



JOYDEBPUR-ISHWARDI DOUBLE LINE

# Project cost to shoot up by 80pc

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The cost of the Joydebpur-Ishwardi rail line expansion project may increase to Tk 26,000 crore, over 80 percent higher than the original estimate, mainly due to long delay in starting work after China decided not to fund the project.

In November 2018, the Tk 14,250 crore project was taken up to turn the 165km Joydebpur-Ishwardi line, vital for Dhaka's link with the country's north-west, into a dual-gauge double line.

But work on the ground could not be started after China in March 2021 declined to fund it, more than five years after it agreed to finance it.

Japan, following Bangladesh's request, agreed to finance the project and reviewed its feasibility study. Japanese consultants estimated that it would now take Tk 25,949 crore to build the line, which is Tk 11,698.59 crore or 82 percent more than the original estimate.

ORIGINAL COST

TK 14,250.61CR

DEADLINE

DECEMBER 2024

PROPOSED COST

TK 25,949.2CR

DEADLINE

JUNE 2030

REASONS FOR COST ESCALATION

Jump in costs of materials

Depreciation of taka against dollar

Use of Japanese sophisticated technology

Inclusion of a new railway station

China had pulled out four months after the Prime Minister's Office ordered reducing the cost of the project by Tk 1,495 (10.49 percent) crore, saying the project cost was inflated.

Now, the project would cost 82 percent more and its deadline would be June 2030.

Because of the delay, Bangabandhu Railway Bridge over the Jamuna, which cost Tk 16,781 crore and is expected to be opened in January, will remain underutilised for at least the next five years, as the double-line bridge will be fed by a single line.

Railways Ministry Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, however, said, "This [line expansion cost] is an estimate by Japan and has not been finalised yet.

"We will discuss the cost with them," he told The Daily Star on November 30.

Fouzul said when Japan International Cooperation Agency officials met him, he appreciated Japan's support

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Members of Naripokkho light candles at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday evening to commemorate those who went missing during the Liberation War. This event, titled "Let the Darkness Fade in the Remembrance of Light", is organised every December to pay tribute to their memory.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## REGIONAL RESISTANCE

PART 5

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

### Halim Bahini of Manikganj

AHMAD ISTIAK

Through swift mobilisation, strategic brilliance, and devastating attacks against the Pakistani army, the Halim Bahini of Manikganj distinguished itself as one of the most effective regional forces that fought in the Liberation War.

Immediately after the March 25 massacre, Abdul Halim Chowdhury, a retired captain of the Pakistan Army, wasted no time and began forming the force, training recruits, and overseeing the overall war effort in the region.

The force's comprehensive recruitment campaign allowed it to eventually grow to about 2,000 freedom fighters strong.

According to the book "Bangladesher Swadhinota Juddho - Sector Bhitik Itihash (Sector-2)", the Halim

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## Star INTERVIEW

### Govt must improve law and order fast

#### Says president of AmCham

SOHEL PARVEZ

Improving law and order has become imperative in recovering Bangladesh's global image that took a beating for domestic politics over the past decade, said a top chamber leader.

"Due to political instability and corruption, there has been significant damage to Bangladesh's reputation globally -- we need to work on rebuilding trust with international partners," Syed Ershad Ahmed, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh, told The Daily Star in an interview recently.

Factors such as law and order and political instability discourage foreign investors.

To attract foreign direct investment, demonstrable evidence of an improving business climate and

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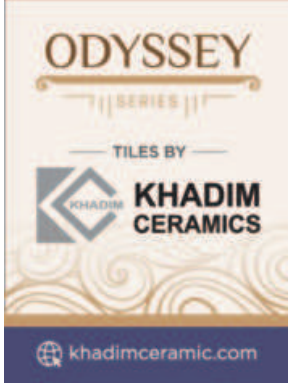
Syed Ershad Ahmed

### 49 Indian media outlets spread fake reports

#### Finds Rumor Scanner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 49 Indian media outlets spread at least 13 false reports about Bangladesh in



around four months after the fall of the Awami League government, according to Rumor Scanner.

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baby Dove Now in Bangladesh



+100% skin-natural nutrients



prebiotic moisturizer



Shop from: unimart AGORA USHOP SHAJGOJ



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

WRITE TO PROTEST

Writers and poets on their experience

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

## Young Tigers crush Pakistan

FROM PAGE 12

unbeaten on 61 off 42 balls with seven fours and three sixes to guide his to the target in just 22.1 overs.

Skipper Tamim credited his pacers for their sensational bowling performance against their Pakistani counterparts.

“Today [yesterday] everything was in our favour. All the bowlers did really well, especially Emon, Maruf and others as well. That’s why we could dismiss them for 117 [116] runs,” Tamim said in a video message after the match.

Meanwhile, pacer Emon was elated with his performance and happy to contribute to the team’s winning cause.

“The wicket was really good, it was a pace friendly wicket. I bowled in good areas and got success. I am very excited and happy to get the player-of-the-match award. My performance was very vital for the team,” said Emon, who also said he wants to bowl in good areas in Sunday’s final against India, who beat Sri Lanka by the same margin in the day’s other semifinal in Sharjah.

Meanwhile, Tamim was hopeful of retaining their title, saying, “Inshallah, we will try to give our best in the final.”

Last year, Bangladesh beat hosts UAE by 195 runs to clinch their maiden U-19 Asia Cup title.

## Project cost to shoot up by 80pc

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for development projects “but I told them that the projects have to be cost-effective.”

He said a Japanese delegation is expected to visit Bangladesh later this month, and they would discuss the railway project, particularly its cost in detail.

**WHY TRAINS TAKE SO LONG**

Trains between the capital and the north-west region being late has become all too common over the last few years.

Dhaka and those regions are linked by the single-line section between Joydebpur and Ishwardi.

Twenty-two trains can smoothly run every day using the single line, but the line is being used by around 40 trains. As a result, most of the trains, except a few, have to wait at nearby stations to make way for oncoming trains, officials said.

This is made worse by the fact that the distance from one station to another between Joydebpur and Bangabandhu Bridge (East) Station is relatively long, causing each train to wait even longer.

**PROJECT DELAY**

To fix this, the government in November 2018 took up the Tk 14,250.61 crore project to turn Joydebpur-Ishwardi section into a dual-gauge double line.

This was among the projects for which Dhaka and Beijing signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Dhaka visit in October 2016.

China was supposed to provide Tk 8,756.75 crore for the line expansion and BR completed negotiation with China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation for implementing the project.

Between March 2019 and January 2021, the railways ministry wrote to the Chinese government several times requesting the signing of a deal.

But, China in March 2021 declined to finance the project citing several reasons, including “a lack of in-depth preliminary work and insufficient feasibility study”.

Sources claimed that China’s backtracking may have something to do with geo-politics. Bangladesh’s rail communication, especially the operation of freight trains with India, would have got a boost once the double-line project was completed. The PMO’s directive to cut costs also played a role, they said.

Amid allegations of inflated project cost, the PMO in October 2020 formed

# Halim Bahini of Manikganj

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Bahini was spread over an area of about 800 sq km, which covered 22 upazilas, including Sadar, Singair, Ghior, Shibalo, Daulatpur, and Harirampur in Manikganj; Dohar, Nawabganj, Dhamrai, and Savar in Dhaka; and Sreenagar in Munshiganj.

In June this year, The Daily Star spoke to over 50 freedom fighters of Halim Bahini during a visit to five upazilas of Manikganj and two upazilas of Dhaka.

**ARMS AND TRAINING**

On March 27, a group of freedom fighters led by Abdul Halim raided the Manikganj treasury, looting a number of rifles and a large cache of ammunition.

Speaking to this newspaper, freedom fighter Awlad Hossain said later that day, a meeting was held in Shibalo, chaired by Abdur Rouf Khan, director of operations, where it was decided to set up training centres in every union of the upazila. The initial training began in Manikganj town using weapons looted from the treasury.

On April 8, when Pakistani troops entered Manikganj town, Abdul Halim divided his arsenal and dispatched 26 rifles and 200 bullets to arm the unit to be led by Matin Chowdhury, associate director (general), in Azimnagar.

From the first week of April, training of freedom fighters commenced in Manikganj’s Sadar, Shibala, Ghior, Harirampur, and Singair under the supervision of the Halim Bahini.

In the second week of April, the Halim Bahini established its headquarters on the banks of the Padma in Harirampur.

**FIRST OF BATTLES**

In mid-May, the Pakistani army, aided by Razakars, set up a camp in Harina, Harirampur, triggering a series of battles between the Halim Bahini and the Pakistani forces across Manikganj.

According to the book, the Halim Bahini engaged in over 40 battles against the Pakistani forces, inflicting heavy casualties on Pakistani soldiers and Razakars.

One of the most notable battles fought by the Halim Bahini against the Pakistanis was the Charigaon Launch Ghat operation in Singair on June 17.

On June 17, freedom fighters, led by unit commander Tabarak Hossain, ambushed two Pakistani launches at Charigaon, located on the banks of the Kaliganga River in Singair.

Yakub Hossain, a freedom fighter who participated in the battle, said,



“The two launches, unaware of our ambush, were easy targets. Our attack was swift and decisive, resulting in the deaths of around a dozen soldiers on board.

“We then looted the launches of their arms and ammunition before sinking them in the river.”

The Halim Bahini also attacked multiple enemy vessels on the Dhaleshwari and Padma rivers.

In September, a group of eight freedom fighters, led by Abdul Halim, attacked a Pakistani launch on the Padma near Harirampur, resulting in the deaths of 11 Pakistani soldiers and 3 Razakars.

The freedom fighters later recovered a significant amount of arms and ammunition from the launch, said Khandaker Abdul Baten, who took part in the attack.

**HALIM’S INDIA TRIP**

As the series of battles against the Pakistani army continued, the Halim Bahini’s ammunition supply dwindled.

In September, Abdul Halim travelled to Melaghar in Tripura, India, to seek additional arms support. During his visit, he met with Sector 2 Commander Major Khaled Mosharra, according to the book.

He would go on to stay in India for two months and return in November with additional fighters.

In his absence, Abdul Matin, associate director, Abdur Rouf, director of operations, and Awlad Hossain, additional director, conducted the operations.

**TURNING POINT**

October marked a turning point, with the Halim Bahini dealing heavy blows on the Pakistani forces in various parts of Manikganj.

On October 13, the Halim Bahini launched a fierce attack on the Pakistani army’s Harina camp in Harirampur. Freedom fighters, along with Baloch soldiers who deserted the Pakistan army, successfully captured the camp.

Awlad Hossain said, “Four Baloch soldiers, enraged at the Pakistani army’s transgressions, reached out to

**Force chief Abdul Halim Chy (1928-1987)** PHOTO: COLLECTED

**File photo of Patgram Anath Bandhu High School in Harirampur, Manikganj from 1975. Next to the school was the Harina camp, where Halim Bahini freedom fighters trained in 1971.** PHOTO: TOYEBUL AZHAR

**Recent photo of the Padma river in Harirampur, Manikganj. On the banks of this river, Halim Bahini set up its headquarters in the second week of April in 1971.** PHOTO: AHMAD ISTIAK

- Area:** Manikganj, Dhaka, and Munshiganj.
- Command structure:** 5 companies under 3 units
- Timeframe:** Apr - Dec
- Operations:** At least 40
- Members:** At least 2,000

battle. He died on October 15.

The most devastating defeat inflicted on the Pakistani army by Halim Bahini was the Battle of Golaidanga in Singair on October 28, when 82 Pakistani soldiers were killed

## 49 Indian media outlets spread fake reports

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In a report titled “Spread of Fake News About Bangladesh in Indian Media Outlets” on its website yesterday, the Bangladeshi fact-checking organisation revealed the findings on the false news published between August 12 and December 5.

Republic Bangla topped the list of Indian media outlets with most false reports about Bangladesh by broadcasting five rumours. The Hindustan Times, Zee News, and Live Mint each spread three false reports. Meanwhile, Republic, India Today, ABP Anand, and Aaj Tak each broadcast two false reports. The remaining 41 media outlets spread one false report each.

The debunked claims included: a fake letter from Sheikh Hasina after her resignation; a video of a Muslim man falsely claimed as Hindu during a search for his son; false reports about Bangladesh’s Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus’s health and location; baseless claims of withdrawal of bans on militant groups; arms smuggling via a ship from Pakistan; misrepresentation of lawyer Saiful Islam’s murder; alleged

ban on Indian TV channels; idol immersion in India misrepresented as a reaction to attacks on Hindu idols in Bangladesh; an alleged attack on a Shyamoli Paribahan bus from India; and false UK travel advisories for Bangladesh.

According to the fact-checking organisation, soon after Hasina fled and took refuge in India, the Indian media circulated an alleged open letter from her blaming the US for her removal. However, Rumor Scanner confirmed no such letter existed. It originated from a Facebook post and was published by a page, “Tripura Bhoishyot”.

It also debunked a viral video that was broadcast by an Indian news outlet claiming a Hindu man was protesting for his missing son. Rumor Scanner found the man, Babul Howlader, was Muslim. His son had been missing since 2013.

The Indian media also used a morphed photo to falsely report that Prof Yunus was admitted to ICU after he was sworn in as chief adviser, according to the Rumor Scanner. It also debunked an Indian media

## Govt must improve law and order fast

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transparent governance needs to be presented, he said.

Ahmed’s observation comes at a time when Bangladesh’s net FDI was found to have been overstated by \$5.7 billion between fiscal years 2019-20 and 2022-23.

In the four fiscal years, Bangladesh actually received \$5.86 billion as net FDI, a disappointing amount given the seeming political stability and stellar economic growth in those years.

Ahmed termed the last 10 years of the previous Awami League government “very pathetic”.

“What I think is that our institutions were severely damaged in those years.”

Institutions like the Public Service Commission and the Election Commission and the regulatory agencies such as the National Board of Revenue (NBR), the Bangladesh Bank (BB) and the police were compromised.

“This led to widespread disorder in the country and everything became politicised.”

The previous AL regime saw widespread corruption and money laundering.

“The Anti-Corruption Commission

and the Bangladesh Bank were supposed to foil those but they did not do their job.”

Even the agencies meant to support businesses such as the port were not spared from politicisation, which, ultimately, weakened the business environment, and the business ecosystem suffered.

“If the ACC is not truly independent and effective, corruption will continue unchecked. Similarly, our Public Service Commission needs to ensure a fair recruitment process free from political influence. Only then we can build the foundation for sustainable economic growth.”

Institutional reform is key, said Ahmed, country manager and managing director of Expeditors (Bangladesh), a global logistics company.

“We need strong, independent institutions that aren’t swayed by political pressure or financial incentives. Without strong institutions, our business environment will continue to suffer,” he said, while lauding the interim government’s reform initiatives.

And all the institutions should be

Freedom fighter Lokman Hossain said, “There were only 30 of us. Armed with few weapons, we forced the Pakistani soldiers into the muddy waters. We scattered their force, which was more than twice our size. The bravery displayed by our forces was broadcast by Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra.”

Among other battles fought by Halim Bahini are the battle of Baira village in July, the battle of Machain Bazar on July 18, the ambush at Maluchi village on August 9, the battle of Narchi and Kustagram in Ghior on November 28, and the battle of Daskandi village in Shibalay on December 8.

**RETURN OF FORCE CHIEF**

The book reads that after spending two months in India procuring weapons, Captain Halim was appointed regional commander of 22 upazilas across Dhaka, Manikganj, and Munshiganj in November.

In the third week of November, Captain Halim returned to Bangladesh with a sizable force and weaponry. The freedom fighters under his command fought valiantly on the battlefield until the ultimate victory.

**COMMAND STRUCTURE**

According to its members, the Halim Bahini was organised into three units. Rouf Khan led the forces operating in the Harirampur Shibala Ghior-Daulatpur area. Tabarak Hossain Ludu commanded the forces in the Singair-Manikganj-Saturia and Savar areas. Sirajuddin led the unit operating in the Nawabganj-Dohar-Keraniganj region of Dhaka.

Initially, the Halim Bahini consisted of four companies. However, after the martyrdom of freedom fighter Mahfuz in October, a fifth company, named the Mahfuz Company, was formed in his honour. The company commanders were Abdur Razzak (Alpha Company), Abul Bashar (Bravo Company), Mainuddin Chowdhury/Sipahi Abdul Hakim (Charlie Company), Abul Khalek (Delta Company), and Rezaur Rahman (Mahfuz Company).

The Halim Bahini’s achievements during the Liberation War were made possible by the support of the local people. “We couldn’t have done anything without the help of the local villagers,” said Awlad Hossain. “We relied on donations from affluent community members to fund our operations. Moreover, the villagers provided us with food and shelter all the time.”

*Translated and edited from Bangla by Dhrata Roy.*

confirmed they remain operational, as verified by the information ministry and the Cable Operators Association.

Another claim suggested that the Bangladesh Air Force, with Chinese support, planned Asia’s second-largest airbase near the so-called Chicken Neck, aka the Siliguri Corridor. However, Rumor Scanner identified this news as false. Lalmonirhat airport, which has been unused for over six decades, saw no such activities as claimed by the report.

The fact-finding organisation identified a viral video claiming to show a temple attack in Bangladesh as fake. The video was taken in India during idol immersion.

Reports of anti-India slogans following a bus accident in Brahmanbaria were also identified as rumours by the Rumor Scanner.

UK travel advisories were falsely portrayed as Bangladesh-specific, whereas they applied to multiple countries, including India, with no heightened warnings for most of Bangladesh.

as leaders who have the mentality to serve the people and do not have the mentality to expand their wealth.

While businesspeople have the right to engage in politics, they should distance themselves from businesses when they become active in politics.

“When you are a politician, your focus should be on politics. But if you are involved in politics and business, there will be no benefit.”

He cited the case of the US where successful businesspeople who join politics step aside from their businesses. They leave the businesses to the top management of their firms.

“Here, in our country, you will find that the politicians remain involved in their business directly. This should not be.”

Some businesspeople had political aspirations, and they joined politics after becoming leaders of trade bodies such as the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

“This is a regret for us. Had the trade bodies worked in favour of businesses, then our business environment would not have deteriorated so much.”



## CJ calls for justice as universal right

UNB, Dhaka

“Whether in the courtroom, the classroom, or the community, let us remain committed to building a society where justice is not a privilege but a universal right,” he said.

He made this call while addressing the Rajshahi University Law Alumni Association (RULAA) Council held at the Shaheed Shafiur Rahman Auditorium of the Supreme Court Bar Association.

“Together, we have the power to transform challenges into opportunities and to pave the way for a future defined by equity and integrity,” he said.

Pointing at the alumni, he said they carry the responsibility of upholding the ideals of justice, equality, and human rights. Their work as legal professionals, educators, and advocates plays a pivotal role in shaping a society rooted in fairness and the rule of law.

“It is imperative that we continue to use our

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## ‘Indian propaganda won’t cause harm to us’ Says Sakhawat

BSS, Benapole

Adviser to the interim government for shipping, labour and employment Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain yesterday said Indian propaganda will not cause any harm to Bangladesh.

“We have everything including medical facilities and huge market. So, we will not suffer from any Indian propaganda against us,” he said while visiting cargo yard and immigration at the customs and land port station in Benapole.

Mentioning a huge number of Bangladeshis visit India for various purposes which makes India benefitted economically, Sakhawat said, “If India is reluctant to provide these facilities, then Bangladeshis will not go there.”

The adviser said, “There is no such divide among us. People of all faiths are living here with equal status.”

“We are historically equal irrespective of all creeds and castes,” he also said.

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

# The breach in Dhaka’s FLOOD DEFENSES

## Water retention ponds shrinking due to urban sprawl

HELEMUL ALAM

Designed to rescue Dhaka from floods, water retention ponds are now in need of rescue themselves. These basins, meant for stormwater management, are shrinking rapidly due to encroachments, unplanned urbanisation, and government neglect.

Just like the capital’s canals, these lifelines are now being choked, one illegal grab at a time.

### WHAT ARE RETENTION PONDS?

Retention ponds serve as reservoirs for stormwater runoff, preventing flooding and downstream erosion while maintaining water quality. By acting as buffers, they ensure that urban areas can cope with heavy rainfall, particularly during the monsoons.

Retention ponds act like giant bowls that collect and store excess rainwater during downpours, preventing nearby areas from flooding.

Imagine this: during a storm, instead of rainwater overwhelming streets and homes, these ponds hold the water temporarily.



Over time, they release it slowly into nearby rivers or canals, reducing the risk of sudden flooding.

For example, in Dhaka’s Mirpur area, stormwater from nearby roads, homes, and markets flows into the Kalyanpur retention pond through Kalyanpur main canal and its branch canals, which is then pumped out to the Buriganga river, said a Wasa official. If this pond didn’t exist, the water would pool on the streets, causing severe waterlogging.

Retention ponds also improve water quality by filtering out pollutants from the runoff before it reaches rivers.

