

## THE FLAVOUR OF CHANGE

### Edible Oils in Bangladeshi Kitchens

PRIYAM PAUL

Edible oil is an essential component of the Bangladeshi diet, with consumption steadily increasing as the nation transitions from a lower-income to a higher-income economy, driven by enhanced purchasing power. However, the country's heavy reliance on imports leaves it highly vulnerable to global price fluctuations, which significantly influence local demand and affordability. Consequently, many people struggle to access edible oil at reasonable prices, prompting government intervention—often through reduced import taxes—to stabilise the cost of this indispensable commodity.

SEE PAGE J2



ILLUSTRATION: SOJIB ROY



## TASTE THE DELIGHT, STEP INTO ADVANCED LIFESTYLE

Fortified with Vitamin A, rich in Vitamins E and K, and powered by the triple strength of Omega 3, 6, and 9, TEER Advanced Fortified Soyabean Oil uses Nutrients Retained Technology to preserve essential values for a better lifestyle and unmatched taste. Savor the taste you crave, and embrace the advanced lifestyle you deserve.



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THE FLAVOUR OF CHANGE

Edible Oils in Bangladeshi Kitchens

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) Household Income and Expenditure Survey, per capita consumption of edible oil increased from 27 grams per day in 2016 to 31 grams per day in 2022, indicating a steady upward trend in food consumption.

FROM PAGE J1

Food experts generally view the growing consumption of edible oil as a positive development, noting its crucial role in addressing nutritional deficiencies, particularly among lower-income and impoverished populations. For many, edible oil is vital for meeting dietary requirements and enhancing overall nutrition.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) Household Income and Expenditure Survey, per capita consumption of edible oil increased from 27 grams per day in 2016 to 31 grams per day in 2022, indicating a steady upward trend in food consumption.

“The edible oil market consists of both branded and unbranded segments. While the unbranded market remains dominant, particularly in rural areas, branded oils are gradually gaining popularity due to their quality assurance. The demand for fortified edible oils,

such as those enriched with Vitamins A and D, has risen significantly, driven by government regulations and health awareness campaigns,” notes Md. Abdulla Al Mamun Fahim, Deputy Brand Manager at City Group.

Unpackaged palm and soybean oils continue to dominate the market, largely due to their more affordable prices compared to bottled alternatives. However, food experts warn that these unpackaged oils often fail to meet essential health and safety standards, whereas bottled oils offer better quality assurance.

In a recent study, Dr. Nazma Shaheen, Professor and former Director of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science at Dhaka University, found that palm oil is often mixed with soybean oil and sold as pure soybean oil in the unpackaged market. This deceptive practice leads to financial losses for consumers, though it becomes less common during the winter months, when palm oil solidifies at lower temperatures.

Dr. Shaheen

also highlights the significant difference between unpackaged and bottled soybean oils. While bottled soybean oil is authentic and meets universal fortification standards, including the mandatory addition of Vitamin A, unpackaged oils face major issues. Exposure to light and heat in the open market causes degradation of Vitamin A, increases peroxide values, and accelerates oxidation, all of which reduce the shelf life of unpackaged oils. Despite its larger market share, unpackaged oil is less healthy.

Approximately two decades ago, mustard oil was the dominant choice among consumers. However, the landscape shifted significantly as soybean oil gained popularity. According to industry insiders, the local edible oil market is now predominantly reliant on two major imports—palm oil and soybean oil—which together account for approximately 85-90% of total demand.

Recently, mustard oil has been experiencing a resurgence in demand, with several leading companies now offering branded bottled mustard oil alongside their soybean oil products. Additionally, other types of edible oils, such as sunflower, canola, and olive oil, are gradually gaining traction. However, their market share remains minimal, as they are mainly preferred by health-conscious, higher middle-class consumers.

Bangladesh’s annual edible oil requirement currently stands at approximately 30 lakh tonnes. Soybean, mustard, groundnut, sunflower, and sesame seeds are cultivated locally for edible oil production, but domestic production meets only a modest demand of 2 lakh tonnes.

Edible oil imports are predominantly sourced from Southeast Asian, North American, and Latin American countries. With both import and local distribution concentrated among a few companies, the process requires substantial financial resources, often necessitating



90 percent of the country’s demand is met through imports.

A food expert emphasises that reducing import duties on edible oil is merely a short-term solution to make prices more affordable for the public.

Professor Shafiun Nahin Shimul from the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University emphasises that the

government should engage regularly with importers, carefully monitoring their pricing strategies. This should be done by comparing local prices with international market rates, as global price data is readily accessible. Such scrutiny will help identify any discrepancies in pricing.

One issue often raised by importers is shipment delays of two to three months, which they claim justify price increases. However, these claims must be carefully scrutinised to ensure their legitimacy. If any fraudulent activities are discovered, appropriate corrective actions should be taken to protect consumers.

At the same time, Professor Shimul warns that the government must be cautious not to exert excessive pressure on importers. Overbearing tactics could discourage them and disrupt the market’s supply chain, leading to unintended consequences.

Looking towards the long-term, he suggests that opening the market to more importers would help foster healthy competition. This could contribute to price stability, as seen in the past when the importation of sufficient quantities of eggs led to a noticeable drop in prices. Similarly, maintaining a steady and consistent supply of edible oil would help mitigate the frequent fluctuations in its price.



BANGLADESH EDIBLE OIL MARKET

Annual Demand:  
30 lakh tons

Local Production:  
2 lakh tons



Major Importers

(accounting for 80% of total imports)

City Group

TK Group

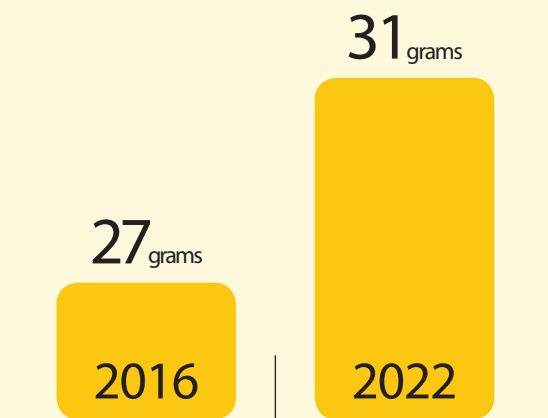
S Alam Group

Meghna Group

Major Sources of Edible Oil

Southeast Asian, North and Latin American countries

Per Capita Consumption of Edible Oil



SOURCE: BANGLADESH BUREAU OF STATISTICS (BBS) REPORT

DID YOU KNOW?



03

Reheated oil begins to break down into toxins because of the absorbed fat—it’s a health hazard best avoided.



02

Refined oils can stay fresh for up to 2 years unopened or 8 months after opening if stored in cool, dry place, and away from direct sunlight.



01

Edible oils provide essential Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats which your body cannot produce, making them vital for health—just watch out for excess intake from sugary and baked goods.



04

Smoking point of your cooking oil, the temperature when the oil starts to smoke—which it will reach before its boiling point—is crucial thing to consider. Overheat your cooking oil past its smoke point, and you risk burnt flavors and harmful carcinogens sneaking into your meals.



05

Olive oil is perfect for garnish or salad dressing, but swap it for high-smoking point, fortified oils when it’s time to cook because olive oil has a low-smoking point and it breaks down when subjected to high-heat.





# “We plan to expand our product portfolio with healthier oil options”

In conversation with Zafor Uddin Siddiqui, Executive Director (Marketing and Sales), City Group

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state of the edible oil market in Bangladesh? What are the key challenges in ensuring a steady supply? What measures can stakeholders, including your company, take to stabilise prices and improve affordability for consumers?

**Zafor Uddin Siddiqui (ZUS):** The edible oil market in Bangladesh is highly reliant on imports, with soyabean oil being the most consumed, followed by mustard oil, refined palm olein, and canola oils. Brands of City Group, such as TEER and SUN, play a significant role in meeting demand. However, the market faces challenges due to global price volatility, geopolitical tensions, and fluctuations in currency exchange rates. Additionally, local production of oilseeds is insufficient to reduce dependency on imports, and supply chain disruptions often worsen price instability.

Ensuring a steady supply is



**As a pioneer in the industry, TEER Advanced Soybean Oil was the first brand in Bangladesh to be fortified with essential nutrients such as Vitamin A, D, and E, addressing widespread nutritional deficiencies. This fortification ensures that our oils not only meet cooking needs but also contribute to improved public health.**

challenged by rising global raw material costs. Inflationary pressures and increased production costs also impact consumer affordability, especially for low-income households. Maintaining steady and uninterrupted production is a significant challenge nowadays, due to the improper supply of utility facilities.

To address these issues, stakeholders can take several measures. Companies should focus on diversifying their

sourcing strategies by partnering with multiple suppliers globally to reduce dependency on specific regions. Investing in domestic oilseed cultivation and refining capacity can also enhance local production and reduce import reliance.

Collaboration with the government to control unethical market practices is crucial. Product pricing should be left to market dynamics. Introducing efficient distribution channels can further ensure consistent availability across urban and rural areas. Subsidies or tax relief on imported raw materials could lower production costs, allowing companies to offer more affordable prices. Government support is required in the supply of utility facilities to run production smoothly. Gas, electricity, and other utility-related support must be provided uninterruptedly.

These combined efforts can contribute to stabilising prices,

improving affordability, and ensuring a resilient edible oil market in Bangladesh.

**TDS:** Despite the growing availability of bottled oils, many consumers in Bangladesh still purchase unpackaged oil. What are the potential health and safety risks associated with consuming such oils? What strategies can be implemented to raise awareness and encourage a shift towards packaged and quality-assured edible oils?

**ZUS:** Despite the growing availability of bottled oils, people still prefer to buy loose oil over packaged oil due to the price factor. However, there remains a risk of purchasing mixed oil under the guise of a particular type of edible oil. This mixing may occur at the trade level. The government should stop allowing the sale of oil in loose form, giving refiners adequate time to prepare for this change. This will help ensure quality oil for all. Regular

consumption of contaminated loose oils can increase the risk of serious health issues, including heart diseases, liver damage, and digestive disorders.

**TDS:** How is your company working to promote healthier edible oil options? What innovations have you introduced to cater to consumer demands for healthier alternatives?

**ZUS:** Our company is committed to promoting healthier edible oil options by prioritising innovation and consumer well-being. As a pioneer in the industry, TEER Advanced Soybean Oil was the first brand in Bangladesh to be fortified with essential nutrients such as Vitamin A, D, and E, addressing widespread nutritional deficiencies. This fortification ensures that our oils not only meet cooking needs but also contribute to improved public health.

To enhance convenience and user experience, we introduced the agronomic bottle for our edible oil brands. This specially designed packaging features a controlled oil

flow mechanism, reducing waste and spillage. Additionally, the bottle's unique single-twist opening system simplifies usage, making it both practical and user-friendly.

Our refining process leverages the world's leading NRT (Nutrients Retained Technology) to preserve the oil's natural nutrients, ensuring that consumers receive the healthiest possible product. This advanced technology highlights our commitment to quality and innovation in every bottle.

Furthermore, TEER stands out as the only edible oil brand in Bangladesh to offer Canola Oil, a heart-healthy alternative known for its low saturated fat content and high levels of omega-3 fatty acids. This reflects our dedication to catering to evolving consumer demands for healthier options.

By combining technological advancements, nutritional fortification, and product innovation, we aim to empower consumers to make healthier choices while maintaining the highest standards of quality and safety in edible oils.

**Collaboration with the government to control unethical market practices is crucial. Product pricing should be left to market dynamics. Introducing efficient distribution channels can further ensure consistent availability across urban and rural areas. Subsidies or tax relief on imported raw materials could lower production costs, allowing companies to offer more affordable prices.**

**TDS:** What are your future plans?

**ZUS:** City Group aims to strengthen its position as a leader in Bangladesh's edible oil market by continuing to prioritise innovation and quality. We plan to expand our product portfolio with healthier oil options, enhance production capabilities using cutting-edge technologies, and invest in sustainable practices to reduce environmental impact. Additionally, we will focus on raising consumer awareness about nutritional benefits and food safety while exploring new export opportunities to establish a global presence. By staying responsive to market trends and consumer needs, we aim to foster long-term growth and contribute to the nation's health and economic development.

## Cooking Gets Cutting-Edge

MIFTAHUL JANNAT

As people strive for healthier living, the role of edible oils in daily diets has come under scrutiny. Our everyday kitchen staple - edible oil - has undergone a remarkable transformation to meet the demands of health-conscious and modern consumers. With the growing emphasis on nutrition and sustainability, the edible oil industry has embraced innovation in formulation, processing, and packaging. In recent trends, edible oils with heart-healthy properties, high omega-3 content, and ability to withstand high cooking temperatures without releasing harmful chemicals are highly valued by consumers.

Essential nutrients like omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, along with vitamins A, D, and E, are critical for maintaining heart health, boosting immunity, and supporting overall well-being. However, traditional oils often lack these essential nutrients and may even contain unhealthy trans fats. This gap has driven the need for innovation, pushing manufacturers to rethink and enhance edible oils. Innovation in edible oils addresses not just health concerns but also caters to the demand



for functionality, convenience, and sustainability to keep in pace with the rapidly evolving market demand.

**INNOVATIONS SHAPING THE EDIBLE OIL INDUSTRY**

**Nutrient Fortification**

Modern oils are now fortified with essential nutrients such as omega fatty acids for cardiovascular health and antioxidants to combat free radicals. Adding vitamins like A, D, and E transforms everyday cooking oils into functional health products that support immunity and vitality.

“TEER is the first brand to fortify soybean oil with vitamin A, D and E. Our production process involves world's top notch NRT (Nutrients Retained Technology) to keep all the natural nutrients intact. We are the only edible oil brand in Bangladesh that refines and bottles canola oil,” said Md. Abdulla Al Mamun Fahim, Deputy Brand Manager, City Group.

Due to advancements in processing and refining technology and growing consumer demand, the availability of edible oil options in the Bangladeshi market has increased significantly compared to a decade ago. Modern hi-tech and healthy refining process allows all the necessary nutritional values to be intact. Edible oil brands including TEER, Sun, Fresh, ACI, Rupchanda, Fortune, Bashundhara, Pusti are offering fortified soybean, sunflower and rice bran oil for local consumers. Apart from mustard oil, vegetable oils, such as, canola and peanut oil are also being increasingly used due to their health benefits, light flavor and high-smoking point, making them ideal for stir-fry or deep-frying.

**Blended Oils**

Blended cooking oil is a combination of

various oils, mixed to deliver a desired flavor, nutritional balance, or cooking efficiency. By combining the best properties of multiple oils, such as rice bran and sunflower oil, manufacturers create balanced products that cater to both taste and health. These blends often improve the smoke point, making them versatile for a variety of cooking methods.

**Targeted Health Benefits**

Modern manufacturers are producing oils with specific health goals in mind, such as reducing cholesterol levels, improving digestion, or boosting energy. These functional oils align with the rising trend of personalized nutrition.

**Advanced Extraction Techniques**

Techniques like cold-pressing preserve the natural nutrients and flavors of the oil, offering a healthier alternative to traditional heat-based methods. Solvent-free extraction minimizes chemical residues, making the oil safer for consumption.

**Refinement Improvements**

Modern refining processes focus on reducing trans-fats while enhancing clarity and taste. Innovations in degumming and deodorizing not only improve the oil's quality but also ensure

it retains its nutritional value.

**Sustainability in Processing**

To reduce environmental impact, manufacturers are adopting greener practices, such as using renewable energy during production and sourcing oils from sustainable crops like soybeans and sunflower seeds. These efforts address growing consumer concerns about environmental responsibility.

**Smart Packaging**

Opaque containers protect oils from light exposure, preventing nutrient degradation and extending shelf life. Reusable or biodegradable packaging meets the demands of eco-conscious buyers.

“The new agronomic bottle of TEER

Soybean Oil is designed in a way that controls the oil flow while pouring. The special design enables the user to open the bottle with just a single twisting,” mentioned Md. Abdulla Al Mamun Fahim from City Group.

Marketing with Packaging: Clear labeling that highlights health benefits, certifications (like organic or non-GMO), and sustainability credentials helps consumers make informed choices. Packaging has become a vital tool for building trust and brand loyalty.

**FUTURE TRENDS**

Plant-based oils designed for vegans or oils infused with flavors specific to global cuisines are gaining popularity. Cold-pressed and organic oils have become increasingly prominent in the edible oil market, emerging as highly sought-after segments within the oils and fats industry. Cold-pressed oils, such as extra virgin olive oil, are defined by their extraction method, while organic oils are characterized by the absence of pesticides or chemicals during processing. Although the two processes differ, the distinction lies in the techniques and equipment used. As consumer preferences shift, it is crucial for more oil manufacturing companies to recognize this trend and adapt to meet the evolving market demand.



# Aquestforbetterhealth

Balanced consumption and wise selection of edible oils foster overall wellbeing

SAUDIA AFRIN

Oil is an indispensable component of Bengali cuisine, enhancing both texture and flavor. The commonly used edible oils offer certain health benefits, including supporting heart and bone health, boosting the immune system, and improving skin condition. However, factors such as quality, processing methods, contamination risks, and consumption patterns significantly influence their nutritional value and safety.

Take a moment to reflect on your recent meals. How many dishes have you consumed without oil? While the number may vary from person to person, one thing is almost certain: dishes cooked with oil likely dominate the scale. Understanding the health impacts of edible oils is essential for making informed dietary choices.

In Bangladesh, frequently used edible oils include soybean oil, palm oil, sunflower oil, and mustard oil. Other available options in the market are rice bran oil, olive oil, canola oil, rapeseed oil, and coconut oil. Edible oils primarily consist of fats, which are classified into three types: monounsaturated fats (MUFA), polyunsaturated fats (PUFA), and saturated fats. Each type affects the body differently, making it essential to consider their health benefits as part of a balanced diet.

PUFAs include essential omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, which support brain and heart health. MUFAs, found in olive oil, canola oil, nut-based oils, and certain animal products, lower bad cholesterol (LDL), increase good cholesterol (HDL), and improve insulin sensitivity. Saturated fats, though controversial, can improve fat-soluble vitamin absorption, support hormonal health and the immune system, and provide a great source of energy when consumed in moderation.

Palm oil is the most consumed edible oil in Bangladesh, followed by soybean oil. Despite its high saturated

fat content, palm oil is widely used in commercial food preparation due to its affordability. Dr. Nazma Shaheen, Professor at the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Dhaka, notes, "Palm olein is good but costly and rarely found in Bangladesh. The palm oil available here is loaded with saturated fats."

Sunflower oil and rice bran oil are gaining popularity as healthier alternatives due to their higher nutrient content. Mustard oil, a traditional choice for Bengali cuisine, is not recommended as edible oil by the USDA because of certain fats, such as erucic acid. Dr. Shaheen explains, "Every oil has both positive and negative aspects. Soybean oil, rich in unsaturated fats, is beneficial, but these fats can degrade under heat and light, causing peroxidation and forming trans fats."

Lower-grade soybean oils, particularly partially hydrogenated ones, may contain trans fats, which are harmful to heart health as they raise LDL and lower HDL cholesterol. Md. Abdulla Al Mamun Fahim, Deputy Brand Manager of City Group, assures, "Our oil is produced in hi-tech facilities to ensure zero trans fat."

A two-year study conducted by the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science at Dhaka University and BRAC

University revealed that approximately 67% of bottled soybean oil samples in Bangladesh contained trans fats above permissible levels, while the rate for loose soybean oil was about 25%. No trans fats beyond acceptable limits were found in palm oil samples. The study highlighted that high-temperature refining processes are a major contributor to the formation of trans fats in oils.

Cold-pressed oils, extracted at low temperatures, retain more nutrients and health benefits compared to refined oils processed at high heat. "We haven't found trans fat in crude soybean. However, further study is required on this aspect," she adds.

The Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, following the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), has classified trans fats as a harmful substance and set permissible limits for their presence in edible oils. Trans fats increase LDL and decrease HDL, raising the risk of coronary heart diseases, heart attacks, and strokes.

Dr. Shaheen also emphasizes the risks of mixing oils with substandard substances to cut costs, compromising nutritional value and safety. "Loose oil lacks proper packaging and vitamin fortification, making it less beneficial," she adds. However, affordability often compels low-income communities to opt for loose oils.

Affordability plays a significant role in why people, particularly in lower-income communities, opt for low-quality oil. "The pricing of the product should be left to market dynamics.

Introducing efficient

## HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH EDIBLE OIL

Nowadays, diseases such as increased cholesterol levels, chronic heart diseases, and cancer are prevalent among people of all ages. Although edible oil is not the sole cause, it certainly plays a significant contributory role in this regard. Despite their health benefits, excessive consumption and improper use of oils can lead to serious health consequences.

Dr. Nazma Shaheen emphasized the importance of adhering to the recommended daily intake. "The consumption requirement of edible oil varies depending on several factors, including gender, age, and weight. For example, for someone with a 2000 kcal energy requirement, fat and oil consumption should not exceed 30 percent of the total kcal," she added.

