests.

32 killed as Israel pounds Gaza

Hamas team to hold truce talks in Cairo

AGENCIES

At least 32 Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza overnight and into yesterday, Gaza medics said.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said it had killed a militant who took part in the Oct 7, 2023 Hamas attacks on Israel and who it said was employed by a US-based charity, World Central Kitchen, in Gaza.

The official Palestinian news agency WAFA reported that three employees of World Central Kitchen were killed when an Israeli strike targeted a civilian vehicle in Khan Younis, southern Gaza.

The military did not offer any evidence and Reuters could not independently verify the man's identity and whether he took part in the attack on Israel last year.

There was no immediate comment from World Central Kitchen on the Israeli statement.

Hamas did not immediately comment.



People use a boat through a flooded street during heavy rain in Pasir Puteh, in Malaysia's Kelantan state yesterday. The death toll from the worst floods in decades in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia climbed to at least 12 yesterday, authorities said, as tens of thousands of people were evacuated due to rising water levels in the past three days.

PHOTO: AFP

Medics in the enclave said that a total of five people were killed in the strike, which they said targeted a vehicle east of Khan Younis.

In a later attack in Khan Younis, medics said at least nine Palestinians were killed when an Israeli airstrike hit a car near a crowd receiving flour, a vehicle that was used by security personnel tasked with overseeing aid deliveries into Gaza.

Among the 32 killed, at least seven died in an Israeli strike on a house in central Gaza City, according to a statement from the Gaza Civil Defense and WAFA early yesterday.

Meanwhile leaders of Hamas were expected to arrive in Cairo yesterday for ceasefire talks with Egyptian officials, days after Israel and Hezbollah agreed to a ceasefire in Lebanon, two officials of the group told Reuters.

The visit is the first since the United States announced earlier this week it would revive efforts in collaboration with Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey to negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Hamas delegation is expected to meet with Egyptian security officials to explore ways to reach a ceasefire deal with Israel that could secure the release of hostages in return for Palestinian prisoners.

Two cases filed

FROM PAGE 12

Jubo League, and Awami League, either directly or indirectly instigated the murder.

It also mentioned that the plaintiff came to know that from Saiful's colleagues and local sources following his death.

On Tuesday, police, lawyers, and followers of Chinmoy, also spokesperson for Sammilita Sanatani Jagaran Jote, clashed when the followers blocked a prison van after a Chattogram court sent the former ISKCON leader to jail in a sedition case filed over disrespecting the national flag.

Chandan Das, a key accused in the murder case, was seen wearing a helmet with an orange T-shirt and a black pair of pants. He was carrying a sharp weapon and was seen hacking Saiful in the CCTV footage, said police.

Meanwhile, Saiful's brother Khan-e-Alam yesterday lodged another case accusing 115 people, including two local journalists of Chattogram, for attacking lawyers, vandalism, and exploding crude bombs on the court premises on Tuesday.

Among the accused, 70 are lawyers and two are journalists. Besides, 400-500 unidentified were sued under the Explosive Substances Act.

With the two new cases, a total of five cases have so far been lodged with Kotwali Police Station over the violence and killing.

Court sources said senior lawyer and former president of Mahanagar Puja Udjapan Parishad Chandan Kumar Talukdar, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad General Secretary of Chattogram unit lawyer Nitai Prashad Ghosh, Mahanagar Puja Udjapan Parishad acting secretary lawyer Nikhil Kumar Nath, lawyers Chandan Das, Rubel Paul, Suman Acharya, and Ashirbad Kumar Biswas are among the accused.

Sukhlal Das, former secretary of Chattogram Press Club and senior reporter of Dainik Azadi, and Ayan Sharma, adviser to local daily Chattogram Pratidin, were also sued in the case, the sources added.

Denying the allegation, lawyer Nikhil told journalists that slain lawyer Saiful was their colleague and brother. Those who murdered him must be punished. But the matter of sorrow is that 70 of the 115 accused are lawyers. All are members of Bijoya Sammilan Parishad, a platform of Hindu community lawyers in Chattogram.

"No lawyers were involved in any kind of vandalism or attacks," he claimed.

Journalist Sukhlal also dismissed the allegation brought against him.

Police also filed three cases against 79 named individuals and 1,400 unknown others over the assault, vandalism, and obstruction of police in performing their duties during Tuesday's clash.

Authorities have arrested 34 people, including nine suspects linked to Saiful's murder. The nine were identified after scrutinising the CCTV footage, according to police.

Ohidur Bahini

FROM PAGE 1

Pakistani forces and Razakars (local collaborators).

The demolition of the Sahagola Bridge in Atrai upazila, Naogaon, on September 6 was a crucial victory for Ohidur Bahini against the Pakistani forces.

Over one hundred Pakistani soldiers were killed in this battle, according to Mizanur Rahman's book "Muktijudde Ohidur Bahini" (Ohidur Bahini in the Liberation War).

Sheikh Anisur Rahman, a member of Ohidur Bahini, said that they received intelligence that a Pakistani train would be passing through Atrai on its way from Natore to Naogaon. So they decided to blow up the Sahagola bridge and lay an ambush. As they didn't have the necessary explosives, they approached the members of the Raja-Malek group, a local guerilla who had training in handling explosives, for a joint operation.

"On the night of the operation, we reached a point between Sahagola station and the bridge by boat. From there, we stealthily approached the bridge and rounded up seven Razakars guarding it. The Raja-Malek group then set the detonator and placed anti-tank mines on both sides of the railway bridge. After we took up positions with our LMGs and SMGs, the detonator was then activated, resulting in an explosion that caused a large section of the bridge to collapse. The heavy rainstorm that night ensured that the Pakistani military in Atrai did not hear the explosion."

Mozahar Hossain, another freedom fighter of Ohidur Bahini who took part in the operation, said, "As the train approached, it turned off its engine light and proceeded onto the bridge. In seconds, five of the six train coaches plunged into the canal water. The military personnel in the remaining compartment immediately opened fire. We returned fire from three LMGs. After a while, their firing ceased, and we realised that the remaining Pak soldiers were also killed."

Initially, the Ohidur Bahini started with some one hundred freedom fighters. However, as the war progressed, its ranks grew to exceed 2,000. The bravery and exploits of this force have been documented in two separate books, which detail its formation, training, attacks, counterattacks, and other significant exploits during the war.

The Ohidur Bahini acquired a large quantity of arms and ammunition by raiding various police stations and Razakar camps in Naogaon, Rajshahi, and Natore.

They carried out raids at Razakar camps in places like Begunbari, Baigacha, Sonadanga, Mainam, Taherpur, and Sadakkutia.

Among notable battles fought by Ohidur Bahini during the war are the Bannigram ambush, Barnitala battle, Taherpur-Bhabaniganj and Brahmapurhat operations, Naldighi battle, Naldanga Bridge operation, and Bhabaniganj skirmish.

FORMATION

According to the books "Muktijudde Ohidur Bahini" and "Mukti Sangrame Atrai", Ohidur Bahini's influence

Purba Banglar Communist Party's stance against participating in the Liberation War, several leaders, including Ohidur Rahman, defied the majority and decided to join anyway.

In the first week of April, an 11-member Sarbodaliya Sangram Parishad in Atrai upazila of Naogaon was formed, with Ohidur Rahman in the council.

The initial training of the



Ohidur Rahman.

- **Area:** 14 upazilas in Naogaon, Natore, Rajshahi and Bogura.
- **Tactics:** Operated on a large fleet of boats.
- **Timeframe:** Apr 10-Dec 14.
- **Operations:** At least 50.
- **Members:** At least 2,000.



Present photo of Sahagola Bridge in Atrai upazila, Naogaon. Part of the bridge was demolished during an operation on Sept 6, 1971. An incoming Pakistani train was derailed, and over 100 enemy soldiers were killed in a subsequent gunfight.

PHOTO: AHMAD ISTIAK



Present photo of the banks of Atrai river in Taranagar-Baullapara village, Kalikapur union, Atrai. An ambush on a Pakistani army boat convoy here on Sept 19, 1971, resulted in casualties of over 150 enemy soldiers.