“Retention ponds are indispensable for reducing Dhaka’s flood vulnerability. Protecting them is critical for the city’s sustainability,” said Akter Mahmud, a member of the advisory council of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners.

### WESTERN RETENTION PONDS

The western part of Dhaka is home to three key pump stations – Kalyanpur, Goran Chatbari, and Dholai Khal – each designed with designated retention ponds. However, over the years, these ponds have been encroached upon, drastically reducing their capacity.

At Dholai Khal, a box culvert constructed in the 1990s by the Dhaka city corporation destroyed the retention area. The pumping station, which requires at least 105 acres for optimal operation, now has just 3.5 acres.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Illegal structures now stand at the Kalyanpur retention pond area. Retention ponds like this are essential to prevent waterlogging, but unchecked urbanisation, jurisdictional overlaps, and negligence threaten their survival, endangering Dhaka’s resilience against floods.

There are three pumps at the Dholai Khal station, each with a capacity of 7.4 cubic metres per second. They are struggling to manage the growing burden.

At Kalyanpur, the situation is equally dire. A study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency in 1990 recommended a pumping station with a 20 cumec capacity and 514 acres of retention pond area. However, in over three decades, the government has managed to acquire only 53,004 acres, far short of the requirement.

Despite acquiring only 53,004 acres, the DNCC has designated 178.82 acres as retention space. This includes 98.35 acres owned by BADC, 6.36 acres by WDB, 11.40 acres of government khash land, and 62.71 acres belonging to Dhaka Wasa. A substantial part of this land is under encroachment.

The BADC recently attempted to fill 11 acres of retention land for a four-storey tissue culture building, violating the Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act 2010. Although legal challenges have stalled the construction, environmentalists warn that the area remains at risk.

“The government’s failure to acquire the required land when it was affordable has made the situation worse,” said a WASA official. “What could have been done for Tk 50 crore then would now require an exponentially higher budget.”

When asked about BADC filling up 11 acres of land, Md Mahmudul Hasan, administrator of Dhaka North City Corporation, said BADC still owns significantly more land than what has been filled. BADC uses the land as seed beds.

Rajuk has designated the area as a waterbody in the Detailed Area Plan.

Meanwhile, Goran Chatbari’s retention pond, once 619 acres, has also lost 40 acres to the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry to implement one of their projects. Although additional pumps have been installed to compensate, the loss of retention area has

strained the system.

### EASTERN RETENTION PONDS

Dhaka’s eastern retention ponds are also struggling to survive.

Two critical areas – one at the confluence of the Gobindopur and Bouthar canals at the Uttar Khan and Dakkhin Khan areas on the bank of Balu River, and another at the ending points of the Dumini and Norai canals at Nagdarpara and Kayetpara – are also being filled up in the name of housing projects.

“These areas are earmarked in the Drainage Master Plan, Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP), and Detailed Area Plan (DAP),” said Akter Mahmud.

Without intervention, the government risks losing these crucial areas, jeopardising future drainage projects, he said.

### WHO IS TO BLAME?

Encroachment, negligence, and a lack of coordinated government action are at the heart of the crisis, according to experts.

Overlapping jurisdictions between Wasa, DNCC, and the Ministry of Agriculture have resulted in a lack of accountability and enforcement, they added.

“The government must take immediate steps to protect these areas,” said Iqbal Habib, an urban planner. “Canals and retention ponds are integral to the city’s drainage system. Any disruption could lead to a total collapse.”

Despite the grim outlook, there are, however, some promising initiatives.

DNCC Chief Engineer Brig Gen Md Moin Uddin revealed plans for a hydro-eco park at Kalyanpur. The project envisions a retention pond surrounded by trees to increase water-carrying capacity while maintaining ecological balance.

However, a large portion of BADC’s land is essential for this project.

Meanwhile, administrator Mahmudul said both the DNCC and LGRD Ministry support the project, but an inter-ministerial decision is required for the land.

## An escape from ‘hell’

### 25-year-old tells story of being confined by traffickers in Myanmar

SHARIFUL ISLAM

What began as a promising opportunity towards a better life turned into a harrowing ordeal for Junaed Hossain Parbez Ariyan, 25, of Narsingdi’s Belabo.

He fell prey to an international human trafficking syndicate and was forced to work for an online scam gang operating in Myanmar’s Karen State.

Ariyan was among approximately 300 individuals, including women, held captive in at least 10 confinement centres near the Thai-Myanmar border. Thirteen of these victims are Bangladeshis.

The captives are subjected to work under inhumane conditions and tortures.

On October 18, Ariyan managed to flee from one of those confinement centres, which are guarded by armed members of Karen insurgent groups and criminal gangs. He jumped into a river, surviving an arduous trek through hills and forests.

He returned home on November 14 and shared his harrowing experiences with this newspaper recently.

### DREAM TURNS INTO NIGHTMARE

Ariyan had previously been working in Dubai’s hospitality sector.

In August, he was enticed by the promise of a lucrative computer operator job in Thailand, offering a salary of US \$1,200–\$1,500 – twice his salary in Dubai.

Convinced by a broker, Noman, a Dubai expatriate

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## INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION ‘Inqilab Mancha’ places 6 demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inqilab Mancha, a Dhaka University-based organisation, yesterday submitted a memorandum to the High Commission of India with six demands.

The Indian government must ensure the safety, security, and protection of Bangladesh’s diplomatic missions, the officials, and their family members and properties, said the organisation.

It also said the Indian government must ensure that no Bangladeshis are killed at the border in the future, and must prosecute the perpetrators of the previous border killings through transparent and credible investigations.

The memorandum signed by its spokesman, Sharif Osman Hadi, said, “Discrimination against

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## LAWYER MURDER IN CTG Two accused put on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday placed two suspects on remand in connection with the murder of Saiful Islam Alif, a lawyer, who was hacked to death during a clash in the court premises on November 26.

The duo Chandan Das and Ripon Das were produced before the court amid tight security measures.

Chattogram Metropolitan Magistrate Kazi Shariful Islam passed the order after Kotwali police produced them before the court.

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## A celebration of colours Butterfly Fair held at JU

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Zahir Raihan Auditorium at Jahangirnagar University transformed into a vibrant hub of activity yesterday during the daylong Butterfly Fair, showcasing hundreds of live butterflies and captivating photographs.

The colourful fluttering of butterflies, combined with engaging activities, delighted visitors of all ages. “I’ve never seen so many butterflies together before. They’re of so many colours – red, blue, purple, yellow – and absolutely stunning,” said five-year-old Faiyad Ahmed Aditya from Savar.

Approximately 35 butterfly species, including Striped Pierrot, Blue Tiger, and Painted Lady, were displayed near the auditorium, Butterfly Park, and Botanical Garden.

The event, organised by JU’s Zoology Department with Cute as the title sponsor, carried the theme “Urle Akashe Projapiti, Prokriti Pay Notun Goti” (If butterflies fly in the sky, nature gets rejuvenated). Its goal was to

promote conservation and raise awareness about nature.

“In 2013, JU hosted 110 butterfly species. However, urban development has caused habitat loss, reducing the number to just 70 species,” shared Prof Monwar Hossain, the fair’s convener.

The Butterfly Award 2024 went to Sabuj Chakma, founder of Plantation for Nature, while Sabbir Ahmed of Jagannath University received the Butterfly Young Enthusiast Award 2024.

Inaugurating the fair, JU Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan emphasised butterflies’ role in preserving biodiversity, urging everyone to foster harmony in nature and society.

“Let today’s Butterfly Fair inspire a commitment to protecting diversity,” he said.

The fair also featured puppetry by Kaktarua Puppet Theatre, art competitions, quizzes, kite flying, photography, debates, and a butterfly identification contest, making it a memorable celebration for nature enthusiasts.



With jubilation in her eyes, a girl looks at butterflies with her father at the daylong Butterfly Fair at Jahangirnagar University yesterday. The Zahir Raihan Auditorium of the university turned into a vibrant hub during the fair, showcasing hundreds of live butterflies and captivating photographs.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



## 3 more die of dengue, 186 patients get hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three dengue patients died while 186 patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

All the deaths were reported from Dhaka North City Corporation areas.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, with the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 517 while the number of cases rose to 95,070.

Currently, 2,354 dengue patients are undergoing treatment in different hospitals, of which 1,401 are from outside Dhaka. A total of 92,199 patients have been released till yesterday.



# CWasa to install 55 deep tubewells despite falling groundwater levels

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (CWasa) has sent a proposal to the Planning Commission to install 55 deep tube wells in Chattogram city in a bid to tackle the water crisis during the dry season.

The state agency has made the move at a time when port city's groundwater level has been receding alarmingly, alongside intrusion of salt water during dry season, posing a significant threat to water security of the country's second largest city.

According to a study published in 2021, titled "Modeling of groundwater level changes in an urban area", the port city's groundwater level receded by 4.75 metres per year from 2009 to 2016.

The study, conducted by Dr Aysha Akter, a professor of Civil Engineering Department at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), found extraction of water without any planning a prime cause of groundwater depletion.

CWasa supplies around 45-46 crore litres of water, most of it collected from surface sources, to consumers daily, except during the dry season.

Of this, around 41 crore litres

of water are supplied after being collected from Halda and Karnaphuli rivers, according to CWasa sources.

As salty sea water enters into Karnaphuli and Halda rivers during the dry season due to the decrease in water flow from upstream, the port city faces an extreme water shortage every year, causing suffering to city residents.

Now, the CWasa is extracting water through at least 45 deep tubewells, contributing to lowering groundwater levels of Chattogram.

"The CWasa's water production decreases 1.5 to 2 crore litres per day in the dry season. So, we have been forced to take the decision to install more deep tubewells to address the water crisis," said Md Rezaul Ahsan Chowdhury, project director and an executive engineer of CWasa.

As per project documents, CWasa will install these tubewells, each of 16-inch diameter, in Kalurghat area at an estimated cost of Tk 80 crore.

Asked why the initiative is being taken despite the depletion of groundwater level, Maksud Alam, chief engineer of CWasa, said, "We have no option except installing deep tubewells to ensure water supply during the dry season."

He, however, claimed that these tubewells will be set up for an interim period to tackle the crisis.

Experts said the new initiative will

put further deplete Chattogram's groundwater level.

"The CWasa took an unscientific approach to solving the water crisis. Instead, they could have increased the production capacity of its existing plants, or by constructing new treatment plants in areas without salinity problem," said Dr Sudip Kumar Pal, a professor of Cuet's Civil Engineering Department, who conducted several studies on groundwater depletion in Chattogram.

Meanwhile, residents of rural areas under 15 upazilas in Chattogram have been facing an acute water crisis as tubewells in many areas can no longer extract groundwater and are left dysfunctional.

Syed Nur, a resident of Hathazari upazila, installed a tubewell with 200 feet of depth in 2019. However, within just two years, it stopped working.

"The tubewell can't extract any water as the water level receded," she said.

According to a recent report of the Department of Public Health Engineering, the groundwater table has been declining by two-five metres yearly.

Of the total 1,00,423 tubewells installed by DPHE in Chattogram district, only 76,368 are currently functional.

## Two dead as fishing boat capsizes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Two people died as a fishing boat capsized in the Bay of Bengal near Hatia in Noakhali early yesterday.

Locals recovered bodies and rescued 20 fishermen. The deceased were identified as Abul Hashem, 50, and his nephew Md Jewel, 25, of Kalichar village.

Two other fishermen remain missing.

The boat capsized in the Bay of Bengal, 35 kilometres south of the Burir Dona Notun Sluice Ghat area of Kalichar between 12:00am and 1:00am.

Hatia Police Station's Officer-in-charge Touhidul Anwar said that a police team went to the spot. Efforts are underway to rescue the missing fishermen, he added.

Hatia Upazila Nirbahi Officer Ibn Al Zayed Hossain said that the bodies were handed over to their families.

Nizam Uddin Choudhuri, a local, said that on Wednesday night, 24 fishermen went for fishing with a boat. The incident took place while they were returning home.

## Two accused put on

FROM PAGE 3

"The court granted a seven-day remand for Chandan and a five-day remand for Ripon Das after the hearing," said Deputy Commissioner (Prosecution) AAM Humayun Kabir of Chattogram Metropolitan Police to The Daily Star.

Public Prosecutor Mafizul Hoque said police sought a 10-day remand for the accused.

Earlier on Thursday, police arrested Chandan from Bhairab, Kishoreganj, and Ripon from Anwara, Chattogram.

In video footage of the incident, Chandan, wearing a helmet with an orange t-shirt and black pants, was seen attacking Alif with a machete.

Police said that after the murder, he went into hiding.

Ripon was also seen carrying a sharp weapon and wearing a red helmet in the footage.

Police also registered three cases on charges of police assault, vandalism, and obstructing police personnel in discharging their duties during the three-way clashes between police, lawyers, and

followers of Chinmoy on November 26.

The clashes erupted on the court premises after the bail plea of Chinmoy, the spokesperson of the Sammilito Sanatoni Jagoron Jote, was rejected in a sedition case.

During the clash, lawyer Saiful Islam Alif was beaten and hacked to death outside the court premises. Following the murder, Saiful's father, Jamal Uddin, filed a murder case naming 31 individuals. Alif's brother lodged another case accusing 115 persons.

## JU committee

FROM PAGE 5

Arifuzzaman Uzzal, newly appointed convener of the committee, said, "We will put in our utmost efforts to uphold the spirit of the mass uprising."

"We also have plans centred around Jucusu [Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union] elections. If the Jucusu elections take place, the

Anti-Discrimination Student Movement will participate in them," he added.

## Deputy secy

FROM PAGE 5

Locals rescued the injured – Rahmatullah, 45, and Javed Ali, 50 – and admitted them to Jashore General Hospital.

Both of the injured, along with the deceased, were travelling in the private car.

Meanwhile, two businessmen were killed in a road accident in Bhurungamari upazila of Kurigram district early yesterday, reports UNB.

Bhurungamari Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Monirul Islam confirmed the incident.

The deceased were Rashidul Islam, son of Abul Gafur, and Kamal Hossain Khokan, 40. Both hailed from Sapara village under Sadar union of the upazila.

Of them, Khokan was an import-export trader, and Rashidul was engaged in the rice business.

The accident happened around 2:00am on Bhurungamari-Kurigram regional road near Joymoni Hatt Shaheed Samad Technical College, said Khokan's relative Bablu Mia.

He said the duo was heading towards Bhurungamari from Rangpur after completing their work.

# CJ calls for justice as universal

FROM PAGE 3

knowledge, influence, and resources to champion the causes of the marginalised, strengthen the legal framework, and promote access to justice for all," he said.

Pointing at the Supreme Court lawyers, the Chief Justice said they also act as bridges between the judiciary and the people as their role extends beyond the courtroom.

"You educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities, empowering them to engage with the legal system. Your work ensures that the law is not an abstract concept but a living promise of fairness and equality for all," said the Chief Justice.

Refaat Ahmed said when he took the oath as the 25th Chief Justice of Bangladesh, he was acutely aware of the immense responsibility placed upon his shoulders. "This role is not merely a position of leadership, but

a solemn trust bestowed by the people of this nation to uphold fairness, equity, and ensure access to justice for all, irrespective of their status or circumstances," he said.

"From the very moment of my appointment, I recognised the urgency of addressing the challenges that have long impeded the full realisation of our judiciary's potential," he said.

"To this end, on September 21, I unveiled a comprehensive roadmap for judicial reform. This initiative is a cornerstone of my vision to strengthen our judiciary and its capacity to serve the people with integrity and efficiency," said the Chief Justice.

"I have declared and initiated the process of creating a separate Secretariat for the Judiciary, a pivotal measure to ensure the judiciary's administrative autonomy," he said.

Alongside this, he has

proposed the formation of a Judicial Appointment Council to institutionalise transparency and meritocracy in the appointment process of apex court judges, as well as Posting and Transfer Guidelines for District Judges, aimed at fostering consistency and fairness in judicial postings. "These proposals have been formally submitted to the government for necessary action, marking a significant step toward the complete institutional separation of the judiciary from the executive branch," he said.

Moreover, in reinforcing the judiciary's independence from the legislative branch, they have restored and strengthened the Supreme Judicial Council following the disposal of the 16th Amendment review case, he went on.

RULAA convenor Barrister Bodruddoza Badal presided over the

function moderated by its member secretary Kamal Ziaul Islam Babu.

## Inqilab Mancha

FROM PAGE 3

the indigenous tribal populations of Manipur must be stopped. The Indian government should seek interventions from the Mediation Support Unit (MSU) of the United Nations to resolve the intensifying conflicts in Manipur."

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Gulshan Zone) Rakib Hassan told The Daily Star that an organisation under the banner of Inqilab Mancha gathered near the office of the Indian High Commission at Gulshan in Dhaka around 4:30pm.

Later on, three of the leaders and activists of the organisation went inside the office and handed over the memorandum. The event took place peacefully, ADC Rakib Hassan added.

# RU medical centre brings no benefit

FROM PAGE 5

centre are largely limited to primary treatments only, said officials.

Students also complained that they have not been getting proper medicines from the medical centre. The medicines available at the centre are of low quality.

Each RU student has to pay Tk 100 yearly as a health-related fee, which generates a substantial revenue for the medical centre. However, its officials claimed to have three drafts of their budget still pending with the RU administration.

On-duty doctors are often unable to provide proper medicines and other facilities to the students due to insufficient budget deficit, the officials added.

"Lack of manpower is a big obstacle for us. Whenever we approached the

university administration in this regard, they only gave us assurances, but made no visible effort to resolve the issue," said Mafruha Siddiqi Lipi, chief medical officer at the centre.

Referring to the November 24 notice, Lipi said, "We are somehow managing to cover the morning shift with the number of doctors we have, but it is not possible to run the afternoon shift."


"Currently, each doctor has to attend hundreds of patients daily. Recruitment of more manpower is desperately needed to provide services properly,"

she added.

Contacted, RU Vice-Chancellor Saleh Hasan Naqib said they are working to resolve the issues pertaining to the medical centre.

"We have arranged to appoint an Ophthalmologist on an urgent basis. Steps are on regarding the other issues. There has been some delay in recruitment over transparency and scrutiny in the process. All the problems will be resolved by January," he added.

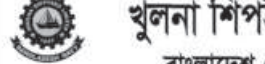
RU Pro-VC Mohammad Main Uddin, however, could not specify any deadline to resolve the issues.



**ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়**

বঙ্গবন্ধু আবাসিক এলাকার এন ব্লকে খুব সুন্দর নিকটিক ৫ কাতার ২ টি পুট জরুরী প্রয়োজনে বিক্রয়। প্রকৃত ক্রেতাদের যোগাযোগ করুন।

**০১৮৯৪-০৯৮৩৬০**



**খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিমিটেড**

বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী, খুলনা

**পরিবহন কাজের বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

দরপত্রের নম্বর নং: বাবি (এফ)-১৩/পরিবহন/২০২৪-২০২৫	তারিখ: ০৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪
০১ প্রকল্পের নাম	খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিমিটেড, বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী, খুলনা।
০২ টেন্ডারের ধরণ	বিশেষ হতে আন্দানীকৃত বিভিন্ন মালামাল চাহিদা সমূহ বন্দর হতে ট্রাক, কন্টরোলার এবং ট্রেলার এর মাধ্যমে খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ডের প্রধান ভাড়া পণ্ড ০৬ (ছা) মাসের জন্য পরিবহনের টেন্ডারের নিয়োগ।
০৩ দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	১৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
০৪ দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৫ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা
০৫ দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান	হিসাব শাখা, খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিমিটেড, বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী, খুলনা।
০৬ দরপত্রের মূল্য	টাকা ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) মাত্র (অন্যভাবেযোগ্য)
০৭ আবেদন মাদিবিহ বড এর পরিমাণ (টাকায়)	টাকা ২৫,০০০.০০ (পঁচিশ হাজার) মাত্র (যেহেতুযোগ্য) খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিঃ এর অনুব্রহ্ম প্ে-অর্ডার/বিলকে ড্রাফট দরপত্রের সঠিত জনা দিতে হবে।
০৮ যোগাযোগের মাধ্যমে	ফোন: ০২-৪৭৭২০০৩ মোবাইল: ০১৯৩০-৪৬৮৩৪৯ Email: oiccomf.ksy@gmail.com
০৯ বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী	খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড কর্তৃক কোন কারণে দলীলতা ব্যতিরেকে যেকোনকালে দরপত্র গ্রহণ/ বাতিল করিবার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।


GID-1130

ম্যানেজার এ্যডমিন



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**NOTICE**

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTARY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 1511 OF 2024


IN THE MATTER OF:  
**Grameen Knitwear Ltd.** -Versus- ----- **Petitioner.**

**The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies & Firms .....Respondents.**

Please take notice that an application under Section 151 read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 for condonation of delay in filing of the Return of allotment of shares dated 24.07.2010 of **Grameen Knitwear Ltd.**, and to relieve from the liability to pay fine has been filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon hearing his Lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohail was pleased to admit the application on 27.11.2024.