Street food is a popular phenomenon in our food culture. Alarming, vendors often reuse low-quality oils for frying to minimize costs. These oils frequently contain harmful trans fats and carcinogenic compounds, posing serious health risks.

Risking heart health: excessive

consumption of oils high in saturated and trans fats can clog arteries, leading to heart attacks and strokes.

Obesity: Oils are calorie-dense, and uncontrolled consumption can lead to weight gain and associated health issues like diabetes.

Cancer risk: Repeatedly heating oils at high temperatures produces harmful compounds like acrylamide, which is linked to cancer.

Liver damage: Overconsumption of certain refined oils may lead to fat buildup in the liver, causing non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).

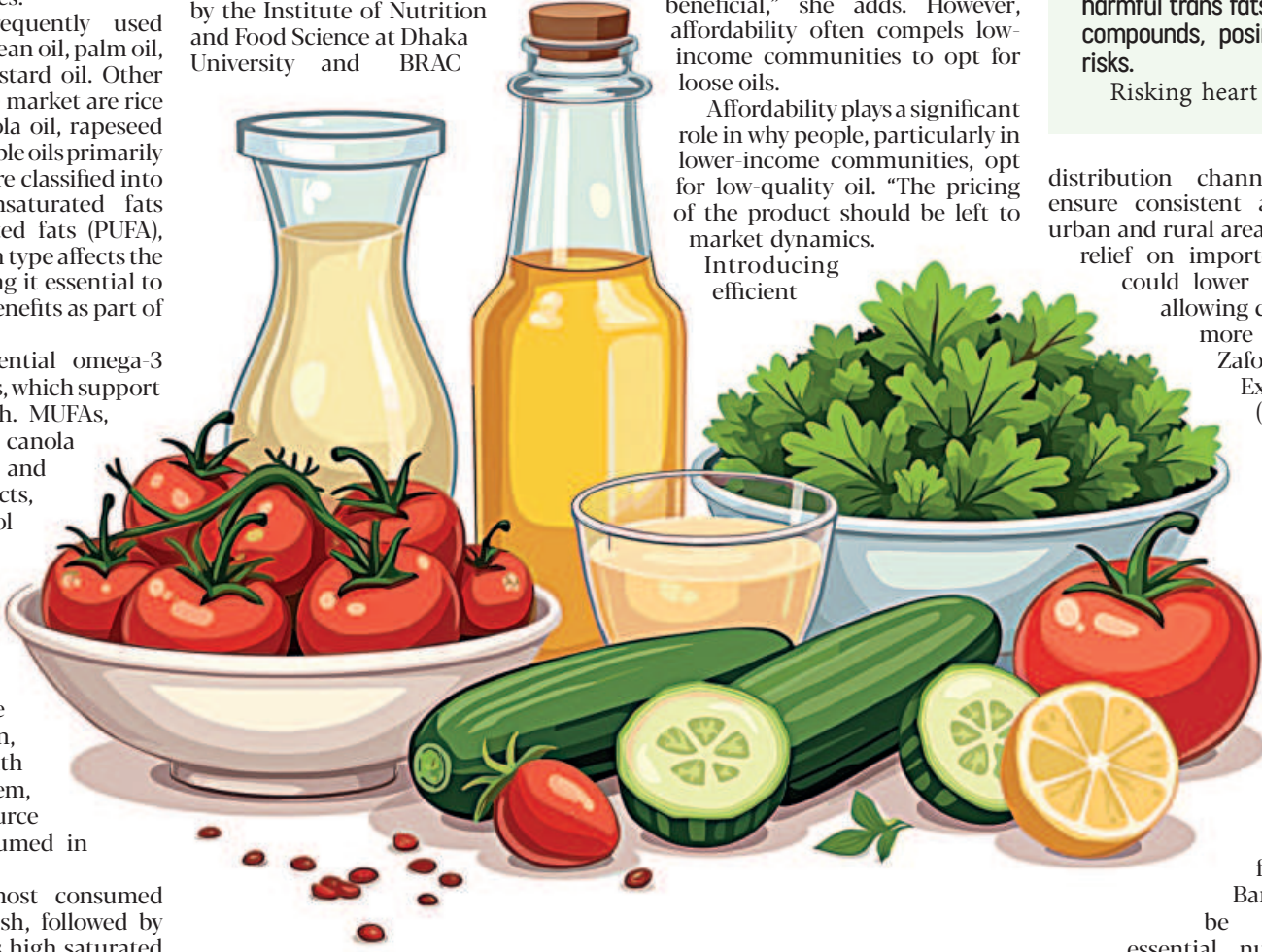
Healthier alternatives emerging in Bangladesh

- » Cold-Pressed Oils
- » Fortified Oils
- » Rice Bran Oil

Tips for Consumers

- » Check for Certification
- » Opt for fortified oils
- » Diversify oil use
- » Avoid overheating oil
- » Buy trusted brands

Nowadays, diseases such as increased cholesterol levels, chronic heart diseases, and cancer are prevalent among people of all ages. Although edible oil is not the sole cause, it certainly plays a significant contributory role in this regard. Despite their health benefits, excessive consumption and improper use of oils can lead to serious health consequences.



distribution channels can further ensure consistent availability across urban and rural areas. Subsidies or tax relief on imported raw materials could lower production costs, allowing companies to offer more affordable prices," Zafar Uddin Siddiqui, Executive Director (Marketing and Sales) of City Group.

Many brands address nutritional deficiencies by fortifying their products with vitamins A, D, and E. "As a pioneer in the industry, TEER Advanced Soybean Oil was the first brand in Bangladesh to be fortified with essential nutrients such as

vitamins A, D, and E, addressing widespread nutritional deficiencies. This fortification ensures that our oils not only meet cooking needs but also contribute to improved public health. Our refining process leverages the world's leading NRT (Nutrients Retained Technology) to preserve the oil's natural nutrients, ensuring that consumers receive the healthiest possible product. This advanced technology highlights our commitment to quality and innovation in every bottle," said Zafar from City Group.

Health experts and sector professionals believe that a more responsible approach by companies to refrain from unethical practices, along with enhanced monitoring by relevant government agencies, is key to overcoming the health concerns associated with edible oils.

Promoting awareness among people is crucial for encouraging healthier oil choices. Governments and food regulators must also ensure transparency in labeling and promote awareness about healthier oil options to encourage healthier lifestyles.

## POUR PERFECT Dos, Don'ts, and Best Practices

MUJIB BRAHMAN

Across the globe everybody is continuously becoming aware of potential health and safety risk associated with food practice and cuisine culture. Among all the ingredients of food industry, edible oil is an essential component. It is said that

Bangladesh is not self-sufficient in terms of producing oil crop, though

only a small fraction of demand. The market includes both branded and unbranded segments, with branded oils gaining traction due to quality assurance. Demand for fortified oils has increased due to regulations and health campaigns. Government oversight of imports, pricing, and fortification aims to ensure quality and curb manipulation. However, global crude oil price fluctuations often drive local price hikes. With better infrastructure and quality control, Bangladesh has potential for exporting edible oils and value-added products.

With regard to sustainable packaging, certain prominent brands are leading from the front. It may be noted that loose edible oil is still routinely consumed by certain portion of the people despite the sustained campaign by BSTI and Consumer Right association (CAB), reason behind durability of the loose oil might be economic. But nowadays government agencies have put ban on sale and usage of loose edible oil and are encouraging to consume healthy and nutrient fortified edible oil.

A large number of domestic edible oil companies are paving the way for healthy and sustained usage of food practices with regard to packing and nutrition. One of them, TEER, is the first brand to fortify soybean oil with vitamin A, D, and E. The specially designed PET bottle also eases the opening with one single twisting, particularly meant for individual client, while wholesale packaging such as drum, tin and plastic are used for corporate. In both cases, they maintain top-notch nutrition standard.

Oil manufacturing companies are leveraging technology, fortification, and innovation to provide healthier, high-quality, and safe edible oils for



consumers. Here's a brief guide on "Dos and Don'ts" for consumers to get the maximum health benefits while integrating edible oils into their diet.

### DOS:

- 1. Choose the Right Oil for Cooking Needs:**
  - » Use oils with a high smoke point (e.g., sunflower, canola, or rice bran oil) for frying or high-heat cooking.
  - » Opt for oils with stronger flavors (e.g., olive or sesame oil) for sautéing, dressings, or low-heat cooking.
- 2. Rotate Oils:**
  - » Incorporate a variety of oils (e.g., mustard, olive, coconut) to benefit from different nutrients and fatty acids.
- 3. Measure Your Oil:**
  - » Use a controlled amount to prevent excess fat intake. A teaspoon or

two is often sufficient for most recipes.

- 4. Store Properly:**
  - » Keep oils in a cool, dark place and ensure bottles are tightly sealed to prevent oxidation.
  - » Use smaller bottles for oils prone to rancidity, such as flaxseed or walnut oil.
- 5. Monitor Shelf Life:**
  - » Check expiration dates and discard oils that smell off or have changed in texture or color.
- 6. Dispose Used Oil Correctly:**
  - » Allow oil to cool after cooking and discard it in a sealed container or designated disposal site to avoid environmental harm.
- 7. Opt for Cold-Pressed Oils When Possible:**
  - » Cold-pressed oils retain more nutrients and are less processed, making them a healthier choice for

non-heat uses.

### DON'TS:

- 1. Don't Reuse Oil Excessively:**
  - » Avoid reusing cooking oil multiple times, especially after deep frying, as it can form harmful free radicals and trans fats.
- 2. Don't Overheat Oil:**
  - » Heating oil beyond its smoke point can produce toxic compounds and unpleasant flavors. Avoid letting oil smoke during cooking.
- 3. Don't Mix Different Oils:**
  - » Mixing oils with different properties can alter their stability and nutritional value.
- 4. Don't Use Oil as the Sole Source of Fat:**
  - » Balance your diet with healthy fats from nuts, seeds, avocados, and fatty fish.
- 5. Don't Use Oil Past Its Best-Before Date:**
  - » Rancid oil can harm your health and negatively impact the flavor of your food.
- 6. Don't Store Oil Near Heat or Sunlight:**
  - » Exposure to heat and light can degrade oil quality, causing it to go rancid faster.
- 7. Avoid Overconsumption**

As food practices go through transformation over time, global supply chain also equally determines kitchen essentials, notably edible oil. For the sake of growing demand of the rising population in Bangladesh, brands are not merely driven by profit motive but also equally preoccupied with delivering healthy, eco friendly and sustainable edible oil.







## AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

# Tarique, Babar, all others acquitted

### HC scraps tribunal verdicts that convicted 49

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The High Court yesterday acquitted BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and all the others convicted in two cases over the grizzly August 21, 2004 grenade attack.

The HC also scrapped the lower court verdicts that convicted and sentenced the 49 accused.

The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain delivered the judgment after a hearing on death references (trial court documents for confirmation of capital punishment) and appeals filed by some of the convicts.

Those who could not file appeals will also benefit from the judgment, said Mohammad Shishir Manir, one of the defence lawyers.

The accused currently behind bars will be released after the HC verdict reaches the jail unless they are imprisoned in any other cases, he said.

The BNP expressed satisfaction at the HC verdict. This has proved that there was a politically motivated conspiracy in these cases.

In the verdict, the High Court said the trial court judgments were illegal since they were delivered through unlawful procedures.

It said substantial changes were made in the supplementary charge sheet which was a completely illegal action, and the trial was based on that charge sheet.

The HC said the supplementary charge sheet was supposed to be submitted before the magistrate concerned first for an examination, but it was directly submitted to the trial court.

The trial court had taken cognisance of the charge sheet without lawful authority, the HC said.

The HC mentioned that the supplementary charge sheet was based on the confessional statement of accused Mufti Abdul Hannan, a leader of the banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI).

Hannan was executed in 2017 for another grenade attack targeting the then British high commissioner Anwar Choudhury in Sylhet on May 21, 2004.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Printing press workers hard at work as the free textbook distribution programme for primary and secondary school students for the upcoming academic year is set to begin on January 1. The photo was taken in the capital's Matuail yesterday.

# \$234 BILLION siphoned off during AL rule

### Says white paper team in its report

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

A total of \$234 billion was siphoned off from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023, according to the white paper on the state of the economy.

As per the report, the laundered money was sent to or routed primarily through the UAE, the UK, Canada, the US, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and India as well as a number of tax havens.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus hailed the report as a "historic document. "It will show us the economy we inherited after the July-August mass uprising," he said in a short speech before receiving the white paper yesterday from

RELATED STORIES ON PAGE 12, B1 SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

DESTINATIONS OF CAPITAL FLIGHT  
UAE, UK, Canada, USA,  
Hong Kong, Malaysia,  
Singapore, India.

"Our blood curdles to know how they plundered the economy. The sad part is they looted the economy openly."

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus

"The problem is deeper than what we have thought. The white paper will show how crony capitalism gave birth to the oligarchs, who controlled the policy framing."

Debapriya Bhattacharya, head of the white paper team

PROPERTIES IN DUBAI  
532 owners of  
Bangladeshi origin have  
real estate worth \$375  
million in Dubai. They  
own 972 residential  
properties.

SIPHONED  
OFF TO  
CANADA  
\$47-100  
billion  
laundered  
into Canada.

MALAYSIA THE  
SECOND HOME  
Bangladeshi origin  
2nd home owners  
in Malaysia are  
more than 3,600  
till March 2024.

## Come together for the challenging times ahead

### Army chief says at event for recognising freedom fighters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-uz-Zaman has urged the nation to stand together to face the challenging times that lie ahead.

"The country will have to overcome some difficult times. We will all work together to help the country through this crucial juncture. Please pray so that we can take the country to a safe place."

"The army that stands before you today has always served this country well in times of crisis. Officers in the army are working tirelessly to ensure law and order. In addition, we are involved in many important mechanisms ..."

The army chief made the remarks while addressing a ceremony held yesterday at the Army Multipurpose



SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

## Structural reforms needed to get rid of crony capitalism

### Says CPD Chairman Rehman Sobhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even all the reform commissions will not be able to rid the country of crony capitalism unless there are wholesale structural reforms, said Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"No one is looking for any sort of structural change - what the reforms might hopefully do is that they may take us away from a non-competitive system of crony capitalism and at least create a more competitive system," he said in an event yesterday to commemorate the CPD's 30-year journey.

Through the reform process, they are aiming to reproduce a reformed system of politics, governance and political system, he said at the event held at the Brac Centre Inn.

Regarding the self-censorship of civil society in expressing their views, he said: "Once upon a time I could write an article within three to four hours for The Daily Star. But in the last 10 to 15 years, it has sometimes taken me 10 days."

He recommended obtaining consent from the political parties to ensure that civil society organisations can actually function without constantly looking over their shoulders.

"This is our great expectation." Sobhan said his colleagues became depressed when they found out that ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina spoke harshly about the CPD after it arranged a dialogue on the 2014 election.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3 SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



## Unite against politics of vengeance

### Says Tarique after acquittal; BNP satisfied, AL protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman has called for national unity to end the practice of political vengeance and pave the way for a new chapter in Bangladesh's history.

"Let us unite to end political vengeance and open a new chapter in history, where no one's life or family will be destroyed because of political

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## Govt must act as guardian of the injured

### Say volunteers working for victims of July uprising at Star discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The measures taken by the interim government for the treatment of those injured in the July uprising are uncoordinated and they lack proper monitoring, said volunteers working for the injured and families of martyred protesters.

They also said the government needs to act as a guardian of the injured.

The volunteers made the remarks at a discussion titled, "Courage amidst crisis: stories from volunteers of the July uprising" organised by The Daily Star.

This was the first storytelling session of a weeklong programme called "36 Days of July - Saluting the Bravehearts", held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Speaking at the event, Farhana Sharmin Emu, organiser of Visionary Voyage, said the interim government does not lack willingness, but they lack coordination among stakeholders.

"The government is taking many steps, but these are fragmented and not interconnected. Initially, a sub-committee under the health ministry was formed and tasked with preparing a list of the injured, deceased and missing. However, no funds were allocated for this committee."

She said three ministries -- health, social welfare, and labour -- need to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



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নোটিশ

সম্প্রতি লক্ষ করা যাচ্ছে যে, দেশের বিভিন্ন জেলা, উপজেলার নির্বাচন অফিসে রোহিঙ্গারা এনআইডি সংগ্রহের অপতৎপরতায় লিপ্ত রয়েছেন। কিন্তু ভোটার তালিকা আইন ২০০৯ এর ৭ (১) (ক) অনুযায়ী কোন ব্যক্তি বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক না হলে তাকে ভোটার তালিকায় অন্তর্ভুক্তির কোন সুযোগ নেই।

এতদসত্ত্বেও বাংলাদেশের কিছু অসাধু ব্যক্তি/দালালচক্র রোহিঙ্গাদের ভোটার বানানোর কাজে সহায়তা করছেন যা ভোটার তালিকা আইন, ২০০৯ এবং জাতীয় পরিচয় নিবন্ধন আইন, ২০১০ অনুযায়ী দণ্ডনীয় অপরাধ।

এমতাবস্থায়, বাংলাদেশের যেকোন স্থানে/জেলা, উপজেলার নির্বাচন অফিসসমূহে কোন রোহিঙ্গা বা অন্য কোন বিদেশী নাগরিক কর্তৃক জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (এনআইডি) সংগ্রহের অপচেষ্টা করার তথ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনের স্থানীয় উপজেলা, জেলা নির্বাচন অফিস, আঞ্চলিক নির্বাচন অফিস, নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়ের টেলিফোনে ০২-৫৫০০৭৬০০; ই-মেইল: secretary@ecs.gov.bd অথবা কল সেন্টার ১০৫ এ (টোল ফ্রি) অথবা ডাকযোগে-বরাবর সচিব, নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়, নির্বাচন ভবন, প্লট নং ই-১৪/জেড, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭ এ জানানো/ পাঠানোর জন্য সর্বসাধারণের প্রতি অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।



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

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



Representatives of volunteer organisations, working for the treatment of those injured in the July uprising, share their experiences at the “Courage amidst crisis” talk, a part of The Daily Star’s storytelling week and photo exhibition titled “36 Days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts”. The photo was taken at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## \$234 billion siphoned off during AL rule

FROM PAGE 1  
Debapriya Bhattacharya, the chair of the committee.

Illicit financial outflows constituted a complex web of shadow economy that “thrived on criminal activities of diverse nature and drew sustenance from an unholy alliance of sections of corrupt politicians, businessmen, financial players, middlemen, government officials, influence peddlers and wheeler-dealers of different types”, the white paper said.

These people worked in connivance with and corrupted the country’s executive, legislative, financial, legal and other institutions; undermined domestic investment and revenue mobilisation efforts; depleted forex reserves; weakened the country’s macroeconomic management; and did serious damage to the cause of

good governance in all spheres, it said. “Our blood curdles to know how they plundered the economy. The sad part is they looted the economy openly. And most of us could not summon the courage to confront it,” Yunus said, adding that even the multilateral agencies that monitor Bangladesh’s economy were also largely silent when the plunder took place.

The laundered money was used to buy real estate or funnel the funds through business operations by remaining anonymous, said the 30-chapter and 400-page-long white paper.

A total of 532 people of Bangladeshi origin had real estate worth \$375 million in Dubai and 972 residential properties worth about \$315 million. It has been estimated that \$47-100

billion worth of money was washed or laundered into Canada as a haven to conceal harmful and illegal financial activities.

As of March, Bangladeshi-origin second home owners in Malaysia stood at upwards of 3,600, the report added.

The white paper committee voted for an independent prosecution body to create a proper mandate and to undertake follow-up actions.

Weak prosecution capacity and succumbing to political pressure have constrained the work of follow-up actions by the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, the Criminal Investigation Department and other institutions, it said.

The report suggested processes of asset recovery: conviction, tracing,

case filling in external jurisdiction, freezing, confiscation and asset recovery.

It is not easy to establish the chain of connections involving ill-gotten money, money laundered from the country and the ultimate beneficiary in the destination country, which will be needed to ensure the return of the stolen assets to Bangladesh.

The interim government is taking steps to recover the money.

An asset recovery committee – led by the Bangladesh Bank governor – has been set up to recover the stolen money.

It has also decided to discard the provision that allowed the whitening of black money and enforce the provision of submission of wealth statements by government officials.

“All these steps are in the right

direction,” the white paper said.

Money laundering from Bangladesh through illicit financial channels had thrived and flourished in an environment of political indulgence and patronage, institutionalised corruption, legal impunity and overall lack of good governance in economic management.

“Getting rid of this curse will call for an uncompromising political will to address the problem head-on.”

This will entail the restoration of accountability and good governance in economic management, enforcement of legal provisions, zero tolerance against corruption and corrupt practices, institutional strengthening and interagency coordination, it added.

## Tarique, Babar, all others acquitted

FROM PAGE 1  
The bench said the confessional statements given by the accused were not true as they were coerced into giving the statements in the Taskforce Interrogation Cell, which has no legal basis.

There is no documentary, ocular or circumstantial evidence to prove the charges, the HC said.

