



Tension, fear on Teknaf frontier

Naf river route closed, trade with Myanmar stopped as Arakan Army claims taking control of border

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Locals and Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar are in fear amid reports of the Arakan Army's takeover of the Rakhine State and full control of the 270km Myanmar border with Bangladesh.

Due to security concerns, Teknaf upazila administration yesterday imposed restrictions on traffic on the Naf, which flows between Teknaf and Myanmar territory.

Boats that carry people and supplies between Teknaf and St Martin's Island had not operated yesterday, according to Rashid Ahmed, president of the local service trawler owners' association. He hopes the restriction would be lifted today.



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Jubo Dal, Swechchhasebak Dal, and Chhatra Dal leaders in cars and microbuses head towards Akhaura in their long march to protest the attack on Bangladesh's mission in Agartala, desecration of the national flag in Kolkata, and an alleged conspiracy to incite communal unrest in Bangladesh. This photo was taken in the capital's Fakirapool yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

3 pro-BNP bodies march to Akhaura Warn India against undermining Bangladesh

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, from Akhaura

Any attempt to undermine Bangladesh's sovereignty would face strong protests, leaders of Jubo Dal, Swechchhasebak Dal, and Chhatra Dal warned India yesterday.

After a long march from Dhaka to Brahmanbaria's Akhaura Land Port, the BNP-affiliated organisations also urged India to maintain friendly relations with Bangladesh and avoid interfering in its internal matters.

As part of the "Long March to Agartala" programme, thousands

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IMF offers extra \$1b for reforms

Govt pushing for at least \$2b under existing loan programme

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has offered an additional \$1 billion to Bangladesh but the government is pushing for at least \$2 billion to implement the interim government's reform agenda, narrow the deficit in the current account and shore up the dollar stockpile.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed sought a fresh \$3 billion from the Washington-based multilateral lender under the existing loan programme on the sidelines of the annual World Bank-IMF meeting in October.

Following the discussion, a 13-member IMF mission came to Bangladesh at the beginning of the month to review the country's performance and compliance with structural reform conditions for the fourth tranche of the existing loan.

The issue of extending the loan amount was discussed with the mission, which has offered about \$1 billion in exchange for additional reform conditions. The Daily Star has learnt from people involved with the discussions.

But the government is holding out for at least \$2 billion. In that case, \$1 billion would be coming in each of the remaining four tranches under the existing loan programme.

In January last year, the multilateral lender approved a \$4.7 billion loan package for Bangladesh. So far, it has disbursed \$2.3 billion in three instalments.

Meanwhile, the IMF mission is set to hold talks with officials of the finance ministry and the central bank today and on December 15 to finalise various policy documents.

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Flourishing tech urgently needed to expedite CHT communication

Says Prof Yunus

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday stressed the need for flourishing technology to accelerate communication in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.



The country's hilly region should be taken forward in education, technology, and economy, he said in a virtual address to the Hill District Council Management training programme.

"The hilly areas are remote, which makes communication difficult. That is why flourishing technology there is urgent. This distance can be overcome through technology," he said.

The training was organised for the chairmen and members of the hill district councils at CHT Complex in the capital.

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Israeli strikes in Syria illegal: UN experts

Over 350 targets hit; Biden's top aides head to Mideast amid rising tensions

AGENCIES

Israel's strikes on Syria following the fall of longtime president Bashar Al-Assad violate international law, United Nations experts said yesterday, branding Israel's attempts to "preemptively disarm" its foes as "lawless".

Since Assad's ouster, Israel, which borders Syria, has sent troops into a buffer zone on the east of the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, in a move the UN has said violates a 1974 armistice.

Over the past 48 hours, following the collapse of the government of Bashar al-Assad, the military said jets had conducted more than 350 strikes on targets including anti-aircraft batteries, military airfields, PHOTO ON PAGE 2

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Political parties trying to portray interim govt as a failure

Says Nahid Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam, adviser to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, yesterday said political parties are attempting to discredit the interim government as they want to be in control of reforms.