Any person interested in the matter may appear before the Hon'ble Court on the date of hearing either personally or through duly appointed Advocate.

(Chowdhury Tanzim Karim)  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
**C. T. Karim & Partners**, Suite No. 7D-1, Paramount Heights (7th Floor),  
65/2/1 Box Culvert Road, Purana Paltan,  
Dhaka - 1000, Bangladesh, Phone: 01710-641779



**Department of Sociology**  
**University of Dhaka**

**ADMISSION NOTICE**  
**Masters in Sociology and Social Policy (MSSP)**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Batch 2024-2025**

The Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka invites applications for admission to the Masters in Sociology and Social Policy for 2024-2025 session. The one-year Master's program is designed to provide well-grounded academic and professional training in theory and methods relevant to sociology, development, and social policy.

**Program features:**

- The program runs for the first time in Bangladesh at the postgraduate level, blending an interdisciplinary approach to social policy and related social sciences subject.
- It prepares graduates to meet the demands of government organizations, local and international NGOs, and private sectors.
- Key focus on Social Policy, Sociology of Development, and Research - gender, health, population, nutrition, education, media, urban and regional planning, criminal justice, environment, migration, and indigenous issues.
- The program places a strong emphasis on developing social science research skills- both quantitative and qualitative methods

**Eligibility:** Bachelor degree in any discipline, with at least 2nd class/CGPA 2.5 or equivalent on a 4.0 scale. Students with a Third division/class or "D" grade in their academic career will not be considered.  
**Class time:** On weekends and one working day during evening, starting from last week of January 2025  
**Selection procedure:**  
**Admission test on Friday, January 10, 2025, at 10am** (Room: 516, Social Sciences Faculty Building, Level 4)  
The written test will be comprised of language and communication, quantitative aptitude and writing skills  
The qualifying examination will be of 100 marks: written 80 & oral 20  
**How to apply:**  
Application forms can be collected from the Sociology Department office (From 09am - 4.00 pm, Sunday - Thursday) at a cost of Tk. 1200, and to be submitted to the office by **December 31, 2024.**  
**Visit-** https://du.ac.bd/body/SOC to download the application form.  
**Contact address:** Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences Building (Level 4), University of Dhaka, Dhaka- 1000. Phone: 9661900 Ext. 6576.  
**Contact:** +8801720567517; +8801534856513; +8801689325801, E-mail: msspdu@gmail.com

GID-1131



## RU medical centre brings no benefit to students

NURAHSAN MRIDUL

Habiba Akter, a third-year student of Rajshahi University, one day found herself struggling to breathe. Seeking help, she went to the university's medical centre. However, even after waiting for around 30 minutes, no doctor or nurse came to her aid.

While the medical centre has a nebuliser machine, there is no one to help patients use it in the case of an emergency.

As such, Habiba had to leave the centre without receiving any treatment.

This has largely been the scenario of RU's medical centre for the past several months. Established in 1958 with a view to ensure healthcare to students and staffers of the university, it is yet to serve its purpose properly.

At present, the centre is running amid an acute lack of doctors and nurses, while other medical officials there are hardly performing their duties.

Worse still, on November 24, the medical centre put up a notice halting treatments in the afternoon citing "insufficient manpower".

As per documents, the centre has a total of 36 posts for doctors, but 22 of these have been vacant for a long time. It is also supposed to have six nurses, including two male nurses, but at present only two female nurses are working at the centre.

The handful of doctors available at the centre have been struggling to serve a large number of students.

Similarly, there are only three emergency medical officers against the total six posts.

According to university sources, it was announced on October 24, 2020 that 13 doctors would be recruited against 18 vacant posts. However, the recruitment process eventually got postponed. Meanwhile, after the Awami League government's ouster on August 5, four doctors resigned from their duties at the centre.

**RU students face significant deprivation in medical care, marked by a lack of quality medicines, inadequate operational facilities, and an acute shortage of doctors and nurses. Despite repeated assurances, the recruitment process for additional medical staff has remained stalled since 2020.**

While the centre has some advanced equipment, there is not enough manpower to operate those. The ECG machine has no operator, while the digital X-ray machine has no full-time technologist. The number of beds for patients is inadequate, while the oxygen channels are insufficient.

At present, the services at the medical

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A youth climbs over the iron fence of Ramna Park, as the Hare Road gate of the park remains closed from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Instead of taking the ordeal to find another entrance that is open, he chose a risky shortcut to get inside. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## AL leader held over attempted murder

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested Nasir Uddin Ahmed Ferdous, president of the central executive body of Bangabandhu Matsyajibi Parishad, an associate body of Awami League, in a case filed over an attempted murder of a protester in Dhaka on July 19.

He was arrested around 8:00pm on Thursday from the capital's Dhanmondi area, said Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

Nasir was among the 180 accused in the case filed with Khilgaon Police Station for shooting at the protester, Ahadul Islam, 25.

Ahadul's father, Mohammad Baker, filed the case on October 17.

According to the case statement, Ahadul and others were protesting near Meradia Bazar on July 19 when "many of the named accused along with other unnamed members of Border Guard Bangladesh, police personnel and Awami League leaders and activists opened fire as per the instructions of some other accused."

Ahadul suffered bullet wounds in his left leg and was also beaten up as he fell on the ground. He later received treatment at multiple hospitals, Baker said in the case statement.

PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 7					
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					

## STUDENT MOVEMENT JU committee formed

JU CORRESPONDENT

The Jahangirnagar University chapter of the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement announced a 20-member convening committee last night.

Arif Sohel, member secretary of the central committee, made the announcement during a press conference held at 10:00pm on the JU campus.

Arifuzzaman Uzzal was announced as the convener, Touhid Siam as the member secretary, Nakib Al Mahmud Arnob as the chief organiser, and Maliha Namrah as the spokesperson. Additionally, Arif Sohel and Mehrab Sifat were named as advisers to the committee.

Mentioning that this committee will operate for the next six months, Arif Sohel said a full committee will be formed soon.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

# Khulna's papor village thriving

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

A small village in the Phultala upazila, around 35 kilometres from Khulna city, is home to an age old tradition of making raw papor.

The village is Dakshindihi, sometimes locally referred to as "papor gram" (papor village), where this tradition has continued for seven decades now.

Papor, also known as papadam, is a popular crunchy snack that originated in the Indian subcontinent. Made from dough using various types of flours that is either deep fried or cooked with dry heat, papor usually serves as a side dish in Bengali cuisine.

Over the years, the papor-makers of this village have transformed this traditional practice into a thriving cottage industry — providing livelihood, economic independence and resilience for the entire community.

Dakshindihi is also famous for being the home of the in-laws of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Hundreds of visitors, from home and abroad, visit this village all year around.

Nearly 1,000 residents — including men, women and children — of the village are engaged in making, drying and packing raw papor for at least eight months of the year. They work almost every day from dawn to dusk.

The tradition of papor-making in Dakshindihi traces back to the late British era when a few Hindu families in the villages began preparing these crispy treats for their own consumption.

Over time, the distinctive crispiness and flavour of Dakshindihi's papors gained popularity across different regions, paving the way for it to become its own cottage industry.

Now, villagers are making

papors for some 30 small and large local factories or on their own in their homes.

The demand for Dakshindihi's papor is so high that distributors often struggle to keep up with sending shipments to major districts across Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna divisions. The demand usually surges between the Bengali months of Kartik and Chaitra (November to April), as well as during different festivals.

The papor-making process, however, is highly dependent on

the unique flavour and quality that are much sought after by customers," he added.

### RISE OF LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

Around 60-70 years back, Satish Chandra Datta started the first papor-making business in this village, and later passed it down to his son Sushil Datta.

As Sushil grew older, the responsibility of the family business was then handed over to his son Ananda Datta.

Ananda now oversees the daily operations of a sizeable factory,



the weather, as it requires ample sunshine to dry properly.

"First, rice flour is mixed with powdered lentils, including moong [mung beans], khesari [green peas], and mashkalai [black gram], with water, salt, and baking soda, to make a dough. The dough is then rolled into small, thin, round shapes which are then laid out in the sun to dry before being packaged for sale," said Mukul Hossain, a local resident.

"A dough weighing one kilogramme will produce around 90-100 papors. The preparation has remained consistent over the decades, thereby preserving

where some 20-25 workers are employed. The papors from this factory are sent to different wholesale shops after packaging.

"We produce 200-250 kg of dried papors daily, and ship those to wholesalers in districts across Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna, for Tk 135-160 per kg," Ananda said.

Another success story similar to that of the Datta family is the one of Mahtab Sheikh.

Once a day-labourer who was struggling to make ends meet, Mahtab, 66, went on to become an exemplary entrepreneur from the village by making papors.

"Around 20 years back, my father-in-law advised me to try something different. I began making papors using rice and pulse purchased from Phultala Bazar, and selling those to traders. Over time, I managed to expand into a factory of my own, which now employs around 40 workers and produces around 600 kg of papors daily. Our annual turnover is now around Tk 15 lakh," he said.

### EMPLOYING WOMEN, EMPOWERING WOMEN

The papor industry in Dakshindihi employs many local women, thereby providing them with financial solvency and empowerment.

Beauty Begum works with her daughter after school hours, making papor on the veranda of their home. "I receive Tk 70 for every 1,000 papors that I make, which takes around two and half hours," she said.

Like her, women from nearly every household participate in the process, utilising their spare time to make extra income for their families.

Golam Saklain, deputy general manager (in charge) of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation's Khulna office, lauded the papor-making industry in Dakshindihi.

"We aim to promote the development of such small-scale initiatives in remote areas, as they not only generate employment at the grassroots level but also empower local women to become self-reliant," he said.

"We have the opportunity to extend loan assistance for such projects. Also, we have a plan to visit the village involved in papor-making, provide them with the necessary financial support, and organise different training programmes to enhance their skills and productivity," he added.

## Deputy secy, 6 others killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Md Farhad Hossain, deputy secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Department of Ministry of Education, was killed in a road accident in Barishal yesterday.

Meanwhile, at least six more people were killed in separate road accidents across three districts of the country yesterday.

The accident, in which Farhad was killed and eight others were injured, occurred around 5:00pm in Muladi upazila, said Zahirul Alam, officer-in-charge of Muladi Police Station.

He said Farhad was going to Muladi Sadar on a three-wheeler from Mirganj Ferry Ghat.

Quoting injured passengers, the OC said when the three-wheeler crossed the Pyadarhat area and approached the Howladar Bridge, suddenly a dog appeared in front of it. To save it, the driver pressed the brakes, and the three-wheeler lost control and overturned.

"As a result, Farhad sustained serious head injuries. He was taken to a local hospital, where the doctor on duty declared him dead," the OC added.

Muladi Upazila Health Officer Dr Saidur Rahman said Farhad died on the way to the hospital.

Meanwhile, in Dinajpur, three people, including the driver of a bus, were killed in a head-on collision between a bus and a truck in the Birganj upazila yesterday morning.

The accident took place at Jadur intersection on the Birganj-Thakurgaon highway, in the Dashmile area, around 8:30am.

Dashmile Highway Police Station Officer-in-charge (OC) Omar Faruk said the driver of the paddy-laden truck and two passengers of the bus died on the spot after the collision.

Several passengers of the bus were also injured in the accident.

In Jashore, a man was killed and two others injured as a truck hit a private car in Barinagar Bazar of the Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Iqbal Hossain, 35, of the Bagbaganj village in Cumilla.

According to the victim's relatives, the incident took place at Barinagar Bazar, when the sand-laden truck hit the car while it was heading towards Cumilla from Jashore around 9:00am.


Iqbal Hossain died on the spot, said Fazlur Rahman, sub-inspector of Barobazar Highway Police.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

The Chattogram Development Authority is re-excavating, expanding, and renovating the city's canals to address waterlogging issues. However, the absence of safety barriers poses a serious risk. Over the past few years, at least 11 people have died after falling into canals and drains in Chattogram. The photo of Jamalkhan canal was taken at Jamalkhan recently.



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**সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি কর্তৃক রহনপুর ৪০০/১৩২ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র হতে রহনপুর ১৩২/৩৩ কেভি গ্রিড উপকেন্দ্র পর্যন্ত ৯.১৫ কি.মি. দীর্ঘ ১৩২ কেভি (১,৩২,০০০ ভোল্টেজ) সঞ্চালন লাইন নির্মাণ করা হয়েছে। লাইনটি আগামী ০৮ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২৪, রবিবার, বেলা ১১:০০ ঘটিকায় পরীক্ষামূলকভাবে চালু করা হবে এবং উক্ত সময় হতে নবনির্মিত লাইনটি সার্বক্ষণিক চালু থাকবে। লাইনটি চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ জেলার গোমস্তাপুর উপজেলায় প্রসাদপুর, গোপাল নগর, খয়রাবাদ, নসিবন্দি নগর, দরবারপুর, ডাইংপাড়া, গৌরীপুর, কাওয়াডাসা, নন্দলালপুর, জাহিদনগর, বসনীটোলা, পিরাসন, মরিচা ডাঙা, চৌডালা প্রভৃতি এলাকার উপর দিয়ে অতিক্রম করেছে।

এমতাবস্থায় উক্ত নবনির্মিত ১৩২ কেভি লাইনের টাওয়ারে আরোহন, গবাদিপশু বাধা, টাওয়ারে রশি বেঁধে কাপড় শুকানো, লাইনের নিচে ও পাশে বীশবাড়ি ও বড় বৃক্ষাদি রোপন প্রভৃতি ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ কাজ হতে বিরত থাকার জন্য অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে এবং সকলকে ১৩২ কেভি লাইন হতে নিরাপদ দূরত্বে (উভয়পাশে ১৪ মিটার) থাকতে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে। উচ্চ ভোল্টেজে বিদ্যুতায়িত বর্ণিত সঞ্চালন লাইন/টাওয়ারের সংস্পর্শে এসে কেউ দুর্ঘটনার শিকার হলে সেজন্য পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলসি কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না।

মোঃ আলমগীর হোসেন  
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (প্রধান প্রকৌশলী) অঃদাঃ  
পাওয়ার গ্রিড নেটওয়ার্ক স্ট্রেন্গথেনিং প্রজেক্ট আন্ডার পাওয়ার গ্রিড



## US State Dept targeting India: BJP

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has accused the State Department and "deep state" elements in the US of trying to destabilise India in conjunction with a group of investigative journalists and opposition leader Rahul Gandhi.

The accusation comes as a surprise as New Delhi and Washington have forged a strong relationship in the last two decades and both have vowed to further strengthen ties despite some differences and irritants.

Gandhi's Congress party used the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)'s articles that "singularly focused" on the Adani Group and its alleged closeness to the government to undermine Modi, the ruling party said on Thursday.

Group chair Gautam Adani and seven others were indicted last month in the US for being part of a \$265 billion scheme to bribe Indian officials - allegations the group has termed "baseless".

OCCRP's articles have also accused state-sponsored hackers in India of

**US 'deep state' elements, media group, George Soros, Rahul Gandhi working together: BJP**

using Israeli-made Pegasus spyware to target government critics.

The government has previously denied both allegations.

The BJP has previously accused Gandhi, the OCCRP and 92-year-old billionaire financier philanthropist George Soros of attacking Modi.

On Thursday, it cited a French media report that said that OCCRP was funded by the US Agency for International Development and "other deep state figures" like Soros.

"The Deep State had a clear objective to destabilise India by targeting Prime Minister Modi," the BJP said in a series of messages on X.

"It has always been the US State Department behind this agenda... OCCRP has served as a media tool for carrying out a deep state agenda," it said. Sambit Patra, a BJP national spokesperson and lawmaker, repeated the accusations at an official media briefing by the party on Thursday.

"A French investigative media group...has revealed that... 50 percent of OCCRP's funding comes directly from the US State Department," Patra said.



Palestinians wait in a queue to receive food outside a distribution centre in Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip yesterday, amid the ongoing Israeli offensive in the enclave.

PHOTO: AFP

## Goal of offensive is to overthrow Assad

Says Syria rebel leader; thousands flee Homs as rebels advance further south; Jordan closes border crossing

AGENCIES

Rebel forces pressing a lightning offensive in Syria aim to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad's rule, their Islamist leader said in an interview published yesterday.

After wresting other key cities from government control, the Islamist-led rebels were at the gates of Syria's Homs, a war monitor said, though the defence ministry denied claims it had withdrawn its troops.

In little over a week, the offensive has seen Syria's second city Aleppo and strategically located Hama fall from Assad's control, for the first time since the civil war began in 2011.

Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the leader of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) rebel alliance, said the goal of the offensive was to end Assad's rule, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, thousands of people fled Homs overnight and into yesterday morning, a war monitoring group and residents said, as rebel forces sought to push their lightning offensive against government forces further south.

The head of the Syrian faction leading the sweeping assault told CNN that his group - a former Al-Qaeda affiliate now known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) - aimed to "build Syria" and bring Syrian refugees back home from Lebanon and Europe.

Iran will send missiles, drones and more advisers to Syria, a senior Iranian official said yesterday. Russia's embassy in Syria has urged Russian nationals to leave the country on commercial flights.

Jordan has closed its border crossing with Syria, the kingdom's interior minister said. Hezbollah sent a small number of "supervising forces" from Lebanon to Syria overnight to help prevent anti-government fighters from seizing the strategic city of Homs, two senior Lebanese security sources told Reuters.

In another alarming development for Assad, the head of the US-backed Syrian Kurdish force said the radical Islamic State group, which ran a reign of terror in large swathes of Iraq and Syria until it was defeated by a US-led coalition in 2017, had now taken control of some areas in eastern Syria.



## Billionaires' wealth more than doubles in 10 yrs: UBS

AFP, Zurich

Billionaires have seen their combined wealth shoot up 121 percent over the past decade to \$14 trillion, Swiss bank UBS said Thursday.

Switzerland's biggest bank said the number of dollar billionaires increased from 1,757 to 2,682 over past 10 years.

The 10th edition of UBS's annual Billionaire Ambitions report found that billionaires have comfortably outperformed global equity markets over the past decade. The report documents "the growth and investment of great wealth, as well as how it's being preserved for future generations and used to have a positive effect on society", said Benjamin Cavalli, head of strategic clients at UBS global wealth management.

## South Korea's Yoon must be suspended

Says ruling party leader; opposition submits motion to impeach him

REUTERS, Seoul

South Korea's ruling party leader said President Yoon Suk Yeol needs to be removed from power for trying to impose martial law, as the government denied reports yesterday it was preparing to issue another martial law declaration.

Yoon shocked the nation - and his own ruling People Power Party - on Tuesday, when he gave the military sweeping emergency powers in order to root out what he called "anti-state forces" and overcome obstructionist political opponents.

He rescinded the declaration about six hours later after parliament, including some members of his party, voted to oppose the decree.

The main opposition Democratic Party has submitted a motion to impeach Yoon and scheduled a vote in parliament for this evening.

Fearing another attempt to declare martial law, opposition lawmakers rotated through parliament's plenary session hall yesterday to block any such attempt, a Democratic Party official said.

## Indian foreign secy

FROM PAGE 12

minorities in Bangladesh. Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Randhir Jaiswal told the weekly media briefing in New Delhi that the Indian Foreign Secretary will travel to Bangladesh on December 9 for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) with his counterpart.

During his stay in Dhaka, Misri will hold talks with his Bangladesh counterpart Jasim Uddin besides having several other meetings that have been firmed up, Jaiswal said without divulging if India's top diplomat will call on Yunus.

Asked about the agenda of FOC, Jaiswal said in Dhaka the Indian Foreign Secretary would discuss all issues of mutual interest.

The MEA spokesperson did not specify any particular issue or issues.

When a reporter pointed out that former ISKCON member Chinmoy Krishna Das was not given bail and the previous court hearing was deferred by a month, Jaiswal reiterated that he would get a fair and transparent trial and his legal rights would be respected.

"We want to reiterate our position that his [Das] legal rights will be respected and he will be allowed to exercise those rights and he will be given a fair and transparent trial."

The visit by the Indian foreign secretary was agreed on at a meeting between Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 23.

The Jaishankar-Hossain interaction was the first since Hasina stepped down in the face of widespread protests and the caretaker administration led by Yunus came to power on August 8.



Vikram Misri

## Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

As the alleged smugglers attacked the BSF troops, the Indian border guards first charged stun grenades and later fired three to four rounds of bullets, the press release said, citing the BSF sources.

A Bangladeshi was killed in the gunfire, and the BGB later learnt from locals that the deceased was Anwar.

The BGB also fired warning shots after hearing the sound of gunfire, the press release added.

The Bangladeshi border force strongly condemned the killing in a protest note handed to the BSF at a flag meeting, said Lt Col Sheikh Md Badruddoza, commander of Nilphamari 56 BGB Battalion.

Locals found the body at the Mominpara border around 7:30am and informed the BGB about the matter.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body, said SM Masud Pervez, officer-in-charge of Panchagarh Sadar Police Station.