It added that there was no eyewitness in the cases and the trial court had delivered the verdicts on hearsay statements.

Details of the HC judgment will be known when its full text will be released.

Contacted, Deputy Attorney General Md Jashim Sarker said the state may challenge the HC judgment at the Supreme Court’s Appellate Division after the full text is published.

“I have already given a note to the attorney general for filing an appeal,” he said.

Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman told journalists that an appeal should be moved against the HC verdict, but his office will take a decision on the matter after examining the full text.

The two cases – one for murder and another under the Explosives Substances Act – were filed after the gruesome grenade attack on an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka claimed 24 lives and left about 300 injured.

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.

A judicial inquiry commission formed by the then BNP-led alliance government had found “foreign enemy link” with the attack. The

supplementary charge sheet was prepared after the Awami League returned to power.

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka delivered the verdicts in the two cases on October 10, 2018, sentencing 19 people, including Babar to death. Tarique, now in London, and 18 others were sentenced to life in jail while 11 others got prison sentences of different terms.

Those sentenced to death also included Abdus Salam Pintu, a former BNP deputy minister, Brig Gen (ret’d) Rezaqul Haider, former director of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence and late Brig Gen (ret’d) Abdur Rahim, former director general of the National Security Intelligence.

The other 18 persons, who were sentenced to life imprisonment, include late Abul Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to BNP Chairperson and the then prime minister Khaleda Zia; and Kazi Mofazzal Hossain Kaikobad, a former BNP lawmaker, were among those who were sentenced to life imprisonment.

### DEFENCE LAWYERS’ REACTION

SM Shahjahan, the principal defence counsel for the accused, told reporters that they have got justice because the charges were not proven in terms of evidence as well as law.

He said the HC clearly stated that the conviction of an accused cannot be based solely on the confessional statements of other accused; and criminal conspiracy charges cannot be established solely on a confessional statement.

Besides Hannan’s statement, which he later retracted, the HC found no evidence against the accused mentioned in the first charge sheet, Shahjahan said. The names of Tarique, Babar and 28 others were included in

the supplementary charge sheet.

The lawyer said a supplementary charge sheet can only be submitted by the investigation officer if he or she finds new evidence. But, in these two cases, the second charge sheet was submitted following a petition filed by the public prosecutor.

Shahjahan added that none of the 225 witnesses, apart from the investigation officer and the magistrate, said he or she had seen who threw the grenades. Nobody in their confessional statements said they had thrown the grenades or seen who threw them.

Shishir Manir, who stood for three of the accused, alleged the confessional statements were extracted through torture as the investigation focused on implicating political opponents instead of identifying the real culprits. “We all want justice for the August 21 incident, but justice cannot be achieved by arbitrarily accusing individuals. This case serves as a lesson that politically motivated charges cannot bring a good outcome.”

Zainul Abedin, president of pro-BNP lawyers’ association Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum, alleged the Awami League government had used the cases as a political tool.

“They aimed to keep Tarique Rahman out of the country. They even sought the death penalty for him, but the court found no evidence to justify such a sentence,” he said.

Kayser Kamal, secretary general of the association, said that the August 21 cases were the “most propagandised legal cases” in Bangladesh’s political history over the past two decades.

“The cases were filed to politically undermine Tarique Rahman both nationally and internationally,” Kamal said.

## Govt must act as guardian of the injured

FROM PAGE 1  
work together while other stakeholders with grassroots experience should be involved in the efforts.

Emu also stated the lack of monitoring of field-level executions of the government measures.

“The framework to oversee whether strategies are being implemented effectively at the grassroots is missing. For example, while a coordination cell was announced in Dhaka hospitals, there seems to be no monitoring mechanism for its activities or accountability for its actions.”

She added that the main challenge in ensuring treatment and rehabilitation of the injured and families of dead protesters is inequality. “There is clear difference between the treatment of the rich and that of the poor.”

“The government has stated that 20,000 people are injured. Which means 20,000 families – or about 80,000 to 100,000 people – are in critical situations. The government must take the lead, and we are willing to provide full support.”

This is not just about financial aid. The government needs to act as a guardian for the injured and develop a strategy accordingly, she said.

Lyana Mahfuz, a volunteer of the Chattogram unit of Empowering Our Fighters platform, said injured patients from outside the capital face difficulties when coming to Dhaka, as they cannot find the government representatives designated to assist them.

“Many arrive without a place to stay in Dhaka. Although treatment is said to be free, other costs, such as for accommodation for the patients’ attendants and the transport to Dhaka, remain burdensome.”

Shakibur Rahman Rony, member and a key founder of Empowering Our Fighters, said, “While the government promises free treatment, many cannot

afford to travel to Dhaka for care. Even accessing free treatment is complex. A single test requires signatures from five-six people, and often, those responsible are unavailable.”

He stated that the injured from low-income groups are the worst victims.

“They lack financial resources and social influence. Moreover, there is a communication gap between them and the doctors. The government should have arranged for volunteers to assist patients at all times.”

Shoilee Akhund, a member of Centre for Critical Discourse, said comprehensive information about all the injured is still missing.

“There are injured victims who are intellectually challenged, as well as unidentified deceased persons who were mentally unwell. While the lists of martyrs include students and workers, no one talks about these groups.”

She said the government announced free medication, but there is no clarity on which medicines are free.

“Patients often have to visit hospitals multiple times for medicine.... While we’ve tried to personally provide support, this is actually the responsibility of the health department, not individuals.”

Addressing the event, Monisha Mafuza, organiser of Chobbbisher Uttara, said the government has systems and teams for ensuring treatments and rehabilitation, including frontline health workers and department officials.

“Effective communication with them could have expedited the process. Yet, even now, a complete list [of injured victims] has not been prepared.”

She said many volunteers like her are trying to resume normal work but cannot do so as they are having to spend all their time tending to injured victims.

“We have to continue working. While

we want to help, this is fundamentally the state’s responsibility. Though, the new government faces many challenges, they must engage skilled individuals and break old systems to create effective networks with stakeholders.”

Kaniz Fatima Mithila, an organiser of Loraku Chobbbish, said, “We were mentally prepared to deal with critically injured people. However, our trauma began 40-45 days later when we saw people deteriorating due to mismanagement. Proper treatment from the start could have prevented many amputations.”

She said there is still no complete list of the injured or deceased, which is a huge challenge for volunteers working for the injured.

“The process of creating these lists is also concerning. These tasks require government coordination.”

“We initially thought our involvement would last 15-20 days, after which the government would take over, but this has not happened. Until the government acts decisively, we have no alternatives [but to continue ourselves].”

She also said there was a duplication of efforts, where multiple volunteer teams were working in the same hospital, depriving patients of other hospitals their support.

“The government should coordinate area-wise teams to avoid this. Each patient has unique requirements and the government must identify individual needs and respond accordingly.”

“Why are we not utilising the experience from the Covid-19 period, such as making an app like the ‘Shurokha app’ and provide regular health briefings? Why are we pushing these individuals towards worsening conditions every day?” she questioned.



CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan, BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, and others unveil two books on CPD at an event celebrating the organisation’s 30th anniversary.

PHOTO: STAR

## Structural reforms needed

FROM PAGE 1  
“I told them that you will not find any institution in the world whose thoughts are being discussed on the floor of the parliament. So, you can think that your thoughts have achieved national attention.”

Hasina was looking for 80 percent marks but the CPD gave her 33 percent marks only. “So, her main complaint was why the CPD has not recognised her singular achievement in development.”

In its 30-year journey, the CPD created a space for civil society to be heard.

The noted economist also called for making a citizen’s commission for rural development. “Even 30 years ago, I called for reform in the agricultural sector,” Sobhan added.

The CPD tried to use research to bring change in the society, said its distinguished fellow Debapriya Bhattacharya.

Free speech, free media and patriotism were criminalised in Bangladesh in the past 30 years, said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

“That has happened as our political and bureaucratic leadership lacked the capacity to understand that a critic can

be a well-wisher. As a result, critics were treated as enemies all the time.”

He also touched upon the much-talked-about ‘minus two formula’.

“The so-called minus two formula was provoked by the armed forces and everybody knows it. But, the CPD, TIB, the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star were bracketed together for this,” he added.

Bangladesh is now at a crossroads, so how it will go further is a big question among the people, said Matuor Rahman, editor of Prothom Alo.

“There are many ifs and buts on whether the government will turn into a weak government, whether the government will continue its reform activities.”

Here, the CPD along with other civil society can play a big role in bringing about cultural, ideological and political change so that the country can go to the next level of development.

“But, this change should be acceptable to the people of the country,” Rahman added.

The private sector is going through a tough time, said Rubana Huq, vice-chancellor of the Asian University for Women.

She requested not to judge the whole private sector by the misdeeds of some

## Ukraine needs arms, Nato invite before Russia talks

Says Zelensky after meeting EU representatives in Kyiv

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that his country needed security guarantees from Nato and more weapons to defend itself before any talks with Russia.

He made the comments after meeting the EU’s new head of diplomacy Kaja Kallas and EU Council chief Antonio Costa, who were visiting Kyiv as a show of support on their first day in office.

“An invitation for Ukraine to join Nato is a necessary thing for our survival,” Zelensky said at a press conference with Costa.

Ukraine faces a tough winter ahead, with Russia unleashing devastating barrages against its power grid and Kyiv’s fatigued forces losing ground on the frontline.

Questions are also swirling around the future of US support once Donald Trump assumes the presidency in January, with fears he could force Kyiv to make painful concessions in pursuit of a quick peace deal.



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## Tourist ships resume from Cox's Bazar to St Martin's

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Cox's Bazar

With the beginning of December, tourist ships have resumed trips to Saint Martin's Island in Cox's Bazar after a nine-month halt.

At around 10:00am yesterday, a ship named Bar Aulia departed for Saint Martin's Island with around 700 passengers from the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) terminal at Nunyarchhara in Cox's Bazar town.

Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Salahuddin, present at the launch, said trips to the

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## Jamaat chief criticises 'political elite'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Bagerhat

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer, Shafiqur Rahman, criticised political elite for prioritising personal gain over national welfare, claiming they have "changed their own fortunes at the expense of the nation."

He made the remarks during a roadside rally at the Malibagh intersection in Narail, on his way from Khulna to Faridpur.

Addressing the crowd, Shafiqur Rahman said, "Those who promised to change the destiny of the nation have only altered their own. The very people who were meant to serve the nation have become its masters."

He outlined his vision for a new Bangladesh, where people of all faiths, genders, and backgrounds could live with dignity. "We will see everyone as the best of creations, regardless of wealth or poverty," he added.

On women's safety, he said, "We want a Bangladesh where women can work safely, free from harassment."



Debapriya Bhattacharya, head of the committee responsible for preparing the white paper on the economy, presented its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the latter's Tejgaon office in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

# Clear newsroom policies needed for gender equality

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There should be clear policies in the newsrooms to ensure gender equality and dignity in Bangladesh's media industry, speakers said at an event yesterday.

They stressed the need for written guidelines promoting equal representation in decision-making, recruitment, and training, while fostering a safe and inclusive work environment. Greater coverage of underreported gender issues and eliminating harmful stereotypes in advertisements and content were also emphasised.

The remarks were made during the launch of a gender charter of commitment for news media, prepared by the Management and Resources Development Initiative, at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Twenty media organisations have already signed the charter, with more expected to join.

Introducing the initiative, Prof Giti Ara Nasreen, head of the Gender Charter Working Group and professor at Dhaka University's Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, expressed concerns over the decline in female enrolment in journalism programmes in Bangladesh.

"Globally, female enrolment in journalism schools is rising, but here, fewer women are studying journalism. This is alarming, and we need to identify the reasons behind it. What about our media environment is deterring

women? What obstacles have we created?" she asked.

She added, "This charter aims to ensure its principles are practised in every newsroom. Equality in participation means transparency in recruitment, equitable pay and benefits for all genders, and assessing gender sensitivity alongside qualifications."

Dr Nasreen also addressed gender biases,

stories," she added.

Journalist and trainer Quratul-Ain-Tahmina highlighted that signing the charter is just the first step. "We must ensure inclusion in internal structures and content while enforcing written policies for meaningful change. This requires a mindset shift," she said.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, pointed to the



**Globally, female enrolment in journalism schools is rising, but here, fewer women are studying journalism. This is alarming, and we need to identify the reasons behind it. What about our media environment is deterring women? What obstacles have we created?**

PROF GITI ARA NASREEN

saying, "When men age, they are seen as more mature, but ageing women often find their competence overshadowed by perceptions of their age."

She stressed the importance of workplace facilities such as separate toilets, childcare support, and protections against discrimination for employees returning from maternity leave.

"In terms of content, we must avoid stereotypical portrayals and ensure women's voices are adequately represented in news

challenges women face in journalism. "The stereotype persists that women can't handle tough jobs. Security risks, family issues, and societal challenges deter many from entering the field. Does she receive the support she needs -- from her institution, family, and society?" she asked.

She also called for the gender charter to be linked to sexual harassment and gender policies, encouraging editors to advocate for legislation ensuring these protections.

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## CPD strives for a democratic, just society

Says Prof Yunus marking 30 years of the think tank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, a trustee member of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), yesterday lauded the organisation, calling it a reputed think tank both at home and abroad.

He made the remarks in a video message played at a programme titled "The CPD Journey: Commemorating Thirty Years of CPD," organised by the think tank at BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka.

"CPD has consistently stood against the tide, offering independent advice to policymakers for the betterment of the country," Yunus said.

He added, "CPD has always strived to establish a democratic, just, and accountable society. Its research and public awareness activities have played an important role in shaping the mindset of the recent mass upsurge."

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## 'Cadre' to be replaced with new titles

Says Public Admin Reform Commission chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bureaucrats themselves are often the perpetrators of the injustice they face, said Abdul Mueed Chowdhury, head of the Public Administration Reform Commission, after a meeting at the Secretariat yesterday.

"We often say, 'Crows do not pick out crows' eyes.' Yet, bureaucrats face the most oppression from their peers," he said.

Mueed added that those misusing power have significantly hindered progress. "We will identify and remove such individuals from the mainstream," he said.

The commission plans to propose structural reforms, including replacing the term "cadre" in civil service with specific designations like "civil service administration" or "civil service health".

Md Mokhles Ur Rahman, senior secretary of the public administration ministry, claimed that "cadre" carries negative connotations and its removal could enhance public perception.

Mokhles highlighted widespread corruption, particularly in offices like the registry office, where bribery is normalised. He said, "The culture of corruption has persisted for too long. People

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**ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিং**

**সামগ্রী ও নিরাপদ ব্যাংকিং**

নিজ আউটলেটে টাকা জমা ও উত্তোলন **সম্পূর্ণ ফ্রি**

অন্য টেরিটোরিতে

জমা বা ফান্ড ট্রান্সফার **হাজারে মাত্র ২ টাকা**

উত্তোলন **হাজারে মাত্র ৪ টাকা**

প্রয়োজনে ডায়াল করুন **16216**  
দিন-রাত ২৪ ঘণ্টা যে কোর ফোন থেকে

Dutch-Bangla Bank  
**AGENT Banking**  
আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী

**ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক**  
আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী



## ‘Cadre’ to be

FROM PAGE 3  
demand change, and we are working to deliver it.”  
Addressing suggestions for renaming titles like “deputy commissioner,” he said the terms from the British era, such as collector or district administrator, are under consideration.  
While structural reforms are essential, Mokhles emphasised that mindset and attitude shifts are critical for lasting transformation. “Real change starts with people’s attitudes. More changes are on the cards,” he said.  
The commission continues to gather public feedback, with over 100,000 responses submitted online, underscoring the demand for reform.

PRAYER  
TIMING  
DECEMBER 2

Fazr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN

5-15

12-45

3-45

5-19

7-00

JAMAA

5-50

1-15

4-00

5-22

7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A Khulna City Corporation worker operates a fogging machine to eliminate mosquito larvae as the mosquito menace rises in the city. The photo was taken in the Abu Naser Hospital area recently. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Adopt gender-sensitive policies

FROM PAGE 3  
Aasha Mehreen Amin, joint editor of The Daily Star, highlighted the need to address the lack of adequate logistics, such as safe transport and work hours that align with societal expectations, to encourage more women to join journalism.  
She said that the traditional newsroom culture, where journalists are expected to work long hours without balance, is impractical for anyone but particularly challenging for women, who often face additional societal pressures.  
“Many women don’t have the luxury of a partner to handle domestic responsibilities, making it even more difficult for them to thrive in this demanding profession. A radical shift in how we view work and the support systems in place is essential for more women to succeed in journalism,” she added.  
Prothom Alo journalist Sumona Sharmin highlighted the struggles of working mothers. “When a new mother returns to work, her child may fall

sick, requiring her to leave early or provide extra care. If judged incapable due to her motherhood, she risks being sidelined in her career,” she said.  
Addressing grassroots journalism, Anwarul Kabir Nantui, editor of Daily Loksamaj, emphasised the importance of job security and financial stability for women in local newspapers. “Without these, no one will join the profession,” he said.  
The event was moderated by MRDI Executive Director Hasibur Rahman.

## Year-round strategy

FROM PAGE 5  
conditions for mosquitoes even into the winter months.  
Prof Mushtaque Ahmed, microbiologist at Popular Medical College, called for the introduction of the dengue vaccine Qdenga in Bangladesh.  
Approved by the World Health Organisation and European Medicines Agency, the vaccine has been in use in Indonesia since January and Brazil more recently.  
“Qdenga, suitable for individuals aged six and above, has undergone trials in 17 countries, though Bangladesh was excluded. The vaccine costs Tk 8,000-10,000, but Indonesia has managed to procure it at a third of the price,” Prof Mushtaque added.  
BPMCA President MA Mubin Khan pointed to Kolkata’s success in managing dengue as a model for Bangladesh.

“Kolkata maintains a year-round approach with ward-level workers focusing on awareness, preventing stagnant water, and sharing blood test results to ensure swift intervention,” he said.  
The speakers also criticised the inequitable application of insecticides, with authorities prioritising affluent areas over less privileged ones, calling for equitable measures across the board.

## CPD strives for a democratic, just society

FROM PAGE 3  
While making the introductory speech, CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said the failure and unwillingness of a government to implement policies is a real problem that needs to be discussed.  
The government is usually uncomfortable with the process of ensuring accountability, he said.  
Rehman Sobhan said that from policy-making to the democratic process and beyond, the government essentially controls the entire domain.  
Civil society, including academic and business communities, workers, and non-government organisations, should have their say in the policymaking process, he said.  
“Most times policies are not implemented,” he said.  
“So, no matter how radical or revolutionary you may want to be in terms of the reforms, you have to see how much they are going to be implemented,” he said.  
They constantly wanted to keep the government accountable on this issue, he added.  
Once finance ministers were willing to sit with

them, he said, adding, “But in recent years, the word ‘rubbish’ was used when intelligent observations were made about policymaking and implementation.”  
Regarding CPD’s establishment in 1993, Rehman Sobhan said it aimed to create a space where all relevant stakeholders discuss problems and find solutions.  
He said year after year cabinet members took part in CPD discussions in the presence of opposition leaders.  
“Sadly, over the last 15 years or so, instead of progress, in some ways there was recession. The scope for having civilised dialogues to solve problems became much more adversarial over the years,” said Rehman Sobhan.  
“Up to the 2014 election, every finance minister used to come to the CPD budget dialogue, but afterwards, no finance minister attended such a programme,” he said.  
At the programme, CPD Distinguished Fellow Prof Rounaq Jahan said CPD can be a useful resource if this or the next government

really wants to remove discrimination.  
She hoped that there will be a democratic environment in the country in the future so that CPD and others can discuss and make criticisms fearlessly.  
“Now I see a lot of risks in expressing a lot of opinions. Not all of it is coming from the government; many people don’t want to hear from others,” she said.  
BNP standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury lauded CPD’s role, saying it has become an alternative voice outside political parties, providing a space to share opinions in the public interest.  
“Democracy is not just about voting; it’s about the daily accountability of an elected government, which has been absent for the last 15 years due to stolen voting rights,” he said.  
Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said CPD is liked by the media as it provides authentic, factual, and evidence-based information and analysis.  
He said CPD has become part of the intellectual journey, creating a mindset

of tolerance.  
“But the culture of tolerance and free-thinking faced attacks during the last 15 years,” he said, adding that a free media ensures accountability every day.  
“Gagging the media was one of the reasons behind the fall of the immediate past government. If the then government allowed media freedom, she [Sheikh Hasina] could get true feedback...,” he added.  
Mahfuz Anam echoed Amir Khasru on the issue of voting rights and said a free election helps ensure accountability.  
“By taking away the voting, you take away the right to expression, all kinds of freedom, and creative thoughts. All these happened due to the manipulated elections in these 15 years,” he said.  
Nihad Kabir, a board director of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Taslima Akter Lima, president of Bangladesh Garments Sramik Sanghati, spoke at the programme.  
CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun chaired the programme where two books were also launched.