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সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

“বিভিন্ন সূত্রে অভিযোগ পাওয়া যাচ্ছে যে, অনেক ভিনদেশি নাগরিক অবৈধভাবে বাংলাদেশে অবস্থান করছেন এবং অবৈধভাবে বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত রয়েছেন। যে সকল বিদেশি নাগরিক অবৈধভাবে বাংলাদেশে অবস্থান করছেন বা কর্মরত আছেন, তাদের অবিলম্বে বাংলাদেশে অবস্থানের বা কর্মরত থাকার প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ বৈধতা অর্জনের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

এক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকল দপ্তর/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে প্রয়োজনীয় সহযোগিতা প্রদানের জন্যও অনুরোধ করা হলো। অন্যথায় অবৈধভাবে অবস্থানকারী এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।”

“Complaints are being received from various sources that many foreign nationals are illegally staying in Bangladesh and illegally working in various institutions. All foreign nationals who are illegally staying or working in Bangladesh are requested to obtain legalization with necessary documents to stay or work in Bangladesh immediately.

In this regard, all concerned departments/institutions are also requested to provide necessary cooperation. Otherwise, legal action will be taken against those staying illegally and the relevant institutions”.

স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়

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GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2024 12pc Bangladeshis undernourished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 12 percent of Bangladesh's population is undernourished, according to the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024.

The report, unveiled at a Dhaka hotel, also highlights the need for increased efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger by pointing out that 2.9 percent of children in Bangladesh die before turning five, 11 percent of the surviving ones are wasted, and 23.6 percent are stunted.

The event, themed "Towards Zero Hunger: Challenges and Way Forward," was organised jointly by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.

While incremental progress has been made in reducing hunger, the pace is insufficient to meet global commitments, such as the UN's SDG 2, GHI 2024 revealed.

With a score of 19.4, Bangladesh was ranked 84th out of 127 countries in the GHI 2024, falling into the "moderate hunger" category.

In comparison, the report places India at 105th position (score 27.3), Pakistan at 109th (score 27.9), and Afghanistan at 116th (score 30.8).

Meanwhile, Myanmar (15.7), Nepal (14.7), and Sri Lanka (11.3) are placed ahead in the ranking.

While this is a significant improvement from a score of 33.8 in 2000, experts noted that progress is not fast enough to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger).

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Israeli military forces in the buffer zone with Syria near the Druze village of Majdal Shams in the Israel-annexed Golan Heights yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

CA press wing debunks more misinfo on Indian media

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser's Press Wing yesterday debunked two news stories published by several Indian media outlets and labelled them as misleading and fake.

India.com published an article titled "Bangladesh to get bankrupt like Pakistan!" which claims that many clothing brands are now shifting their focus to India.

The press wing on its Facebook page, The CA Press Facts, called the article misleading.

It said Bangladesh's export earnings for November 2024 grew by 15.63 percent compared to the previous month. The apparel sector earned an extra \$1.77 billion during July-November, a 12.34 percent rise compared to last year's July-November earnings.

The data solidifies the fact that Bangladesh is neither going bankrupt nor losing any international brand's support any time soon, said the post.

Meanwhile, ABP Ananda and Sangbad Pratidin, two other Indian outlets,

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Tension, fear on Teknaf frontier

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Faysal Anwar, a resident of Nayapara village, said, "We heard the sound of bombing and shelling coming from across the Naf river in Myanmar for weeks. We worry about the safety of our families."

As per international media reports, there had been intense fighting between the Myanmar junta and ethnic armed group Arakan Army. Locals say there has not been any bombing since Sunday, but military planes were frequently flying over the border.

Abdus Shukkur, a fisherman of Sanrang village, claimed that the Arakan Army detained several fishermen from the Naf estuary a few days ago.