PHOTO: AHMAD ISTIAK

extended across 14 upazilas in four districts, stretching from Naogaon to Natore and Bogura in the east and Rajshahi in the west.

In February of this year, this reporter visited Naogaon, Rajshahi, and Natore and interviewed 50 freedom fighters of this group, including Ohidur Rahman himself, now 81 years old.

They said that despite the

freedom fighters involved the use of dummy guns at Sahebganj field near Atrai Police Station, according to Khalequzzaman Bulu, a member of Ohidur Bahini.

FIRST OP

On April 10, Ohidur Rahman decided to lead a raid on the Atrai Police Station to loot weapons.

Ohidur Rahman said, "We divided 25 men into three groups to attack

were actively considering calling a vote, which would circumvent the UN's traditional approach of agreement by consensus.

It was a possibility being increasingly discussed as a "last resort," said the of Congo's Lapwong.

"I think that if we can't reach an agreement, we'll be obliged to go to a vote. We cannot come all this way, all these kilometres, to fail," he told AFP.

"True, it's not the usual way at UN meetings, and we will do it to our shame -- because when you negotiate, you don't expect to win it all."

More than 90 percent of plastic is not recycled, while plastic production is expected to triple by 2060.

Environmental groups have pushed ambitious countries to move to a vote if progress stalls, arguing that countries like Saudi Arabia and Russia have not offered any compromises during talks.

He warned that "some countries"

116 Rohingyas rescued off Indonesia: UN

AFP, Banda Aceh

More than 100 Rohingya refugees including women and children have been rescued after their boat sank off the coast of Indonesia, the United Nations refugee agency said yesterday.

The Rohingyas are heavily persecuted in Myanmar.

"We received a report from the East Aceh government that there are 116 refugees in total," UNHCR's Faisal Rahman told AFP yesterday.

"The refugees are still on the beach right now, it has not been decided where they would be taken."

He said the flimsy wooden boat carrying the Rohingyas was found half-submerged not far from the beach off the coast of northeastern Sumatra island.

NATO MEMBERSHIP Kyiv seeks invite soon

REUTERS

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha has urged his Nato counterparts to issue an invitation to Kyiv at a meeting in Brussels next week to join Nato, according to the text of a letter seen by Reuters.

The letter reflects Ukraine's renewed push to secure an invitation to join Nato, which is part of a "victory plan" outlined last month by President Volodymyr Zelensky to end the war triggered by Russia's 2022 invasion.

Zelensky told Sky News that offering Ukraine Nato membership while allowing Russia to keep for the moment territory it had captured could be a solution to end the "hot stage" of the 33-month-old war.

steadfastly denied any involvement in the war.

When asked how they escaped, Manjur Alam said, "After three days of interrogation, the Pakistani major handed us over to Naogaon Shanti Committee Chairman Badiul Alam, who then confined us in his house. One night, the man guarding us got drunk and passed out, and we managed to break free and escape."

However, they discovered that their money and revolver had been taken, forcing them to abandon their trip to India.

RAIDS, OPS CONTINUE

With their plan to acquire weapons from India falling through, Ohidur Bahini began targeting police stations for firearms. One notable operation was the raid at the Bagmara Police Station in Rajshahi on August 14, Pakistan's Independence Day.

Khalequzzaman Bulu, a member of Ohidur Bahini, stated, "We intended to take advantage of the Independence Day celebrations as a diversion to raid the police station."

The freedom fighters were divided into two groups and hit the police station around 2:00am.

"When they resisted our initial attack, we decided to retreat. The next morning, we renewed our assault on the police station and managed to snatch 40 rifles and 2,000 bullets." The Ohidur Bahini had raided the Bagmara Police Station a second time on November 21.

On September 19, Ohidur Bahini launched an ambush on a Pakistani army boat convoy at Taranagar-Baullapara villages. The convoy was returning from Bandaikhara village in Atrai, where they had committed mass killings, looting, and rapes.

Over 150 Pakistani soldiers were killed in the attack, according to Ohidur Rahman's book "Mukti Sangrame Atrai" (Atrai in the Liberation War).

Mojibor Rahman, a freedom fighter of Ohidur Bahini, said, "Upon receiving intelligence that the Pak soldier was heading to Bandaikhara village, hundreds of freedom fighters took positions on both sides of the Atrai river to ambush them on their return. At noon, when 11 military boats approached, we launched a coordinated attack. Ten boats were sunk in the river, and the remaining boat fled towards Atrai."

On December 9, the force attacked the Raninagar Police Station in Naogaon, forcing 40 Razakars to surrender and seizing more than 50 rifles.

On the morning of December 14, Ohidur Bahini captured the Atrai police station and raised the flag of independent Bangladesh for the first time in Atrai.

Translation and editing by Subrata Roy.



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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Kolkata's flag-burning incident must not recur

Such hostile acts will add fuel to the fire

The burning of the Bangladesh national flag and the effigy of the chief adviser to the interim government of Bangladesh outside the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata was a reckless and provocative act. This incident has the potential to inflame tensions between India and Bangladesh, exacerbating already strained relations. Such hostile displays only serve to deepen divisions.

According to Bangladesh's foreign ministry, violent protests erupted with demonstrators breaking through police barricades and reaching the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission's boundaries, creating a sense of insecurity among the staff. This kind of aggression threatens not only bilateral relations but could have far-reaching consequences, spilling over into social unrest and further instability in the region.

What makes this incident even more concerning is the involvement of certain Indian regional political figures who appear to be exploiting anti-Bangladesh sentiment for domestic political gain. The recent inflammatory rhetoric and actions by some politicians risk undermining India's own foreign policy and could have broader implications. India has long been a vocal advocate for the rights of minorities in Bangladesh, which the interim government has time and again committed to uphold.

One particularly dangerous narrative being peddled is the claim that the arrest of former ISKCON member Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari is an attack on the Hindu community in Bangladesh. This rhetoric is baseless and irresponsible. The arrest has been misrepresented by sections of the Indian media, which serves to stoke fears and fuel divisions. The tragic death of a lawyer during protests in Chattogram has further been distorted to fit this narrative. Initially, some outlets erroneously claimed that the lawyer, a Muslim, had been targeted because he was representing Chinmoy Das, but this was later proven false. Despite this, false narratives continue to circulate, amplifying tensions.

India and Bangladesh share a complex history, but they also share significant economic and strategic interests. The actions of a few individuals should not be allowed to undermine the broader relationship. It is time for both governments, and particularly the Indian media, to resist the temptation of inflammatory rhetoric and focus on strengthening the ties that bind the two nations. The stakes are far too high to allow such provocative incidents to escalate into something far worse.

We urge the Indian media, in particular, to exercise rigorous journalistic principles when reporting these incidents and to avoid taking them out of context, which may lead to exaggeration and misreporting.

Address the misuse of social media and AI

We must not let lies in cyberspace disrupt peace and unity

The United Nations chief's recent comment about social media and artificial intelligence (AI) amplifying hate speech and spreading disinformation rings true in Bangladesh's present context. Only five months ago, social media networks were used to unite people in bringing down Sheikh Hasina's fascist regime. Unfortunately, the same tool, enhanced with AI-generated content, is now being used to create divisions in society.

After the ouster of Sheikh Hasina's fascist regime, many perceive—60 percent, according to a recent survey by Voice of America—that freedom of speech and expression has improved in Bangladesh. Yet, as the lines between expressing an opinion and stating a fact become blurry and murky on social media platforms, people and organisations are being harassed or threatened with mob justice. More concerning, thanks to social media, the propagation of misinformation and disinformation—as well as taking content out of context and presenting it with ill intention—is quickly spreading across national borders.

It has reached a new level, especially after the fall of Sheikh Hasina. For instance, our neighbouring country's media—given the political ideology they serve—are resorting to social media misinformation to such an extent that their actions are causing a rift in Bangladesh-India relations. More worryingly, it is instilling hatred among many people, threatening social cohesion and unity. Sadly, reiteration of falsehoods, sometimes with the help of AI-generated content on social media, often succeeds in gaining people's trust. In fact, a 2018 study by MIT's Media Lab found that "falsehood diffuses significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth." Moreover, it is humans who reshare false information more than bots that are made for that purpose.