## Tourist ships

FROM PAGE 3  
island typically begin in November. However, this year, due to various government decisions, ship movement started on December 1.  
“Tourists must follow several regulations to protect the island’s environment, including a ban on polythene and

plastic. Additionally, travel passes are required to visit Saint Martin, which can be obtained via apps developed by the Bangladesh Tourism Board in cooperation with the Cox’s Bazar district administration,” he said.  
Initially, the operation of tourist ships was

scheduled to begin last Thursday. However, due to a lack of passengers, ship authorities temporarily suspended travel to Saint Martin, he added.  
Currently, due to recent tensions near the Myanmar border, shipping from Teknaf is not allowed. Only ships departing from Cox’s

Bazar town are permitted to operate.  
To address environmental pollution on the island, the government has decided to limit the number of tourists. This year, only 2,000 tourists will be allowed to stay overnight on the island during December and January.

## Stronger push

FROM PAGE 5  
criticised the interim government’s constitutional reform commission for excluding indigenous representation.  
Nipun Tripura, president of Parbatya Chattagram Pahari Chhatra Parishad, echoed these concerns, while Gajendra Nath Mahato, assistant general secretary of Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum, said, “Despite the formation of ten reform commissions, the interim government failed to include indigenous representation.” He added that this exclusion has led to the marginalisation of indigenous communities, with their lands being seized under the guise of tourism.  
Sajedul Haque Rubel, central secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh, said the July uprising raised hopes for democracy, but these aspirations remain unfulfilled.  
Monira Tripura, a PCJSS member, reiterated the call for immediate, time-bound implementation of the treaty.  
The discussion was presided over by Ajoy A Mree, vice president of the Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum, and moderated by PCJSS member Trijinand Chakma.

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY

Progoti Foundation for Education and Development

Permanent Sanad Holder

INVITATION OF TENDER

Tender is invited from the bonafide/intending suppliers/firms for the following items:  
1. Procurement of different types of Printer Cartridge for various Departments/ Offices of EWU for the period from January to June 2025  
2. Extension and Renovation of Prayer Rooms of EWU  
3. Procurement of different types of Laboratory Instrument for the Department of GEB  
4. Procurement of Laboratory Chemical and Reagent for the Department of Pharmacy  
5. Procurement of Laboratory Glassware, Apparatus and Supplies (Consumable) for the Department of Pharmacy  
6. Procurement of different Lab instruments for the Department of Pharmacy  
7. Roof treatment and repairing work at Roof of Block-C (beside the Dept. of Social Relations), Library’s Stair Roof Slab and Roof of Block-B (Dept. of GEB) of EWU  
8. Procurement of different types of Lab items for the Chemistry Lab, Department of MPS  
9. Supply and Installation of Flap Barrier at the entrance of EWU  
The schedule of the items with terms and conditions can be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (1st floor) of the University until **23.12.2024** during office hours (until 03:00 p.m.) on working days. The schedule of item **no.1** will also be available in the e-tender process (<http://etender.ewubd.edu>). The price of the tender schedule (non-refundable) is **Tk.500/-** (Taka Five Hundred) only.  
The interested bidders are requested to submit the tender schedule **by 24.12.2024 within 02:00 P.M.** through hard copy or e-tender process (as mentioned in the schedule). The tender (hard copy) must be dropped in the tender box kept at the 2nd floor of the office of the Treasurer (Room No-316) of the University. The tender(s) submitted within the deadline will be opened **on the same day (24.12.2024) at 02:15 P.M.** in the Conference Room (4th floor) of East West University in the presence of the representatives of the bidders.  
The bidders must mention the “**name of the item**” at the top of envelope. Otherwise, the bid document will be treated as cancelled.  
East West University authority reserves the right to accept any tender in full or part of it or reject all tenders without mentioning any reason thereof.  
Chief of HR & Logistics

পলি কার্মা-সাহায্যক  
ফাউন্ডেশন

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)

PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207  
Phone: 02-22218331-33, 02-22218335-39, Fax: 02-22218341; website: [www.pksf.org.bd](http://www.pksf.org.bd)

Ref. No: 53.23.0000.001.03.122.24.7700

Date: 01 December 2024

Request for Expression of Interest (REoi)  
(Selection of Individual Consultant: National)

A.	Basic Information (Procuring Entity, Assignment, Procurement Method, Source of Fund, etc.) for the Consultant:	
1	Name of the Organization	Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
2	Procuring Entity Name & Designation	Dr. Md. Jashim Uddin, Additional Managing Director
3	Package Number, Name of the Package, and Minimum Qualifications (Details in ToR).	<p>a) <b>PKSF/GCF/RSMP-2/2024-25/SR-01:</b> Selection of an Individual Consultant for Assessment of Energy Use and Waste Management of PKSF, <b>Qualification:</b> Bachelor and Master's degree in the subject/field of Environmental Science/Forestry/ Geography and Environment/Chemical Engineering or any other relevant subject. No third division/ class at any level is acceptable. Experience in conducting resource efficiency assessments and developing RECP strategies.</p> <p>b) <b>PKSF/GCF/RSMP-2/2024-25/SR-03:</b> Selection of an Individual Consultant for Feasibility Study of "Water Efficient Boro Rice Cultivation in Bangladesh (WEBC-BD)" Project, <b>Qualification:</b> Bachelor and Master's degree in the subject/field of Economics/ Agricultural Economics/Agricultural Engineering/Water Resources Management/ Environmental Science from a recognized university with a minimum of two first-division/class. No third division/ class at any level is acceptable. Minimum ten (10) years of proven experience in conducting feasibility studies for agricultural development/development projects</p> <p>c) <b>PKSF/GCF/RSMP-2/2024-25/SR-05:</b> Selection of an Individual Consultant to Develop a GCF Standard Full Funding Proposal on "Promoting Climate-Resilient Aquaculture for Climate-Vulnerable People of Bangladesh" Project, <b>Qualification:</b> Bachelor and Master's degree in the subject/field of Fisheries/Zoology (Major in Fisheries/ Fisheries Biology and Genetics/Aquaculture/ Fisheries Management/ Fisheries Technology/Marine Science from a recognized university with a minimum of two first-division/classes. No third division/ class at any level is acceptable. Minimum of ten (10) years of proven experience in aquaculture-related project/program development, preferably in the environment and Climate change sector</p> <p>d) <b>PKSF/GCF/RSMP-2/2024-25/SR-06:</b> Selection of an Individual Consultant to Develop GCF Standard Full Funding Proposal on "Resilient Infrastructure to Combat Climate Change Impact in Flash Flood Prone Haor Areas of Bangladesh (RIH) Project", <b>Qualification:</b> Bachelor and Master's degree in the subject/field of Economics/ Environmental Science/Fisheries/Agriculture from a recognized university with a minimum of two first-division/classes. No third division/ class at any level is acceptable. Minimum of ten (10) years of proven experience in project/program development, preferably in the environment and Climate change sector.</p>
4	EOI Publishing Date	02 December 2024
5	Procurement Method	Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)
6	Source of Fund	BGD-RS-007: GCF Readiness Project-2.
7	Development Partner	Green Climate Fund (GCF)
8	Project Name	Increasing the Capacity of Bangladesh's NDA and Direct Access Accredited Entities to Access GCF Resources
9	EOI submission closing date, time, and place	<b>Date: 17 December 2024; Time: 2:00 PM;</b> PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
B.	Key Information for the Consultant:	
10	Brief description of the assignment	The detailed Request for Application (RFA) documents, including the Terms of Reference (ToR) of these four packages, are obtainable from the office of the undersigned during office hours: 9:30 am to 2:30 pm, free of cost. It will also be available at the PKSF website: <a href="https://pksf.org.bd/tender/">https://pksf.org.bd/tender/</a> .
11	Experience, resource, and delivery capacity required of the Consultant	
12	Other Details	
C.	Procurement Entity Details:	
13	Name of the Official Inviting EOI	Dr. Md. Jashim Uddin
14	Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Additional Managing Director
15	Address of the Official Inviting EOI	<b>Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)</b> PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
16	Contact Details of Official Inviting EOI	Telephone: 02-222218211; e-mail: <a href="mailto:jashim@pksf.org.bd">jashim@pksf.org.bd</a>
The Procurement Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all applications.		
Dr. Md. Jashim Uddin Additional Managing Director		



## Ex-MP Safia Khatun arrested

UNB, Dhaka

Safia Khatun, a former MP from Cox's Bazar's Chakaria Pekua upazila, was arrested in Dhaka's Pallabi area on Saturday night in connection with the killing of a youth during the July-August movement.

The 70-year-old, who previously served as vice-president of Mahila Awami League, was detained around 10:10 pm in Balughat, according to Talebur Rahman, DC (Media) of the DMP.

Police identified her through CCTV footage, intelligence, and technological assistance. On July 19, Akram Khan Rabbi was shot dead in front of Abul Taleb School in Mirpur-10. His father, Faruk Khan, filed a case with Pallabi Police on August 25. The investigation into the killing is ongoing.



Two workers paint the wall of a high-rise without safety gear, putting themselves at risk of falling. The photo was taken in Sylhet's Zindabazar area recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Stronger push needed to implement CHT accord: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called for a stronger movement to implement the Chattogram Hill Tracts Peace Accord by resisting all conspiracies. They expressed concern that the delay in implementing the accord has caused deep frustration among hill communities and urged immediate, time-bound action to enforce the treaty.

The event, jointly organised by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti and Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum, marked the 27th anniversary of the CHT Peace Accord signing, which took place on December 2, 1997. It was held at the Women's Voluntary Association auditorium in Dhaka.

Dhaka University Professor Khairul Islam Chowdhury, co-coordinator of the CHT Accord Implementation Movement, said, "The CHT Peace Accord, signed with the state on December 2, 1997, holds historical significance. However, the initial hope it brought has now turned into despair."

He questioned the necessity of continuing military rule in the CHT and said "CHT Peace Accord Implementation Movement" was formed in response to these ongoing challenges. He also

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Barking deer beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) was allegedly beaten to death by locals in Juri upazila of Moulvibazar on Saturday.

This sparked outrage after a video of the incident went viral on social media yesterday morning.

The video showed the lifeless deer lying on a riverbank, surrounded by a crowd of children and teenagers.

Upon receiving information, forest department officials arrived at the scene, recovered the deer's body, and took it to a livestock hospital at the upazila headquarters.

Doctors found injury marks on its head and confirmed the animal had died. The forest department later buried the deer in a nearby forest.

Nazmul Hossain, range officer of Juri Range of Forest Department, said initial reports suggested the deer had been struck by a stone during the chase.

However, further investigation confirmed it was beaten to death with sticks.

"We are conducting a detailed investigation, and appropriate action will be taken," he said.

He further said the barking deer likely entered the area from the nearby forest in search of food.

Barking deer primarily feed on grass and leaves, and are classified as "Least Concern" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.

## Year-round strategy key to combatting dengue

Experts tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A year-round, inclusive approach involving all stakeholders is crucial to controlling *Aedes* mosquitoes, the primary carriers of the dengue virus, experts said during a roundtable at the CIRDAP auditorium yesterday.

The event, titled "Severity of Dengue and What to Do for Its Prevention", was organised by the Bangladesh Private Medical College Association against the backdrop of a severe dengue outbreak that has claimed 494 lives



and hospitalised 92,351 individuals since January.

"We often resort to reactive planning instead of proactive measures. Proactive planning involving all relevant stakeholders is vital," said Prof Humayn Kabir

Talukdar, speaking as a special guest. He stressed the importance of continuous anti-mosquito drives and year-round research to address the issue effectively.

Highlighting the role of public participation, Prof Zafarullah Chowdhury said, "Everyone must work together to control *Aedes* mosquitoes."

He also attributed the prolonged dengue season to changing rainfall patterns driven by climate change, which has extended breeding

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

পরিচালক এর কার্যালয়

কুর্মিটোলা জেনারেল হাসপাতাল

ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা।

E-mail: kurmitola500bed@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-কুজেন/হা/পোষ্ট গ্রাঞ্জুয়েট ট্রেনিং/২০২৪/৩৭১২ তারিখঃ ৩০/১১/২০২৪ইং

অবৈতনিক চিকিৎসকদের প্রশিক্ষণ সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তিঃ

কুর্মিটোলা জেনারেল হাসপাতাল বিসিপিএস কর্তৃক মেডিসিন, কার্ডিওলজি, সার্জারী, গাইনী এন্ড অবস্, অটোল্যারিঙ্গোলজি, অফথ্যালমোলজি, এন্ডোসকোপিসিওলজি, ডার্মাটোলজি এন্ড ভেনেরোলজি, পেডিয়াট্রিক বিষয়ে পোষ্ট গ্রাঞ্জুয়েশন প্রশিক্ষণ পরিচালনার জন্য অনুমোদন রয়েছে। এ প্রেক্ষিতে জানুয়ারী-জুন/২০২৫ইং সেশনে পোষ্ট গ্রাঞ্জুয়েট ট্রেনিং এর জন্য সরকারী মীতিমালা অনুযায়ী অনারারী মেডিকেল অফিসার (HMO) হিসেবে নির্ধারিত ফরমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদন ফরম [www.kgh.gov.bd](http://www.kgh.gov.bd) ওয়েবসাইটে হতে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে। ডাউনলোডকৃত আবেদন ফরম যথাযথভাবে পূরণ পূর্বক ০২ রুপি সম্মততালা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি, ইন্টার্নশীপ প্রশিক্ষণ সনদের ফটোকপি, বিএমডিসি কর্তৃক রেজিস্ট্রেশন এর ফটোকপি, এফসিপিএস/এমডি/এমএস পার্ট-১ এর ফটোকপিসহ আগামী ২৪/১২/২০২৪ইং তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে জমা প্রদান করা যাবে।

এ সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য কুর্মিটোলা জেনারেল হাসপাতাল ওয়েব সাইট: [www.kgh.gov.bd](http://www.kgh.gov.bd) অথবা হাসপাতাল প্রশাসনিক অফিসে পাওয়া যাবে।

স্বাক্ষরিত

ব্রিগেডিয়ার জেনারেল মোঃ সাইদুর রহমান

পরিচালক

GD- 1082

কুর্মিটোলা জেনারেল হাসপাতাল, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা।

বিএসএমআর মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর (সংস্থাপন শাখা)

১৪/৬-১৪/২৩, পল্লবী, মিরপুর-১২, ঢাকা-১২১৬, মোবাঃ ০১৭৬৯-৭২১০১০

ই-মেইল: [regoffice@bsmrmu.edu.bd](mailto:regoffice@bsmrmu.edu.bd), ওয়েব: [www.bsmrmu.edu.bd](http://www.bsmrmu.edu.bd)

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর: বিএসএমআরএমইউ/রেজি-৩০৬/২৪/৩০ তারিখ: ০১/১২/২০২৪

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের ২০১৩ সনের ৪৭ নং আইন দ্বারা প্রতিষ্ঠিত বিএসএমআর মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ-এর জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্য পদে কর্মকর্তা নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হইতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও পদ সংখ্যা	শ্রেণি ও বেতনস্কেল	সর্বোচ্চ বয়স	মন্তব্য
১.	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (সিভিল)-০১ (এক)	গ্রেড-৯, বেতনস্কেল ২২,০০০-৫৩,০৬০/-	৩২ বছর	১। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা এবং আবেদনের শর্তাবলি সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে ( <a href="http://www.bsmrmu.edu.bd">www.bsmrmu.edu.bd</a> ) দেখুন। ২। আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ১০ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪। ৩। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্থায়ী ক্যাম্পাস চট্টগ্রাম (এনং মোহরা ওয়ার্ডে কালুরঘাট এলাকায় থানা: বন্দর, জেলা চট্টগ্রাম)-এ নির্বাণাধীন।

GD- 1086

বশব্দ শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

Dhaka South City Corporation

Office of the Executive Engineer

Traffic Engineering Circle

Nagar Bhaban, Dhaka.

Ref. No. 46.207.000.09.27.721.2024

Date: 01/12/2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-Gp Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of :

SI No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of works	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1.	Tender ID: 1032516 TEC/OF/2022-23 /SBT_PF/P07	Contruction of a Footover Bridge at Captain Mansur Ali Sarani near Old Ramna Police Station due to Safe Pedestrian Crossing under Dhaka South City Corporation.	30-Dec-2024 11:00	30-Dec-2024 12:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National c-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branch. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

(5 X 4)

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/১৪৪/২০২৪-২০২৫

01/12/2024

(Saiful Islam)

Executive Engineer

Traffic Engineering Circle

Dhaka South City Corporation.

e-mail: [actecdsc@gmail.com](mailto:actecdsc@gmail.com)

নর্থ-ওয়েস্ট পাওয়ার জেনারেশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড

NORTH-WEST POWER GENERATION COMPANY LIMITED

ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

ইউটিসি ভবন, (লেভেল ৩ ও ৪), ০৮ পাছপথ, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫।

Phone : 48122117-18, e-mail : [info@nwpvgl.gov.bd](mailto:info@nwpvgl.gov.bd), web : [www.nwpvgl.gov.bd](http://www.nwpvgl.gov.bd)

Memo No-27.28.0000.501.11.301.19.1280

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Date: 01.12.2024

North-West Power Generation Company Limited (An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board) is looking for energetic and promising persons for immediate appointment on contractual basis to the following posts and inviting applications through online system from Bangladeshi Nationals:

SL. No	Name of the Post & Basic Salary	No. of Post(s)	Required Educational Qualification	Age
01	Assistant Manager (Accounts/Finance/Audit) Basic Salary: Tk. 52,000/-	04	At least Honors with Master Degree in Finance/ Accounting or BBA & MBA (Finance/Accounting) from any recognized university with at least GPA 3.50 on the scale of 5.00 and CGPA 3.00 on the scale of 4.00 or equivalent.	Age shall be maximum 32 (thirty-two) years as on 01.12.2024
02	Assistant Manager (Chemical) Basic Salary: Tk. 52,000/-	02	B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering/M.Sc with Honors in Applied Chemistry from any recognized university with at least GPA 3.50 on the scale of 5.00 and CGPA 3.00 on the scale of 4.00 or equivalent.	
03	Junior Assistant Manager (ICT) Basic Salary: Tk. 40,000/-	01	Diploma in Computer Technology/Computer Science & Technology/Telecommunication Technology/ Data Telecommunication & Network Technology from any Govt. approved Polytechnic institute with at least GPA-3.50 on the scale of 5.00 and CGPA-3.00 on the scale of 4.00 or equivalent.  Or Graduate in relevant subject from any recognized university/institute with at least GPA-3.50 on the scale of 5.00 and CGPA-2.50 on the scale of 4.00 or equivalent.	

Compensation Package:

a) House rent allowance, medical allowances, festival bonus, gratuity, other fringe benefits & allowances as per the pay structure and the rules of North-West Power Generation Company Limited.

b) Income Tax: To be paid by the employee.

General Conditions:

1. Candidates must have strong communication skill in Bengali and English (written & oral) including computer literacy.

2. Persons employed in Government / Semi-Government / Autonomous organization(s)/Govt. owned company(s) should have permission from the proper authority.

3. Candidates passed O level and A level having minimum grade point B for each subject can apply.

4. Candidates passed from foreign university(s)/institute(s) should have equivalent result and certificate from the competent authority.

5. Candidates should also be capable of working in challenging and stressful situations.

6. Candidates must be ready to work in any area of North-West Power Generation Company Limited.

7. Age limit may be relaxed for the departmental candidates of NWPGL.

8. Any kind of persuasion will disqualify the candidate.

9. The Authority of North-West Power Generation Company Limited reserves the right to increase or decrease the number of post and cancel any or all applications without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Submission of Application:

Interested candidates must apply through the [Online Application System](#) where a scanned recent photograph (within last 06 months) and signature of the candidate shall be inserted properly. The online application system will be available in the career site (<http://career.nwpvgl.gov.bd>) of North-West Power Generation Company Limited's website (<http://nwpvgl.gov.bd>).

The applicant must pay Tk. 600/- (Six Hundred) for the posts mentioned in serial no. 01 to 02 and Tk. 500/- (Five hundred) for the post mentioned in serial no. 03 through [NWPGL Career Portal's Online Payment Gateway](#) to complete the application process in the career site of NWPGL (<http://career.nwpvgl.gov.bd>).

Candidates must apply not later than 22.12.2024 (5:00 p.m.).

01.12.2024

(Md. Mamunur Rahman Mondal)

General Manager (HR & Admin)

North-West Power Generation Company Limited.

GD- 1087



WHAT'S  
THE HAPS?

'Artivism' exhibition at AFD

Save the Children in Bangladesh and Alliance Française de Dhaka are hosting an artivism exhibition where young girls share their visions for progress and raise awareness during #16daysofactivism. November 30 - December 6.

## Geetikobi Shongho introduces new executive committee

Geetikobi Shongho (Lyricists Association of Bangladesh) has announced its freshly formed executive committee for the 2024-26 term by appointing Asif Iqbal as president and Joy Shahriar as general secretary. The 15-member panel was declared yesterday by Naquib Khan, chief election



commissioner of the election committee, at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, in the presence of Foad Nasser Babu and Fahmida Nabi. **Shonghojoner Geetikobita** (Anthology of Lyricists' Poetry), a collaborative publication by Adorn Publications and Geetikobi Shongho, was also unveiled at the event.