A deep injury mark was found on the deceased's collarbone, the OC said.

OC Masud also said the body would be handed over to the family today after a post-mortem.

Anwar's brother Arif Hossain filed a murder case at the police station against unidentified individuals over the incident.

## Won't tolerate

FROM PAGE 12

The Jamaat chief also touched on the issue of the Pilkhana killings, where 57 military personnel lost their lives.

He demanded a fair investigation into the killings, pointing out that "no trial has yet been held" for those responsible. He called for a thorough investigation into the incident.

Jamaat leader Abu Taher Mohammad Masum, Assistant Secretary General Abul Hasanat Mohammad Abdul Halim, and Central Executive Committee members Mohammad Abdur Rob and Mohammad Mobarak Hossain were also present at the event chaired by Kazi Din Mohammad, ameer of Cumilla City Jamaat.

## BTRC recalls bandwidth

FROM PAGE 12

states of Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

At present, the states, popularly known as the Seven Sisters of India, are connected to Singapore through submarine cables in Chennai using the neighbouring country's domestic fibre optic network.

The landing station in Chennai is about 5,500 kilometres away from the northeastern part - a considerable distance that compromises the internet speed.

Due to the mountainous nature of the region, the maintenance of fibre optic networks and the installation of new networks are relatively difficult.

"The guidelines do not permit such 'transit' arrangements," Md Emdad ul Bari, chairman of BTRC, told The Daily Star on Thursday.

Subsequently, the internet regulator wrote to the telecom ministry last week to recall its earlier application.

The transit arrangement will also strengthen India's position as a dominant internet hub and weaken Bangladesh's potential to become a regional hub, according to a BTRC document.

It would also hinder the potential for Bangladesh to become a Point of Presence (PoP) for content delivery network (CDN) providers such as Meta, Google, Akamai and Amazon.

A PoP is a physical location, facility or data centre that acts as an interconnection point for various networks. It facilitates the exchange of data traffic between different network providers, internet service providers and CDNs. In short, it is a central hub where data highways from different regions converge.

Currently, CDNs such as Meta, Google, Akamai and Amazon have their PoPs in Indian cities such as Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai. Through transit connectivity provided by Summit and Fiber@Home, the Indian telecom operators would easily be able to offer internet

services to the Seven Sisters.

Besides, the arrangement would obstruct Bangladesh's ability to provide internet services to parts of Myanmar and northwestern China through its own infrastructure.

Approximately 60 percent of the international bandwidth in Bangladesh is supplied by the seven ITCs like Summit Communications and Fiber@Home, while the remaining 40 percent is provided by Bangladesh Submarine Cables (BSC).

Despite BSC's bandwidth capacity of 7,217 Gbps, only 2,343 Gbps is currently being utilised.

Granting such connections to ITC operators despite BSC's adequate capacity and redundant cables would further increase ITC operators' bandwidth usage, undermining efforts to utilise BSC's unused bandwidth effectively.

"This arrangement would not harm Bangladesh," said Sumon Ahmed Sabir, chief technology officer at Fiber@Home, while acknowledging that the Seven Sisters region would undoubtedly benefit more.

Bangladesh, however, would also gain by earning foreign currency, while BSC, ITC and Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network (NTTN) operators would share in the profits, he added.

Summit Communications did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

"Ultimately, the bandwidth from India will end up in India, reducing Bangladesh to merely a transit point," said Aminul Hakim, president of the Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum.

At first glance, it may seem that Bangladesh would earn foreign currency from this arrangement.

However, since the two local ITC providers facilitating the transit already import bandwidth from Indian companies, there is a significant likelihood of service exchange, depriving the government of revenue, Hakim added.

## Ducsu election likely by next February

FROM PAGE 12

challenges are."

Prof Sayema Haque Bidisha, DU pro-VC (admin), said that forming the committee, initiating discussions, and addressing administrative and logistical procedures naturally took them some time.

"Since this process has already begun, and they [committee] have also prepared their plan for consultations, we can hope that they will provide us with concrete recommendations within a reasonable time," she told this newspaper.

"Based on the recommendations, it will become easier for us to hold the election and carry out other related tasks. Accordingly, an approximate deadline for the polls has been set," she added.

With the university authorities preparing for the Ducsu polls, student organisations gave mixed reactions to the plans.

During a meeting on Wednesday, leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and 29 other student organisations demanded elections to Ducsu and student unions at other universities and colleges across the country by late January or early February.

"We have reached an agreement that elections to student councils at all universities and colleges, including Ducsu, should be held by the last week of January or the first week of February," Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, told reporters after the meeting.

"For over a decade, campuses were dominated by Chhatra League through a type of authoritarian political culture. This created a sense of fear among a generation about student politics. Also, debates have surfaced across educational institutions since August 5 about whether to allow student politics and in what form," Hasnat said.

He added that the student leaders agreed to address the negative aspects of past politics to establish non-partisan, student-council based politics on campuses, ensuring representation of students.

However, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the pro-BNP student body, opined that elections to Ducsu and students' unions at other educational institutions should not be held hastily.

Nasir Uddin Nasir, general secretary of the JCD central committee, said, "Student council elections should be held on all campuses, but not hastily. Student organisations should work on

creating student-friendly atmosphere and building popularity among students through meaningful activities before the elections."

He added that after the mass uprising, student bodies have regained the freedom to engage in normal political activities and are now working to rebuild their image and change negative perceptions of student politics after years of dominance by BCL.

Nasir added that the student bodies should be given more time to change the negative perceptions about students' politics.

This interim government has banned the BCL, the pro-Awami League student body, amid demands from the student movement against discrimination.

Gonatantrik Chhatra Jote, an alliance of seven left-leaning student organisations, said the Ducsu charter should be amended before holding the elections.

"The charter mandates supreme power to the university VC, who can make any decision at will, which is an undemocratic practice. This must be changed before the polls," said Rafikuzzaman Farid, coordinator of the Jote.

DU VC is the ex officio president of Ducsu.

## Resist communal forces in your country

FROM PAGE 1

of attacks on minority communities happen repeatedly."

The signatories say that they never equate the Indian people with the Indian government.

"We know that the people of India are also fighting against 'Hindutva' forces and communalism. We [Bangladeshis] fought for a long time against the 'fascist' Awami League regime and brought it down."

When the Bangladeshi people fought against tyranny in July and August, the people of India took to the streets in solidarity. For a long time, people on both sides of the border stood in solidarity with each other.

When the AL was in power, homes of Hindu people were attacked, properties grabbed, temples desecrated, and people were injured and killed. But after

the ouster of AL on August 5, similar incidents took place.

"However, this time, many political parties, inspired by the mass uprising, protected Hindu homes and temples, setting new examples of communal harmony."

Many Indian media outlets have not been depicting the true picture of Bangladesh, says the statement.

Although the Indian government expressed regret over the incident of attack on the Bangladesh mission in Agartala, it had not taken any effective step to stop the falsehood.

The Indian government's role after the arrest of former ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das was surprising. There were allegations against him within ISKCON, and the organisation expelled him.

"We support his right to a fair trial,

which is a right for everyone. However, it is astonishing how swiftly the Indian Ministry of External Affairs issued a statement in his favour."

On the day he appeared in court, a chaotic situation ensued, leading to the murder of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif. Thanks to the collective efforts of the people of this country, no major unpleasant incident occurred in the wake of that event.

Signatories to the statement include Prof Anu Muhammad, Prof Salimullah Khan, Prof Sayeed Ferdous, Prof Swadhin Sen, Prof Gitirara Nasreen, Prof Kamrul Hasan Mamun, Prof Tuhin Wadud, Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua, writer and journalist Altaf Parvez, writer Rahnuma Ahmed, musician Shayan, central member of Jatiya Nagorik Committee Pritom Das, and Associate Professor Samina Luthfa.





# NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

Center of Excellence in Higher Education

## 25<sup>th</sup> Convocation || 7 December, 2024



PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

### Message

On the auspicious occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Convocation of North South University (NSU), I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the graduating students, their parents, faculties and university authority for their hard work, dedication and efforts.

Education is the most important element for building a knowledge-based, equitable and just society. It plays a pivotal role in building up knowledge and ideals among the youth who represents the future of a country. Keeping that in mind, present government has to undertake various measures to ensure quality at every level of education. Universities also have a crucial responsibility in imparting quality education, and nurturing future leaders imbued with patriotism, integrity, and ethical values. I hope NSU will continue their efforts to promote quality education, research and innovation in the process of preparing the students to face the evolving challenges of the millennium.

Convocation marks a unique milestone in the lives of students, recognizing their achievements and the dedication of their alma mater. I hope the graduates would apply their acquired knowledge for the betterment and prosperity of the masses. I wish them a bright and successful future.

I wish the 25<sup>th</sup> convocation of NSU a grand success.  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Shahabuddin  
Mohammed Shahabuddin



Adviser  
Ministry of Education and Planning  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

### Message

On the occasion of 25th Convocation of North South University (NSU), I offer my warmest congratulations to the graduates. I also congratulate faculties, officials, guardians and others in this occasion.

Like much of the world, Bangladesh stands at the crossroads of profound economic, social, and technological transformations. As graduates of one of the country's most prestigious institutions, NSU students are uniquely positioned to drive progress, foster sustainable development, and lead in areas where new ideas and solutions are needed.

After the student-people uprising in August this year, the interim government led by Professor Muhammad Yunus is working relentlessly to maintain discipline in the education sector. We have appointed vice-chancellors in public universities by judging their academic excellence and quality of leadership. We are trying to enrich textbooks and curriculum aimed at improving the quality of school education, to equip students with real-world skills. We have taken other steps in the education sector to develop human resources aligned to the needs of our socio-economic development.

The students have a crucial role in fostering a respectful and conducive learning environment. I urge all stakeholders to help maintaining the integrity of educational institutions and thereby benefit the broader community.

I wish the 25th Convocation of NSU a grand success.

Wahiduddin Mahmud



Professor Dr. S.M.A. Faiz  
Chairman  
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

I am pleased to know that North South University (NSU), the first private university in Bangladesh, is going to hold its 25th Convocation on 7th December 2024. On this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduating students and their parents, faculty, university staff, members of the Board of Trustees and all concerned.

It is no longer a debate that an aura of positive changes has occurred in Bangladesh's tertiary education. The number of university students has increased to around 4.5 million in 2022 which was 31,000 in 1972. In a span of 53 years, the number of public universities in the country has risen from 6 to 61. A total of 114 private universities are being running under private management in the country. Despite such rapid growth and quantitative improvement in tertiary education, in recent years, many questions have been raised about its quality and its linkage with employability. I think the improvement of the quality should now be the prime focus of our higher education institutions.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has consistently demonstrated its commitment to promoting quality education and fostering a knowledge-driven society. As the principal regulatory body for higher education in Bangladesh, the UGC collaborates closely with universities, including NSU, and other higher education institutions to ensure the delivery of high-quality education. Serving as a vital link between the state and universities, the UGC acts as a catalyst for educational advancement in the country.

I am aware that the NSU is committed to academic excellence and has earned its reputation as a premier educational institution due to its relentless pursuit of providing a superior learning environment. NSU consistently provides its students with an exceptional learning experience, focusing on academic rigour and creating a nurturing environment to develop well-rounded individuals ready to tackle global challenges.

The faculty members at NSU deserve special recognition for their unwavering dedication and expertise, which are essential to the university's success. These educators bring valuable knowledge and experience to the classroom, nurturing intellectual curiosity and academic excellence.

Once again, congratulations to the graduates of North South University's 25th Convocation. Your journey is a testament to your resilience, determination, and hard work. I wish the 25th Convocation of North South University a grand success.

Professor Dr. S.M.A. Faiz



Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, PhD  
Vice-Chancellor  
North South University

I am pleased to welcome you all to the 25th Convocation Ceremony of North South University (NSU). Today, we celebrate our graduates' achievements and the beginning of an exciting new chapter in their lives. As the Vice-Chancellor of this esteemed institution, I am deeply honoured to stand before you on this momentous occasion. To our graduates, today is the culmination of your hard work, determination, and perseverance. You have earned the right to wear caps and gowns and proudly hold the degrees that reflect your commitment to excellence.

North South University has always been steadfast in its mission to provide a world-class education and prepare our students for success. Over the years, our university has earned recognition for academic excellence and cutting-edge research—becoming the top private university in Bangladesh as well as jointly top university of the country and fostering international solid collaborations. Our students and faculty have garnered accolades in national and international arenas, showcasing their talents and making us proud.

We have witnessed remarkable progress in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in recent years. Many of our students have launched successful startups and ventures that highlight their creativity and contribute to societal advancement. At NSU, our focus extends beyond academic achievements; we are committed to shaping well-rounded individuals with the values and skills necessary to make a meaningful difference in their communities and the world.

As you embark on the next phase of your journey—whether it involves pursuing further studies, advancing your career, or dedicating yourself to community service—I urge you to uphold the values instilled in you at North South University. Use your education as a force for good to promote peace, understanding, and sustainable progress.

On behalf of the entire NSU family, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each of you. As you enter the future, I encourage you to remain connected to your alma mater and become active members of our global alumni network. Strive for excellence, embrace challenges, and be the agents of positive change the world needs.

Once again, congratulations on your remarkable achievements. We are proud of you and excited to see the heights you will reach. Thank you, and best wishes for a bright and prosperous future.

Abdul H. Chowdhury  
Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, PhD

### A Brief History of NSU

North South University (NSU), the first private university in Bangladesh, was established in 1992 by the then Foundation for Promotion of Education and Research (FPER), a charitable, non-profit, non-commercial and non-political organization. The FPER was renamed as the NSU Foundation. Later as per Private University Act-2010 formed North South University Trust. The Trust is comprised of a group of eminent industrialists, prominent patrons of education, notable philanthropists, widely experienced academics and senior civil servants of the country. In the early 1990s, they had a dream to set up a world-class university as a center of excellence in higher education in the private sector. Their dedication, tireless efforts, and hard work paved the way for the approval of the establishment of NSU.

Since, at that time, there was no relevant law in the country to set up and operate a university in the private sector, the Founders took the initiative and extended their best efforts in assisting the then government in formulating the relevant law and enacting it. Subsequently, the government amended the Private University Act (PUA) 1992 (repealed by PUA 2010), approved the establishment of NSU. The University formally started its journey in a very modest way in February 1993. Later, in 2012, the NSU Foundation, in the light of the PUA 2010, approved by the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission, formed the NSU Trust with the same group of people in the Foundation as Trustee Members and vested the entire management and administration of NSU in its Board of Trustees (BOT). The Honorable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh is the Chancellor of the BOT.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is the apex policy making and approving body of the university. Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed is the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees and a Founder Life Member of the NSU Trust. The other members of the BOT are Mr. M. A. K. Rahman, Mr. Benajir Ahmed, Mr. Aziz Al Kaiser (Tito), Mr. M. A. Kalam, Mr. S. M. Kamaluddin, Mr. Abul Kashem, Mrs. Yasmin Kamal, Mrs. Rehana Rahman, Mr. A. S. F. Rahman, Mr. Mohammed Shajahan, Mrs. Fawzia Naz, Mr. Tanveer Harun, and Dr. Junaid Kamal Ahmad. All of them are also the members of the NSU Trust. Professor Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, the Vice-Chancellor of NSU, is the Ex-Officio Member of the BOT.

The Syndicate is next to the BOT and is headed by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor is also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the University. He is responsible for managing the administrative and academic affairs of the university as per the Private University Act (PUA 2010), and implementing the policy guidelines set by the BOT. The Vice-Chancellor is assisted by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor and a Treasurer. All of them are appointed by the Honorable Chancellor on recommendation of the BOT.

In general, NSU is modeled on US universities and follows their academic features such as semester systems, credit hours, letter grades, etc. When first introduced, its curricula of undergraduate programs such as Economics, Business, and Computer Science were largely modeled on the curricula of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and were duly approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh, the highest accrediting authority of higher education of the country. NSU has an International Advisory Board, comprised of scholars from all over the world, to counsel and to suggest improvements on academic matters of the university.

The university is delivering a substantial general education curriculum, has a strategic plan, and has initiated and implemented student instructional learning assessment for degree programs and courses and is in the process of developing the infrastructure for evaluation of institutional effectiveness for its institutional accreditation.

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Prof. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, PhD  
Ex-Officio Member, Board of Trustees  
North South University, Vice-Chancellor

2022

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Kazi Masaddequr  
(ID# 18131543 0 42)  
CGPA: 4.00  
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and  
Engineering (BS in CSE)  
School of Engineering and Physical Sciences  
(SEPS)



Fahim Ahmed  
(ID# 2125025 0 60)  
CGPA: 4.00  
Master of Business Administration  
School of Business & Economics (SBE)



Aif Eham Khan  
CGPA: 3.98  
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science  
and Engineering (BS in CSE)  
School of Engineering and  
Physical Sciences (SEPS)



Namirah Ahmed Bushra  
CGPA: 4.00  
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School of Business & Economics (SBE)

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Adiba Nawaz  
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Shahzadi Sharmin  
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School of Humanities and  
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School of Health & Life  
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Sanjana Rahman Nijhu  
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and Engineering (BS in CSE)  
School of Engineering and  
Physical Sciences (SEPS)



Zawata Afran Sharara  
CGPA: 3.96  
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School of Health & Life Sciences  
(SHLS)



Mohammad Tanvir Islam  
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School of Humanities and  
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School of Business & Economics  
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Srejon Datta  
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School of Humanities and  
Social Sciences (SHSS)



Suranjit Das  
CGPA: 3.94  
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School of Business & Economics  
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Md. Masherul Islam  
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CGPA: 3.94  
Master of Science in Computer Science  
and Engineering (MS in CSE)  
School of Engineering and  
Physical Sciences (SEPS)



Mithun Kumar Biswas  
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Master of Science in Environmental Science  
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School of Health & Life Sciences  
(SHLS)



CHIEF ADVISOR  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

### Message

It is with immense pride and joy that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduates of North South University (NSU) on the occasion of the 25th Convocation. Today marks a milestone in your lives—a day of celebration, reflection, and new beginnings. As you step into the world as ambassadors of knowledge, innovation, and leadership, you carry forward the values and ethos of this prestigious institution.

North South University has always been at the forefront of fostering academic excellence and nurturing critical thinkers who contribute to the progress and prosperity of our nation. This gathering not only celebrates your achievements but also reaffirms the institution's commitment to shaping the future leaders of Bangladesh.

In reflecting upon our nation's journey, we must also acknowledge the significance of the July Revolution in Bangladesh's socio-political landscape. This revolution was pivotal in our history, lighting a wave of social consciousness and political transformation. It was through the sacrifices of many brave students and citizens that a new dawn emerged, paving the way for a more dynamic and just society. Their courage and vision laid the foundation for a Bangladesh that aspires to uphold the values of accountability, transparency, and social justice. As graduates, you must honor their legacy by contributing to a nation that values equity, freedom, and integrity.

You are the torchbearers of a better, more prosperous Bangladesh. As you embark on your respective journeys, I encourage you to harness the power of your education to create positive change within our borders and beyond. Your success will not be measured solely by personal achievements but by your impact on building a brighter, more inclusive future for all. Let your actions be driven by compassion, inclusivity, and a deep commitment to the betterment of society.

The future is yours to shape, and with the knowledge and skills you've gained, I have no doubt you will be instrumental in realizing the promise of a dynamic Bangladesh. Carry the torch of knowledge, and may you illuminate paths of progress wherever you go.

With my warmest regards and best wishes for your future endeavors.

Professor Muhammad Yunus



Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed  
Chairman  
Board of Trustees  
Founder Life Member, NSU Trust

### Message

Dear Graduating Students of North South University (NSU),

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to congratulate each of you on your remarkable achievement. It is an honour to share this memorable day of your convocation with you as you conclude your journey at North South University.

Today, we celebrate a significant milestone in your life, attained through your hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. You have shown outstanding academic discipline, innovation, and resilience at NSU. These qualities have prepared you to step forward confidently and optimistically into the next chapter of your life.

As you embark on your unique journeys, embrace the opportunities that come your way. Let your passions drive your dreams and your ambition elevate you to new heights of success. Remember, material achievements do not measure true success; instead, they are measured by the positive impact you have on the lives of others.

North South University has provided a unique learning, discovery, experiment, and growth environment. This opportunity is a privilege not afforded to many. Make the most of what NSU has given you, and pay it forward to your community through your life's work and achievements. Your NSU education has given you tremendous potential to create a lasting impact.

I sincerely congratulate you again on behalf of the entire Board of Trustees. May your future be filled with boundless opportunities, personal fulfillment, and continued success in all your endeavors.

Sincerely,  
Azim Uddin Ahmed  
Chairman, Board of Trustees,  
North South University



Gwyn Lewis  
Convocation Speaker  
UN Resident Coordinator  
United Nations Bangladesh

### Message

It brings me great pleasure to be informed about the forthcoming 25th Convocation of North South University (NSU). I extend my sincerest congratulations to the graduating students, their proud parents, the dedicated faculty members, and the esteemed university administration on this momentous occasion.