To counter the spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media, the government must develop ways to address the deepfakes of the cyber world. Countering false narratives and controlling the propagation of disinformation by forces outside the nation may require well-thought-out strategies. The country's media, as well as internationally reputed outlets, can play a role in this fight. At the same time, the government must ensure that press freedom in the country is not threatened. Additionally, the government's messaging in this context should be uniform, and its actions must reflect its words.

Additionally, the authorities should focus on improving social media literacy. Enhancing online intelligence capabilities should also be considered. However, any steps, including creating new policies to control and prevent cybercrimes using information as a weapon, should not come at the cost of people's right to privacy and free speech.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Rosa Parks ignites bus boycott



On this day in 1955, in violation of segregation laws in Montgomery, Alabama (USA), Rosa Parks refused to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger and was arrested, sparking a 381-day bus boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

The gathering storm

Post-revolution challenges and the new generation's role in shaping our future



STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (ret'd) is a former associate editor of The Daily Star.

SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

If anyone had thought that the post-revolution government or the people, in general, would have an easy ride in conducting the affairs of the state, they were living in a paradise dominated by fools. The more aware among us perhaps anticipated some resistance posed by the supporters of the disgraced autocrat. However, the highly coordinated and well-orchestrated programmes—planned, instigated, and directed from across the border to spoil the gains and thwart the recovery programmes of the interim government—make us wonder.

And the wonder is at the ineptness of the intelligence agencies to anticipate the anti-state elements because anyone who resists the current recovery and reform programmes cannot be categorised as anything but that. We will dwell on this aspect a little later.

All successful revolutions run the risk of a counter-revolution, particularly when there is a lot at stake for a deposed autocrat, their party, and its diehard supporters. The destruction that has been wreaked on every sector, including the very moral edifice of the nation that elevates a country in the community of nations, needs a turbulence-free environment to set right. The longer a post-revolution regime lasts, the more of their wrongdoings come to light—and more of the wrongdoers face trial and punishment. Thus, to have failed to foresee the events now unfolding would suggest either incompetence or dereliction of duty on the part of those responsible for forewarning the administration.

Our problems are essentially twofold. Firstly, the opposition has an external sponsor and beneficiary. They have perhaps an equally high, if not greater, stake in the fugitive prime minister's reinstatement to power. It seems that hostile intelligence agencies are working overtime to create as much turmoil as possible inside Bangladesh to bring down the interim government and ensure that outcome.

For this, the most sensitive issue—the minority issue—has been exploited. Facts have been distorted and exaggerated, and, in most instances, narratives have been manufactured to create communal strife in Bangladesh to restore the disgraced autocrat to power.



Supporters of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das and police clash at court premises in Chattogram on November 26, 2024.

PHOTO: STAR

This looks like a crass, callow, and rustic approach from the mandarins sitting in New Delhi, who seem to be out to atone for their dismal failure, firstly, to anticipate the fate of their protégé in Dhaka and, secondly, to prevent the outcome that eventuated, by any means, fair or foul.

The second problem is that the former autocrat has not only been provided a safe sanctuary across the border but is also being allowed to carry out anti-Bangladesh activities seemingly in collusion with hostile intelligence agencies. Investigations so far have revealed that the anti-minority activities and attacks on the minority community have been instigated and perpetrated by Awami League elements. In fact, they have been behind most of the troubles witnessed in various sectors.

And regarding the above, I have a few submissions.

Firstly, the use of Indian soil to conduct anti-Bangladesh activities by anti-Bangladesh elements. It is not only Hasina but also a large number of her party members who are now ensconced in India and, in fact, are seemingly being supported by Indian authorities. It is time the Bangladesh government looked its counterpart in the eye and demanded that this be stopped

forthwith. We are used to hearing ad nauseam the whining of the Indian authorities about so-called hostile anti-Indian elements, without credible proof, conducting anti-Indian activities from inside Bangladesh. Hasina makes no secret of her activities. She and her fugitive party members are a distinct threat to our security interests, and this issue must be dealt with the alacrity

programmes has remained outside the notice of the international community. In fact, very little, if any, news of the persecution of Muslims in India since 2014 has found space in our electronic or print media. But perhaps I am expecting too much, given a situation where a large section of the fourth estate in Bangladesh, over the last 15 years, had surrendered to the

and seriousness it deserves. Otherwise, I fear we will rue the fact that many of the top leadership managed to leave the country—indeed, some of them were helped to leave.

Secondly, the role of the intelligence agencies. In the past, they had been serving party interests rather than national interests. Vestiges of the deposed party may still exist among their serving members, with loyalty to the erstwhile ruling party. Thus, it may not be beyond the realm of possibility that the timely passage of intelligence is being deliberately disrupted. This must be addressed seriously.

Thirdly, countering ill-motivated distortions of facts by the Indian media. The concerted, coordinated offensive by the Indian media, certainly at the direction of the authorities in Delhi, must be addressed effectively. Here, I feel the role of our media is vital.

Notice the quickness with which a minority matter is turned into an issue by the Indian media and how stories are manufactured with slants given to events occurring in Bangladesh to tarnish our image. I have not seen enough editorials or articles in our leading newspapers countering these spurious and malicious news stories.

The fact that the Modi government has been carrying out anti-Muslim

party in power and, instead of being a watchdog, had become a lapdog of the party (see my article: "Surrender of the fourth estate," *The Daily Star*, February 27, 2019). It is time we put national interests first and helped in our own ways to enhance and preserve national security.

Let me end by asserting that the Indian political leadership and their policy planners are out of sync with the reality prevailing in Bangladesh. The quiescent they set up in Dhaka and her party have all but lost public support. More importantly, a new generation in Bangladesh has come of age and has taken, somewhat by force, the baton that the old guards—who have consistently failed the people—failed to pass on to the new generation in a timely manner. Luckily, this generation is not burdened by the baggage of history and is gifted with greater acuity to see the tree from the woods.

It is my firm belief that this new generation will run the affairs of the state in the very near future. In all likelihood, political power alternation will no longer be considered in binary terms. A third party will emerge—it needs to emerge—to replace the ossified minds that have been running the affairs of the state for so long.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Widening the domain of domestic abuse



Munira Fidai is a mother, writer, and singer. She teaches language at Sunbeams English medium school.

MUNIRA FIDAI

A big gap in the common descriptions of domestic abuse is the mention of marital rape which is not even considered abusive in public perception. But for many women who endure domestic violence, marital rape is almost an inescapable issue further aggravated by the acute need to keep this particular form of violence, a secret.

Rokshana Begum, a domestic worker by profession, describes her ordeal: "It happened for years and years. Almost until he (her husband) died, a few years ago. He would come home drunk, pick a fight, hit me and then demean me even further by forcing himself on me."

Begum suffered decades of such abuse at the hands of her husband because he told her that she would suffer gravely if she denied her husband his "rights." "I had no clue that I too had rights," she adds.

"Victims of marital rape usually confide to a close confidante; going to law enforcement agencies or seeking

legal redress is seldom a priority," says Sifat-E-Nur Khanam, associate legal specialist at BLAST.

This need for secrecy stems not only from cultural norms that discourage speaking out but also from an almost non-existent support system at home and insufficient awareness of the legal solutions available to them.

Bangladesh's legal framework provides very few avenues for addressing domestic violence and next to no protection for victims of marital rape.

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010, coming

into place through the Citizen Initiative against Domestic Violence (CIDV) initiated in 2007, for example, emphasises resolving conflicts without disrupting family life. However, Khanam notes that the act's impact has been slow, due to poor implementation and a lack of awareness.

"An eighteen-point guide by the Honourable High Court mentions

critical, but proving non-consensual acts is challenging, particularly for married women," opines Khanam.

The absence of marital rape as a legally recognised crime aggravates these issues. The concept itself is alien to Bangladesh's legal framework, with existing laws such as Section 375 of the Penal Code failing to accept that sexual violence can occur within a marriage unless the wife is under 12 years of age! Many survivors of domestic violence also experience marital rape, yet they have no official alternative—except if the physical coercion results in harm or danger to life, limb, or health, and/or causes developmental impairment.