## Chhayanaut's 'Jagoroni' initiative opens with national anthem

Chhayanaut launched its December initiative titled 'Jagoroni' (Awakening) yesterday, to honour the Liberation War. They will release a new song each morning throughout the month as part of the initiative. To mark the start of the victory month and the debut of its digital platform, the institution broadcasted the national anthem sung by thousands of voices.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Over 3,000 participants, including artistes, teachers, students, and organisers, united to perform the national anthem at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Rayerbazar. This collaborative effort, led by Chhayanaut, involved Nalonda High School, Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammelan Parishad, Kanthashilon, and Bratachari.



## Dua Lipa recreates memes with actual 'Levitating' and 'SRK' mashup

Dua Lipa stunned Indian fans by performing a mashup of her global hit song *Levitating* with Shah Rukh Khan's iconic Bollywood song *Woh Ladki Jo* from film *Baadshah* (1999) on Saturday. Dua Lipa's most popular song, *Levitating*, frequently trends on Instagram as part of a mashup. The combination of these two tracks quickly became a favourite among the Gen Z. Dua Lipa recently took the stage by storm, performing *Levitating*—not in its original form, but as the mashup—displaying her awareness of the trend.



## Linkin Park secures entire top 10 on Billboard Hard Rock chart

Linkin Park is experiencing one of their most successful weeks ever on the Billboard charts. With their comeback album *From Zero* making an impressive debut on multiple charts, the tracks from the project are achieving significant success individually. While four songs were released ahead of the album's launch, the remaining tracks, unveiled alongside the full project, are now also securing spots on various Billboard charts. *The Emptiness Machine* dominates the Hot Hard Rock Songs chart, claiming the top spot for 11 of its 12 weeks. Tracks from the band's album *From Zero* also shine, with *Heavy is the Crown* steady at No 2, *Two Faced* climbing to No 3, and *Over Each Other* holding at No 4.

## 'Bollywood once felt unreachable'



Telugu icon Allu Arjun has recently reflected on his journey into Bollywood, sharing that he once believed making a mark in the Hindi film industry was beyond reach. However, with the upcoming release of Sukumar's directorial *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, scheduled to hit theatres on December 5, his dream of connecting with audiences nationwide is steadily becoming a reality. Allu Arjun reflected on how distant the idea of doing a Hindi film once seemed. "The thought of working in Bollywood felt like an unattainable dream. We used to think, 'Maybe, if we're lucky, we'll get to do one Hindi film in our lifetime.' That's how far it felt for us. Standing here today, on this stage, is an incredible milestone for me," the actor shared.

# NEWS

## Outrage in Teknaf

FROM PAGE 12 and ammunition while another person fled the scene. "During primary interrogation, the boy admitted his father have given him the pistol and ammunition to deliver those to a nearby house." Rezaul at a press briefing alleged police targeted his son based on political affiliation. "Police recovered arms and ammunition from a house near ours and later raided my home when I wasn't there. They dragged my son out of bed, kicked him, and implicated him in the case. The confession they claim was forcibly extracted." He added that his son, a seventh grader and three-time scholarship recipient, missed his annual exams due to his detention. "I demand the government investigate the incident, withdraw the false charges, and ensure my son's immediate release." OC Gias Uddin said Rezaul, who is

accused in several cases, had given the weapon to his son for safekeeping. "The boy was caught red-handed with his [Rezaul's] weapon. Considering his age, we ensured his rights [as a juvenile] but can't release him given the seriousness of the offense." He added that the boy was sent to a Child Development Center after being presented in court. The controversy deepened after a video footage of the boy's confession surfaced on social media. Netizens alleged the confession was coerced and questioned how such a recording could be made while the child was in police custody. The OC denied police involvement in filming the video, claiming it might have been done by onlookers during the arrest. Yesterday, hundreds of students in Teknaf formed a human chain demanding the minor's release. Earlier in Dhaka University, students hailing from Ukhiya and Teknaf

demonstrated near the Raju sculpture and demanded the removal of OC Gias Uddin. Joynal Abedin, president of the Dhaka University Student Association of Ukhiya-Teknaf, said the arrest of a 16-year-old student is a human rights violation. He said Rezaul is known to have a criminal record. "The boy was picked up from one house, while the pistol, allegedly belonging to his father, was recovered from a different location. "The video footage collected from locals suggest the weapon was not in the detainees possession." He further accused police of coercing a confession from the child. "The video of his confession was recorded by police, and a 16-year-old child is bound to give a statement under duress." Abedin added that if Rezaul is guilty, he should face the consequences, "but targeting a minor is unacceptable".

## Key promises still unfulfilled

FROM PAGE 12 people, demilitarisation, empowering district and regional councils, and making the Land Commission effective -- are still unmet." He added that not a single repatriated or internally displaced indigenous person has been rehabilitated, despite the formation of a taskforce on January 20, 1998. Similarly, the district and regional councils have been rendered ineffective. Demilitarisation has also not been achieved, even though the treaty stipulated the presence of only six camps, he said, adding that the Land Commission, formed in 2001, has yet to resolve any land dispute. Dipayan Khisa, a PCJSS central committee member, said that despite being a signatory to the accord, the AL government has betrayed the CHT people as it did not implement the treaty fully. "Voter lists of the CHT permanent residents must be prepared for holding elections to three district councils, members of which elect the regional council. However, no government, including the Awami League, has taken any steps to formulate the voter lists." In the absence of such lists, polls in the three hill districts have not been held and consequently, the regional council elections could not take place, he said, adding that the district council members are replaced whenever the government changes. The PCJSS leader alleged that the district councils function as a tool of the government, turning the three district councils into factories for implementing the ruling party's agenda without respecting the highest administrative body in the

hills, the regional council. Santoshita Chakma Bakul, general secretary of the Parbatya Chatotogram Jumma Kalyan Samity, said a separate 20-point treaty was signed with the government on March 9, 1997, before the CHT Peace Accord, in which the government promised rehabilitation of the returnees from India. "A taskforce was formed on January 20, 1998, for rehabilitation, but not a single person has been rehabilitated to date, as the issue relates to the Land Commission, which could not resolve any disputes because the government failed to formulate its regulations." He demanded that the government prepare the regulations for the commission immediately. Shamsul Huda, executive director of the Association for Land Reform and Development, said the law under which the Land Commission was formed contradicted the CHT Peace Accord, and it took until 2016 to amend the provisions of the law. "After 2016, the Land Commission managed to hold a few meetings. But it could not convene meetings regularly due to opposition by a Bangalee organisation in the CHT. A powerful group supporting this organisation has prevented the commission from functioning." He added that over 28,000 land-related complaints remain unresolved because the Land Commission is dysfunctional. "To make the commission effective, regulations need to be prepared as early as possible. Despite repeated requests from the regional council, I don't understand why the relevant ministry has not taken any steps in this regard."

## Hasina's allies have properties worth Tk 6,000cr in UK

FROM PAGE 12 wrongdoing, asserting that all acquisitions complied with money-laundering laws. **Saifuzzaman Chowdhury** Former land minister Saifuzzaman and his family are said to own over 300 properties in the UK, valued at approximately £160 million. A previous report by Al Jazeera in September estimated the global value of his assets at \$500 million. Bangladesh's Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) has frozen Chowdhury's bank accounts, and a court has ordered the seizure of his immovable assets within the country. He is also under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and is barred from leaving Bangladesh. **Ahmed Akbar Sobhan** The chairman of Bashundhara Group, Sobhan, and his family reportedly own two properties worth £13 million in Surrey, purchased through offshore companies. During the investigation, a mansion linked to Sobhan's son was identified in the area. The family strongly denies the allegations, with Bashundhara's vice-chairman, Safwan Sobhan, claiming the accusations are baseless. **Nazrul Islam Mazumder** Nazrul, chairman of Nassa Group, is also under investigation for money laundering. He and his family allegedly own five properties worth £38 million in London's Kensington area. Government Actions and Legal Responses The Bangladesh government has taken strict measures against those implicated. Authorities have frozen bank accounts, seized properties, and issued travel bans against several individuals, including Sobhan and his family. In response to the allegations, legal representatives of the accused parties have consistently denied any misuse of funds or unlawful acquisitions. They argue that the purchases adhere to UK and Bangladesh laws governing property and finance. The findings of this investigation have intensified scrutiny over the financial dealings of Bangladesh's political and business elites, raising broader questions about corruption and accountability in the country.

## Unite against politics of vengeance

FROM PAGE 1 differences," Tarique said in a statement posted on his verified Facebook page last night. He put up the post following his acquittal in the two cases related to the August 21 grenade attack. "The beauty of truth is that it inevitably triumphs over propaganda and conspiracy, giving us faith that, eventually, justice and fairness prevail." He also reiterated the BNP's commitment to fostering democratic values in the country, highlighting the need for diversity and inclusion. "We pledge to uphold the spirit of democracy that thrives on diversity of faiths, beliefs, and ideologies, empowering the people of Bangladesh to define their own fate through electoral participation," he said in a statement. Highlighting his vision for the nation, Tarique expressed his aspirations, saying, "In that journey, we aspire to establish the rule of law, human rights, and freedom of expression, safeguarding the rights and liberties of every citizen and building an inclusive, tolerant, and rules-based society." **BNP ELATED** The BNP expressed satisfaction over the High Court verdict acquitting Tarique and other accused in the August 21 grenade attack cases. The party leaders also viewed this verdict as proof that all the cases filed against Tarique were politically motivated

and part of conspiracies. At a press conference at the party's Nayapaltn central office, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi hailed the verdict, saying, "Justice has been served... Tarique and other accused in the two cases had been deprived of justice under the Awami League government." Rizvi said that the cases were manipulated during the tenure of the Awami League, specifically accusing retired police officer Abdul Kahar Akhand, who was reappointed as the investigation officer, of having "malicious intentions." Following the announcement of the verdict, party leaders and activists brought out a celebratory rally in the Nayapaltn area. In a statement issued from London, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "Through this verdict, it has been proven that all the cases filed against Tarique Rahman were part of a political conspiracy." In a separate programme, the party's standing committee Member Mirza Abbas said the grenade attack was a "planned act by a foreign power" and had no connection to the BNP. "A foreign power carried out this heinous act to frame Begum Khaleda Zia and our leader, Tarique Rahman," he said in a programme at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Abbas called the verdict "good news

for justice" during the month of victory and expressed hope for Tarique's safe return to Bangladesh. **AWAMI LEAGUE PROTESTS** Mahbulul Alam Haniif, joint general secretary of the Awami League central committee, condemned and protested the acquittal of all individuals sentenced to death and life imprisonment in the cases. "Today's verdict proves that the government has completely hijacked the judiciary," he said in a statement yesterday. Haniif said, "We have seen the practical implementation of Dr Yunus's 'reset button' through this verdict. He wanted to erase everything from our memories. This is a part of the ongoing conspiracy to completely erase an incident like the horrific massacre of August 21." "This farcical verdict is a disgrace to the nation, despite having clear and specific evidence. In November 2008, Mufti Abdul Hannan, a leader of Harkat-ul-Jihad, was arrested. In his statement presented to the court, Hannan confessed that with the assistance of top figures in the BNP-Jamaat government, he carried out the grenade attack on the Awami League rally," he said in a statement. "Today's verdict once again demonstrates that this government has completely held the judiciary hostage. The culture of impunity and mob justice prevalent in the country will soon demand a heavy price," he added.

## Tigers bowled out for 164

FROM PAGE 12 between Taskin and Miraz before both got dismissed in the 69th over. Miraz, the innings' second-highest scorer with 36 runs, was undone by the short ball and Taskin (8) too suffered the same fate against the short ball. Both were victims of pacer Shamar Joseph. After Kemar Roach scalped the two wickets that fell on Day 1, it was Joseph and Jaydon Seales, whose

sizzle was too hot to handle for the Tigers' batters as the former picked up three wickets and the latter starred with four. The Tigers started the day well as they kept the Windies pace attack at bay for 8.4 overs but a flurry of wickets followed since then as the visitors Liton Das (1), Jaker Ali (1), Shadman Islam (64) within the next six overs, slimming hopes of a considerable total.



# Negotiators fail to reach agreement on plastic treaty

## Call for more time

AFP, Busan

Negotiators have failed to reach agreement on a landmark treaty to curb plastic pollution and need more time to continue discussions, the diplomat chairing the talks said yesterday.

Nearly 200 nations are in South Korea's Busan for negotiations that are supposed to result in the world's first accord on the issue after two years of discussions.

But a week of talks has failed to resolve deep divisions between "high-ambition" countries seeking a globally binding agreement to limit production and phase out harmful chemicals, and "like-minded", mostly oil-producing nations who want to focus on waste.

Plastic production is on track to triple by 2060, and more than 90 percent of plastic is not recycled.

A draft text released yesterday afternoon after multiple delays included a wide range of options, making clear the ongoing level of disagreement.

When an open plenary session finally convened late last night, chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso said progress had been made.

But he said "we must also recognise that a few critical issues still prevent us from reaching a comprehensive agreement."

"These unresolved issues remain challenging and additional time will be needed to address them effectively," he said.

"There is a general agreement to resume the current session at a later date to conclude our negotiations," he added.

Plastic production is on track to triple by 2060, and more than 90 percent of plastic is not recycled.



An injured girl and a woman are transported to a hospital following a strike by the pro-regime forces that targeted a neighbourhood in Syria's rebel-held northern city of Idlib yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Israeli strikes kill 15 in Gaza

## Cairo holds fresh talks with Hamas to reach a ceasefire deal

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes killed at least 15 Palestinians in Gaza yesterday, medics said, as Israeli forces kept up bombardments across the enclave and blew up houses on its northern edge.

Two children were killed when a missile hit a tent encampment in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, while four other people were killed in an airstrike in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, medics told Reuters.

Residents said the military blew up clusters of houses in the northern Gaza areas of Jabalia, Beit Lahiya and Beit Hanoun, where Israeli forces have operated since October this year.

Israel's military campaign in Gaza has killed at least 44,429 people and displaced nearly all of the enclave's population, Gaza officials said yesterday.

In Cairo yesterday, Hamas leaders held talks with Egyptian security officials to explore ways to reach a deal with Israel that could secure the release of hostages in return for Palestinian prisoners. The visit was the first since the US announced on Wednesday it would revive efforts in collaboration with Qatar, Egypt and Turkey to negotiate a ceasefire in Gaza.

# Distressed loans

FROM PAGE 12

The penalties for willful defaulters, such as travel bans and restrictions on trade licenses, are described as minimal and ineffective. Additionally, board members and their relatives were permitted to borrow against collateral, further undermining governance and accountability, it adds.

The report highlights the Finance Ministry's politically motivated licensing of private banks, which became a tool for patronage. Ownership was often granted to individuals with political affiliations, sidelining economic considerations and the concerns of external stakeholders.

"The Finance Ministry's politically motivated overreach in licensing private banks was yet another manifestation of policy and regulatory capture."

The White Paper stresses the urgency of reforms to prevent new oligarchs from taking over and perpetuating the cycle of exploitation.

Immediate actions under the International Monetary Fund programme and World Bank-supported budget reforms have begun addressing deviations from international norms, but these measures alone are insufficient to dismantle the entrenched culture of impunity, it observes.

Bangladesh Bank has started reconstituting bank boards following the departure of politically connected owners and directors. However, the road ahead remains challenging and demands sustained political will to transform the banking system from one ruled by vested interests to one governed by the rule of law, it recommends.

The report emphasizes the need for a robust corporate governance framework, enhanced regulatory autonomy, and the depoliticisation of bank licensing to ensure decisions are based on economic viability rather than political connections.

Strengthening oversight and increasing the number of independent directors on bank boards are also highlighted as crucial steps toward improving accountability and reducing the influence of sponsors.

It also emphasises the importance of sustained reforms and vigilance to prevent a recurrence of the current crisis and stresses the need for promoting financial inclusion by allocating credit to innovative startups and small enterprises without traditional collateral, thereby fostering growth and addressing the structural weaknesses in the banking sector.

# Bringing money

FROM PAGE 12

In addition to finding the picture of the looting money, the press secretary said the committee members also accomplished a post-mortem on the story of development that was portrayed earlier. The looting was going on in front of the eyes of the country's people, when many legitimised it.

"As a result, you have seen how many billions of dollars have been laundered," he said, adding that they were panicked after hearing the story of looting.

He said many politicians, bureaucrats, and some businessmen in collusion with each other plundered the taxpayers' money, the money of the poor people of Bangladesh.

"The picture of looting should be included in textbooks. Students of schools, colleges or universities should know this story," Shafiqul said, quoting the chief adviser as saying at the function.

Prof Yunus termed the report of the white paper preparation committee a historical document.

Stating that the government is committed to bringing back the laundered money, Shafiqul said, "We will bring back the laundered money. We have already started working with international organisations to this end."

Headed that many issues will be updated and then the people of Bangladesh will get the overall picture of the corruption of Sheikh Hasina's regime.

# Serbia denies behind Kosovo blast

## Says attack aimed at Belgrade

AFP, Belgrade

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic yesterday denied that Belgrade had masterminded a strike on Kosovar infrastructure, saying Kosovo itself had mounted a "hybrid attack" against his country.

The strike late on Friday -- near the town of Zubin Potok in an area of Kosovo's volatile north dominated by ethnic Serbs -- damaged a canal supplying water to hundreds of thousands of people and cooling systems at two coal-fired power plants that generate most of Kosovo's electricity.

Kosovar Prime Minister Albin Kurti immediately accused Serbia of masterminding the blast, calling the incident a "terrorist attack".

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- Establish partnerships with coaching centers, education consultants, and student counsellors to drive student enrolment.
- Foster and maintain strong relationships with partner institutes and agencies to ensure mutual satisfaction and successful collaboration.
- Plan, manage, and execute marketing, sales, and promotional campaigns.
- Organize student workshops, seminars, and events to promote and sell all UCB programs.
- Identify enrollment opportunities and organize education fairs, workshops, and events in Chattogram, Sylhet, and key nearby areas.

**Requirements**

- Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Business Administration, or a related field. A Master's degree or relevant certifications will be a plus.
- At least 4 years of experience in marketing, with a focus on university student enrolment, event management, school connect programs, exhibitions, and fairs.
- Familiarity with CRM software and project management tools.
- Strong sales and negotiation skills with the ability to close deals and develop long-lasting client relationships.
- A self-starter with the ability to work independently, set goals, and take initiative to drive business growth.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present confidently to clients, stakeholders, and senior management.
- Strong ability to manage multiple projects, prioritize tasks, and meet deadlines effectively.

Job Location: Chattogram and Sylhet

**Application Procedure:**  
Interested candidates are invited to submit their updated resume by **15<sup>th</sup> December 2024** to [career@ucbbd.org](mailto:career@ucbbd.org), with the subject line: **Assistant Manager, Business Development.**

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UNIVERSAL COLLEGE BANGLADESH  
SA Tower, 1 Gulshan Avenue,  
Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

**এসেনসিয়াল ড্রাগস্ কোম্পানী লিমিটেড**  
৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা  
ঢাকা-১২০৮।

**স্থানীয় দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

ইডিসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমগুলো প্রকৃত স্থানীয় প্রস্তুতকারক/সরবরাহকারকদের (সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যবসার সাথে জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করছেঃ-

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	বিবরণ	পরিমাণ	আর্নেষ্ট মানি	দরপত্র শিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরৎ যোগ্য)	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
০১।	ইডিসিএল/ক্রয়/লোকাল/দরপত্র/২০২৪/৪৬৬ তারিখঃ ০১/১২/২০২৪ইং	Benzy Benzoate BP (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)	৫,০০০ কেজি	২.৫%	টাকা ১,২৫০.০০ (এক হাজার দুইশত পঞ্চাশ) মাত্র প্রতি সেট।	১২/১২/২০২৪ ইং বেলা ১১-০০ ঘটিকা	১২/১২/২০২৪ ইং বেলা ১১-১৫ ঘটিকা
০২।	ইডিসিএল/ক্রয়/লোকাল/দরপত্র/২০২৪/৪৬৭ তারিখঃ ০১/১২/২০২৪ইং	Sorbitol Solution (70%) BP (সিডিউল মোতাবেক)	১০,০০০ কেজি	২.৫%	টাকা ১,০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) মাত্র প্রতি সেট।	১২/১২/২০২৪ ইং বেলা ১১-০০ ঘটিকা	১২/১২/২০২৪ ইং বেলা ১১-১৫ ঘটিকা

সকল কার্যদিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে উপরোক্ত কার্যালয় হতে শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র শিডিউল ক্রয় করা যাবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, যাদের ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন নাই তাদের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করার প্রয়োজন নাই। দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র শিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে না।

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## Save Chattogram hills from destruction

### Reports indicate widespread damage over the decades

We are concerned about the ongoing trend of hill cutting in Chattogram which has persisted despite the political changeover in the country. Recent findings in this regard paint a troubling picture—with one report saying that the port city has lost 120 hills over the past 40 years. Another report claims that only about 80 of the 200 hills the city once had remain, with at least 30 real estate projects having contributed to hill flattening over the last five decades. While data on hills can be sketchy at times, available studies clearly indicate widespread destruction in the name of constructing residential colonies, commercial ventures, and road infrastructure, largely due to poor oversight by the authorities.