North South University has indisputably carved a niche for itself as a premier private educational institution in Bangladesh, renowned for its commitment to delivering excellence in education. The university's unwavering dedication to maintaining academic standards and fostering discipline, coupled with its responsiveness to the evolving needs of its graduates, is commendable. Moreover, the university's robust scholarship program underscores its commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that deserving students have the opportunity to pursue their academic aspirations.

The remarkable strides achieved by North South University in a relatively short span of time are a testament to the dynamism, foresight, and unwavering dedication of its administration and faculty. Their collective commitment to both the future of the country and the university is truly commendable.

Throughout its illustrious 30-year more journey, North South University has ascended to prominence, garnering recognition not only within Bangladesh but also on the global stage. It is my firm belief that graduates of North South University not only receive a world-class education but also emerge equipped with the mindset and skills necessary to excel as professionals and responsible citizens. I am confident that the graduates of this esteemed institution will rise to the occasion and contribute meaningfully to addressing the myriad challenges confronting Bangladesh and the world today.

I extend my best wishes for the success of the convocation ceremony. May it serve as a joyous celebration of academic achievement and mark the beginning of a new chapter filled with boundless opportunities and accomplishments.

Thank You

Gwyn Lewis



Professor Abdul Rob Khan  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (IC) and Treasurer  
North South University

As we come together to celebrate the 25th convocation of North South University (NSU), I am imbued with immense pride and a deep sense of fulfillment. Our university has traversed a remarkable journey since its inception, achieving numerous milestones that have solidified its status as a leading educational institution in Bangladesh and beyond.

This convocation is a celebration of your diligence, tenacity, and unwavering commitment. You have exhibited exceptional prowess, depth of knowledge, and adaptability, equipping yourselves to excel in any chosen path. Throughout your academic pursuits, you have surmounted obstacles, embraced innovative learning modalities, and provided mutual support during challenging times. Your steadfast dedication to your education, particularly in these extraordinary circumstances, is both commendable and inspiring.

As you transition from North South University into the workforce, pursue further education, or embark on your own ventures, I urge you to carry forward the values that have guided you thus far. The pursuit of knowledge, the importance of hard work, and a commitment to making a positive impact on society—these principles will continue to be your guiding lights.

May you achieve all your dreams with courage and determination. I am confident that you possess the integrity, fortitude, and compassion required to excel in your respective fields, address the needs of the marginalized in our society, and emerge as paragons of excellence.

As you advance, may you continue to grow in strength and capability, bringing honor to your faculty, university, and nation in the years to come. Your journey is just beginning, and I eagerly anticipate the profound contributions you will make to the world.

Congratulations, esteemed graduates, on this monumental achievement. May your future be replete with success, fulfillment, and boundless opportunities.

Professor Abdul Rob Khan



## Workers deserve more in new Bangladesh

### Honour their sacrifices in July uprising through labour reforms

It is no secret that the July mass uprising was made possible by the sacrifices of many individuals, particularly workers and underprivileged communities. Without them putting their bodies in the line of fire, alongside students, this uprising would not have succeeded in bringing down the autocratic Awami League regime. It is, thus, unfortunate to see that their contributions are still not receiving the recognition they deserve. Instead, as speakers pointed out during a discussion organised by *The Daily Star* on the sidelines of a photo exhibition titled “36 Days of July,” these individuals risk being “erased” from the narrative.

The lack of recognition is evident not only in the failure to properly document their contributions but also in the continued disregard for their needs and rights—as evidenced by the plight of the injured seeking treatment and rehabilitation, as well as workers in various sectors. Part of the challenge is that a comprehensive list of those injured or killed has yet to be finalised, even after four months. This is affecting the fund disbursement efforts of the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation, which earlier promised to deliver all the funds by December. While the compensation amount itself has been criticised as inadequate, its prompt disbursement could address some, if not all, of the issues facing the injured. The continued delays and hurdles reported in accessing treatment and medication also need to be resolved.

The fact is, these people, including rickshaw-pullers, garment workers and other marginalised individuals, paid a heavy price for their involvement in the July uprising. Many families lost their primary breadwinners. Many survivors suffered life-altering injuries. Beyond treatment or compensation, what they need is proper rehabilitation to rebuild their lives, in which the government must help. An accurate victim list is also essential to prevent a repeat of the flawed listing of 1971 freedom fighters, which remains a cautionary tale of exploitation.

That said, the most meaningful tribute to these unsung heroes of the uprising would be to build a pro-worker business ecosystem where their rights and dignity are guaranteed. We have an obligation to ensure that these individuals are not only remembered for their sacrifices but also given their due through tangible improvements in their lives. In the past, workers’ demands for fair wages, safe workplaces, and reasonable working hours were frequently dismissed in favour of appeasing powerful industrial groups. Workers have long been treated as disposable—whether it’s the appalling treatment of migrant workers, exploitation of RMG workers or invisibility of sanitation workers. The change promised by the head of the Labour Reform Commission recently makes us hopeful. But it must be backed by structural reforms in labour laws and practices.

Bangladesh finally has an opportunity to address decades of inequities and ensure the dignity and rights of all. The sacrifices of our workers demand nothing less. Let us not fail them.

## DAP must enhance Dhaka’s liveability

### Govt should not bow to pressure from real estate developers

We are concerned about the newly proposed amendments to the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 2022-35 of Dhaka by the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK). According to city planners and environmentalists, these amendments prioritise the interests of real estate developers over the city’s liveability, environmental protection, capacity, and civic amenities. In the proposed revisions, RAJUK has only suggested increasing the size and height of buildings, while issues such as protecting flood flow zones, wetlands, and agricultural land have largely been overlooked. Clearly, RAJUK’s proposals serve the interests of real estate businessmen who seem to be primarily interested in the floor area ratio (FAR), increasing which would result in higher profits for them. It is due to their pressure that efforts have been made to revise the DAP twice within two years of finalising it.

Over the past decades, Dhaka has developed without proper city planning. While real estate developers have often constructed buildings without adhering to necessary guidelines, many water bodies have also been filled in by developers as well as government and non-government agencies, leading to various environmental consequences. After the first DAP was formulated in 2010 under the Town Improvement Act of 1953, we saw how the government gave in to developers’ demands, leading to over 200 amendments to the plan. Through these amendments, the filling of wetlands was legalised, among other things.

When the second DAP was developed by RAJUK, we hoped for a change in direction. Sadly, since DAP 2022-35 was passed in August last year, it has also been the subject of debate and criticism. Many leaders of the real estate developers’ organisation, REHAB, as well as city planners believe the new DAP is discriminatory and unclear. One of the reasons cited for it is that the FAR ratio set in the second DAP varies across different areas, benefiting the wealthy while depriving middle- and low-income groups. While this issue must be addressed by the authorities in consultation with all stakeholders, they must also ensure that flood flow zones, wetlands, and agricultural land—all vital for our collective existence—are protected from developers’ encroachment.

DAP was formulated to make Dhaka a better place to live, not to serve the interests of any specific group. Therefore, RAJUK must revise it with a focus on public interest, liveability, and environmental sustainability. To achieve this, we need well-planned, sustainable strategies and approaches.

#### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Pearl Harbor attack

On this day in 1941, Japanese bombers launched a surprise aerial attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, precipitating the entry of the United States into World War II.

# A new vision for social protection in the face of climate change



Fazley Elahi Mahmud is a social protection specialist, and international consultant, on social protection. He can be reached at [fazleyelahi.mahmud@gmail.com](mailto:fazleyelahi.mahmud@gmail.com).

FAZLEY ELAHI MAHMUD

Bangladesh is witnessing a marked increase in the frequency and intensity of climatic events, leading to substantial losses in lives, assets, and livelihoods. A recent report by *The Daily Star* highlighted that the country endured 15 climatic events between May 2023 and September 2024. These included four cyclones, nine floods, several episodes of heavy rainfall, and extreme temperature events like heat waves and cold waves. In response to these escalating challenges, advancing adaptive social protection (ASP) has emerged as an urgent priority, complementing ongoing climate mitigation and adaptation efforts to address the growing impacts of climate change.

ASP enhances the resilience of climate-vulnerable households by strengthening three capacities: preparing for, coping with, and adapting to climatic and other shocks. [i] Its development is driven by several complementary factors: i) the proven success of social protection measures, particularly cash transfers, in reducing poverty and building resilience; ii) the shared objective of resilience-building across social protection, disaster risk management (DRM), and climate adaptation; iii) the increasing use of cash transfers in disaster response over the past two decades; and iv) the potential to leverage social protection mechanisms, such as beneficiary registries and digital payment systems, for rapid cash delivery to disaster-affected individuals.

Despite their complementarities, social protection, DRM and climate adaptation have distinct objectives. Social protection primarily focuses on poverty reduction, with resilience-building as a secondary outcome. However, its reliance on poverty-based indicators for beneficiary selection often excludes climate-vulnerable households who fall outside these criteria. In contrast, DRM prioritises resilience through interventions such as infrastructure development, preparedness, and disaster response. After a shock, DRM aims to restore livelihoods and help communities “bounce back” to their pre-shock state. Climate adaptation takes a broader approach, enabling communities to “bounce forward” by addressing climate vulnerabilities and fostering sustainable development through strategies like improving economic conditions, promoting human

capital, and facilitating migration to safer areas. ASP leverages the complementarities among these approaches while addressing their gaps to establish a comprehensive framework for addressing the impact of climate change.

Since adopting the National Social Protection Strategy (NSSS) in 2015, Bangladesh has established a life cycle-based social protection system that addresses risks faced at different stages of life, including pregnancy, early childhood, school age, disability, and old age. Key programmes under



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

this framework include the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP), the Primary Education Stipend Programme (PESP), the Disability Allowance programme, the Widow Allowance programme, and the Old Age Allowance Programme (OAA). These are complemented by several DRM-related schemes such as Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), the Employment Generation Programme for the Poor (EGPP), Food for Work, Work for Money, Test Relief, and Gratuitous Relief. Both life cycle

universal coverage would ensure that no climate-vulnerable individual is left behind. Given the already high programme coverage, expanding to universal access in climate-vulnerable areas would be both strategic and affordable.

Second, strengthen coping and adaptive capacity through top-up cash (or in-kind) transfers. Top-up cash or in-kind transfers can be provided to beneficiaries of life cycle programmes in anticipation of or following climate shocks, using existing beneficiary lists

revised policies, updated operational guidelines, and formal agreements on financing, collaboration, and coordination mechanisms among relevant ministries and agencies.

While full-scale ASP implementation will take several years, Bangladesh is well-positioned to embark on this transformative journey. By pursuing these pathways, the country can strengthen the resilience of most vulnerable populations, enhance adaptive capacity, and establish itself as a global leader in ASP.

# Traffic problem, no problem!



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytix, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

My wife’s car has artificial intelligence, which I realised while returning from the BRTA office after renewing its fitness certificate, the annual ritual for every motor vehicle in Bangladesh.

Thanks to an agent, we went there at 8am and were finished by 2pm. I felt relieved because it was two weeks overdue. What happened next could be any Hollywood sci-fi movie sequence. As we hit the expressway, the engine growled, and the car pounced, weaving through the traffic, frequently changing lanes to overtake them. “Rubel, why are you driving so fast? Slow down, for God’s sake!” I yelled at my driver. He looked puzzled, glanced at the speedometer nervously while trying to manage the steering wheel, and mumbled, “It’s speeding up all by itself. I haven’t done anything!” Baffled, I frantically tried to comprehend our bizarre situation. After a few minutes of racking my brain, it occurred to me like an epiphany: the newly obtained fitness document! The car, looking quite innocent and rather dumb, sensed its presence, felt “fit as a fiddle,” and sprinted at the first opportunity. Somehow, we managed to steer it home safely.

Rubel stepped out, staggered towards a water tap, and put his head

under flowing water in full view of grinning onlookers, both baffled and bemused. I calmed my nerves with a double-shot espresso. We had to confine the culprit in a double-locked garage until its excitement waned.

I revisited the fitness-checking process to satisfy my curiosity. The inspector scanned the barcode on the windshield with a hand-held device, signed a few papers, and was off. That’s it! The car got a clean bill of health for another year. Nobody opened the engine hood or checked the emission. Not even a glance at the tyres or the lights. Now I know how the 40-something buses and trucks get their fitness certification and run with more vigour every year. Don’t let their rickety and rusted bodies, black exhaust, peeling paint, and absence of lights fool you. They are all certified fit and road-worthy. I feel savvy as I sit inside the air-conditioned car and watch people boarding or getting off running buses in the middle of busy intersections, covering their mouths with Covid-era masks. Who will tell them there is no need for masks because all vehicles are fit, and the emissions are perfectly healthy?

But why are those people crossing the road through such heavy traffic

when a perfect foot overbridge is nearby? Some escort uniformed children, hold babies, or carry heavy bags. A grown-up was recently photographed crawling through a narrow hole in a road divider on the ever-busy Aricha Road. Isn’t that illegal and dangerous? I kept pondering as the car started moving again. Suddenly, my whole body jerked briefly as if struck by lightning. Rubel looked at me quizzically. The purpose of the foot overbridge was not what I thought! They were for shopkeepers and beggars to set up businesses, people without homes to sleep at night, and perhaps drug peddlers. How mistaken I was!

The train of thought kept going as I stopped at another congestion. Pedestrians don’t need footpaths; they can use any part of the road. Footpaths are for hawkers and fish sellers (who will also process it for you right there), motorbike users and, astonishingly, relieving oneself.

Dhaka’s roads have many unique aspects that no other city can match. You can drive in any direction—there is no right or wrong. You turn on your hazard lights (or flash headlights), honk, and keep driving in whichever direction and at whatever speed you want. Other drivers will give way with reverence. Learn from the rickshaw drivers. They take the shortest path to the destination, like crossing a farmland diagonally, stopping and greeting people at will along the way. Some roads have signs saying, “It is forbidden to drive in the wrong direction.” But how would others know which direction is right for me? My direction is always the right one! And

who are you to tell me which direction I should travel?

I gradually came to realise that Dhaka has no traffic problems. Shake your head in disagreement all you want, but I will tell you why it is so. Nothing is stuck forever; slowly and grindingly, things move along, though often it takes hours. People get to work every day. Children go to schools. Stay-at-home parents carry on with their daily chores. Late into the night and early mornings, trucks, pickups and rickshaw vans carry fresh produce to the markets. Shoppers complain about the rising prices but still buy things. Days roll into weeks, weeks into months, then into years, and so on for decades, while life gets more arduous. Where is the problem, then? It lies among those who habitually complain about everything from their air-conditioned cars, homes and offices.

May I also propose another unique offering Dhaka could make to the world? A motor rally from Sadarghat to the Gazipur intersection and back in full traffic. It would start at 4pm on a Thursday. The Paris-Dakar rally would look like a toddler’s game. Imagine the enormous tourism development opportunity it would bring.

So, dear residents of Dhaka, stop complaining and continue with your daily endurance in this city of ever-increasing traffic congestion. And dear experts and policymakers, find out why rural workers migrate to cities in droves. Decode the economy of people’s travel demands and the unending supply of rickshaws. And, finally, step out of your air-conditioned SUVs to use public transport. That’s the minimum you could do.



# As the world changes, so must our English education



**BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND**  
**Dr Shamsad Mortuza**  
*is professor of English at Dhaka University.*

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

Foreign Adviser M Touhid Hossain, whilespeakingatarecentevent,shared his personal observations on what he called “educational apartheid.” In his professional experience across various countries, he noticed that a lack of English proficiency forces many Bangladeshi migrant workers into menial jobs with low wages. In some cases, workers from our neighbouring countries earn three times more than ours. This highlights a key truth: the global economy values English as a skill of high currency. Yet, despite over 12 years of English language training, our schooling system fails to equip the majority of citizens with this essential skill. As a literature teacher at the tertiary level, I often face questions from employers and civil society members. I am not a language policymaker nor a materials developer. Still, I cannot ignore my responsibility when a coaching centre boasts that a six-month course can offer more valuable skills than a four-year degree in English.

TheideaarosewhenBritishCouncil, as a sponsor of a two-day international conference on transforming English language teaching, came to Dhaka University. Its business director

deciding factor between securing a well-paying job or remaining in low-wage labour. It is disheartening that our workers struggle not due to a lack of talent but because they lack the language skills necessary to seize opportunities. For the same reason, there are thousands of top-level managers from India and Sri Lanka working in our factories and business outlets.

This linguistic gap titillates donors and foreign organisations to promise modules and aptitude tests. Traditionally, they have been successful in selling such programmes easily to opportunist bureaucrats or corrupt political leaders through their imported experts. Expats often supervise the preparation of materials for our national curriculum, promotingmodelslikecommunicative English and experiential learning. However, when we compare textbooks for our local students with those from native English-speaking countries, the discrepancy is glaring. Our curriculum has been systematically dumbed down.

Conversely, when our students aspire to higher education abroad, English language proficiency

In a political climate demanding change, we must ensure that graduates from all education streams—Bangla medium, English medium and madrasa—are prepared for the challenges of a globalised world. English-medium graduates often secure better jobs and adapt more easily to professional settings and higher education. However, their

years, we still rely on foreign experts or imported ideas. We have failed to identify our own needs and embrace the English language that is crucial for our advancement.

Instead, we have a flurry of excuses: not enough qualified teachers, insufficient salaries, outdated textbooks, lack of incentives or motivations, etc. We have no desire

with our recognition of English as a global necessity. The bilingual English textbooks prepared by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) exemplify this ambivalence, failing to provide an immersive language experience, leaving students neither fluent in English nor confident in Bangla.

Some may claim that emphasising

we remain voiceless in international conversations.

The younger generation, born into the age of the internet, instinctively understands this. For them, English is not a colonial relic but a necessity. It is the language of the internet, social media, and global culture. Coding, online learning, and digital entrepreneurship—all require



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

**Some may claim that emphasising English perpetuates colonial legacies, but this perspective misses a crucial point: true decolonisation requires the tools to challenge and dismantle colonial ideas. English, paradoxically, is one such tool. In a world where English dominates international discourse, media, and the internet, not knowing the language handicaps us.**

mentioned a recent survey result: 34 percent of employers in Bangladesh prioritise English skills when hiring. This statistic underlines the widening gap between the job market’s demands and the skills our education system provides. Given that English is the primary language of ICT and is spoken by 1.5 billion people worldwide, proficiency in English is often the

requirements become increasingly stringent. So they must enrol in a coaching programme and pay hefty test fees multiple times to demonstrate their linguistic competence. All for money. Do foreign missions have the authority to engage in commercial activities? Do these foreign agencies pay taxes? Curious minds want to know.

advantage is not just linguistic; their education also enhances cognitive skills. On the other hand, Bangla-medium graduates often struggle to express themselves in job interviews or professional discussions, especially if it involves speaking English. This disparity reflects not only a gap in access but also a failure in our educational priorities.

The idea that you do not internalise knowledge when you memorise is partly true. To avoid such possibilities, our English language texts in communicative and creative classrooms offer chunks of information. This aligns with the colonial project of limiting education to the native population. The colonial powers wanted us to serve as civil servants or managers, never as masters of our own fate. It’s a shame that, as an independent nation for 53

to invest in our teachers or reading materials. That does not stop our bureaucrats and experts from travelling abroad to gain “first-hand experience” of native English language settings and then proposing ambitious curricula and models. This self-defeating logic ensures that our students remain unprepared for the demands of the globalised world, perpetuating a cycle of mediocrity.

The issue is even more glaring when we consider the success of private language institutes, which teach languages like Chinese, German, and French in relatively short periods. If these institutes can achieve results in months, why can’t our schools teach English effectively over a decade? The answer lies in our collective ambivalence toward English. As a nation, we struggle to reconcile our commitment to the mother tongue

English perpetuates colonial legacies, but this perspective misses a crucial point: true decolonisation requires the tools to challenge and dismantle colonial ideas. English, paradoxically, is one such tool. In a world where English dominates international discourse, media, and the internet, not knowing the language handicaps us. It’s not just about economic opportunities—it’s about representation, identity, and the ability to shape our own narrative on the global stage.

For example, Bangladeshi cricket fans often struggle to respond to taunts from opponents because they lack the language skills to retort. Similarly, when foreign media portray Bangladesh negatively, we lack the linguistic capital to counter these narratives. English is more than a language of commerce; it is the language of power, and without it,

proficiency in English. So, denying young people the opportunity to master this language is not just an oversight—it is a crime.

The failure of our education system to teach English effectively is symptomatic of deeper systemic issues. Rather than confronting the root causes, we have allowed a culture of complacency to take hold. The solution is not to lower standards but to raise our expectations. We need to invest in teacher training programmes that produce skilled educators who understand not just the mechanics of English but its cultural and professional significance. We must design curricula that prioritise real-world communication skills and critical thinking over rote memorisation. And, most importantly, we need to listen to the voices of young people who are eager to learn and grow.