"Rape Law Reform Coalition, comprising BLAST and other likeminded advocacy groups, are working to address this gap by pushing for the inclusion of marital rape within legal definitions of sexual violence but addressing these systemic issues requires more than legal reforms," says Sifat-E-Nur Khanam.

Besides legal reform, Sifat emphasises altering social perception and awareness of this issue. She notes that societal attitudes must shift if we are to challenge archaic patriarchal norms that continue to suppress women and disregard their right to consent. It is also important that children are taught to respect women as equals. Both men and women must be seen as human beings first, whose consent takes top priority, whether in or out of marriage.

that a victim of rape may approach their nearest police station to file a complaint, and the authorities must consider it, noting all details, no matter which locality the victim belongs to or which area the incident has taken place," she mentions. "Unfortunately, implementation of such an important guide remains questionable."

Women who manage to approach a police station or law enforcement agency can also access mediation mechanisms such as an arbitration known as *salish*. Despite these provisions, the majority of victims remain unaware of their rights.

"In cases of rape, evidence becomes

BEYOND CONCRETE AND CHAOS

Can Dhaka's spirit be reclaimed?



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KARESHMA E. SHAMS

For years, I've watched two young boys hang out at a family-owned tea stall near my home. Their conversations evolved from debates about football and bikes to heavier topics like *shoshon* (exploitation) versus *shashon* (rule) during the curfew of July, questioning which path Hasina was following. This shift is a testament to how recent political upheavals have sparked a broader consciousness.

Although recent political shifts have sparked broader conversations, this deep-seated political apathy didn't appear overnight. A decade of Hasina's dysfunctional governance has stifled free speech, undermining citizens' self respect and identity. Even agencies like RAJUK, our capital development authority, have followed suit, treating citizens as afterthoughts in decisions about Dhaka's future. The result? A city that feels chaotic and unrecognisable, alienating people from both their surroundings and formal institutions.

Yes, planning a city as complex as Dhaka is daunting. Yet RAJUK's failures go beyond typical challenges like managing the past sins of previous planning initiatives. In fact, citizens view RAJUK as a "government arm for realtors" due to policies that often ignore public interest and favour commercial interests, particularly in housing and public space developments. For instance, projects like the Detailed Area Plan (DAP, 2022-35) and the Strategic Plan (SP, 2016-35) sometimes reclassify flood-prone areas as "residential zones" or

"agricultural homestead" to benefit developers, favouring elites at the public's expense. This governance model, entrenched in profit motives, has left Dhaka's residents with little influence over their environment.

And Dhaka is not a blank canvas. DAP's block housing proposals, lacking clarity on their impact on existing areas, feel dismissive to residents. As Dhaka's urban neglect deepens, citizens' rights—from voting to self respect—gradually erode. Historically resilient, the population now seems resigned to autocratic rule. As the capital, Dhaka sets the national tone, and its culture of detachment risks spreading nationwide.

According to evolutionary psychology, communities that evolved around shared natural resources tend to foster cooperative behaviour, while those rooted in hunting or survival develop a more competitive nature. This cooperative spirit has deep roots in Dhaka's indigenous *moholla* culture along the Buriganga River. Each *moholla* unfolds like a honeycomb, its spatial elements woven together to encourage different levels of engagement. It begins with the *uthan*—a private courtyard where families gather. This opens into the *goli*, a semi-private, visually connected lane that everyone from housewives to schoolchildren and office goers passes through, sparking spontaneous exchanges and small conversations that sustain daily life. The *goli* leads to the *morh*, a gathering place with magnets like

tea stalls, sweet shops, schools, or religious centres, each changing character throughout the day. Finally, the *chowk*, a public square, serves as the heart of commercial and social activity, a place where the *moholla* connects with the broader public domain.

This seamless flow of spaces—from

impersonal streets that lack the communal warmth of Dhaka's original neighbourhoods.

In contrast to its indigenous core, later developed Dhaka reflects only economic status, a product of a colonised, profit-driven urban landscape. Yet, aspects of the *moholla* culture could still be

like Mohammadpur, Mirpur, and Dhanmondi may not accommodate block-style developments, upcoming housing projects should clarify how the calculation of floor area ratios (FAR) will work, to enable courtyard-style or block developments. Defining clear boundaries between intimate neighbourhood spaces, semi-public

entirely. Policy documents don't mention civil society or citizen groups as policy instruments, ignoring their role in creating community networks. In a city of over 20 million, it may seem impractical to reach every resident. However, rather than pursuing a "gradual continuum of change," planners should seek incremental change by "advocating the common good." This approach could lay the groundwork for "participatory planning," a key component of the ongoing discourse on distributive democracy. Critics argue that participatory planning can lead to individual interests overshadowing common goals. But in a city whose people feel ignored for years, there are still those who marched for liberation, who protect their neighbourhoods from robbers, and who want to belong.

Each year, Dhaka's liveability ranking declines, putting it alongside war-torn cities—a sad reflection of the psychological toll this city has taken on its residents. For years, we've lived under an invisible siege, where our sense of self and place has been diminished by unchecked planning. August 5 marked a turning point, a day that reminded us of our right to hold leaders accountable and to demand a city that respects its people, supports communal bonds, and nurtures civic participation.

With new political shifts on the horizon, we have a chance to reclaim Dhaka—not as a fractured, profit-driven metropolis, but as a city that honours its heritage, resilience, and future aspirations. In the face of enormous challenges, such as traffic, waste management, and urban flooding, the core issue remains Dhaka's disconnection from its people. Rebuilding this city will require collaboration across government bodies, civil society, and citizens. Only by fostering this lost sense of community and shared identity can Dhaka become a place where its citizens feel at home, heard, and valued.



Dhaka's intimate spaces are rapidly disappearing, leaving isolated developments and impersonal streets that lack the communal warmth of its original neighbourhoods.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

private to public, *uthan* to *chowk*—created a dynamic community that held people together in daily rhythms of cooperation and shared identity. Even today, amid Dhaka's sprawling urban landscape, we see glimpses of this culture in small gatherings, like two boys who meet by a familiar tea stall in a cozy *goli*. Yet such intimate spaces are rapidly disappearing, leaving isolated developments and

revived by transforming "dead-end" streets, or *mora-goli*, and utilising abandoned spaces between buildings by adding vibrant, crowd-pulling features such as food carts, vegetable vendors, seating areas, or even play spaces. Eliminating surface parking in areas where it's leasible could also open semi-private ground spaces for co-designed community activities. While already-developed areas

is essential to restoring Dhaka's rich cultural way of living.

In a conference last year, a senior planner dismissed ideas like "guided traditional shophouses," "pedestrian-friendly streets," and "policies for street vendor management" as naive dreams for ever-changing Dhaka. Yet citizens like myself feel left out of the process

Bangladesh stock market: Analysing the challenges ahead

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MEHEDEE HASAN

The Bangladesh stock (equity) market has experienced significant fluctuations since the 2010 market crash, reflecting a challenging macroeconomic and political environment. Analysing the post-crash period from 2011 onwards provides insights into the volatility and recovery patterns of the market.

In 2011, the market experienced a dramatic loss of 32.2 percent (total return), driven by a sharp capital loss of 36.6 percent following the speculative bubble that burst in late 2010. This was compounded by high inflation (10.7 percent), leading to a substantial negative real return of 42.9 percent. Investor confidence remained low in 2012, with a further decline in market returns (by 16.1 percent) and inflation staying elevated (8.7 percent), resulting in another negative real return of 24.9 percent.

However, the market began to stabilise from 2013 onwards. Although capital gains were modest at 4 percent, dividend yields provided some cushion, and total market return rose to 7.8 percent. With inflation beginning to taper (7.5 percent), the real return turned positive at 0.3 percent, signalling a tentative recovery. From 2014 to 2017, the market gradually improved, with total returns averaging around 15 percent per year. The highest total return during this period was 26.7 percent in 2017, despite inflation averaging around 5-7 percent, leading to consistent positive real returns.

A major setback occurred in 2018 when the market saw a loss of 10.8 percent (total return), coupled with inflation at 5.7 percent, resulting in a negative real return of 16.4 percent. This trend continued into 2019 as the market struggled to recover, with a further 13.1 percent decline in total return. The market showed a sharp recovery in 2020 and 2021, with total returns of 24.4 percent and 29.1 percent,

respectively, as post-pandemic optimism boosted performance. However, high inflation and corporate-led corruption have led to a decline in 2022 and 2023, and in 2024 YTD, the market is down by 16.2 percent (capital loss), facing significant headwinds like macro instability, high inflation, and weak investor sentiment.