During a recent visit to Chattogram, a correspondent for this daily documented the extent of damage in areas such as Khulshi, Akbar Shah, and Bayezid Bostami, where hills were levelled for multiple housing projects. Locals revealed that plot owners often erect walls first to dodge scrutiny. Although Department of Environment (DoE) officials claim to take action after receiving complaints—including filing 34 cases against violators in the past two years—the scale of destruction suggests that such actions are neither sufficient nor timely enough to deter further violations. Developers continue to operate with impunity, exploiting legal loopholes and weak enforcement of environmental laws. As a result, the city's hills and green spaces have diminished sharply, while landslide and waterlogging risks have escalated.

Under the Environment Conservation Act 1995, razing hills without permission from the DoE is a punishable offence. Permission should also be obtained from the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA). Authorisation or lack thereof is not the only issue here, however. According to a CDA official cited by *Desh Rupantor*, while there is no outright prohibition on building in hilly areas, construction requires caution due to the region's topography. The hills in Chattogram are primarily composed of sandy soil, which is prone to erosion, especially during heavy rainfall. This geological feature makes the hills particularly vulnerable to destruction when cut or disturbed.

Clearly, there must be stricter and more specific guidelines for construction in these hilly areas, and they must be effectively enforced. Over the years, enforcement has been hindered by corruption and political influences, issues that should be easier to address under the interim administration. Experts say that if the current trend of hill cutting continues, Chattogram's remaining hills could be halved by 2035. The authorities, therefore, must take stronger measures to prevent further damage. Otherwise, the region's ecological balance will be irreparably harmed, increasing the frequency and severity of landslides and flooding.

## Address the causes of internal migration

### We need solutions for a more balanced future

It is concerning that approximately 71 percent of internal migrant workers in Bangladesh move due to livelihood challenges or a lack of job opportunities. According to a recent survey, around 69 percent of internal migration is further driven by low wages. This underscores the persistent lack of opportunities in certain regions of the country. Internal migration also imposes significant costs both on those being compelled to move and on the areas they are migrating to.

The survey, which included 2,505 individuals across 10 districts (five source districts and five destination districts), also found that around 48 percent of internal migrants are motivated by the prospect of better healthcare when choosing a destination, while 85 percent seek higher wages. Naturally, this drives many towards Dhaka—and occasionally a few other major cities—resulting in overpopulation and straining the city's ability to provide basic services for such a large population.

Additionally, the survey revealed that climate change affects 55 percent of migrants from source districts. To cope with extreme weather, over 30 percent of migrants from these areas rely on their savings, further pushing them down the economic ladder. As witnessed during recent floods, thousands of families lost their homes and livelihoods, with their cattle or farmland either washed away or damaged. With extreme weather patterns becoming more frequent, such struggles are increasingly affecting a larger number of people, especially those who are already vulnerable.

The opportunity gap between rural and urban populations in Bangladesh is significant and well-documented. Numerous development agencies, including the UNDP, have identified various factors contributing to this divide, such as over-centralisation, poor infrastructure and communication networks, and the impacts of climate change. According to a 2018 report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), one of the primary drivers of migration is economic necessity. Since most migrants come from agriculture and fisheries backgrounds, they often find themselves seeking opportunities on the margins of the urban economy. Lacking the necessary training or skills for formal sector jobs, many face limited chances of escaping the poverty cycle.

It is high time the government developed a comprehensive strategy to address internal migration. It should focus on developing underprivileged regions, ensuring better economic opportunities for residents, and reducing the need for migration. Additionally, it must work to mitigate the impacts of climate change in vulnerable areas so that affected populations can better withstand extreme weather events. Introducing a Universal Basic Income scheme for vulnerable populations and expanding social safety net programmes could also provide crucial support.

## CPD'S 30-YEAR JOURNEY

# A testament to growth and resilience



**MACRO MIRROR**  
**Dr Fahmida Khatun**  
*is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.*

**FAHMIDA KHATUN**

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has completed an exciting journey spanning over three decades. In 1993, Prof Rehman Sobhan, an eminent economist and civil society leader in Bangladesh, took the initiative to establish the centre in response to the growing need of the country's civil society for a platform of its own after democracy returned in the early 1990s. It was a period when important policy reforms were being pursued in Bangladesh.

Prof Sobhan invited several eminent personalities to join CPD's board as distinguished members. It has been fortunate to have on its board globally acclaimed personalities and social entrepreneurs, such as the late Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder of BRAC, and Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank.

At the time it was established, CPD's board members perceived that it would contribute to strengthening the country's democratisation process by promoting a demand-driven developmental agenda and facilitating a process whereby stakeholders would have a say in the design, implementation and monitoring of developmental policies. CPD's journey in a country with limited space for independent voices offers ample experiences and lessons that can guide the think tank landscape in Bangladesh and other developing countries.

### Demand-driven and policy-relevant research

CPD's overarching objective is to contribute to good governance by promoting accountability and transparency and ensuring equitable development. Towards that, the think tank makes significant strides in ensuring high-quality research, capacity development of researchers, institutional sustainability, and smooth leadership transition. During the initial years, e.g. 1993-94, CPD's activities included mainly organising dialogues and discussions on macroeconomic management, governance, and donor-recipient relationships. However, the need to incorporate research was recognised early on, both as input to and outcome of the dialogue process, ensuring that research themes are identified based on felt needs.

It is at this time that the proposal for CPD's flagship research programme, the Independent Review of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD), was developed as a study to provide home-grown development alternatives to the government and donors. With the first IRBD completed in May 1995, CPD

developed a tradition of preparing its own research proposals in areas that were perceived to be important from a national perspective, and where it had the relevant competencies. Its research programme covers a wide range of issues, including governance, economic reforms, environmental sustainability, energy, women's empowerment, social development, the SDGs, trade, and the financial sector.

### Dialogues for constructive policy engagement

At the core of CPD's activities lies its dialogue programme. It designs



FILE VISUAL: **ANWAR SOHEL**

the dialogues in a manner that is not just a mere exchange of rhetoric and opinion but also promotes and stimulates constructive engagement and informed sharing of views. The dialogues are designed to come up with specific recommendations in terms of both redefining the policies and ensuring their effective implementation. These recommendations are then placed before the country's current and prospective policymakers as inputs to the policymaking process.

CPD brings together high government officials, senior agency executives, members of parliament (MPs), the business community, professionals, academics, non-government organisation (NGO) activists, and development partners to discuss specific policy issues in which they have relevant expertise. CPD dialogues also engage public interest groups such as trade unions, workers' and women's organisations, professional associations, and local community groups. Through these dialogues, policymakers and academics can engage directly

with those who experience the real consequences of policies and may have valuable ideas and concerns about the validity of such policies.

### Non-partisan stance, engagement with diverse stakeholders

Because of the importance of bringing together political parties to promote a consultative process for designing the reform activity, it is CPD's policy to be non-partisan in its outlook and to retain independence in designing its dialogues. Such a stance has enabled this organisation to bring together cabinet ministers and opposition leaders around the same table, even at times when the contending parties were not communicating with each other in parliament.

Thus, CPD dialogues are held in an environment where controversial issues may be discussed in a non-confrontational manner, and constructive solutions can be jointly explored. These initiatives have extended over several successive political regimes. Indeed, CPD can be credited for playing an important

and civil society organisations (CSOs) during the previous regime. Indeed, political polarisation in Bangladesh has significantly impacted the regulatory environment for NGOs and CSOs. Over the past decades, the country has witnessed a decline in policymakers' tolerance of objective criticism, leading to the use of new laws as a censorship tool. The remit of the NGO Affairs Bureau, the institution that regulates NGO activities, has been strengthened, posing challenges for NGOs and CSOs.

While the vigilance of regulatory bodies is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability of NGO and CSO activities, the bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining clearance certificates often lead to delays. These regulations were often politically motivated to undermine specific organisations, creating an environment that hinders the development of a culture of free thinking and free academic practices. This underscores the need for streamlined processes and efficient governance. CPD has been engaged with like-minded CSOs in discussing these issues with policymakers, though it seems difficult to convince the regulatory bodies as they were politicised by the previous government.

### CPD will continue to articulate people's concerns

CPD is a think tank deeply invested in Bangladesh's future. Therefore, for more than 15 years, it has been vocal in identifying the inherent weaknesses of the growth model pursued by the previous autocratic government of the Awami League. Following the ousting of the autocratic government on August 5, 2024 by a student-led mass uprising, the interim government led by Prof Yunus is pursuing the difficult task of improving Bangladesh's macroeconomic stability by reinstating discipline and raising efficiency in economic management. In addition to addressing the immediate issues, the government will have to work in several areas, such as improving the competitiveness of the economy, enhancing productivity, developing sustainable infrastructure, participating in regional and global value chains, addressing climate change challenges, and mitigating economic and social inequalities in the short to medium terms.

CPD has flagged these issues and articulated concerns over Bangladesh's deteriorating socioeconomic situation, while the previous fascist government presented the false narrative of growth. CPD has always suggested reforms since economic vulnerabilities have been visible through the poor performance of all important sectors as well as increasing inequality due to a lack of good governance, accountability, transparency, and the rule of law. By remaining true to its mission, CPD will continue to contribute to the country's institutional and policy reform efforts in establishing an equitable and just society.

# Let the textile tussle begin

## RMG NOTES



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

**MOSTAFIZ UDDIN**

The return of Donald Trump to power in the United States and the likelihood of increased tariffs on Chinese imports, including textiles, could shift the trade dynamics between these two economic giants dramatically.

If Bangladesh plays its cards right, it could emerge as a key beneficiary of this geopolitical shift, solidifying its position in the global garment trade and significantly boosting its presence in the US market.

If Trump raises tariffs on Chinese textiles, US buyers potentially will seek other sources to maintain profitability. Historically, countries like Vietnam, India, and Bangladesh have been the go-to alternatives. However, I believe, Bangladesh has a unique edge. Vietnam is experiencing rising labour costs, and India faces inefficiencies in its garment sector, leaving Bangladesh as one of the most viable options for US retailers. The US is already one of the largest markets for Bangladeshi garments, with imports reaching nearly \$10 billion in 2024. If Chinese garments become less cost-competitive, this figure could grow significantly as new buyers enter the

market and existing ones increase their orders.

Moreover, I think this shift could, and should, encourage Bangladesh to expand its product range. Traditionally focused on basic apparel like T-shirts and sweaters, the industry could now branch out into higher-value items such as sportswear, outerwear, and technical textiles, opening new revenue streams. A surge in demand for Bangladeshi garments would likely lead to job creation, benefitting millions of workers and their families. The ripple effects could extend to sectors like logistics, packaging, and transportation, contributing to overall GDP growth. However, seizing this opportunity will require Bangladesh to address several critical challenges.

First and foremost, I think Bangladesh must tackle its infrastructure issues. Delays caused by inefficiencies at ports, outdated road networks, and congested transport systems could undermine our ability to meet the demands of international buyers. Improving infrastructure should be a top priority

for both the government and private sector. Buyers in the US are unlikely to tolerate shipment delays, especially when alternative suppliers might be more reliable.

In today's global market, buyers care deeply about ethical practices and environmental responsibility. US retailers will be paying close attention to labour standards and factory conditions, and in my view, Bangladesh must ensure it is meeting these expectations to avoid reputational risks and maintain its competitive edge. Additionally, adopting sustainable practices is equally important. Buyers are increasingly drawn to suppliers that use renewable energy and other sustainable factory practices, and Bangladesh could cement its reputation by investing in green technologies. But government policies and investments play a crucial role in this process.

Another issue is our industry's heavy reliance on imported raw materials. Despite our strength in garment production, Bangladesh imports much of its textiles, particularly cotton and synthetic fabrics. This dependency increases costs and lengthens production timelines. I think investing in domestic textile manufacturing could be a game-changer, enabling our industry to reduce costs and improve efficiency while becoming more self-sufficient.

Diversification is another critical step. By moving into higher-value products and niche markets,

Bangladesh can increase its revenue and reduce dependence on low-margin items. Additionally, I think proactive trade negotiations with the US will be vital. Securing favourable terms could make Bangladesh an even more attractive sourcing destination for American retailers.

That said, I recognise that Bangladesh isn't the only country with its eyes on this opportunity. Competitors like Vietnam, Indonesia, and even Mexico are also well-positioned to attract buyers seeking alternatives to China. In my opinion, Bangladesh must differentiate itself by emphasising its ability to deliver quality products at competitive prices while ensuring reliability and sustainability.

While we do not yet know what Trump will do—there is talk of a 10 percent tariff on all imports from China—this moment represents a pivotal opportunity for Bangladesh. If managed wisely, the benefits could extend far beyond the garment industry. Increased export earnings could fuel investments in other sectors, such as home textiles and accessories, creating a more diverse economic base.

A potential shift in US-China trade relations is a rare chance for Bangladesh to take a giant leap forward in the global garment trade. With careful planning, strategic investments, and a commitment to addressing its challenges, Bangladesh can position itself as a key player in the US market and beyond.



27TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS ACCORD

# Implementing CHT Accord a pressing need for peace and stability



Mangal Kumar Chakma  
is information and publicity secretary  
at Parbatya Chattagram Jana  
Samhati Samiti (PCJSS).

MANGAL KUMAR CHAKMA

Even though 27 years have passed since the historic Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) Accord was signed between the Bangladesh government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS), the much-cherished political and peaceful solution to the CHT crisis has not been achieved yet as it has not been fully implemented. Instead, the successive governments have opted for the policy of repression and extinction of the Jumma entity in an undemocratic and colonial manner. As a result, the enormous possibility that was created for putting an end to the long-standing bloody conflicts and discrimination and, above all, establishing peace and development in the hill tracts, is falling at risk of getting foiled day by day.

Following the signing of the accord in 1997, five political governments and two caretaker governments have been in power, but none of them showed the political will in fully implementing the CHT Accord. The student led mass uprising in July-August 2024 caused the downfall of the Sheikh Hasina government, following which the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus was formed. This administration has been in power for almost four months, yet it has not taken any initiative in this regard either. To this date, two-thirds of the clauses of the accord, including the core issues, remain unimplemented.

The Jumma people were in hope that the long-standing conflicts and violence in the CHT region would come to an end, that the accord would establish an imitable example of resolving a conflict peacefully. That in place of armed movement,

mutual confidence, cooperation and tolerance would be achieved. That the Jumma people would not be subjected to enforced jailing, repression, harassment, arbitrary arrests and killings any more. That like the citizens living in other parts of the country, residents of the hill tracts would also enjoy the security of life. But it is a regrettable fact that due to non-implementation of the accord, the Jumma people have not yet achieved the secured life free from undemocratic and suppressive rule.

Rather, the CHT region continues to be ridden with conflicts, similar to how it was during the pre-accord period. In the post-accord period, the successive governments have applied aggression and forceful measures as means to handle the crisis. The security forces deputed in the CHT have been regulating the region, including general administration, law and order, judiciary, and the development programmes, through Operation Utoron, which is serving as an obstruction to the introduction

**The government over the years has not only engaged in programmes that were counterproductive to the CHT Accord and against the interest of the Jumma people, but it also applied the colonial “divide and rule” policy to deal with the unruly and opportunist sections within the Jumma people.**

of a special governance system incorporating the three hill district councils with the CHT Regional Council atop.

A vested quarter within the government has been conducting various conspiracies and propaganda to criminalise the justified movement for full implementation of the CHT

Jumma people, divided them into different armed groups, and incited them against the current movement of the Jumma people demanding the full implementation of the accord as well as their right to self-determination.

Indeed, a special vested quarter has been creating a formidable

along the communal line has been intensified with a planned revival of communal hatred among the Indigenous Jumma people and the Bangalee people. Since the accord was signed, numerous communal attacks upon the Jumma people have taken place, including arson attacks on Indigenous homes and

lands and homesteads, breaking down their economic spine, and destroying biodiversity and the natural environment. Actions that pose a threat to the Indigenous culture and are counterproductive to the environment of CHT include the redesignation of reserve forest areas, leasing the traditional *Jhum* farming land and mouza land out to outsiders, establishing tourism centres via illegal occupation of traditional *Jhum* farming land, constructing border road, link roads and other infrastructures, establishing and expanding camps of the security forces, exploring for gas and oil resources, etc by destroying plantations and homes of the Jumma people.

The Jumma people cherished a hope that the time-immemorial feature of the Jumma-inhabited region would be restored through the implementation of the CHT Accord. The national identity of Jumma people, their culture, language, customs and practices, etc would thereby be developed and preserved. With this, the multiracial, multicultural and multilingual characteristics of Bangladesh would be strengthened and firmly founded. Instead, the Jumma people's fate stands at risk of getting abolished in the absence of a fully functional CHT Accord.

Democratic governance of the CHT region can never be developed while one-tenth of the area remains under undemocratic rule. A happy, prosperous and peaceful Bangladesh is possible only when the inhabitants of CHT are released from repression. Indeed, through full implementation of the CHT Accord, the historic opportunity to resolve the crisis through political and peaceful means will be revived and the long-standing conflict and discrimination will come to an end. Hence, the inhabitants of CHT continue to hope that the interim government, led by Prof Yunus, will take the step to create a roadmap in order to speed up the full implementation of the CHT Accord.



The Jumma people continue to hope for the full implementation of the CHT Accord so that peace can come to the region.

FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Accord. As a part of the mission, the fascist modus operandi includes identifying the right activists and people as “terrorists” and subjecting them to arbitrary arrest, extrajudicial killings, imprisonment under false charges, beatings, harassment, etc.

The government over the years has not only engaged in programmes that were counterproductive to the CHT Accord and against the interest of the Jumma people, but it also applied the colonial “divide and rule” policy to deal with the unruly and opportunist sections within the

environment in the region by nurturing these armed groups and providing support while continuing with repressive measures upon the people in the name of dealing with the terrorists. Not only that, the government has been operating against the interest of the Jumma people by making use of the opportunists, power-hungry and greedy Jumma individuals affiliated with various national political parties, including the deposed Awami League.

In recent months, propaganda

businesses by Bangalee people in Khagrachhari's Dighinala upazila in September, as well as clashes and mob beatings in Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

Instead of resolving the CHT crisis through peaceful, political means by fully implementing the CHT Accord, the authorities are employing a blueprint for the displacement of the Jumma people by utilising all possible means. As part of the whole, the development programmes include the conspiring acts of evicting the Jumma people from their ancestral

## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

# Piercing the invisibility of violence against Adibashi women



Myat Moe Khaing  
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multinational company and also writes on issues at  
the intersection of Indigenous and gender politics.  
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MYAT MOE KHAING

Only two months ago, Abul Hasnat Muhammad Sohail Rana, a teacher of Khagrachhari Government Technical School and College allegedly raped a seventh-grade female Tripura student. According to news reports, doctors found evidence of sexual assault. Protesters, mostly from the Indigenous communities, attacked him, and after he was taken to the hospital, he was declared dead. Immediately after his death, tension broke out between groups of Bangalees and Indigenous people. A hospital was vandalised, temples looted and houses and shops belonging to Indigenous communities in multiple areas were torched.

Human Rights Support Society reports that in September, at least 28 people were killed in mob beatings in Bangladesh. However, in no other part of the country has such violence escalated into community-targeted aggression, underlining systemic issues unique to Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Rana previously went to jail on charges of attempt to rape of a student in Kushtia, following which, he was transferred to Khagrachhari. The decision to transfer him to CHT instead of taking firm disciplinary action raises serious questions about whether CHT is being treated as a “dumping ground” for individuals with tarnished records, further neglecting the safety of Indigenous or Adibashi women.

Violence against Indigenous women is not new in the playbook of colonial oppression and systematic marginalisation. The recent violence towards Adibashis in Khagrachhari and Rangamati in September and October,



VISUAL: MONG SHONIE RAKHAINÉ

resulting in the deaths of four Indigenous people and widespread attacks on Indigenous properties, reveals a different dimension to gender-based violence against Adibashi women.

Amid indiscriminate violent attacks on us, we were called “*Bicchinotabadi*” or separatists. Instead of solidarity, we received the demands to answer why we were anti-state. We somehow managed to get through the days, but the nights were filled with fear. Social media was filled with provocative statements inciting hatred against us, and there was no hesitation in publicly demanding that Adibashis had to be controlled, lest

cultural traditions are exoticised to create a stark difference against modern “Bangalee” culture. As life-givers, we are the backbone of our communities. Under the “separatist” label, we are painted as the “enemy” women. Our wombs are targeted to disrupt the transmission of Indigenous ways of life. The violence is not just physical, it is deeply political and cultural.