## Remembering Sigma Huda’s trailblazing activism against gender-based violence



**Taqbir Huda**  
*is a human rights lawyer who is currently pursuing LL.M at Harvard Law School. He serves on the civil society advisory group for Executive Director of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and UN Under-Secretary-General Sima Bahous. He can be reached at taqbirhuda@gmail.com.*

TAQBIR HUDA

Every year, civil society around the world seeks to refocus attention on violence against women and girls during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, which commences on November 25. This year, while most look to the long path that lies ahead to realise gender equality, I would like to take this moment to look back, to remember one of the pioneers in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). On July 17, 2024, while the nation was embroiled in an unprecedented political crisis and revolution, Bangladesh lost one of its staunchest advocates for women’s rights and gender equality: Sigma Huda. As one of the country’s most senior female lawyers, practising since just before the birth of the nation, she not only shattered the proverbial glass ceiling, but also made sure it could never be rebuilt. How did she do so?

I could say she did so by fighting tooth and nail to become the first woman to be enrolled in a law degree programme at the University of Peshawar—at a time when women were denied entry into law in many parts of the world—and then going on to become a founding partner at one of the oldest law chambers in Bangladesh.

I could say she did so by founding and helping to set up countless

NGOs that have been instrumental in advancing women’s rights in our country, such as the Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA), the first NGO comprised exclusively of women lawyers to fight for women’s rights, and to encourage more women to join the legal profession and collectively wage the legal battle against gender inequality. She founded the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), the first NGO dedicated to victims of acid violence. She also fought for the rights of pregnant and abandoned women by founding the Association for the Prevention of Septic Abortion, Bangladesh (BAPSA) and Bangladesh Breastfeeding Foundation, and serving as the president of the Center for the Training and Rehabilitation of Destitute Women, now renamed as Home for Destitute Women and Children.

I could say she did so by being the first woman in Bangladesh to establish and become a partner of a law firm in 1971, Chancery Chambers, which would go on to become a leading law firm in the country. She then went on to become one of the first women to hold leadership positions in the two most important lawyers’ associations in the country: as member and assistant secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association, and twice elected as a member of

the Bangladesh Bar Council—the apex body created by statute to enrol lawyers, fix and prepare conditions of enrolment and discipline in legal practice in Bangladesh—for the terms 1995-98 and 2001-04. She was also a member of Bangladesh Labour Law Reform Commission in 1991-95, and in 1985, she served as the regional vice-president of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA).

I could say she did so by representing Bangladesh at the United Nations General Assembly in 1978, where she was allocated to the Third Committee to work on the drafting of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). She was then among those who mobilised the feminist movement in Bangladesh to pressurise the state to ratify CEDAW.

I could say she did so by becoming the UN’s first special rapporteur on human trafficking in 2004, producing technical reports and setting global standards to help combat sexual trafficking of women and children. These continue to be cited and applied globally even today. She conducted missions to and held bilateral negotiations with the governments in countries where women and children were most at risk of trafficking—from Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Lebanon to Thailand, Japan and Nigeria. Her groundbreaking 2006 report presented before the 62nd session of the UN Commission on Human Rights dispelled several misconceptions that operated against women in prostitution at the legal and institutional levels, and established how the demand for prostitution drives sexual trafficking

of women and children, which was hitherto unacknowledged. In recognition of her work against trafficking, she was also appointed to the National Council for Women’s Development, the highest national body for the development of women, by the prime minister of Bangladesh. She remained a board member of the Coalition against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific.



PHOTO: COURTESY  
**Advocate Sigma Huda**

I could say she did so by being among the first to call out the legality of marital rape and the misinterpretation of Islamic law to ostensibly justify spousal violence, among other misogynistic practices, on national and international forums—at a time when almost no one else would. It is for this reason that, in July 1985, *The New York Times* decided to feature her as one of the three women from over 13,000 participants from 157 countries who attended the UN’s Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi. I came across this article in November

2020, when I was researching on the marital rape exception clause in Bangladesh to help draft the writ petition challenging it before the Supreme Court. Even in 2020, over three decades later, we were still struggling to openly discuss these issues, as was demonstrated by social reaction to the persistent marital rape of a child bride from Tangail in October 2020, which ultimately killed her.

I could say she did so by leading the first known case in Bangladesh in which a mother was appointed as the sole guardian of her child in 1982, at a time and place where this right was exclusively given to fathers and women were systematically denied the right to have guardianship over their children in the event of divorce. This case set a landmark precedent, which subsequently enabled many women to also become sole legal guardians of their children during divorce proceedings, and she would go on to utilise this precedent to secure this long-denied right to sole guardianship of children for many other women facing divorce.

I could say she did so by leading numerous public interest litigation cases that established the rights of and challenged grave miscarriages of justice. For instance, in 1999, she filed a writ before the Supreme Court challenging the government’s large-scale eviction of women in prostitution from their residences in the red-light areas of Tanbazar and Nimtoli of Narayanganj, at a time when most of society and the state saw them as “illegal vagrants.” She argued that the state’s forced eviction was in violation of their constitutionally guaranteed fundamental rights to livelihood and liberty, and the prevailing law of

tenancy, leading to the court ruling in the favour of the evicted women.

I could say all of this and more, but the list would not end, because that was the extent of her dedication to the empowerment of women and pro-bono work for the most marginalised behind closed doors, at a time when social media did not document and grant immediate validation for every professional achievement or social justice intervention. From marital rape to misinterpretation of Islamic laws to women in prostitution, she had to face violent backlash from conservative elements in the country for challenging the status quo and combatting taboo topics. This was an era quite distinct from the one we are accustomed to today, where there were no social media or mobile phone cameras that could help garner quick support or solidarity campaigns, while documentation of the violent opposition that feminists in Bangladesh faced was also few and far between. But from being the only female student in her law class in university to being one of the first female lawyers practising at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, confronting controversy after creating ruptures in patriarchal spaces and practices had become second nature to her.

She may have left us today, but her legacy for the empowerment of women, be it at the home, on the roads or in the courtroom, lives on. Thank you for your trailblazing activism, for not backing down in the face of overwhelming backlash, and for making it that much easier for the future generations of activists to fight for what is right.



# Female youth voices from Bangladesh at COP29



PHOTO: REUTERS

Highlighting the impact and advocacy of young Bangladeshi women leaders at COP29 as they fight for climate justice on the global stage.

ALLIN MOHANA BISWAS

The voices of young women from Bangladesh resonated powerfully at the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), bringing stories of resilience, advocacy, and determination to the global stage. Representing diverse communities and experiences, Saila Sobnom Richi, Farzana Farak Jhumu, and Fariha Aumi embodied the spirit of youth leadership in addressing climate justice.

Saila Sobnom Richi, ICCCAD Delegate

Saila Sobnom Richi, an undergraduate student from the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies at Dhaka University, began her journey in climate activism with a deep connection to her community in Barishal where she was born and



brought up. Her path to climate leadership started with YouthNet for Climate Justice, where she became a Youth Climate Ambassador and Media and Movement Coordinator, advocating for gender and climate justice for over four years. Reflecting on her work, Saila shared, "I have seen how

vulnerable our people are to climate change. If we don't act now, our future is at stake."

At COP29, Saila brought stories of vulnerable Bangladeshi communities to the global stage, highlighting the urgent need for climate finance and addressing the realities faced by people displaced internally due to climate impacts.

Speaking at the "Youth Gathering" event hosted by the Government of Bangladesh, Saila posed a critical question: "Are youth voices genuinely being empowered, or are they merely tokenised?" Her words resonated with many young attendees grappling with similar doubts.

Representing Bangladesh at COP29 came with its own challenges. Saila candidly reflected on her reliance on a foreign international non-governmental organisation (INGO) badge and funding from another country's embassy to attend, questioning the authenticity of national support for youth empowerment. Despite the hurdles, Saila remained undeterred, participating in movements such as demanding climate finance at the COP29 Action Zone. She also launched her documentary, *INFLUENCERS: The Path Led by Knowledge*, at the Share Hub Pavilion, showcasing the power of youth-led initiatives.

Saila expressed her frustration at the insufficient allocation of USD three hundred billion instead of the required USD one trillion for climate finance. Yet, she maintained her optimism, emphasising the need for the youth to be included in decision-making processes and not just as symbolic representatives. Reflecting on her first COP experience, Saila said, "This is just the beginning for me. I will continue fighting for my country to have a stronger voice on the global stage."

Farzana Faruk Jhumu, UNICEF Youth Advocate

Farzana Faruk Jhumu's journey in climate activism began in 2018 when she co-founded KaathPencil, an organisation focused on educating underprivileged children. Through her interactions with climate displaced families, Farzana realised the profound human impact of environmental disasters.



"I remember speaking to a mother who had lost her home to river erosion. Her pain became my purpose to fight climate change," Farzana recalled. This experience inspired her to go deeper into the intersection between climate change, child rights, and justice, eventually joining the global "Fridays for Future" movement – an international movement of school students who skip Friday classes to participate in demonstrations to demand action from political leaders to prevent climate change.

At COP29, Farzana was moved by several powerful moments. She spoke at an event advocating for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to address climate change and human rights. Reflecting on the experience, she said, "It was empowering to

demand accountability from states for the harm they have caused to vulnerable communities." Listening to youth stories from around the globe reinforced her belief in the collective power of young people to challenge states on their climate obligations.

One of her most significant achievements at COP29 was giving an intervention in a negotiation room, representing women, gender constituencies, and youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Her demands, delivered with conviction, were reflected in the COP29 presidency text.

"That moment showed me that our voices can truly shape decisions, even in spaces dominated by power and politics," Farzana said.

Despite her successes, Farzana faced challenges as a young woman navigating a patriarchal system. She described moments of "mansplaining" and being tokenised on panels to ensure gender balance. However, these experiences only strengthened her resolve. "Being underestimated only fuels my determination to prove them wrong," she remarked.

Farzana also found inspiration in her interactions with global leaders and fellow activists. Representing the youth in a meeting with Dr Muhammad Yunus, she proposed creating an official youth mechanism to enhance their involvement in multilateral processes. Reflecting on her overall COP29 experience, Farzana said, "Sea levels are rising, but so are we. We have no choice but to fight harder for our future."

Fariha Aumi, ICCCAD Delegate

Fariha Aumi's activism was inspired by her upbringing in southern Bangladesh, where she witnessed firsthand the impacts of climate change. Her passion deepened in

2018 when Greta Thunberg's "Fridays for Future" movement ignited global awareness, prompting her to join the fight for climate justice.

"Growing up, I saw how cyclones devastated my community. It's not just statistics for us; it's our lives," Fariha shared.

At COP29, Fariha participated in a panel discussion with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) that brought together youth from Bangladesh, China, and Nepal. This exchange of regional perspectives was a highlight for her, as it built deeper connections among peers facing similar challenges. She also recounted a conversation with a representative from Tuvalu, a small country in the Pacific Ocean made up of nine coral islands, who described the severe water crisis in their capital. This harsh narrative struck a chord with Fariha, as she envisioned a similar future for Dhaka.

"When he described the struggles of the people dealing with the water crisis, I could see my own city in his words. It was heartbreaking," she said.

Navigating societal expectations as a young female leader presented its own



challenges. Fariha acknowledged the resistance she faced but emphasised how persistence and gradual acceptance helped her overcome these barriers.

"At first, many didn't take me seriously. But with every step forward, I earned their respect," she reflected.

For Fariha, the most inspiring aspect of COP29 was the shared commitment to climate justice among attendees, from heads of state to young activists. This unity reaffirmed her belief in the collective strength of the Global South. However, she described the conference as a "compromising COP" due to the lack of substantial progress on critical issues.

Looking ahead, Fariha intends to share her insights with her peers, encouraging them to engage in global climate discussions. "We have to be the change we want to see. It's our responsibility to amplify our voices and demand justice," she said.

As COP29 drew to a close, these young leaders left the conference with a pressing question on their minds: will their voices spark the change needed, or will they be drowned out in the politics of inaction? The fight for climate justice is far from over.

# A master procrastinator's guide on how not to procrastinate

MAHPARA FAATIN

Procrastinating may be a guilty pleasure or even a coping mechanism for many of us, one that has a tight grasp on our daily lives. Many people, including myself, simply work better under the pressure of finishing things in the eleventh hour. However, it is undeniable that the guilt of procrastination devours us from within and is detrimental to our mental well-being. So, how exactly can we untangle ourselves from its sticky threads?

Strict time management

Habits are deeply ingrained in our brains. They compel our bodies to carry out certain actions almost automatically. That, in turn, makes it difficult for our minds to override these habits. This makes it all the more important for us to adhere to a to-do list that outlines when we ought to perform a chore and for how long. By sticking to the list and turning it into a habit, our minds might just spare us from procrastination.

It is, of course, important that you make a realistic routine that is open to changes. As someone who has to juggle work and academics with multiple extracurricular activities, I would suggest utilising your time as best as you can. For instance, maybe read a book or listen to a lecture when you are stuck in traffic, provided you are in the right headspace for it.

Know what to prioritise

You may not be able to fully complete your to-do list, and that's absolutely fine. But make it your goal to complete at least three productive tasks every day. Get the hardest things done when you have more energy. You should also try and prioritise tasks according to their deadlines.

Identify and remove distractions

What are some things that easily distract you? Is it your social media or streaming services? If it's the allure of social media that makes you procrastinate, keep your phone stashed

away in a drawer or place it in another room. Do anything you can to make it inconvenient for you to start scrolling.

Motivate yourself

Use sticky notes to remind yourself what it is that you're working so hard for. Make use of positive reinforcement. Tell yourself that if you finish just this one task, you can watch an episode of your favourite show.

What I do when I need to urgently get something done late at night is light a scented candle. This is a hack I will never stop blabbering about. Not only do the smell and the fire hazard keep you awake, but they are also too expensive for you to waste procrastinating. The best part: depending on the size, these candles need to stay lit for a

minimum of two hours to prevent caving, so you can't just blow them out either. Finish whatever you were (or weren't) doing and start procrastinating again once you're done.

Procrastinate, but on a schedule

When making a routine, it is crucial to allocate some free time if you simply cannot stop procrastinating. It's better to waste an hour if it makes you feel better, instead of

wasting the entire day because you weren't in the mood to get things done.

Also, remember to be kind to yourself. Procrastination happens to the best of us, so don't beat yourself up over it. Forgive yourself and move on. Experiment with these tips a bit, and you might just be able to free yourself from the sticky threads of procrastination.



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN





## Starc far from ‘TOO SLOW’

**Australia’s left-arm wrecking ball Mitchell Starc won the Adelaide round of his duel against India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal in the day-night second Test on Friday. Jaiswal smashed 161 in India’s comprehensive win in the series opener in Perth and was caught on stump mic telling Starc he was bowling “too slow”. However, Starc was far from being too slow as his onslaught saw Australia bundle India out for 180 before the hosts made 86-1 at close, with Nathan McSweeney not out 38 from 97 balls and Marnus Labuschagne on 20 off 67 deliveries.**

- Mitchell Starc had India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal lbw in the very first ball yesterday, becoming only the second bowler to take a wicket with the first ball of three Test matches. West Indies’ Pedro Collins had also done this, at Dhaka in 2003-04, and at Gros Islet and Kingston in 2004 -- with Bangladesh’s Hannan Sarkar the victim on each occasion.
- The Australian quick had struck with the first ball twice before -- against Sri Lanka at Galle in 2016 and against England at Brisbane in 2021-22, dismissing Dimuth Karunaratne and Rory Burns. In fact, the Burns wicket was the last incident of a wicket falling off the first ball of a Test.
- Starc claimed career-best figures of 6-48 -- his 15th five-wicket haul in Tests. It was also Starc’s

maiden five-wicket haul against India in Tests, after 51 wickets in his first 19 matches against them.

- Starc is also the leading wicket-taker in day-night Tests, with 72 scalps to his name. The second-best in this regard is his Australia teammate Nathan Lyon, who took 43 wickets in as many matches as Starc (13).
- It was also Starc’s fourth fiver in day-night Test matches. No other bowler has taken more than two.
- Meanwhile, India’s Jasprit Bumrah got the only wicket for India on the day when he dismissed Australia opener Usman Khawaja (13 off 35). That wicket saw Bumrah become only the third India fast bowler to get 50 wickets in a calendar year in Tests after Kapil Dev (74 in 1979 and 75 in 1983) and Zaheer Khan (51 in 2002).

## Tigresses look to bounce back against Ireland

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women’s cricket team will be eyeing to bounce back in the ongoing three-match WT20I series when they take on Ireland in the second match at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium today.

The hosts are currently trailing the series 1-0, having lost the high-scoring opener by 12 runs at the same venue on Thursday.

Bangladesh looked to have things under control in chase of a massive 170-run target in that game. Dilara Akter and Sobhana Mostary stitched together a 103-run opening stand -- the highest for Bangladesh in the format -- but the Tigresses lost impetus once Mostary departed in the 12th over.



“We scored 100 runs within 10-11 overs. It was a big score for an opening partnership. Still, we were hopeful,” pacer Jahanara Alam recounted how Bangladesh were in a favourable position in a video message yesterday.

The Tigresses, however, saw a dip in the scoring rate in the latter part of the innings and lost way, needing 18 runs off the final two overs -- a task that proved too much for Nigar Sultana Joty’s side.

“We lost the contest for some faults. Four of our batters were on song so we are very hopeful about our next matches,” Jahanara hoped to not make the same mistakes in today’s game, mentioning that she believed they could still win the series.

Meanwhile, Ireland will be looking to clinch their first-ever series against Bangladesh in this format.

Both the teams previously played in only one bilateral WT20I series in 2018 where Bangladesh won by a 2-1 margin in Dublin.

## An anomaly that can make Tigers hopeful

SPORTS REPORTER

If given a choice between playing an ODI at home or away, the Bangladesh cricket team, like most other teams in the world, would almost always prefer playing as the hosts.

But in international cricket, schedules are not shuffled around just to accommodate the preferences of a team. However, it probably bodes well for the Tigers that they will be taking on the West Indies in the Caribbean islands in their forthcoming three-match series, beginning with the first ODI in St Kitts on Sunday.

Playing away from home in a format where they have lost their mojo in recent times, with defeats in four of their last five ODI series, seems like a disadvantage. However, statistically speaking, the Tigers are actually better off taking on the West Indies in the Caribbean than in home conditions.

Bangladesh have the reputation of being a better side at home than abroad and stats show that this assumption is not without merit as their win percentage in home ODIs -- 45.22 percent -- is much better than their success rate as a touring team -- 26.03 percent.

However, there is always at least one exception to any rule and for the Tigers, playing ODIs against the West Indies seems to be just that as they are the only opponents against whom Bangladesh have a better win percentage while touring than as hosts.

Bangladesh have so far played 20 ODIs at home against the Caribbean side, winning nine, losing 10 with one match ending as a no result.

But in the West Indies, Bangladesh have a 50-50 record against the hosts in one-dayers, with eight wins against eight losses in 16 encounters.

- West Indies are the only Test-playing nation against whom Bangladesh have a better win percentage while touring (50 percent) than as a host (45 percent) in ODIs. Bangladesh also have a better success rate against Afghanistan in abroad (66 percent) than at home (50 percent) in the 50-over format, but they are yet to play a match in Afghan soil.
- Bangladesh have won the last four ODIs they have played in the Caribbean.
- The Tigers have played three ODIs at the Warner Park in St Kitts, venue for the first ODI of the forthcoming series, winning two and losing one.

One may be prompted to write this off as three of those wins came against a second-string West Indies team back in 2009. However, one also has to consider the Tigers’ recent ODI record in the Caribbean islands, as they have come out victorious in their last four 50-over games over there.

Bangladesh had clean swept the West Indies in three-match ODI series in Guyana in 2022 and also won the third ODI of the 2018 series at the Warner Park, the venue where the first ODI of the upcoming series will take place.

Now, the difference in Bangladesh’s home and away record against the West Indies may seem minuscule, but at a time when everything is seemingly going wrong for the side in what used to be their most favoured format, any and every positive, however minuscule, is worth taking note of.

## ‘Vinicius to be ready for Real’s next CL game’

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said star forward Vinicius Junior will be back from injury quicker than expected to face Atalanta in the Champions League on Tuesday.

The Brazilian winger suffered a hamstring injury in November which was expected to keep him out until the Intercontinental Cup final on December 18.

However Vinicius was able to train on Friday and Ancelotti said he would return next week, missing Saturday’s La Liga visit to face Girona.

“Vini has recovered from his injury very well, he will not be ready for tomorrow but he will be for the next Champions League game,” Ancelotti told a news conference Friday.

Vinicius’ return bolsters a Madrid side which has suffered three defeats in their opening five European matches, sitting 24th in the Champions League group table.

The coach said defender David Alaba, who also trained with the team, was finding fitness after a long-term knee injury and could return in January.