The overall post-crash analysis shows a pattern of recovery but is marked by periods of volatility, inflationary pressure, and ongoing political and economic risks.

The Bangladesh stock market typically rebounds after 2-3 consecutive years of correction, as historical patterns suggest. Based on past trends, one might



FILE VISUAL: STAR

expect a recovery in or by 2025. However, the current situation presents unique challenges, as the market's trajectory is increasingly intertwined with the country's macroeconomic conditions and political landscape. Given these dynamics, the projection for the next two years remains cautious. The Bangladesh stock market is poised to encounter substantial headwinds due to a confluence of macroeconomic and political uncertainties, which could significantly impact its performance. Below is a detailed analysis of the key challenges expected to shape market outcomes in the coming years. To provide a more comprehensive

understanding, the article includes historical context that sheds light on the underlying causes of anxiety among minority investors in Bangladesh's stock market, ensuring these issues are neither overlooked nor ignored.

Bangladesh's stock market is under strain as high interest rates on government bonds (11-13 percent) pull institutional investors toward safer, risk-free returns, weakening liquidity and investor confidence. Rising inflation, projected to hover around 10 percent for at least the next two years, exacerbates economic instability by eroding consumer purchasing power and corporate

investments. Without effective fiscal management, investor confidence and stock market growth are likely to remain subdued.

High global interest rates, particularly in the US, are drawing investment flows away from emerging markets like Bangladesh. With US bonds offering safer, more attractive returns, foreign investors are less likely to invest in Bangladesh's stock market, exacerbating capital outflows. Additionally, capital flight driven by export-import manipulation and corruption in large project financing, involving major corporations like S Alam Group, Summit Group, and BEXIMCO Group, continues to deplete foreign exchange reserves. Hopes of recovering these siphoned funds are unrealistic, as they are often held in tax havens with little incentive to cooperate. This capital flight and lack of international legal recourse further weaken the country's economic stability and stock market performance.

Bangladesh's stock market faces significant challenges due to weak regulatory leadership, institutional failures, and unresolved margin loan issues. The Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) remains under scrutiny. Compounding these concerns, the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB), once a major stabilising force in the market, is now struggling under a portfolio of junk stocks and questionable investments.

Years of mismanagement and corruption, including dubious investments, have left ICB in a weakened financial state, severely limiting its ability to intervene in market downturns. Moreover, the persistent issue of margin loans continues to burden financial institutions. Merchant banks and brokerage firms, plagued by bad debts from margin loans extended during previous market bubbles, are unable to provide fresh loans, stifling market liquidity. The total outstanding margin loans, including interest, have reached Tk 250 billion (\$2 billion), with a significant portion in negative equity. Despite efforts to address these issues, powerful individuals with political and social connections have manipulated the

system, obtaining unauthorised loans and evading accountability. Without decisive action from the BSEC and a comprehensive cleanup of financial institutions' balance sheets, Bangladesh's stock market will remain vulnerable, limiting its growth potential and undermining investor confidence.

Bangladesh's stock market is grappling with a significant lack of "smart capital," as wealthy investors and corporations either move funds abroad or hold back investments due to uncertainty. This absence of new, well-capitalised investors leaves the market dependent on a small group of players, increasing the risk of manipulation and volatility. Foreign investors, too, are deterred by poor transparency, particularly under the previous leadership of the BSEC, further stalling capital inflows. Additionally, tax policies provide little incentive for companies to list on the stock exchanges, with the tax differential between listed and non-listed firms being too narrow to justify the costs of going public. As a result, many well-established companies avoid the stock market, depriving it of the quality listings needed for growth and stability. Combined with the regulatory failures that allow debt-ridden companies to remain listed, these factors prevent the market from attracting both local and international long-term investors, ultimately stifling its development. Without reforms, the Bangladesh stock market will struggle to achieve sustainable growth and liquidity.

Given these challenges, a conservative investment strategy focusing on government bonds is advisable. Allocating 60-70 percent of funds to government bonds ensures capital preservation in uncertain times. Until a stable government is established and market conditions improve, focusing on low-risk investments is a prudent approach. It's important to remember that in a stormy sea, keeping your ship steady is far more vital than rushing toward the horizon. In such dangerous waters, ensuring your vessel stays afloat matters more than chasing quick profits.

Batters show rare consistency FOR TIGRESSES

SPORTS REPORTER

For the second successive game, Bangladesh women's team batters showcased a level of consistency that is usually missing from them and guided the team to a five-wicket win in the second WODI against Ireland to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series in Mirpur yesterday.

The Tigresses typically bank on their spinners to topple opponents in home conditions while their batting, which has become over-reliant on skipper Nigar Sultana Joty in the last few years, often ends up being the cause behind defeats.

But in the ongoing series against Ireland, the batters have been at the forefront for the hosts.

After scoring their highest ever WODI score of 252-4 in the series opener on November 27, Bangladesh batters once again created history yesterday by completing their highest successful run chase in the format in home soil, reaching 197-5 in 43.5 overs.

Opener Fargana Hoque struck her second half-century of the series, making the highest 50 off 89 balls after scoring 61 off 110 in the series opener.

Sharmin Akhter Supta, who has returned to the national side after 16 months, made 43 in the match on the



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

back of the 96 she had scored in the first WODI.

Skipper Joty also chipped in with a 39-ball 40 as the hosts clinched a series victory in this format after one year.

Joty was glad to see the batters scoring

runs in consecutive games, something she had demanded from them before the second WODI.

"Today [Saturday] in the morning, I told the cricketers that it's important to be consistent. I told them to score runs just

like they had done in the first game," the Bangladesh skipper told reporters after the match.

"Batting was our most visible problem, because of which we were losing many matches. So, it's a matter of great relief for the team to see the batters' scoring runs," she said, adding that their challenge is now to deliver a similar batting performance in the series-concluding contest, scheduled at the same venue on Monday.

Meanwhile, Ireland skipper Gaby Lewis credited Amy Hunter (68) and Orla Prendergast (37) for their 91-run third wicket stand which helped the visitors post 194-6, a stark improvement from the first match where they were bundled out for only 98.

"How we batted, we adapted well. We put together partnerships, which was great. Orla and Amy did brilliantly in the middle period for us, putting up that big partnership which gave us a competitive total, I thought.

Overall, the series so far has been a learning experience for the Irish team, said the skipper.

"This series is definitely a learning experience for us. Especially as we are such a young team. If you look at our spinners, they are quite young compared to other teams that come out here. There are lot of lessons to be learnt," she concluded.

Sabbir, Sofor impress early in NCL last round

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi Division opener Sabbir Hossain struck his second century in the ongoing National Cricket League (NCL), but his side could only manage 226 runs in their first innings on the opening day of the final round match against champions Sylhet Division in Chattogram yesterday.

Sabbir scored 116 off 137 balls and shared a 109-run opening stand with Habibur Rahman (57). However, Sylhet pacer Sofor Ali, playing his first game this season, claimed his maiden five-wicket haul with figures of 5-69, while fellow pacer Tofael Ahmed took 4-40, triggering a batting collapse in Rajshahi's innings after they opted to bat first. Sylhet ended the day at 49 for two.

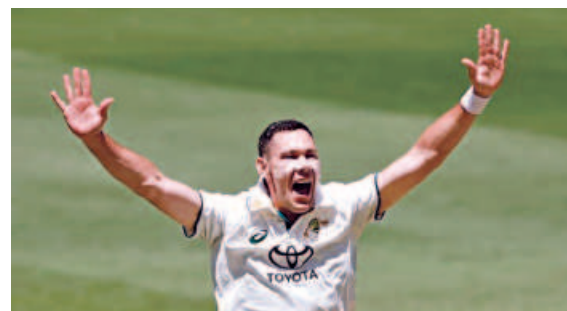
At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogura, fifties from Sohag Gazi (78 not out) and Fazle Mahmud (64) helped Barishal post 289 runs in their first innings against

Dhaka Division after being sent in to bat. Dhaka did not open their account, facing only one over before stumps.