On January 22, 2018, two Marma sisters were allegedly sexually assaulted by security forces in Orachhari village of Rangamati. IWGIA reports that in 2020, 25 violent incidents against Adibashi girls aged between 11 and 30 years took place in the

CHT. Physical assault, rape and attempted rape posed the biggest threat to their safety. From January to June 2021, 16 incidents of rape were confirmed by a report published by Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network. In 2022, Kapaeng Foundation documented at least 19 rape cases of Indigenous women and girls, including seven gang rapes.

The figures do not consider the many cases that go unreported. The 2016 Amnesty International report on sexual and gender-based violence in the CHT observed that 95 percent of victims feared stigmatisation and 60 percent chose not to pursue legal actions. By comfortably throwing Adibashi women under the “secessionist” label, perpetrators enjoy impunity and law enforcement agencies get an excuse to look away from the violation of our dignity. Dominant groups dismiss our suffering based on the conviction that it is self-inflicted and inevitable.

Such narratives depoliticise our activism. Our experiences are deeply entrenched in oppression, erasure and dehumanisation, yet our screams remain inaudible to dominant groups. Is it because recognising our struggles requires recognising their own privilege and complicity in systemic oppression?

In retrospect, a joint statement by IWGIA and Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission mentioned that Bangalee settlers had been attempting to incite unrest in the CHT ever since the Chief Adviser of the interim government referred to Indigenous Peoples of CHT as “Indigenous” in a speech on August 25, 2024. Certain groups protested this acknowledgment, claiming Bangalees were the country's true Indigenous population.

The Indigenous peoples have inhabited the region for centuries, long before the formation of modern Bangladesh. Historical accounts from Mughal and British administrators reference our distinct existence. During British rule, the region was classified as an “Excluded Area,” recognising the unique governance and cultural practices of its Indigenous communities. This status was reinforced by the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Regulation of 1900, which acknowledged the Indigenous population's autonomy.

Bangladesh has not ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention No 169 that aims to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Without the recognition of our Indigenous status, our customary land rights are not protected. To suppress land claims, perpetrators use terror and rape against women. On the other hand, Article 22 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples mentions, “States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous Peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.” How do we seek justice when our vulnerability is not recognised?

How does asking for Indigenous recognition translate to becoming a secessionist? If anything, we are seeking respectful coexistence and equitable relations with the state. Scandinavian countries, Bolivia, Mexico, North America and many other nations recognise their Indigenous Peoples. Were those countries divided?

Today the Chittagong Hill Tracts has the highest rate of poverty and illiteracy in Bangladesh, reported by Asian Development Bank. Despite having immense biological, cultural, and environmental resources, why is CHT lagging behind in almost all development indicators? Is it the Indigenous communities who want separation or the exclusionary policies pushing us to the margins?

Every year on May 5, Canada and the United States observe the National Awareness Day for Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Red dresses are put up in public spaces, symbolising the lives of Indigenous women lost to violence. There is no red pinon or thami hanging for us.

Experiencing gender-based violence as an Adibashi woman is like being hit by a car. You are only allowed to get medical attention if you can prove that you are not anti-state. How long can you wait till you bleed out?





## পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়



রাষ্ট্রপতি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ

১৭ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩১, ২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

### বাণী



পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের ২৭ বছর পূর্তি উপলক্ষে আমি পার্বত্য তিন জেলার সকল অধিবাসিকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

পার্বত্য জেলা রাঙ্গামাটি, বান্দরবান এবং খাগড়াছড়ি প্রাকৃতিক সম্পদে সমৃদ্ধ একটি অঞ্চল এবং উন্নয়নের ক্ষেত্রে অত্যন্ত সম্ভাবনাময়। যুগ যুগ ধরে এই তিন পার্বত্য জেলায় বসবাসরত বিভিন্ন জনগোষ্ঠীর বর্ণিল জীবনচারণ, ভাষা, কৃষ্টি ও সংস্কৃতি এ অঞ্চলকে বিশেষভাবে বৈশিষ্ট্যমণ্ডিত করেছে। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের উন্নয়ন সম্ভাবনা কাজে লাগিয়ে এলাকার আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে ১৯৯৭ সালের ২ ডিসেম্বর পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক জাতীয় কমিটি ও পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম জনসংহতি সমিতির মধ্যে এক ঐতিহাসিক চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। এ অঞ্চলের উন্নয়নে গঠিত হয় পার্বত্য বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় এবং পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম আঞ্চলিক পরিষদ। চুক্তি বাস্তবায়নের ধারাবাহিকতায় পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের আর্থ-সামাজিক, অবকাঠামো ও সাংস্কৃতিক উন্নয়ন চলমান রয়েছে। পার্বত্য জেলাসমূহে অগ্রগতির ধারাকে অব্যাহত রাখার জন্য আমি দলমত নির্বিশেষে সকলকে একযোগে কাজ করার আহ্বান জানাচ্ছি।

বাংলাদেশের পার্বত্য অঞ্চল নৈসর্গিক সৌন্দর্যের অপার আধার। আমাদের ভাষা আন্দোলন, স্বাধিকার আন্দোলন, মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধ, গণতান্ত্রিক আন্দোলন-সংগ্রাম ও বৈষম্যবিরোধী ছাত্র আন্দোলনসহ জাতির সকল সংকট ও ক্রান্তিকালে পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের অধিবাসীদের ছিল স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত ভূমিকা। অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকার একটি বৈষম্যহীন, দুর্নীতিমুক্ত, ন্যায়বিচারিক ও আধুনিক বাংলাদেশ গঠনে বহুমুখী সংস্কার পরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ করেছে। এর সফল বাস্তবায়ন বৈষম্য ও সাম্প্রদায়িকতা মুক্ত একটি পার্বত্য অঞ্চল প্রতিষ্ঠায় ভূমিকা রাখবে বলে আমি মনে করি। পার্বত্য জেলাসমূহের উন্নয়ন কর্মকাণ্ড আরো টেকসই ও বেগবান হবে, উন্নয়ন ও অগ্রগতিতে এগিয়ে যাবে পার্বত্য অঞ্চল-এ প্রত্যাশা করি।

মোহাম্মদ সাহাবুদ্দিন



### উপদেষ্টা

পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

১৭ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩১, ২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

### বাণী



পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের ২৭ বছরপূর্তিতে আমি পার্বত্যবাসীসহ দেশের আপামর সহাবিধে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

১৯৯৭ সালের যুগান্তকারী পার্বত্য চুক্তি পার্বত্য জনজীবনের ফিরিয়েছে স্বাভাবিক অবস্থা এবং কর্মসম্মান জীবনধারণ যা এতদঞ্চলের আর্থ-সামাজিক কর্মকাণ্ডে প্রচণ্ড প্রভাব সৃষ্টি করেছে এবং পাহাড়ি-বাগানী জনজীবনে এনেছে পরিবর্তনের ছায়া। তাই এই ঐতিহাসিক চুক্তি শিল্পে থাকা জনগোষ্ঠীর বহুমুখী শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নে বৈশিষ্ট্যমণ্ডিত করেছে। বর্তমানে পার্বত্যবাসীদের দারিদ্র্য বিমোচন ও টেকসই অর্থনৈতিক জীবনধারণের প্রকল্পে বর্তমান অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকার সকল প্রচেষ্টা অব্যাহত রেখেছে। বাংলাদেশের এক দশমাংশ এলাকা পার্বত্য অঞ্চল বিধায়, এ অঞ্চলে বনায়ন, জীববৈচিত্র্যের উন্নত ব্যবস্থাপনা ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের নেতিবাচক প্রভাব মোকাবিলায় ঐতিহাসিক কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করা প্রয়োজন। এ সকল বিষয় বিবেচনায় পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে জীবনধারণের মান উন্নয়নে শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, শিল্প, যোগাযোগ, অবকাঠামো, মেগাবোলি বৈচিত্র্যসমৃদ্ধ নানা পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ ও বাস্তবায়ন এ অঞ্চলে সার্বিক উন্নয়নের অগ্রদূত বর্তমান অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকার বন্ধপরিকর।

কৃষি ক্ষেত্রে বর্তমানে পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে উপযোগী পরিবেশে পরিকল্পিত উপায়ে নির্ধর্মিয়াদি অর্থনৈতিক সুফল লাভের জন্য কচি ও কান্ড বাদাম চাষে ব্যাপক সাড়া মিলেছে। তাছাড়াও পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের পাহাড় ও পর্বতের পরিবেশগত ভরসাম্য বজায় রেখে টেকসই উন্নয়ন কার্যক্রম অব্যাহত রয়েছে। আমার বিশ্বাস এবারের পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি দিবস উদযাপনের মধ্য দিয়ে শিক্ষা ও আর্থ-সামাজিক, প্রকৃতি ও পরিবেশের অবক্ষয় না ঘটিয়ে পাহাড়ের জৈববৈচিত্র্য সুযোগ-সুবিধা, পর্যটন শিল্পের অমিত সম্ভাবনা নিশ্চিত করে সকল মানুষের সুস্থ জীবন বিকাশে ব্যাপক জনসচেতনতা বৃদ্ধির সুযোগ তৈরি হবে। রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রপটও এ চুক্তি পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে নির্ধর্মিয়াদের বিরাজমান সংঘাত বহনিয়ে দ্রুত সমাধান করেছে। আমার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস, পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের সমস্ত জাতিগোষ্ঠী পারস্পরিক সহানুভূতি ও আল-সুরিকতার সাথে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহাবস্থান করছে। বর্তমান অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকার দেশের সকলের অধিকার ও শান্তি বজায় রাখতে বন্ধপরিকর। আশা করি, সকলের সন্নিহিত প্রচেষ্টায় পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তির পূর্ণ বাস্তবায়ন এবং পার্বত্য জনগণের আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নের মধ্য দিয়ে দারিদ্র্যমুক্ত, সুখী সমৃদ্ধ এবং সর্বক্ষেত্রে শান্তিপূর্ণ, বৈষম্যহীন ন্যায়বিচারিক বাংলাদেশ প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে সক্ষম হবে।

আমি পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের ২৭ বছরপূর্তি উপলক্ষে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সফলতা কামনা করছি।

সুপ্রদীপ চাকমা

### A Developed and Prosperous-Enlightened Hills

The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs expresses its deep appreciations to all peoples of the CHT on the 27th celebrations of the CHT Accord. Comprising three districts (Bandarban, Khagrachari, and Rangamati), it is a region with a rich cultural heritage, diverse ethnicities, and unbounded economic potentiality. However, it faces significant socio-economic, education and environmental degradation challenges, including underdevelopment and ethnic tensions. Lagging behind in socio-economic, educational and other indicators vis-à-vis other parts of the nation, the CHT Accord of 1997 has created dynamism in every sphere of social live. Unfortunately, the development of the CHT in the current context of Bangladesh requires addressing the region's unique challenges while capitalizing on its resources and culture which will be in a sustainable and inclusive and multi-faceted approach, focusing on infrastructure, education, healthcare, social equity, environmental protection and political understandings. Do so, follow deserves more consideration:

#### 1. Promote Inclusive Governance & People's Rights:

• Implement CHT Accord: Implementation of the CHT Accord 1997, which was signed aiming to address historical injustices and ensure political rights and good-governance for all communities of the CHT. Strengthening local governance structures and ensuring the participation of local leaders in decision-making process is critical as indicated in the Accord. The CHT Peace Accord (1997) should be fully implemented, ensuring the rights and autonomy of ethnic communities. Which will include better representation in decision-making processes and local governance.

• Decentralized Governance: Empowering the Hill District Councils (HDCs) in accordance with CHT Accord 1997 and other local institutions to manage resources, development, and good-governance for all. So, establishment of robust systems for conflict resolution to address disputes and prevent violence. Strengthen the role of local councils (like the CHT Regional Council) and ensure that the local peoples are fairly represented.

#### 2. Improve Infrastructure and Connectivity:

• Roads and Transport: Improve road networks for transportation links to integrate the region with the rest of the country for free movement of persons and goods and especially to facilitate trade, mobility, and access to essential services and ultimately that will connect remote villages to urban centers. Besides, multiple uses of Kaptai Lake facilities for harmonious growth in economic developments in fisheries, navigation, eco-tourism and other service sectors.

• Digital Connectivity: Expand internet and mobile network coverage to improve access to information, institutional and remote education, healthcare services and finally economic opportunities. The lack of digital connectivity is a major barrier to social and economic development to.

• Energy and Utilities: Expand access to electricity is prime for socio-economic development. About 250,000 households are still out of electricity. Although, due to remoteness and geographical terrain national grid may not be possible but government may like to provide household solar panels to bring the nation in 100% power supply. So, renewable energy options (solar, hydro), to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and improve living standards.

#### 3. Inclusive & Integrated Economic Development:

• Sustainable Agriculture: To develop livelihood of the CHT peoples, it is essential to promote agricultural development focusing on sustainability and climate-resilient farming methods, replacing shifting cultivation practices harmonious horticulture and long-term income generating methods to increase productivity without harming the environment. Introduce climate-resilient crops, organic farming, and agro-forestry techniques that are culturally acceptable and environmentally sustainable. Besides, increase fisheries and eco-tourism and sustain water transport during lean period are must. Finally, that includes along with better access to markets access for supplies of different produces.

• Products Diversification: Encourage alternative livelihoods, especially for youth and women, through vocational training in skills like weaving, carpentry, eco-tourism, and digital literacy. Supporting entrepreneurial self-employed small-scale businesses and cottage industries can help diversify the local economy and reduce dependence on traditional farming, which is often vulnerable to climate impacts.

• Tourism Development: Capitalize on the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage to promote eco-tourism and community-based tourism



প্রধান উপদেষ্টা

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

১৭ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩১, ২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

### বাণী



প্রতি বছরের মতো এবারও 'পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি দিবস ২০২৪' পালিত হচ্ছে জেনে আমি আনন্দিত। এ উপলক্ষে আমি দেশের পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের সকল জনগোষ্ঠীকে আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন ও শুভেচ্ছা জানাই।

১৯৯৭ সালের এই দিনে বাংলাদেশ সরকার এবং পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম জনসংহতি সমিতি এর মধ্যে চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়েছিলো। এটি একটি ঐতিহাসিক চুক্তি ছিলো যা শান্তি চুক্তি নামেও পরিচিত।

দেশের মোট আয়তনের এক দশমাংশ এলাকায় পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের জনগোষ্ঠীর বসবাস। তাই পার্বত্য অঞ্চলকে পশু কাটিয়ে বাংলাদেশের উন্নয়ন সম্ভব নয়। পার্বত্য জেলাসমূহের নৈসর্গিক সৌন্দর্য্য সংরক্ষণ ও পর্যটন শিল্পের প্রসারে স্থানীয় জনসাধারণকে সম্পৃক্ত করে নানামুখী সংস্কারের উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে। এতে বেকারত্ব হ্রাস পাবে, অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন ত্বরান্বিত হবে এবং জীবনযাত্রার উন্নতি ও সামাজিক বৈষম্য দূর হবে। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের সকল অধিবাসীর জীবনে শান্তি, সম্প্রীতি, উন্নয়ন ও অগ্রগতির অভিযাত্রা অব্যাহত রাখতে সকলের সন্নিহিত প্রচেষ্টা আবশ্যিক।

ছাত্র-শ্রমিক জনতার গণঅভ্যুত্থানের মাধ্যমে গঠিত অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকার সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতির বন্ধন অটুট রেখে ঐক্যবদ্ধভাবে বৈষম্যমুক্ত নতুন বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলতে অঙ্গীকারবদ্ধ।

আমি 'পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি দিবস ২০২৪' এর সার্বিক সাফল্য কামনা করি।

প্রফেসর মুহাম্মদ ইউনূস



### সচিব

পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

১৭ অগ্রহায়ণ ১৪৩১, ২ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

### বাণী



পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের ২৭ বছরপূর্তিতে আমি পার্বত্যবাসীকে জানাই আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন।

প্রাকৃতিক ও নৈসর্গিক সৌন্দর্য্য আর সাংস্কৃতিক বৈচিত্র্যের এক রূপময় খু-খড় পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চল। ২২টি জাতিভাষা এবং ১৯টি উপজাতীয় সম্প্রদায়ের সংমিশ্রণ এ অঞ্চলকে দেশের অন্যান্য অঞ্চলের চেয়ে বিশেষ বৈশিষ্ট্যমণ্ডিত করেছে। খাগড়াছড়ি, রাঙ্গামাটি ও বান্দরবান এই তিন জেলার বস্ত্রীর্ণ বনভূমি, উঁচু পাহাড়, উপত্যকা এবং কিছু সমতলভূমি নিয়ে দেশের এক দশমাংশ এলাকা জুড়ে পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম গঠিত।

'পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি' দুই দশকের বেশি সময় ধরে চলমান সংঘাতকে প্রশমিত করেছে। এরই ফলশ্রুতিতে গঠিত হয় পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় ও পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম আঞ্চলিক পরিষদ এবং পুনর্গঠিত হয় তিন পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তির পর পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক কিছু আইন প্রণয়ন ও কিছু বিধি-বিধান সংশোধন করা হয়েছে। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় তিন পার্বত্য জেলার মানুষের উন্নয়ন ও কল্যাণে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। পার্বত্য জেলাসমূহের নৈসর্গিক সৌন্দর্য্য সমন্বিত রেখে পর্যটন শিল্পের প্রসার ঘটানোর সরকার বিভিন্ন জনকল্যাণমুখী উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করেছে।

পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তির বাস্তবায়নের মাধ্যমে এই অঞ্চলে বসবাসকারী মানুষের জীবনে সৃষ্টি হয়েছে অতুলপূর্ণ উন্নয়ন। পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় চুক্তি বাস্তবায়নের মাধ্যমে সম্প্রীতি ও উন্নয়নের সেতুবন্ধন রচনা করে তিন পার্বত্য জেলার মানুষের উন্নয়ন ও কল্যাণে নিরলসভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে।

পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম উন্নয়ন বোর্ড, তিন পার্বত্য জেলা পরিষদ, সরকারের অন্যান্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের সমন্বয়ে এবং উন্নয়ন সহযোগী দেশের আর্থিক ও কারিগরি সহায়তায় তিন পার্বত্য জেলায় শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, বিদ্যুৎ, বনায়ন, কৃষি সম্প্রদায়, মৎস্য ও পশু সম্পদ, সুপেয় পানির ব্যবস্থা, বিভিন্ন অবকাঠামো নির্মাণ, কচি ও কান্ড বাদাম চাষ এবং পর্যটন সুবিধা বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে এ এলাকার মানুষের জীবনমান উন্নয়নের কাজ চলছে। বর্তমানে অন্তর্বর্তীকালীন সরকার পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের মানুষের আর্থ-সামাজিক উন্নয়নসহ একটি বৈষম্যহীন, কল্যাণকর ও প্রগতিশীল বাংলাদেশ গড়ে তুলতে বন্ধপরিকর।

আমি পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের ২৭ বছরপূর্তি উপলক্ষে গৃহীত সকল কর্মসূচির সফলতা কামনা করছি।

এ কে এম শামিমুল হক ছিদ্দিকী

by avoiding damaging the environment or displacing local communities. Ethnic communities can benefit from tourism by developing cultural sites, homestays, and guiding services. However, tourism development should be sensitive to local cultures and environmental sustainability.

- Promote Entrepreneurship and Local Industries: Encourage local entrepreneurship, particularly in small-scale industries such as handicrafts, traditional textiles, bamboo products and local ethnic craftsmanship, by providing market access, financial assistance, and training which can be exported or sold locally.
- Value Addition and Market Access: Develop infrastructure for better access to markets, especially for local products such as handicrafts, bamboo, and forest products. Government and non-governmental support for value-added products will open new markets for ethnic goods, enhancing economic opportunities. Promote the unique crafts of CHT, such as weaving, bamboo products, and traditional arts. Facilitating fair-trade systems, cooperatives, and access to national and international markets will provide income opportunities without compromising cultural integrity.

#### 4. Enhance quality Education and Skill Development:

- Improved Access to Education: The CHT has fallen behind in education than other parts of Bangladesh. So, compulsory primary, secondary and possibly higher education facilities are must to ensuring access to education for all communities. Besides, CHT schools have been incorporated few ethnic languages, traditions, and history into the curriculum to promote inclusivity. Support the preservation of local languages and promote bilingual or multilingual education to foster cultural identity and social cohesion.
- Quality Higher Education and Vocational Training: Provide vocational and skills training programs tailored to the region's needs, such as in construction, IT, handicrafts, teaching foreign languages emphasizing on English, eco-tourism, to increase employability and self-reliance.
- Teacher Training and Capacity Building: Provide incentives for qualified teachers to work in CHT, along with ongoing training to improve the quality of education. Teachers should be trained in culturally sensitive approaches that reflect the ethnic way of life.

#### 5. Health and Wellbeing:

- Health Infrastructure: Improve healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics, and mobile health units, especially in remote areas. There should be a focus on maternal and child health, mental health, and prevention of diseases prevalent in the region. Mobile health clinics can be used to reach hard-to-access areas.
- Community Health Programs: Train and deploy local health workers to serve as intermediaries between healthcare providers and ethnic communities. This will help bridge cultural gaps in healthcare delivery.
- Mental Health Support: Address mental health challenges, particularly trauma from past conflicts, by providing community-based mental health services and support systems.