Ancelotti also said he accepted resting misfiring Kylian Mbappe might also help him at some point.

## Footballer Shakib Al Hasan grabs the spotlight

SPORTS REPORTER

Even though captain Souleymane Diabate scored the decisive goal to power Mohammedan to a 1-0 win over holders Bashundhara Kings in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter in Cumilla yesterday, it was substitute goalkeeper Shakib Al Hasan who stole the show with a valiant display.

Shakib came on to the pitch in the 25th minute of the game after first-choice goalkeeper Suhan Hossain was given marching order following a foul on Kings forward Rakib Hossain just outside the box. The 20-year-old goalkeeper then turned himself into a wall under the Mohammedan bar, denying numerous efforts from the Kings forwards.

Shakib, who has been with Mohammedan for five seasons now, frustrated Bashundhara Kings by foiling efforts from Mohammad Sohel Rana in the 45th minute, Jonathan Fernandes in the 55th minute, Jared Khasa in the 83rd minute and Miguel Ferriera in the 90th minute.

Mohammedan could have widened the margin but Kings goalkeeper Mehedi Hasan Srabon also made a couple of good saves including a spot-kick from Diabate.

“No doubt, everyone has contributed in this important victory as all players gave their best in a bid to win the match following a defeat against them in the Challenge Cup. However, goalkeeper

Shakib played really well coming from the bench and making some brilliant saves. He is our second-choice goalkeeper and has good potential if he can carry on this performance,” Mohammedan coach Alfaz Ahmed told The Daily Star over phone on way back to Dhaka after the match.

“Shakib, who was picked from BKSP through a trial, was our real hero in our 1-0 win over Kings in a league match last season. I think he performed better in that match compared to this one,” said Alfaz, adding that Shakib has been improving under goalkeeping coach Syed Hasan Kanon.

“Before entering the pitch, coach Kanon bhai told me that a goalkeeper could turn a match by keeping his cool and performing well. I tried to implement the instructions of my coach,” Shakib told The Daily Star over phone.

Shakib, who only played for BKSP in 2nd Division Football League, has so far played nine league matches since 2021-22 season as a substitute goalkeeper but is now looking forward to cementing his place in the starting eleven of Mohammedan and get a call from the national team after being part of Bangladesh U-23 team in 2023.

When asked about his name being identical to a celebrity cricketer, how the goalkeeper informed: “My original name was Mohammad Shakib Hossain, but my school teacher changed it to Shakib Al Hasan during the registration for PSC exams. Since then I’m known as Shakib Al Hasan.”



**Following on from his match-winning 171 in the first Test at Hagley Oval, Harry Brook smashed a century to help England score 280 in their first innings on the opening day of their second Test against hosts New Zealand at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on Friday. England were on top by the end of the day, reducing the Black Caps to 86-5 at stumps.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Mourinho hits back at Guardiola

REUTERS

Jose Mourinho said the Premier League trophies he won at Chelsea were achieved fairly, responding to Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola’s comments that he had six English top-flight titles while the Portuguese coach only had three.

Guardiola, whose team lost 2-0 at Liverpool on Sunday, held up six fingers to home fans to indicate the number of league titles he won in response to chants of “you’re getting sacked in the morning.”

Mourinho, while managing Manchester United, had similarly held up three fingers to opposing fans during an underwhelming league campaign, before being sacked in December 2018 after a loss to Liverpool.

Guardiola was asked at a press

conference whether he could face a fate similar to Mourinho.

“I hope not in my case... he won three, I won six... but we are the same like that,” Guardiola answered.

In his response to the Spaniard, Mourinho alluded to City’s charges over alleged violations of the Premier League’s financial rules ranging from 2009 to 2018, which the club has always denied.

“Guardiola said something about me... he won six trophies and I won three, but I won fairly and cleanly,” Turkish outlet Hurriyet quoted Mourinho as saying on Friday, ahead of his team Fenerbahce’s clash with Besiktas.

“If I lost, I want to congratulate my opponent because he was better than me. I don’t want to win by dealing with 150 court cases.”





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# Ducsu election likely by next February

## DU proctor says preparations underway

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

After a six-year gap since the last Ducsu polls in 2019, the Dhaka University authorities are now gearing up for an election early next year.

The authorities have got the go-ahead from the interim government to hold the election by the end of January or early February.

"The university administration aims to complete the groundwork for the election by December and prepare to conduct the polls either at the end of January or mid-February next year," DU Proctor Prof Saifuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star.

He added that DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus recently where the latter assured of extending all possible cooperation for conducting the polls to the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu).

Prof Saifuddin said the election is essential to facilitate communication between the university administration and students and to ensure students' rights.

"If there is no formal platform for students, who will the administration consult while making important decisions? Having a common platform is crucial for this,"

The last Ducsu election was held on March 11, 2019, breaking a 28 year hiatus.

A special committee, formed by the DU authorities to make recommendations and give the university administration guidance on the nature of political activities at DU, is now talking to the stakeholders to speed up the process of the polls.

Prof Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq, a member of the committee, said, "We are working on how the polls can be held and what the

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Bangladesh captain Azizul Hakim clenches his fist in celebration after guiding his side to a seven-wicket win against Pakistan with an unbeaten 61 off 42 deliveries during their Men's U-19 Asia Cup semifinal in Dubai yesterday, setting up a final against India on Sunday.

PHOTO: ACC

# Young Tigers crush Pakistan

## Bangladesh qualify for U-19 Asia Cup final

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Under-19 team pacers ran through their Pakistani counterparts and helped them earn a seven-wicket win in the first semifinal and qualify for the final of the ongoing ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup in the UAE.

The fast bowlers set up the victory for the defending champions with Iqbal Hossain Emon finishing as the most successful of the lot with figures of 4-24.

The other pacers also played their part with Maruf Mridha setting the tone early by dismissing both Pakistan openers for ducks and Al Fahad and Debasish Sarkar Deba also providing breakthroughs in crucial times as the young Tigers bowled out their opposition for just 116 after electing to bowl first.

Later, skipper Azizul Hakim Tamim struck his third 50-plus innings in the tournament and remained

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# PANCHAGARH BORDER

## Bangladeshi man shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Bangladeshi man was killed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Mominpara border in Panchagarh's Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Anwar Hossain, 40, son of Rafiqul Islam of Debnagar Amjuani village in Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and police said.

Citing BSF sources, BGB Battalion 56 in Nilphamari said in a press release that some troops from Chanakia BSF camp stopped a group of alleged Indian and Bangladeshi cattle smugglers in the Singpara area on the Indian side of the border around 5:25am.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

# BTRC recalls bandwidth export bid to India

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The internet regulator is abandoning its plan to allow Bangladesh to be the transit point for bandwidth supply to India's northeastern states on concerns that it could weaken the country's potential to become a regional internet hub.

Last year, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) sought the telecom ministry's permission after Summit Communications and Fiber@Home applied to supply bandwidth from Singapore via the Akhaura border to the northeastern region of India through Bharti Airtel.

Summit Communications's chairman is Muhammad Farid Khan, the younger brother of Awami League presidium member Faruk Khan, also a five-time member of parliament from the

Gopalganj-1. Farid is also a close friend of Sajeeb Wazed Joy, the son and ICT affairs adviser of ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

Fiber@Home was a major beneficiary during the AL regime from 2009 to 2024, ranking second to Summit Communications in terms of major government contracts and licences won.

Before the two international terrestrial cable operators sought the BTRC's approval, Bharti Airtel applied to the foreign ministry the previous year for permission to connect Agartala through Akhaura to Bangladesh's submarine cable landing stations in Cox's Bazar and Kuakata to reach Singapore.

Under this arrangement, Bangladesh would serve as the transit route -- enabling faster internet connection for India's northeastern

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



# Won't tolerate any aggression

## Says Jamaat ameer pointing at India

UNB, Cumilla

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman has said Bangladesh will not tolerate any aggression.

"We will not give away even an inch of Bangladesh's land to anyone. We will not tolerate any aggression," he said, referring to India.

Shafiqur was speaking at Cumilla City Jamaat activists' conference at the Town Hall ground yesterday morning.

"Reforms are needed to hold a free and fair election free from muscle power. Elections must be held on time," he said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

# NORTH GAZA HOSPITAL

## Israeli strikes kill 29 Palestinians

AFP, Beit Lahia

Gaza's civil defence agency said 29 people were killed by Israeli strikes around a major hospital in the northern city of Beit Lahia yesterday.

Kamal Adwan Hospital, one of northern Gaza's last functioning health centres, was hit by several strikes in the morning, the agency and the hospital director said.

"There was a series of air strikes on the northern and western sides of the hospital, accompanied by intense and direct fire," said hospital director Hossam Abu Safieh, adding that four staff were killed.

Mahmud Bassal, the civil defence agency's spokesman, said, "At least 29 people were killed and dozens were wounded... since dawn on Friday as a result of the continuing Israeli shelling around Kamal Adwan Hospital."

Bassal told AFP that the Israeli army entered the hospital, evacuated patients and arrested several Palestinians.



Garo dancers perform at the Wangala festival at Lalmatia Housing Society School and College in the capital yesterday. The celebration of Wangala, a harvest festival of the Garo people, marks the end of a period of toil and the arrival of a bountiful harvest.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# DHAKA-DELHI TALKS

## Indian foreign secy to fly in December 9

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday confirmed the visit by its Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to Dhaka on December 9 in the first top diplomatic contact with Bangladesh since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as prime minister of Bangladesh in August.

The meeting also comes at a time when ties between Dhaka and Delhi are under considerable strain over various issues, including allegations of attacks on

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# PAKISTAN UNREST

## Imran threatens civil disobedience movement

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has called on his supporters to hold a rally next week and threatened to start a civil disobedience movement days after his party led a deadly protest march in Islamabad.

In a post on X on Thursday, Khan asked supporters to converge on December 13 in the northwestern city of Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province which is ruled by his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

He demanded a judicial probe into the crackdown on the November 25 protest march which he said killed at least 12 of his supporters and violence on May 9 last year which killed 8. All arrested political workers should also be released, he said.

"If these two demands are not met, a civil disobedience movement will start from December 14, and the government will be held responsible for any consequences," Khan said.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Brigadier General (Retd.) Md. Masih Ud Dowla  
(1932-2024)

WE DEEPLY MOURN

Brigadier General (Retd.) Md. Masih Ud Dowla, son of Khan Bahadur Mohammad Ismail and Kawkabunessa Begum, brother of M. Anis Ud Dowla and Mohammad Asafuddowla died on 5th December 2024 at 7:15 pm at his residence.

He was Brigade Commander of Independent Engineering Brigade in Bangladesh Army, former Defense Attaché in Saudi Arabia, former Chairman, CDA and former Operation Director, ACI Formulations Ltd.

He was 92 years old. He left behind his wife, two daughters Dr. Rumana Dowla, Rubaba Dowla and only son Fahim Dowla, five grandchildren, two brothers and one sister to mourn his death.

He has been buried in the Army Graveyard.

Please pray for the departed soul.

BEREAVED FAMILY





# A dignified welcome

Dhaka airport finally opens lounges dedicated to migrant workers and their families

**Migrant worker Md Sumon, who has been in Oman for 17 years and usually comes home every two years, said he had no idea about the new facilities before arriving at the airport. When he reached the arrival area volunteers told him about the waiting room and guided him and his family members there.**

PHOTO:  
PALASH KHAN

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

A quiet revolution is underway at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka. For years, Bangladeshi migrant workers -- one of the main pillars of the nation's economy -- endured long hours of discomfort and humiliation at the airport, often standing for hours in overcrowded spaces with nowhere to rest before boarding their flights. Their families, who came from far-flung districts to bid farewell, shared similar hardships. But now, a wave of change has swept through the country's busiest airport. Two newly inaugurated facilities -- the Waiting Lounge and the Probashi Lounge -- are transforming the travel experience for migrant workers and their loved ones, offering them the comfort, respect, and dignity they deserve.

Both the facilities are the first of their kind at the Dhaka airport.

**Waiting Lounge: No more standing around**

Rozina Begum recalls her first trip to HSIA two years ago when her husband was flying to Saudi Arabia. "There was no proper place to sit, let alone rest. I stood outside the departure gate for two hours, waiting for him to go through the formalities," she shared. Like Rozina, many families of migrant workers faced similar ordeals, loitering around the airport in heat or rain, with no access to basic amenities.

But when Rozina returned to the airport recently to see off her son heading to Saudi Arabia, she was greeted by a vastly improved

their wait.

Abul Kashem, supervisor of the café, said his team works round the clock in three shifts at the café to serve "our honourable migrant workers and their families". He said traditional meals like biryani and rice will be added to the menu soon, providing more affordable food options for visitors.

Additionally, efforts are underway to further enhance the lounge's facilities based on feedback from users.

For Anisur Rahman, who came from Brahmanbaria to see off his son, the lounge was a lifesaver. "We arrived seven hours before the flight. Without this space, the wait would have been unbearable. Here, I

volunteers to help the migrant workers at the airport.

**Voices of Gratitude**

The changes at HSIA have been met with widespread appreciation from the migrant community.

Monirul Islam, who has been working in Malaysia for five years, was visibly moved by the facilities. "Earlier, we were treated like orphans at the airport--no one cared about us. Now, everyone here treats us with respect, calling us 'sir.' It's such an honour," he said, expressing his gratitude to the interim government.

Nazrul Islam, another migrant worker, echoed these sentiments. "This



could rest, eat, and even take a shower," he said.

Migrant worker Md Sumon, who has been in Oman for 17 years and usually comes home every two years, said he had no idea about the new facilities before arriving at the airport. When he reached the arrival area volunteers told him about the waiting room and guided him and his family members there.

"The changes are assuring. The place is relatively hustle-free, secured and comfortable for spending some hours with family members before boarding the plane," he said.

**Probashi Lounge: An exclusive area for migrant workers**

Inside the departure terminal, another facility--the Probashi Lounge--caters exclusively to migrant workers. Sponsored by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), this lounge was inaugurated by the chief adviser on November 11. Accessible only after completing immigration formalities, it offers outbound workers a comfortable space to relax before their flights.

The lounge features 144 comfortable chairs, charging stations for electronic devices, and free Wi-Fi. There are also three large monitors inside the lounge to display flight information and other important messages to the migrant workers.

A subsidised café serves affordable meals and snacks, with items sourced from the Bangladesh Air Force bakery.

For workers like Humayun Kabir, who was waiting for his flight to Malaysia, the lounge was a welcome surprise. "The food prices here are reasonable, and the Wi-Fi allows me to stay connected with my family. It's a great way to pass the time before boarding," he said.

IOM is also sponsoring nearly 100

is the first time I've felt recognised for my contributions. The facilities here make me proud to be a remittance earner for my country," he said.

For many workers this correspondent talked to, it's a sign that their sacrifices are being acknowledged. "We work hard to support our families and the nation. These changes show that the government values our efforts," said Anwar Hossain, who was waiting in the Probashi Lounge for his flight to Saudi Arabia.

**Building a Better Future**

As Bangladesh continues to rely on remittances to stabilise its economy, it is only fitting that those driving this lifeline are given the respect they deserve. The Waiting Lounge and Probashi Lounge are a promising start to treating our overseas heroes right.

While these facilities bring much-needed comfort and pride to people like Rozina Begum, their late introduction highlights the long-standing neglect that the migrant workers faced. And a lot is yet to be done to make their stay overseas and travelling hassle-free.

Kamrul Islam, Executive Director of HSIA, agreed and said, for years, these "nation builders" were overlooked, their needs ignored in the very spaces they frequented most.

"We want to ensure that our migrant workers feel respected and valued. These lounges are just the beginning. Our goal is to make their travel experience as smooth and comfortable as possible," he said, emphasising the airport authority's commitment to honouring these workers.

And for workers like Md Sumon, these changes are meaningful. "This lounge is a symbol of respect. It's a reminder that we matter to the country we work so hard for," he said adding that the lounges mark a step in the right direction.



## The Impact of Remittance Warriors

Remittances remain a lifeline for Bangladesh's economy, contributing around 6-7 percent to GDP, according to financial reports. In FY24, remittance inflows reached \$23.91 billion, a 10.66 percent increase from the previous year, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

The trend continues upward, offering relief amid external payment pressures and declining foreign reserves. In October, remittances rose 21.31 percent year-on-year to \$2.39 billion, following sharp jumps of 40 percent in August and 80 percent in September. From July to October, inflows totaled \$8.93 billion, up 30 percent from \$6.87 billion during the same period in FY24.

Meanwhile, in FY24, 11.42 lakh Bangladeshis went abroad for work, slightly surpassing FY23's 11.37 lakh, according to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) data. Currently, over 1.49 crore Bangladeshi migrants work in 176 countries, contributing significantly to the nation's economic resilience.



**Earlier, we were treated like orphans at the airport--no one cared about us. Now, everyone here treats us with respect, calling us 'sir.' It's such an honour.**

Monirul Islam  
a migrant worker

environment. A spacious waiting lounge on the first floor of the airport's multi-level car park now caters specifically to families like hers. "It's so much better now. There are seats, a prayer room, and even a small play area for children. It feels good," Rozina said with a smile.

The Waiting Lounge, inaugurated on November 14 by Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus who called the migrant workers "nation-builders", was developed through a collaboration between the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. Located on the first floor of the airport's multi-level car park area, it offers a clean, quiet space for families to wait while their loved ones navigate the airport's departure procedures.

The lounge provides ample seating areas for visitors. Separate prayer rooms for men and women ensure a space for spiritual needs, while a baby-care room and breastfeeding facilities cater to parents with young children. A reasonably priced cafeteria serves snacks and refreshments, ensuring that migrant workers and their families do not have to pay extra during





ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

On invisibilised VIOLENCE

During a recent class discussion on violence against women (and girl children) portrayed in South Asian literature, talk turned to the spectacularised nature of violence seen in literary texts.