At Rajshahi's Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium, Dhaka Metro finished day one at 161-3, taking a one-run lead after bowling out Chattogram Division for 160 in the first innings.

Left-arm spinners Rakibul Hasan and Arif Ahmed took four wickets each, dismantling the Chattogram batting line-up, which lasted only 45.2 overs after opting to bat first.

Meanwhile, on a rain-affected opening day in Khulna, Khulna Division, sent in to bat first, reached 79-2 against Rangpur Division after only 25 overs were possible at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium. Khulna opener Anamul Haque Bijoy remained unbeaten on 50.



Jansen never thought he 'would get ten wickets'

AGENCIES

South Africa's chances of reaching the World Test Championship final received a boost when they completed a 233-run over Sri Lanka on the fourth day of the first Test at Kingsmead on Saturday.

Set a massive 516 runs to win, Sri Lanka were bowled out for 282.

Left-arm fast bowler Marco Jansen, the destroyer in Sri Lanka's record-low first innings of 42, took four for 73 to finish with match figures of 11 for 86. He was named player of the match.

"Never thought I would get ten wickets. It is a dream and that is what we work for. The second innings we felt the wicket was low and slow and a bit flatter. Getting wickets was going to be tough," said Marco Jansen.

The result lifted South Africa to second place in the WTC table, which is calculated on average points earned.

With their remaining three matches to be played at home – the second Test against Sri Lanka followed by two against Pakistan – South Africa are well-placed to qualify for the final at Lord's in London next June if they carry on winning.

"That's always been one of our goals as a team," said South African captain Temba Bavuma. "The conversation has always been there. We've not been loud about it but that conversation will probably become more alive now."

Referring to the Test championship, Bavuma said his team needed to continue to focus internally on what they needed to do, rather than be concerned about factors beyond their control.



The Proteas have now pipped Australia and sit second in the ICC World Test Championship points table. Sri Lanka on the other hand, have slipped from third to the fifth spot.

'No panic stations in Aus change rooms'

ICC

Ahead of the Pink-Ball Test, starting from December 6, Australia pacer Scott Boland shared that the hosts are raring to have a go in Adelaide.

Scott Boland believes despite the scoreline of the defeat in the first Test against India, Australia didn't do much wrong on the field.

The 35-year-old pacer, who missed out on making the cut for the playing XI in Perth, is now among the top contenders as a replacement for Josh Hazlewood, who was ruled out of the next Test owing to a 'low grade left side injury.'

Speaking ahead of the second Test against India in Adelaide, Boland shared that the Aussie dressing room atmosphere is still on the up.

"There's definitely not panic stations in our change rooms. There's obviously going to be some chats around individual performances and everyone wants to perform really well every game they play. But yeah, it's like, we've lost one game. It's not toys out of the cot, I don't think," Boland said on Saturday.



Fabio Silva

Las Palmas stun Barcelona

AFP, Barcelona

Las Palmas claimed a surprise 2-1 victory at La Liga leaders Barcelona on Saturday, spoiling the hosts' 125th anniversary celebrations.

Sandro Ramirez sent the visitors ahead early in the second half and although Raphinha hammered home an equaliser, Fabio Silva struck to claim three points and take his team up to 14th.

Barcelona still lead champions Real Madrid by four points but Los Blancos, who host Getafe on Sunday, have played two fewer games than Hansi Flick's team.

The Catalans have now gone three league games without a victory, after a run of 11 wins in 12 prior in the top flight.

Barcelona wore white shorts as part of their anniversary celebrations, as they used to back at the start of their history.

Slot wary despite City's shaky form

REUTERS, LONDON

Manchester City are second-favourites to win a Premier League game for the first time in more than 2,500 days, according to one British bookmaker, but Liverpool manager Arne Slot is reading nothing into the champions' meltdown ahead of Sunday's big clash at Anfield.

City's staggering loss of form resulted in five successive defeats in all competitions and while they ended that losing streak on Tuesday, a 3-3 home draw with Feyenoord in the Champions league, having been three up, only fuelled the sense that the wheels have fallen off Pep Guardiola's juggernaut.

Premier League leaders Liverpool will go 11 points clear of City if they beat them on Sunday and the way Slot's side are playing, few would bet against that happening.

Liverpool, however, suffered a setback on Friday as central defender Ibrahim Konate confirmed he has suffered an injury.

France international Konate, who has been superb at the heart of a Liverpool defence that has conceded only eight Premier League goals in 12 games, appeared to hurt his knee in a 2-0 victory over Real Madrid in the Champions League on Wednesday.

According to reports in British media, the 25-year-old could be sidelined for five to six weeks due to the injury.

A victory over European champions Real on Wednesday made it 17 wins from 19 matches in



"They are still a very good team and one of the reasons why Pep is the best in the world, he always comes up with solutions for his problems," the Dutchman told reporters on Thursday.

"One might be (midfielder) Rodri is out now but he will come up with a solution, hopefully it is after Sunday. I wouldn't be surprised if Pep comes up with another brilliant idea."

Even when City were in their pomp, visits to Anfield have always been difficult.

Nine times Guardiola has taken a City side to Liverpool and only once did he taste victory – a 4-1 win behind closed doors in February 2021. Five times City were beaten with three other games ending in draws – including last season.

Mbappe's problem is Real's problem, says Ancelotti

AFP, MADRID

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said Saturday superstar striker Kylian Mbappe's struggles this season are due to his team's overall lack of consistency.

The French forward missed a penalty as Spanish and European champions Real Madrid lost on Wednesday in the Champions League against Liverpool, their third defeat in five matches in the competition.

Mbappe, who joined in the summer at the end of his Paris Saint-Germain contract, was criticised for his performance and has netted just two goals in his last nine games for Madrid.

"Mbappe's problem is the problem that we all have. The idea is to try to give our best version, not just of him but myself, other players," Ancelotti told a news conference ahead of Sunday's La Liga clash against Getafe.

"It's not a problem about one player, the problem that we have is one of a team that has not been capable of being consistent. It's not a problem about one player.

"We have to try and improve that, do everything we can... among other things (Mbappe) is new here and adapting, among other things he's scored eight goals and has participated in attack, giving assists.

"Yes he can play better, but we can all do better and we will try to."



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

“What we saw from Woakesy at the back end was unbelievable. With that ball, on that pitch, to get two big wickets back to back was a dagger to their heart.”

England batter Harry Brook on Chris Woakes' crucial two wickets in two balls on the third day in Christchurch against New Zealand



Tabith plans to ‘breathe new life’ into country’s football

The newly elected president of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), Tabith Awal, brings a wealth of experience to the role at 45, having served as BFF’s vice-president twice before. In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star’s Anisur Rahman, the seasoned politician, businessman, and former footballer shared his vision to elevate Bangladesh’s footballing landscape and tackle the challenges ahead in his new leadership position.

The Daily Star (DS): What is your overall footballing philosophy?

Tabith Awal (TA): I don’t see football either as entertainment or as a separate sport. I see football as part of my whole life, and I believe football should be part of the country’s citizens.

DS: Your opinion on the present condition of the country’s football?

TA: I see football in a good position to move forward... At the same time, football is evolving. The positive initiatives of the past may not help in the current context, and similarly, we won’t follow up on negative things. If you look back at the ranking of teams, you can find big differences from one to four, but if you look at the ranking points, the teams are very close. In this perspective, Bangladesh have a good opportunity to progress in FIFA rankings.

DS: Since your name emerged as the BFF presidential candidate, there has been a common sentiment in the country’s football fraternity: can Tabith Awal pull football forward? How do you take that sentiment?

TA: I think football is a state treasure, and I must succeed as I have taken on the responsibility of it. The question is, how can I succeed? If we can properly utilise the executive committee, the current crop of players, and the infrastructure, I believe we can breathe new life into the country’s football.

DS: The Kazi Salahuddin-led board could not meet the expectations over the last 16 years, and you were also part of eight years of his tenure. What were his shortcomings, and why?