#### 6. Environmental Conservation and Natural Resource Management:

- Sustainable Forestry: The CHT is rich in forests and bio-diversity. It contributes 44% of oxygen at national level. So, develop sustainable forest management practices and preventing deforestation and conserving natural resources while supporting eco-tourism and the livelihood to flourish for locals. Remind that these are a crucial part of the ecosystem. This could involve collaboration with local communities who have traditional knowledge of the land.
- Climate Change Adaptation: Introduce climate-resilient farming techniques and water conservation methods to cope with unpredictable weather patterns. This could involve reforestation, watershed management, and sustainable water use practices. Mentionable that during lean/dry period, water scarcity is huge which hampers transportation, agriculture/horticulture and household uses of vulnerable women in CHT. So, to keep the water availability during dry

season, steps should be taken to revive stream and water heads. Noted that Kaptai Lake water level drastically falls in dry season of the year. So, given the region's vulnerability to climate change, investments in climate-resilient infrastructure (e.g., flood control systems, drought-resistant crops) are necessary.

- Eco-tourism and Conservation: Promote eco-tourism as a way to protect biodiversity while providing economic benefits to local communities. This could include promoting conservation projects, wildlife protection, eco-friendly infrastructure and eco-friendly tourism.

#### 7. Address Social Inequality and Empower Women:

- Gender Equality: Ensure that females and males have equal access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Empower women in decision-making roles, particularly in local governance and community leadership are far behind.
- Social Safety Nets: As all aware that CHT is far behind in education, health and socio-economic indicators of growth at national level. So, introduce targeted welfare programs to address poverty and inequality in marginalized communities. This could include cash transfers, food security programs, housing schemes, modern internet based education and medical facilities, reduce poverty level and considering environment protection schemes with sufficient fundings.

#### 8. Promote Inter-Community Dialogue and Conflict Resolution

- Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Promote dialogue and understanding between ethnic and Bengali communities to reduce tensions and build social cohesion. Initiatives could include cultural festivals, inter-community education programs, and joint development projects. This could be supported by the government, civil society organizations, and international agencies.
- Address Historical Grievances: Acknowledge and address the historical injustices faced by ethnic communities, including land loss, forced migration, and violence. This could involve compensatory measures, reparations, and long-term plans for peaceful co-existence of different communities.

#### 9. Strengthen Law and Order:

- Security and Rule of Law: Strengthen the rule of law and ensure that communities feel secure. Law enforcement should respect local customs and traditions, while addressing illegal activities such as land grabbing and deforestation.
- Human Rights Protection: Ensure that the human rights of ethnic people are protected, including their right to land, culture, and participation in governance.

#### Conclusion:

The development of the CHT areas in Bangladesh must be based on a comprehensive, inclusive approach and not be top-down, but rather a collaborative, community-based approach that respects the region's ethnic cultures, traditions, and governance systems. A collaborative effort between the government, local communities, NGOs, and international partners is necessary to create lasting change. The key is to empower local populations, uphold their rights, and develop infrastructure and services that are tailored to their unique needs, while also fostering economic growth that benefits everyone in the region. The involvement of local stakeholders, as well as a commitment to inclusivity, peace-building, and environmental sustainability, is key to ensuring that development in the CHT is both effective and just.



# When will BCB clear stance on Shakib?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Just as the ICC Champions Trophy is facing uncertainty due to the dispute between the cricket boards of India and Pakistan, there remains an ambiguity over Shakib Al Hasan's participation in the event – something the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has failed to clear up thus far.

Yesterday, during the logo unveiling event of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2024-25, board president Faruque Ahmed was asked by the media about the BCB's stance on Shakib.

Faruque relayed that the all-rounder is still in the plans for the Champions Trophy, saying, "Right now, he [Shakib] is still in the list. We hope that the issues get solved in the way he wants. Definitely, he still possesses the capability to play for the national team," suggesting Shakib may be looking for certain assurances.

But almost in the same breath, the BCB honcho pointed to Shakib's lack of preparation to play for the Tigers and revealed that they have left the decision up to the player.

"Playing for a franchise and playing for the country is not the same thing. You need preparation and also you really need to gel with the team. Since he can't do those things, I don't think he is in a mental state to play for the country. Because of that, we have left this thing up to him."

Leaving things up to the player was something the former BCB president



Nazmul Hassan Papon often did and it almost never worked in favour of the team.

Under Papon, Shakib's availability would be a talking point ahead of every other series. It did not help the team's cause since the board's policy to leave things to players' whims hampered the

team's continuity.

The BCB selectors too have not made any clear statements regarding Shakib's availability although whether the matter is truly in their hands remains under suspicion.

Shakib's availability had been put into doubt ever since the fall of the Awami

League government, of which he was a part as a member of the parliament.

The all-rounder's wish to retire from Tests with the Mirpur Test against South Africa in October remained unfulfilled as he was advised not to come to the country by sports adviser Asif Mahmud via the BCB due to security concerns.

However, such concerns are not holding him back from playing away series, like he did in the Test series in Pakistan in August and then in India in September.

Shakib's recent performances too have not exactly been excellent. Captaining the Bangla Tigers in a T10 tournament in Abu Dhabi, he bagged five wickets and scored 63 runs as his team crashed out of the tournament.

In the BCB's last board meeting, the discussion of the incumbent members centered on the need for Shakib in the national team. But with a big tournament like the Champions Trophy coming up, the BCB are yet to come to a decision relating to the outstanding situation at hand.

The board thus far has not outright said they want to move ahead without Shakib nor have they said they want him in the Champions Trophy next year and ensured his participation in last month's ODI series against Afghanistan in the UAE or in the upcoming ODIs in West Indies, both key series in the buildup to the event.

This lack of decisiveness from the board could rear its ugly head in the tournament and cause yet another forgettable ICC event for the Tigers.

## NCL Rony hits ton, Bijoy misses out

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Division opener Rony Talukdar hit his first hundred in this season's National Cricket League yesterday, keeping his side in contention for a second-place finish after Sylhet Division already clinched the title with a win in the previous round.

Rony helped construct the innings with a 202-ball 112 against Barishal at Bogura's Shahid Chandu Stadium on day two of the seventh and final round. The right-handed opener, who struck 16 fours and a maximum, was the last batter to depart on the day as Dhaka ended on 303 for eight at close in reply to Barishal's 289 all out on day one.

Unlike Rony, Anamul Haque Bijoy missed out on a ton, out on 90, while Mohammad Mithun remained unbeaten on 89 as Khulna posted 240 for seven in a rain-affected game at Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna.

Meanwhile, Nihaduzzaman bagged a four-wicket haul for Rajshahi Division at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram to help bowl Sylhet out for 212. With Sylhet's frontline pace attack rested, Rajshahi ended the day at 70 for three with an 84-run lead.

Chattogram Division's 19-year-old left-arm spinner Ashraful Hasan bagged four for 84 to help bowl out Dhaka Metro for 268 at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi. Abu Haider Rony bagged four for 41 for Dhaka Metro as Chattogram ended day two at 173 for 6.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Change the country, change the world'

The logo unveiling ceremony of Youth Festival and the unmasking of the mascot for Bangladesh Premier League T20 2025 took place at the Hotel InterContinental in Dhaka on Sunday. The theme of the Youth Festival-2025 has been set as 'Let's change the country, let's change the world'.

The Youth Festival will be held across the country, starting with the BPL inauguration on December 30 and concluding on February 19 with the final of the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship.

Sporting events, cultural shows and concerts across the country will mark the festival, with the theme: 'Change the country, change the world'.

The 'Dana 36' mascot designed for BPL 2025 -- a 'white dove' with wings spread out wide, with 36 colourful feathers representing the memory of July Uprising.

Three concerts will be organised under in the three BPL venues of Dhaka, Chattogram and Sylhet. During the BPL, eight boys' and eight girls' football matches will be organised every Friday and Saturday.

In addition, the 'Under-15 National Cup' will be organized.

Plans are afoot to organise debate competitions, quiz competitions, inter-school and college competitions, essay competitions, skill competitions and a 'July 36' painting competition to explore talent from the grassroots level.

## Chelsea move joint second in PL

REUTERS, London

Expertly taken goals from Nicolas Jackson, captain Enzo Fernandez and Cole Palmer earned Chelsea a 3-0 home win over Aston Villa on Sunday, lifting them to joint second in the Premier League table.

Senegal striker Jackson neatly side-footed a Marc Cucurella cross from the left, knocking it in off the post in the seventh minute.

Chelsea took advantage of questionable defending in the 36th minute when Fernandez was fed by Palmer before steadying himself and firing home between Matty Cash and Ezri Konsa.

Palmer outdid both his team mates, however, lofting an exquisite left-foot shot into the top corner of substitute goalkeeper Robin Olsen's net in the 83rd minute.

Enzo Maresca's Chelsea moved joint second, level on points and goal difference with Arsenal, before the late kickoff between table-toppers Liverpool and fifth-placed Manchester City. Villa dropped to 11th.



## BANGLADESH INTO SEMIS

Defending champions Bangladesh cemented their spot in the semifinals of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup with a five-wicket win over Nepal at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday. After a comprehensive effort with the ball which bundled out Nepal for 141, Bangladesh opener Zawad Abrar and skipper Azizul Hakim Tamim hit half-centuries to chase down the target in 28.4 overs. Zawad scored a 65-ball 59 and put together a 90-run stand with Tamim, who followed up his century in the previous match with an unbeaten 72-ball 52. Bangladesh play Sri Lanka in their last Group B fixture on Tuesday which will determine the group winner.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

## Bangladesh a win away from Hockey Junior World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh moved closer to their dream of qualifying for the FIH Hockey Junior World Cup for the first time following a 1-1 draw against China in their last pool match at the Al Amerat Hockey Stadium in Muscat yesterday.

With two draws and a win alongside a defeat, Bangladesh finished third in Pool B with four points, behind Pakistan and Malaysia and ahead of China and Oman.

The third position finish set Bangladesh up for a place-deciding match against Thailand, fourth placed finishers from Pool A, on Tuesday.

A win against the inferior-ranked Thailand will take Moududur Rahman Shuvo's charges to next year's Junior World Cup, to be staged in India.

After playing a creditable 2-2 draw against Malaysia in the previous match, Bangladesh



needed a draw to finish third so as to avoid South Korea in the place-deciding match. However, the men in red and green could not put on a spirited display like the previous match, instead their game was full of erratic passing, loose ball control and lack of organisation in attacks.

Goalkeeper Mohammad Noyon, though, stood tall and made a string of saves to deny a spirited China and kept Bangladesh in the match until the umpires cancelled out a last-minute strike from China.

Bangladesh took the lead against the run of play with

Mohammad Ali finding the back of China net with a reverse hit in the 41st minute following an attack from the right flank. China, however, came back strongly after converting one of four successive penalty corners in the 45th minute to level the score.

China kept pressing in the final quarter but were denied time and again by keeper Noyon before defender Amirul Islam wasted a penalty stroke in the 54th minute to make things harder for Bangladesh.

With only 30 seconds left to the final whistle, Bangladesh launched an attack with a scoop shot, only to be caught in possession and China earned their ninth penalty corner from the resulting counterattack with only 4.5 seconds left of the game.

China converted the penalty corner and the umpire signalled for a goal before changing his decision, allowing Bangladesh to have a massive sigh of relief.



Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford celebrates scoring one of his two goals in their 4-0 thrashing of Everton in a Premier League game in front of their home crowd at Old Trafford on Sunday. Joshua Zirkzee scored the other two for United, who have now won two consecutive games in all competitions under new boss Ruben Amorim after the Portuguese started with a 1-1 draw away to Ipswich Town.

PHOTO: REUTERS





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## Tigers bowled out for 164

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another dismal batting display saw them get bundled out for 164 in the second session on Day 2 of the second Test against the West Indies at the Sabina Park in Jamaica today.

The Tigers were able to bat for 71.5 overs and were in utter discomfort against the pace battery of the West Indies. Thirty overs were played on Day 1, meaning the Tigers could only bat for 41.5 overs in the second day.

Shadman Islam top-scored with 64, while skipper Mehedi Hasan Miraz added 36.

The Tigers went to Lunch at 122-6, with Miraz and Taijul Islam unbeaten on 18 and eight, respectively, but the latter fell after a 66-ball 16-run resistance, bringing an end to a 41-run stand for the seventh wicket in the second session. The dismissal exposed Bangladesh's tail as it brought Taskin Ahmed to the crease.

A 20-run stand followed

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A vast swathe of floodplain is being filled with sand to make houses in Madinabagh area of Khalishpur, Khulna. Experts say poor management of the landscape and building on floodplains are key factors that lead to severe floods in Khulna city almost every monsoon. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## 27YRS OF CHT PEACE ACCORD

# Key promises still unfulfilled

Indigenous rights advocates say successive govts ignored pact

MD ABBAS

Twenty-seven years have passed but four key promises of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord remain unfulfilled, said indigenous leaders and rights activists.

These are rehabilitation of repatriated and internally displaced indigenous people, demilitarisation, empowering district and regional councils, and making the Land Commission effective.

They alleged that the full implementation of the accord is elusive due to the unwillingness of successive governments to carry it out.

The government claims that 65 out of the 72 sections of the treaty have been fully implemented. However, leaders of the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) said only 25 sections have been fully implemented and 18 partially, adding that 29 others are untouched.

The CHT Peace Accord was inked on this day in 1997 between the then Awami League government and PCJSS leaders, ending the armed conflict, as PCJSS leaders surrendered their firearms to the government.

Talking to The Daily Star, Devasish Roy, the king of the Chakma Circle, said he does not evaluate the status of the CHT Peace Accord by the number of clauses implemented.

"I focus on the qualitative aspects. From that perspective, four key elements – rehabilitation of returnees from India and internally displaced indigenous

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 5

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## Hasina's allies have properties worth Tk 6,000cr in UK

Finds joint probe by British Observer, TI

STAR REPORT

A joint investigation by British newspaper The Observer and Berlin-based anti-corruption organisation Transparency International has revealed that close associates of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, including former ministers and business owners, hold properties worth over £400 million (approximately Tk 6,000 crore) in the UK.

Allegations suggest these assets were purchased with laundered money siphoned off Bangladesh, reports the Guardian.

The findings, published in a report by The Guardian on Saturday, indicate ownership of nearly 350 properties ranging from luxury apartments to sprawling mansions. Many of these were reportedly acquired through offshore companies and shell entities linked to Sheikh Hasina's close allies.

Among those implicated are Salman F. Rahman, former private sector adviser to Sheikh Hasina and vice-chairman of Beximco Group; Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, chairman of Bashundhara Group; Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, former land minister; and Nazrul Islam Mazumder, chairman of Nassa Group.

**Salman F Rahman**

Rahman, currently imprisoned in Bangladesh on money laundering charges, and his family are alleged to own several high-value properties in London's prestigious Mayfair area. These include seven luxury apartments in Grosvenor Square, primarily acquired via offshore entities. In March 2022, Rahman's son, Ahmed Shayan Rahman, reportedly purchased an apartment for £26.75 million and owns another flat valued at £35.5 million.

Legal representatives for the family have denied

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

# Distressed loans equal to cost of 22.5 Padma bridges

Discovers committee for preparing white paper on economy

REJAUL KARIM BYRON AND AM JAHID

Distressed assets in the banking sector have reached a whopping Tk 6,75,030 crore, an amount bigger than the cost of building 22 bridges across the Padma or 13.5 metro rail systems in Dhaka, according to a White Paper released yesterday.

The amount is the sum total of non-performing loans (NPLs), rescheduled and restructured loans, and outstanding written-off loans. These account for 31.7 percent of the total bank loans as of June 2024.

Attributing the crisis to systemic regulatory failures, the report said a fragmented regulatory system enabled widespread malpractice, leaving banks under-provisioned and ill-prepared to withstand the current financial stress.

"It's not the economy, stupid. Bangladesh's financial sector distress did not emerge from economic disruptions or financial crises or even political instability. Economic factors such as trade, remittances, investments, inflation, commodity prices, exchange rates, and interest rates cannot explain the sustained drain in balance sheets and trust in market makers and regulators," reads the White Paper.

The details reveal Tk 2,11,391 crore in recognised NPLs, Tk 2,72,856 crore in rescheduled and restructured loans, Tk 75,389 crore in written-off loans, Tk 39,209 crore in special mention accounts, and Tk 76,185 crore in loans pending under court orders.

"The distress is even larger when the bad loans of the non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) are accounted for," it says.

The White Paper states that the culprits within the banking system are all influential heavyweights and the concentration of non-performing loans (NPLs) closely aligns with the concentration of overall loans, revealing a deeper, systemic issue.

**The regulatory framework, particularly at Bangladesh Bank, has been compromised by collusion between top officials and influential outsiders, especially during the period from 2015 to 2024.**

"The culprits within the banking system are all heavy weights. The big ones coincide with the bad ones. NPL concentration mirrors loan concentration and more."

An organised network of business conglomerates, bureaucrats and politicians coalesced explicitly and implicitly to use the financial system to mine public money by capturing corporate

and regulatory governance, it adds.

"Laws and regulations were tailored and retrofitted to serve the interests of this troika in the spot and forward markets for local and foreign currencies. De jure accountability systems were de facto deposited in a deep fridge. The web of institutions to adjudicate disputes, regulate markets, and allocate resources largely exhausted the trust of the public."

Dominant business interests have captured regulatory safeguards, leading to operational inefficiencies that have stifled growth and excluded startups and entrepreneurs without tradable collateral from accessing credit, it says.

"Big players siphoned big money. Embezzlement of big chunks of money from different banks by a number of groups through fake companies or without proper documentation became a privilege of large borrowers."

The regulatory framework, particularly at Bangladesh Bank, has been compromised by collusion between top officials and influential outsiders, especially during the period from 2015 to 2024.

The central bank failed to enforce prudential requirements on state-owned banks, allowing repeated violations without sanctions. Amendments to the Bank Company Act in 2018 and 2023 introduced a distinction between willful and un-willful defaulters, with the former ambiguously defined as those who "fail to repay despite having the capacity".

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

## Bringing money launderers to book the govt's top priority

Says CA press secretary

BSS, Dhaka

The government is committed to bringing those to justice who left the country in a terrible condition by looting public money, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said yesterday.

"The top priority of the government is to ensure justice and accountability for those involved in anarchy in the last 15 years," he told a press briefing at Foreign Service Academy.

Apart from holding trials for those involved in the mass killings and enforced disappearances, the looters must be tried, he said.

"So, information and evidence will have to be collected to this end. The Anti-Corruption Commission is being restructured for this purpose. I hope it will start the process soon to bring these thieves to justice," Shafiqul said.

He said the white paper preparation committee, formed by the interim government to examine the overall situation of the country's economy, handed over its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

Eminent economist Debapriya Bhattacharya, who worked as the head of the committee, said after three months of investigation, their report was handed over to the chief adviser at a function at the Chief Adviser's Office.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

## Syria's Aleppo slips from govt control

Says monitor after surprise advance by rebels

AFP, Beirut

Syria's second-largest city Aleppo has fallen from government control for the first time since the country's conflict began more than a decade ago, a war monitor said yesterday, after a surprise advance by rebels.

An Islamist-dominated rebel alliance has pressed a lightning offensive against forces of the Iranian- and Russian-backed Syrian government since Wednesday, the same day a fragile ceasefire took effect in neighbouring Lebanon between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah group after two months of all-out war.

The Syrian army – supported by Russian air power – had recaptured in 2016 rebel-held areas of Aleppo, a city dominated by its landmark citadel.

Damascus also relied on Hezbollah fighters to regain swathes of Syria lost to rebels early in the war which began in 2011 when the government crushed protests. But Hezbollah has taken heavy losses in its fight with Israel.

The jihadist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and allied rebel factions "control Aleppo city, except the neighbourhoods controlled by the Kurdish forces," Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP.

For the first time since the conflict started, "Aleppo city is out of control of Syrian regime forces," Abdel Rahman said.



The son of local Palestinian journalist Mamduh Qantiya, who was killed in an Israeli strike, bids his father farewell ahead of his funeral at the Al-Maamadani Hospital in Gaza City in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Outrage in Teknaf as 'minor held in father's stead'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The minor son of a Jubo League leader Rezaul Karim was detained and sent to a juvenile centre sparking outrage in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf.

According to police, Rezaul faces multiple drug-related charges.

The incident, which took place on November 26, sparked outrage among locals, students and rights activists, who are demanding the boy's release and the removal of Mohammad Gias Uddin as the officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station.

Police said the 16-year-old boy was apprehended allegedly in possession of a foreign pistol and 46 rounds of ammunition, which belonged to his father, a member of the Hnila Union Parishad.

According to the statement of the case, filed by Sub-Inspector Badiul Alam, police conducted a raid around 3:55am near Dargapara in Hnila.

Law enforcers reportedly detained a boy carrying a blue bag containing the weapon

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