NAZIA MANZOOR

From Sadat Hasan Manto’s visceral depiction of physical trauma inflicted upon women’s bodies in Partition-era India to Bapsi Sidhwa’s offhand, normalised mention of sexual violence against women in their homes and outside, to the explicit, haunting rape of the central character in Shahidul Zahir’s work on 1971, violence against women and girls is often portrayed in classic South Asian literary texts through a spectacularised, gratuitous, and one might even say, indulgent lens. Such renderings of explicit violence can be linked with one of colonisation’s foundational traits itself—the colonial mission at its core is an enterprise to conquer land. Consequently, theorists of postcolonial studies draw an unavoidable parallel between women and land as both embody the colonial desire to possess, exploit, dominate, violate, and own. Perhaps it is this land/women analogisation that leads to such portrayals in literature—of ripping away of skin, of vicious rapes, of molestation, of battered and bruised bodies. Yet there are other, more quotidian forms of violence inflicted upon women

and girls and literary representations of such violence—fleshly and bodily—deserve close inspection. As a reader of this genre of literature, I cannot help but find myself drawn more to the erasures and absences of minoritised, everyday acts of violence. Without a doubt, the spectacle of gendered violence—such as Momena’s raped body being discovered by her brother in Zahir’s work—serves a specific, important purpose. But increasingly, the sort of violence that does not get the spectacularised treatment, that hides in between lines, that is withheld, that gets the ambiguous treatment and is left to the imagination—intrigues me more. Those effacements compel me to ask: What does such absence of everyday violence in literary representation tell us about violence against women in general? Take, for instance, the violence of debilitating, all-consuming hunger and how it disproportionately affects women, especially when we consider the nexus among patriarchy, the gendered notion of shame and self-sacrifice, and caregiving. Abu Ishaque’s *Surjo Dighal Bari* (1955), set in the immediate

aftermath of the 1943 Bengal famine, painstakingly and evocatively captures the horrors of hunger through the protagonist Jaigun. That Jaigun refuses to bow down to the strictures of purdah after the death of her husband undoubtedly marks her as a resilient, uncompromising female figure. Yet, Jaigun chooses to work because she refuses to let her children go hungry, establishing her as someone who abides by the sanctioned, accepted codes of Bengali motherhood. A different but notable treatment of hunger from the female perspective can be seen in Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay’s *Pather Panchali* (1929) through the adolescent Durga. One perhaps recalls Satyajit Ray’s film version depicting a white sari clad Durga rummaging through wild bushes searching for fresh fruit, roots, and practically anything that is edible to help her mother cook one decent meal for the poverty-stricken family. Durga however, is routinely shamed by her mother for wanting more food whereas Apu, her brother, in line with our conventions, gets the first pick of food. Here we must recall

another powerful visual medium, the Bangladeshi cartoon *Meena* and its compelling critique of such gendered food inequalities within the household where the titular Meena gets a single slice of a mango whereas her brother Raju gets the rest of it. Importantly, it is Raju who expresses his delight in the mango, commenting “aamta khub-e moja”, not Meena. The episode ends with the family serving two identical plates to their children as the boy child experiences a day of household work from the perspective of his sister. In other words, fictional women experience hunger much in the same way women in real lives do—in private and in silence. Their joy in consuming food or relishing an item is also muted. Too often, women and girls are caregivers who want to satiate others’ hunger—husbands, men they love, and children. Gendered hunger caused by systemic inequality such as man-made famine or patriarchal practices within the domestic space thus is a form of violence that affects women in both fictional and real worlds. One curious way in which feminine hunger presents itself within our cultural landscape is through female ghosts or petnis. From shakchunni, dakeeni, mecho petni, and rakkhoshi—female supernatural beings are hungry, and their hunger is often addressed with relish as well as ridicule in our tales. Interestingly, hunger is permissible in the supernatural world—a petni can boldly claim “toke khabo”, making her more comfortable in expressing her desires in contrast to her worldly counterparts. The mecho petni’s craving for fish can easily be interpreted as a commentary of society’s strict food codes imposed on women. Consider, for instance, the widowed ghost in Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay’s *Goynar Baksho* (1993) who wanted to taste fish—an action that bears witness to the complete denial of fish to her from the age of 12 when she became a widow. Rakkhoshi’s all-consuming hunger is code for shame and derision and

residing in post-9/11 New York—respectively have a complexity about Ramzan. Both characters grapple with the ethics and politics of the practice, sometimes introspectively and other times with other characters including a girlfriend who is also Muslim. Yet, neither novelist explores the Muslim women’s relationship to Ramadan—an effacement that is applicable to this genre of fiction itself which is rather male-centric. A curious case, considering 9/11 altered the image of the Muslim women within the Western imagination rather irrevocably—the ripple effects of which are still ongoing in the present moment. Culturally too, Ramadan becomes a month about food. In affluent and affluent adjacent households around us, women become engulfed by the elaborate making of the iftar, their days structured around the (still) three meals they must provide for their families, often keeping them away from the central purpose of Ramadan—ibadat itself. Spatially too, women’s relationship with food structures her movement within the domestic realm and determines her role within the family ecosystem. In classic Bengali fiction, the kitchen is a central site for conflict and community bonding. One here might recall the grandfather figure from Sunil Ganguly’s *Purbo Poschim* (1989) who made the women make an endless array of items for each meal but himself only ate plain rice with ghee and perhaps one other item. When asked why he insists on being served so many items if he only consumes the simplest of meals, he responds that if the patriarch eats a simple meal, women will simplify the cooking process and will spend their free time in “kutkachali”. An important scene that solidifies the argument this essay is trying to make—that food and its making and consumption is deeply patriarchal and men dictate much of women’s relationship with it. Of course, the kitchen can also be an empowering space for women—a domain where she finds kinship and can exercise control

A further appearance of gendered food ethics is noticeable in novels about 9/11. In at least two prominent novels in the subgenre, fasting during Ramzan is portrayed with much fanfare but from the male perspective. In both *The Submission* (2011) by Amy Waldman and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, the protagonists Mo and Changez—diasporic subjects residing in post-9/11 New York—respectively have a complexity about Ramzan.

women whose loved ones die are often derogatorily termed rakkhoshi—she who eats it all, lives included. It appears that only in death can women and their ghostly alter egos express hunger or fondness for food as their living, corporeal beings are expected to serve, starve or both. A further appearance of gendered food ethics is noticeable in novels about 9/11. In at least two prominent novels in the subgenre, fasting during Ramzan is portrayed with much fanfare but from the male perspective. In both *The Submission* (2011) by Amy Waldman and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, the protagonists Mo and Changez—diasporic subjects

and bring joy to herself and her loved ones. Ultimately, much in the same way in which what women can or cannot wear is socially dictated, what women consume, at which stages of their lives, in what way is also designed and dictated by society, albeit in a more muted, invisibilised way. These underrepresented forms of violence thus deserve deeper engagement from us. Nazia Manzoor teaches English at North South University. She is also Editor, Star Books and Literature. Reach her at nazia.manzoorgmail.com.

POETRY

Remnants of a burning home

MALIHA TRIBHU

I fell asleep to the chatters of cicadas on a quiet summer night; Half indulged in a delirium, half a dreamless sleep—with an unutterable desire clung to my chest like a safety-pillow, Let the nightmare end, let me sleep till then. And yet, I woke up at the crackling noise of a burning home, The fire, reaching up to the ceiling with no escape doors left to carry myself out. A home that I had once thought to be my own Suddenly caught fire that night—and I packed no bags And left no goodbye letters at the dining table, Only a handful of freshly-cut apples and a jar full of my father’s favorite cookies, A bread with strawberry jam spread on it And a last cup of tea in my father’s big-old ceramic mug—I am sorry, for I can no longer carry on standing under the roof that you set on fire, pretending to be your perfect daughter Who doesn’t scream at the sight of a waking nightmare, I can no longer carry on being in a burning home, And consider myself as grateful for my failing health and a wrecked heart.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

I am sorry, but I have forgotten what it feels like to be a daughter Without having to prove my worth for it every once in a while, And now I am an empty glass-jar that has nothing left to offer—I am sorry, For I do not have the strength in me to burn any longer Just to keep you warm. So, I fell back into a deep, dreamless

sleep, To the sounds of stars falling over my head Like bullets crashing over my wearisome bones, Like flocks of migrating herons quietly dropping dead, And after the end of an unfathomable winter, when I finally awake—the house was no longer burning. There was nothing left to burn, nor to

mend. The tea has gone cold, the apples all rotten—the cookies eaten by fungus, And the fungus spreading over my lungs. I woke up to the sound of silence hovering over my room, with the sunlight splashing over my face and the dragonflies fluttering over the blues. Another winter has made its way to

this home now—in between my crushed bones, like a wretched memory of an unwanted childhood. And I cannot tell if I have awakened from a long, lost dream Or am I still dreaming of a yet-to-be-found life? I cannot decide if the war is over yet, and whether the fire has finally been put out. I can no longer tell the difference between all the before and afters of survival. And whether I am safe once and for all without catching up to a burning home again. All that I can truly think of is this—what about after all this survival? What do I do with all this grief? Where do I put it? Where do I bury it? Tell me, father, what do I do with the memories of once-a-burning home clung to my throat? Where shall I bury the remnants of a home that no longer exists? Where shall I bury myself? Maliha Tribhu is currently an undergraduate majoring in Marketing at the University of Dhaka. During her leisure hours, she likes to talk to moths and plants and soak under the winter sun.





PHOTOS: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED

# Electrifying, eclectic, EZ

## Ershad Zaman discusses new projects, possibility of Artcell return

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

"I sat at home for two years, restricted by nothing but my ego. I was in a dark place back then," said Ershad Zaman, taking a sip from his coffee cup. The seasoned guitarist, known for his stint with the iconic band Artcell, still commands a dedicated fan following who appreciate his remarkable contributions to music.

"Music in 2024 is a completely different game – a game of marketing, reels, streaming platforms, and whatnot. Unfortunately, I let my ego hinder my adaptation to this game, but that won't be the case anymore."

The musician, renowned for his fluid, mellifluous solos and roaring riffs, was one of the core contributors to Artcell's seminal albums *Onno Shomoy* and *Oniket Prantor*. After periodically releasing singles like *Fight Back*, *Shobdahoron*, and *Gaan*, he is now on a new journey with his band EZ, composed of young and energetic musicians. As we took his pictures, he proudly displayed his Music Man guitar. "Times are different now. I recorded my first album (*Onno Shomoy*)

with a guitar I borrowed from Ranjan of Arbovirus. Kids nowadays – and I don't mean to sound like a boomer (*laughs*) – have all the instruments, tones, and software at their disposal!"

Ironically, the musicians in EZ are all talented artists from the upcoming generation. The lineup includes Ajoy Banik, Mahin Irtisum, Rezwan, and Dipalok Dip. The band is gearing up to release their first single. "Mahin, our guitarist, was born when Onno Shomoy was released," remarked an amused Ershad Zaman with the beaming smile of a proud mentor. "That said, I've been nurturing this lineup for the past two years, so EZ isn't exactly a new band. However, we've only recently started performing regularly."

How does this lineup differ from his previous efforts? "Completely different. We were lucky enough to peak together in Artcell and define an entire generation," commented the guitarist. "We didn't produce music people wanted; rather, we made music we loved and taught people to love it. We aim to do the same with EZ – because

music has evolved, and so have I."

The veteran guitarist elaborated, "We used to perform the 16-minute *Oniket Prantor* live in one go, but obviously, our bodies might not allow that now. What we can do is use our experience, expertise, and, most importantly, our souls to reach within and offer something new to listeners."

No matter how you look at it, the future seems bright for Ershad and his projects. He has already secured a tour in the USA in 2025. However, fans reading this article likely have just one question in mind.

The split between Artcell and Ershad Zaman was far from amicable, and the rather public fallout has been well documented. Still, fans across the country yearn to see them perform together again. Could a reunion be possible?

"It's difficult to say at this moment, but I do believe time heals all wounds. So, I won't rule it out," said Ershad. "Wherever I go to perform, fans ask me to play Artcell songs – they are my creations, after all. I haven't faced any restrictions from the members of Artcell so far. A band is nothing less than a family, and I have never spoken ill of my former bandmates. They are still like family to me. A reunion is very much possible."



### TRENDY STREAMS

**Netflix**  
A Nonsense Christmas with Sabrina Carpenter



**Prime Video**  
Jigra



**Hulu**  
Sugarcane



**Disney+**  
From the World of Inside Out



**HBO MAX**  
Creature Commandos



### What's Playing

## GOLD DUST Woman

Fleetwood Mac's *Gold Dust Woman*, the haunting closer of the album *Rumours*, is a masterclass in capturing emotional chaos. Stevie Nicks' ethereal vocals weave through bluesy guitar riffs, creating a spectral soundscape. The song's layered textures – heightened by eerie phaser effects and Mick Fleetwood's experimental percussion – build an atmosphere of mystique and despair.

Lyrical, Nicks explores themes of addiction, heartbreak, and resilience, painting a vivid portrait of a woman trapped in self-destruction. The autobiographical undertones add an aching vulnerability, reflecting the band's turbulent personal dynamics during *Rumours*' creation.

The recording process, marked by late-night takes and emotional rawness, shaped the song's intensity. *Gold Dust Woman* remains timeless, a chilling reminder of Fleetwood Mac's ability to transform pain into transcendent art.

## Spotify Wrapped mapped

Spotify Wrapped 2024 is out now! Taylor Swift continues her reign as the most-streamed global artiste, while Bad Bunny and Billie Eilish follow close behind. This year's Wrapped introduces a "Music Evolution" feature, tracking how listeners' moods shifted



through their playlists, alongside AI-generated podcasts offering deeper insights into individual listening habits.

Popular tracks like Benson Boone's *Beautiful Things* and Billie Eilish's *Birds of a Feather* topped global charts, while the most-streamed album was Taylor Swift's *The Tortured Poets Department: The Anthology*.

### WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

## Ariana Grande

**Ariana Grande, enchanting fans with her 'wicked' smile at the premiere of Wicked in New York City, embodied her inner Glinda in a custom-made pink satin gown from Louis Vuitton. The strapless creation, with its sweetheart neckline and sculpted, corset-like bodice, fit her like a dream.**

The gown was further elevated by a peplum detail at the waist, which gracefully transitioned into gathered fabric, forming a dramatic bubble hem. Her ensemble was completed with an elegant bun and a chic diamond necklace, adding a touch of refined glamour that left her looking absolutely stunning.



### Out and about in Dhaka



**Diversity of Nature**  
December 6-14 | 11am- 7pm  
Alliance Française de Dhaka, Gulshan



**Cine Carnival 3.0**  
December 17 | 6pm  
ULAB



**Moar-e Jabo Comedy Night**  
December 18 | 7:30pm  
Moar Gulshan Link

### 1-MINUTE REVIEW

## A heartfelt tale of parenting and circuitry

DreamWorks' *The Wild Robot*, directed by Chris Sanders, is a heartfelt exploration of humanity through the eyes of an outsider. Rozzum Unit 7134, or Roz, voiced impeccably by Lupita Nyong'o, begins as a task-oriented robot washed ashore on a remote island. As Roz bonds with a misfit community of animals, particularly a gosling she adopts, her emotional evolution captivates.

With stunning animation blending photorealism and impressionism, the film explores themes of parenting, connection, and ecological responsibility. Notable performances, including Pedro Pascal's wily fox and Catherine O'Hara's world-weary possum, bring humour and depth.

Backed by Kris Bowers' emotive score, *The Wild Robot* is a modern animated classic, inviting tears and reflection on the power of love and adaptation in unexpected places.

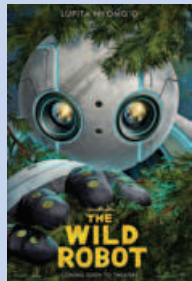






PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Is Motijheel losing its glory as commercial hub?

**Vacant commercial floors have been a common sight in Motijheel for years. Many building owners said they are not getting commercial tenants despite offering lower rents.**

AHSAN HABIB

Motijheel, once the pulsing heart of Dhaka's trade and commerce, has become a shadow of its former self. Empty office floors now whisper tales of abandoned ambitions.

For example, take the Ittefaq Mor-Dilkusha-Naya Paltan stretch. The two-kilometre patch has some 40 commercial buildings standing by one side of the road. Around 22 of them now have "to-let" signs dangling.

Their yearslong wait for tenants speaks of a commercial exodus that has drained the lifeblood from what was once Dhaka's most vibrant business hub.

Most buildings have not found tenants since the previous occupants left in the past five years. Besides, existing businesses, banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFI) are moving to Gulshan, Banani or Baridhara.

New businesses are also hesitant to assume a business address in the old town area.

Take Adamjee Court Annex Building 2, located next to Motijheel park, as another example.

Once a busy 12-story building rented by a bank, it was full of people and activity.

After the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020,

Consequently, it was one of the busiest buildings in the area during trading hours. But now it is deserted in the middle of the day.

After the DSE relocated its office to its own building in Nikunja, thousands of square feet of space have remained vacant in the commercial structure.

Two brokerage houses and an insurance company have posted relocation signs, stating that they are also departing for greener pastures.

A similar sight was found at the Jibon Bima Tower in Dilkusha, where the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) rented space for its office since the 1990s.

Two floors, each boasting 6,200 square feet, now remain vacant in the building after the BSEC shifted to its own building in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in 2017.

Banks, whose headquarters once dominated Motijheel, earning it the status as the capital's downtown area, have mostly relocated to Gulshan.

A number of building owners in Motijheel said they are not getting commercial tenants despite offering comparatively lower rents.

Md Delwar Hossain, the owner of a building in Dilkusha, said he has been searching for

they have thousands of square feet of vacant spaces across their properties.

According to them, although vacant commercial floors have been a common sight in Motijheel for years, rents have not reduced. However, the increase in rent is slower than in other areas.

The average rent per square foot in this area ranges from Tk 60 to Tk 90, depending on location and amenities.

This is still lower than the rent one would expect to pay in newer commercial hubs like Gulshan and Banani.

According to bdproperty.com, a website for renting and selling real estate, the average rent in Gulshan range from Tk 180 to Tk 250 per square foot. In Banani, it ranges from Tk 70 to Tk 150.

Alongside the shift in commercial offices, cinemas in the area are also suffering. Modhumita Cinema Hall, located on Toynbee Road, was once a top-rated movie theatre. But now it opens irregularly amid a dearth of visitors.

The situation is even worse for Ovishar Cinema Hall, which has been closed since the pandemic.

Md Liton, owner of Ovishar Store located next to the cinema hall, said he started his shop in the 1990s. Back then, he and his three brothers used to sell snacks.

The area surrounding the cinema hall was once swarming with people, who gathered to watch movies. As the cinema business declined, his three brothers left the store in search of other jobs.

Liton said that people once bought cinema tickets from the black market at prices three times higher than the official rate. Now, the hall building has become a ghost palace, having been closed for years. People now flock to the multiplexes in large shopping malls to enjoy movies.

Motahar Hossain Masum, who grew up near the Old Dhaka area and visits Motijheel frequently, said although banks have relocated their offices, several top food sellers remain and continue to attract a large number of people.

The self-professed gourmand shared some insights into the cuisine scene.

Established in 1958, Deshbandhu Hotel continues to serve food that evokes nostalgia for many.

Other popular hotels in the area include Ghorra and Hirajheel. These hotels welcome a large number of diners daily.

In the 1980s, when the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) building was constructed, its cafeteria attracted white-collar officials with its upscale design and quality food, Masum said.

Purbani Hotel also has a long history of attracting white-collar people, he added.

Motijheel's transformation into a different place at night is striking.

As people rush home after work, the area becomes eerily quiet. On weekends and public holidays, the streets in Motijheel host cricket, football, or badminton for children.

## Banks shun old-time Motijheel for glitzy Gulshan

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Motijheel is losing its historic lustre as Dhaka's commercial hub, with Gulshan, among the wealthiest neighbourhoods in the capital, stealing its thunder.

Nearly half of the country's 61 banks and 35 non-bank financial institutions (NBFI) have shifted their head offices from Motijheel to Gulshan in the past decade while many others harbour aspirations of moving to what has quickly become the most appealing zip code.

Not only that, but even newly licensed banks, NBFI and insurance companies have established head offices in Gulshan despite the fact that the Bangladesh Bank is still situated in Motijheel.

For example, Bengal Commercial Bank, awarded a Bangladesh Bank licence in 2020, established its head office in Gulshan. The same is true for Community Bank Bangladesh, licensed in 2018.

Industry people said major factors for this trend include changing business and economy, proximity to the offices of some of the largest corporations in the country as well as hotels and shopping malls, and a lack of modernisation of the Motijheel area.

"Most factories are situated in Gazipur, Ashulia, Tongi and Uttara. So it is punishing for our clients to visit Motijheel. Most of them feel Gulshan is more convenient. That is why banks are so keen to shift their head offices to the area," Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Shahjalal Islami Bank, told The Daily Star.

Ahmed outlined another key reason for the Shariah-based lender shifting its head office from Motijheel to Gulshan Avenue in 2014, saying: "Most luxury hotels and shopping malls are located in Gulshan, making it convenient for foreign buyers who visit banks with our local customers."

He added that a major portion of clients now reside in Uttara, Gulshan, Banani and Dhanmondi, making it easier to visit Gulshan compared to Motijheel, adding that the latter offered only one benefit.

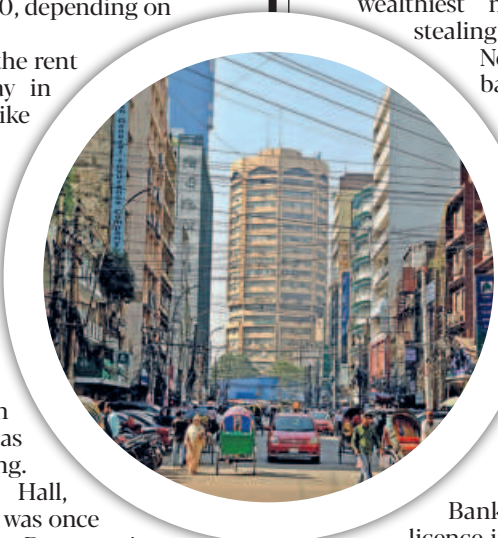
"Bangladesh Bank is located in Motijheel, which is the only convenient factor for banks and financial institutions."

The senior banker added that the Motijheel area has been stagnant in terms of development while Gulshan and Uttara were prospering through the expansion of infrastructure and industries.

M Khurshed Alam, deputy managing director of Eastern Bank, which now also boasts a Gulshan address, told The Daily Star that most banks want to be in the vicinity of big corporate houses and businesses, a majority of which are situated in Gulshan and Uttara.

"Similarly, a majority of manufacturing units are located in Gazipur, Bhaluka and Mymensingh. So, banks are shifting their head offices to Gulshan," he said.

Alam added that foreign buyers also prefer Gulshan and Banani instead of Motijheel since those areas are closer to the Dhaka airport.



the bank began to relocate its head office to Gulshan area in phases. Now, most floors in the building remain empty, leaving it gloomy even in daylight.

The scene is similar at the DSE Annex Building, roughly a 15-minute walk from Adamjee Court building. During a visit there recently, the 11-story structure was found eerily quiet at 1:00 PM, with only two or three people in the elevator.

This was beyond anyone's wildest imagination just a few years ago.

In the 2010s, when the building was full of stock brokerage firms, people had to queue just to enter the elevator. All the main activities of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) were also handled inside the building from 1959 until 2019.

tenants for four years as one floor remains vacant.

This area was highly sought-after in the 90s, with commercial spaces fetching the highest rents across all of Dhaka. But few people now call him to inquire about the floor.

"While the building itself is now old-fashioned, there are many vacant spaces that are not that old. The problem is that large conglomerates, banks, NBFI and new-generation corporations are not coming to this area," Hossain said.

Most businesses were concentrated in Motijheel due to easy communication and proximity to public offices, he added.

Officials at Sadharan Bima Corporation, which has several buildings in Motijheel, said