TA: We should not talk one-sided. While there were shortcomings, there were also gains. We saw the Argentina-Nigeria match in Bangladesh, the rise of licenced coaches in Bangladesh, the success of the women’s team in the SAFF Championship, and

the failure of the men’s team in the SAFF Championship... However, if you want to know specifically where the weakest point of the past was, and where we want to place emphasis, I would say it is district-level football. It is now imperative to decentralise football.

DS: What will be your action plan to revive football?

TA: I want to ensure football reaches every corner of the country; there will be no single day when football is not played on the ground. Secondly, technical skills must somehow be instilled in players from tender ages, meaning from the eight-to-12-year-olds. Otherwise, we can’t fulfil our ambition. Lastly, we must raise the standard of the national team to a very high level because fans feel football is suffering if the team lose.

DS: What are the things you want to achieve in the next four years?

TA: Actually, with the committees and ambitious plans we have designed for one year, we will be able to assess whether we can carry them forward in the following years. After four years... with the resources we have, Bangladesh [men’s team] should progress by 70 places from the current position [of 185 in FIFA rankings]. In terms of infrastructure, whether through the BFF or the clubs, we should have four specific stadiums or complexes. Regarding the players, a significant number – male and female – should be playing at the international league level, not just the domestic level.

DS: The BFF, which has always faced financial crises, has further fallen into an image crisis, especially after FIFA disclosed its transparency scandal. How do you plan to recover from both issues, given that you also oversee the finance committee?

TA: Now the time has come to generate new sources of revenue, and we have some



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ideas... because football is no longer just watched in stadiums or on television. It is now being watched on different platforms like social media and streaming services. If we can generate revenue from these sectors, we can meet the financial demands needed to run football.

From the perspective of financial discipline in the BFF’s accounts, while it is confidential, it is not an account of profit or loss, rather one of donors and expenses. If we can enhance the perception that the discipline meets expectations, I think it will be sufficient to restore trust.

DS: Your take on the strong whispers about commission business in the appointments of foreign coaches or technical directors in the past.

TA: People in Bangladesh speak without having any documents or meaningful data. The question is not whether anyone in Bangladesh is engaging in commission business. If you look at those who give away commissions, they are also breaching

ethical standards at the international level. Are we prepared to raise fingers at them? Do you think any coach would sacrifice part of his remuneration? It doesn’t make sense. I hope such whispers will diminish in the coming days, and I am preparing myself mentally so that they do not disturb me.

DS: What are your thoughts on the women’s football team, who have virtually overshadowed the failures of their male counterparts? How do you plan to take them further?

TA: I don’t differentiate between women’s football and men’s football. To me, they are all footballers, and when they take to the ground, they represent Bangladesh. When they score goals, the people of the country rejoice. However, we definitely have more opportunities to excel in women’s football owing to having more resources. We are dominating South Asia with back-to-back titles, and we are happy about that, but it is time to elevate our women’s football performance to the Asian level. Our vision is to make Bangladesh’s women’s team competitive at the Asian level and to add more girls to women’s football because our pipeline is still weak.

DS: When the senior or junior women’s football teams succeed at the international level, they receive financial incentives, but they struggle to survive due to the poor domestic structure. Do you have any plans to overcome the poor competition structure for women’s footballers?

TA: When we started women’s football some 10 years ago, we struggled to even form a playing eleven. But now, we are seeing more players outside the national team. If we plan to organise a league with 10 teams, we need at least 300 players, and we have almost reached that number. There are also investments from Bangladesh Army, BKSP, and a couple of private academies in women’s football. If the women’s football

league continues, players will benefit from the clubs over the years, and the facilities will not be confined only to the national team. Our vision is for women to play football across the country and earn a living through it. We aim to move forward steadily with women’s football.

DS: Soon after being elected president, you attended the AFC Award Night to know the views of the AFC and FIFA. What were your findings?

TA: FIFA and the AFC have clear views that 180-million-strong Bangladesh has a lot of talent... We have already received directives from FIFA, and based on those directives, we have immediately formed an independent new constitution reform committee, which has already started its work.

DS: Can you specify which areas of the BFF constitution you want to reform?

TA: To be honest, I don’t know anything specific, but I am aware of the government’s demands, our demands, and what FIFA wants. There is nothing specific yet, but there are three to four principles. Some standing committees are not suitable in terms of progressiveness and professionalism. The second issue is self-governance because there are no guidelines on who will investigate indiscipline, how it will be done, and what the punishment will be. So, self-governance is missing here. The third principle is to uphold different values of football.

DS: Do you feel Bangladesh needs to develop an identifiable playing style?

TA: We need to develop footballers tactically from the grassroots level, alongside technical growth. If we plan for the next four to eight years, we need to play a lot of possession football, considering our limitations in endurance and physicality. Additionally, we need specialised coaches in goalkeeping, free-kicks, and defending free-kicks.

Moni elected into BFF EC

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national footballer Saifur Rahman Moni beat Ekhlash Uddin by five votes to book the last ticket of Bangladesh Football Federation’s executive committee in Dhaka yesterday.

Among 133 delegates, 107 casted their votes at the BFF House yesterday, with Moni securing 56 votes against 51 secured by Ekhlash Uddin, the president of Chuwadanga District Football Association.

BFF’s chief election commissioner Mezbah Uddin said, “All 107 votes were valid. No vote was cancelled. Moni got 56 votes while Ekhlash Uddin received 51 votes.”

Moni, the former striker of the national team, had contested in member position in last two BFF elections as well, but failed to win.

Currently working as the head coach of Chittagong Abahani, Moni said that he would try to fulfill his responsibility as a member.

“I will fulfill the responsibility given to me by the BFF for the development of football. Coaching is my profession.

Both Ekhlash Uddin and Moni had received 61 votes each in the elections, which were held at a hotel in the capital on October 26.



Bangladesh defender Mohammad Shaikat moves to gain possession against a Malaysia player during their Junior Asia Cup match at the Al Amerat Stadium in Muscat, Oman yesterday. The topsy-turvy affair ended in a 2-2 draw. PHOTO: AHF

JUNIOR HOCKEY TEAM show spirit in Malaysia draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh held Malaysia to a 2-2 draw in their third Pool B match of Junior Asia Cup hockey tournament at the Al Amerat Hockey Stadium in Muscat on Saturday.

Moududur Rahman Shuvo’s charges, who had started the tournament with a 3-1 win against Oman before suffering a 6-0 drubbing by Pakistan, put on a spirited display to hold a strong Malaysia side to a draw.

It is the first draw for Bangladesh against Malaysia in the history of the competition, having suffered an 8-0 defeat to them in 2015 and a 5-1 defeat last year.

Bangladesh goalkeeper Noyon made some stunning saves throughout the match to be adjudged as the player of

the match.

However, it was a poor start for the men in red and green, who conceded the lead in the very second minute, Danish Danial scoring the goal from open play.

Malaysia dominated the opening quarter but could not extend their lead, instead Bangladesh had the opportunity to equalise in the second quarter when they won a penalty stroke in the 26th minute. Forward Rafizul’s Hasan’s effort, though, was blocked by the Malaysia goalkeeper.

Rafizul, however, made amends in the same minute with a brilliant piece of play as he dribbled past three defenders and earned a penalty corner, which skipper Amirul Islam converted with a powerful flick.

Rafizul gave Bangladesh the lead with a beautiful hit in the sixth minute of the third quarter, turning on his feet inside the D box and picking the target with a fierce diagonal hit.

However, Malaysia came roaring back into the game with an equaliser in the last minute of the third quarter, Norizam Muhammad bringing parity with a shot following a penalty corner.

The draw kept Bangladesh’s chances of a semifinal spot alive as they sit third in the five-team table with four points from three matches. Malaysia lead the pool with seven points from three matches followed by Pakistan on six points from two.

Bangladesh will play their last pool match tomorrow against China, who have three points from three matches.

Abahani, Rahmatganj notch victories

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani and Rahmatganj MF’s registered victories on the second day of the Bangladesh in two venues of the country yesterday.

Abahani, the six-time professional league champions, notched a 2-0 win against promoted Yougmen’s Fakirerpul Club at the Shaheed Barkat Stadium in Gazipur.

Playing without any foreign player this season, Abahani found it hard to break down Fakirerpul in the first half. Enamul Haque Gazi, though, broke the deadlock in the 71st minute of the game to give the Sky Blues the lead. The 23-year-old midfielder shrugged off his marker just outside the box, cut into the box skipping past a defender and picked the corner of the net with a diagonal shot.

Former Mohammedan winger Jafar Iqbal wrapped up the victory with a goal from the penalty spot in the sixth minute of stoppage time to give Maruful Haque a winning start to the campaign.

Meanwhile, at the Birshreshtho Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj, Rahmatganj stunned Fortis FC 3-1.

After a barren first half, Ghanaian midfielder Mamoud Oshie broke the deadlock in the 59th minute with a superb volley from inside the box following a corner.

Full-back Taj Uddin doubled Rahmatganj’s lead eight minutes later with a superb left-footed strike from a similar position.

Felix Tetteh, another Ghanaian player, made it 3-0 in the 70th minute with a placing shot after rounding off the Fortis goalkeeper before Monjurur Rahman Manik scored a consolation goal for Fortis four minutes later with a strike from inside the box after the rahmatganj goalkeeper failed to grip a corner.



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Delhi needs to address Dhaka's concerns

Foreign adviser says ties between two countries may improve if India does so

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain yesterday said Bangladesh-India relations could have improved if New Delhi had addressed Dhaka's concerns.

"Bangladesh's previous government tried its best to address the concerns of India... But India did not take measures to address those of Bangladesh," he said.

The adviser was speaking at a roundtable on India-Bangladesh relationship, co-hosted by the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and North South University's political science and sociology department, at the university.

Touhid said Bangladesh is not a threat to anyone. Some major concerns for Bangladesh include the signing of the Teesta water-sharing treaty and ending border killings. Such killings, he noted, only occur during wartime.

"India has to address this issue. If anyone commits a crime, they can be tried in court. Why should they



Touhid Hossain

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Bangladesh opener Fargana Haque plays a shot during her 50-run innings off 89 balls against Ireland in the second Women's ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. Her anchoring knock helped the hosts comfortably chase a 194-run target, leading a five-wicket victory and an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Joty and Co seal Ireland ODI series

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A half-century from Fargana Haque and useful contributions from Sharmin Akter Sultana and skipper Nigar Sultana Joty helped Bangladesh women complete a series-clinching five-wicket win over Ireland in the second and penultimate ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Chasing 194 runs, opener Fargana made 50 off 89 balls, in-form Supta registered 43, while skipper Joty hit a brisk 40 off 39 balls to take Bangladesh to 197 for five in 43.5 overs.

This is the Tigresses' highest run chase in home WODIs, surpassing 167 against Pakistan in Mirpur in November 2023.

In the chase, after Bangladesh lost opener Murshida Khatun for six in the fifth over, Fargana and Supta compiled an 85-run second-wicket stand to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Noor assaulted at BSMMU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former minister Asaduzzaman Noor was assaulted at BSMMU yesterday by injured patients of the recent student-led mass uprising when he was taken there for physiotherapy.

Tanvir Imam, son of HT Imam, former political adviser of the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, was also attacked at that time, eyewitnesses said.

The incident happened around noon at the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Ward of the hospital, where several injured patients were already undergoing physiotherapy, hospital sources said.

"They recognised the two AL leaders when they were taken to the ward for physiotherapy from the prison cell of the hospital. Some of them got angry and punched them," a prison official told The Daily Star.

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Two cases filed over killing of Ctg lawyer

His father sues 31 for murder; brother files case against 115 including 70 lawyers, 2 journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Father of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif, who was hacked to death during Tuesday's violence on the Chattogram court premises, yesterday filed a murder case against 31 named and 10 to 15 unidentified others.

Jamal Uddin lodged the case with Kotwali Police Station, Kazi Tarek Aziz, ADC (public relations) of the Chattogram Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

Most of the accused are the dwellers of Sebak Colony in the Bundle Road area of the port city, the ADC said. So far, nine people were arrested in connection with the killing after scrutinising CCTV footage, he added.

According to the case statement, the attackers -- some named in the FIR -- armed with weapons such as machetes, tridents, and cleavers -- carried out a premeditated attack on Saiful while chanting slogans in favour of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, who was arrested in a sedition case. Saiful was attacked on his way home.

The statement claimed that individuals affiliated with political organisations, including Chhatra League,

Saiful Islam Alif

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Power sector's indemnity act repealed at last

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday repealed the long-debated "indemnity act" of the power sector, bringing to an end the 15-year-long practice of awarding contracts under opaque circumstances.

The ministry of law, justice and parliamentary affairs issued an ordinance titled "Ordinance to Repeal the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) 2010 Act" on behalf of the president.

The ordinance was issued as there is no parliament and the matter warrants immediate action.

On November 14, the High Court declared two sections of the act unconstitutional as those protected the decisions of the government from legal challenges and gave the energy minister the sole authority to approve all sorts of plans for the sector.

Section 9 of the act states that no question about any action done or deemed to be done, and any order or direction given under this law, cannot be raised before any court.

Section 6 (2) says that any planning or proposal related to the buying or investment decisions has to be approved by the energy minister and sent to the cabinet committee for approval after

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'Giving support, time to govt our moral obligation'

Dr Kamal calls for nat'l dialogue among pro-democracy parties, individuals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is the moral responsibility of all political parties and citizens to give the interim government reasonable time and full support, said Dr Kamal Hossain, emeritus president of the Gono Forum.

"The national consensus achieved on this issue must be preserved. To ensure this, a national dialogue involving all pro-democracy political parties, citizens and civil society is crucial," he said yesterday.

He was speaking at the Gono Forum's 7th national conference, held at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh. Presiding over the event, he expressed hope that the leaders and activists of the party would set aside internal disputes and unite to embark on a new journey through the national council.

"The people, especially the youth, have once again proven that this country does not belong to any autocratic ruler. It belongs to the people," Dr Kamal remarked.

Amir Khashru Mahmud Chowdhury, a member of the BNP's National Standing Committee, attended the Gono Forum council as a special guest. "There is no need to worry about reforms. We will bring about the necessary changes."

He said that collaborators of the deposed autocratic government have resumed their activities to destabilise Bangladesh through various means.

"From Ansar protests to issues involving minorities and even battery-run auto-rickshaws -- attempts are on to create unrest in the country," he said.

Khashru called for collective efforts to restore democratic governance.

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Cops release Munni Saha on condition

People had handed her over to police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalist Munni Saha, who is accused in a July mass uprising case, was released conditionally in the wee hours after being taken to Tejgaon Police Station last night for security reasons, police have said.

"Police did not detain her. People detained her and then handed her over to the police," Rezaul Karim Mallick, additional commissioner (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

"The Tejgaon police first took her to the police station. She was moved to the DB police compound for security reasons," he said.

"Munni Saha had a panic attack and fell ill.

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A farmer husking paddy with a chalani (sieve) after the Aman paddy is harvested and threshed by a combine harvester on a field in Bohor village of Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila. Farmers are upbeat as the yield is very good this year. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

SECTARIAN FIGHTING 13 more killed in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

Sectarian feuding in northwest Pakistan killed 13 more people, a local government official said yesterday, as warring Sunnis and Shias defied repeated ceasefire orders in recent conflict claiming 124 lives.

Pakistan is a Sunni-majority country, but Kurram district -- in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, near the border with Afghanistan -- has a large Shiite population and the communities have clashed for decades.

Fresh fighting broke out last Thursday when two separate convoys of Shia Muslims travelling under police escort were ambushed, killing more than 40.

Since then 10 days of fighting with light and heavy weapons has brought the region to a standstill, with major roads closed and mobile phone services cut as the death toll surged.

A Kurram local government official put the death toll at 124 yesterday after 13 more people were killed in the past two days. Two were Sunni and 11 Shia, he said, whilst more than 50 people have been wounded in fresh fighting which continued yesterday morning.

"There is a severe lack of trust between the two sides, and neither tribe is willing to comply with government orders to cease hostilities," he told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Police report that many people want to flee the area due to the violence, but the deteriorating security situation makes it impossible," he added.

A seven-day ceasefire deal was announced by the provincial government last weekend but failed to hold. Another 10-day truce was brokered Wednesday but it also failed to stymie the fighting.