"Sometimes they open fire on the Bangladeshi fishermen, saying that we are in their territory. We cannot risk our lives while fishing," he said.

Maulana Harun Amini, a resident of Ghumdhum area in Naikhongchhari, Bandarban, said he was afraid to go to his farm next to the border.

"Who knows when they will begin fighting again and one of us will become a victim?" he asked.

Contacted, Teknaf Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sheikh Ehsan Uddin said,

"The estuary of the Naf is used by large trawlers that go to the sea. We restricted the movement of those trawlers through that part."

Abdul Jalil, president of fishing trawler owners' association in Teknaf, said despite risks, around 10 fishing trawlers went to the sea via the Naf.

"We are scared. This is our livelihood. That's why the fishermen are risking their lives," he said.

**BANGLADESH-MYANMAR
TRADE DISRUPTED**

Jasim Uddin, general manager of Teknaf United Land Port Ltd, said, "The last boat to arrive from Myanmar with goods was a fishing trawler from Yangon on December 7. Currently, four Myanmar trawlers are at the land port jetty. The boatmen are not willing to return."

UNO Ehsan said the BGB and Coast Guards were on alert to prevent illegal entry to Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Rohingya leaders in Cox's Bazar are concerned about the long-awaited repatriation process.

"We want to sit with the Arakan Army and talk about our chances of returning to our homeland," said Kamal Hossain, chairman of the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals Representative Committee in Cox's Bazar.

Mohammad Zubair, chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights, said people of his community were frequently calling him from Maungdaw township and saying that they were in fear of a crackdown on Rohingyas.

Many international media reported that the Arakan Army claimed the capture of the last army outpost in the strategic western town of Maungdaw, gaining full control of the territory along Bangladesh-Myanmar border on Sunday.

AP quoted the Arakan Army as saying that after claiming control over the northern part of Rakhine, it ordered the suspension of transport across the Naf because police and local Muslims affiliated with the army were attempting to escape by boat to Bangladesh.

AP reported, "The rebel group has been accused of major human rights violations, particularly involving its capture of the town of Buthidaung in mid-May, when it was accused of forcing an estimated 2 lakh residents, largely Rohingyas, to leave, and then setting fire to most of the buildings. It was accused of attacking Rohingya civilians fleeing the fighting in Maungdaw in August."

Aftab Bahini of Kurigram

FROM PAGE 12

camp was relocated to Rajibpur High School in Char Rajibpur upazila, he added.

"The ranks of Aftab Bahini swelled as local students and youths joined the war effort, exceeding 700 members. Subsequently, several additional camps were set up in Kodalkathi in Char Rajibpur, and Tapurchar and Dantbhang in Rowmari," Sabur Farooqi, a prominent freedom fighter of the Aftab Bahini.

"As the scale of freedom fighter training expanded, Rowmari CG High School emerged as one of the largest training camps in the country, where around 30,000 freedom fighters received training over the course of the war."

DEFENDING MUKTANCHAL

During this period, the freedom fighters declared a 600 square-mile liberated zone, known as Rowmari Muktantchal, spanning from Dewanganj in Jamalpur to Char Rajibpur in Kurigram via Sundanganj in Gaibandha.

In June and July, Aftab Bahini maintained a strong presence in Kodalkathi Char in Char Rajibpur upazila.

"On August 6, the Pakistani army, aiming to capture Rowmari, launched a heavy attack on Kodalkathi Char, forcing the freedom fighters to retreat to Kartimari Char," freedom fighter Nur Hossain told The Daily Star.

To defend Rowmari for strategic importance, Aftab sought reinforcements from Shafaat Jamil, commanding officer of the 3rd East Bengal Regiment.

In response, a company led by lieutenant Nurunnabi Khan was deployed to Rowmari, said fighter Kafil Uddin, another Aftab Bahini fighter.

The final stand against the Pakistani forces was made near Kodalkathi to prevent access to Rowmari through the Sonabhorri river and Jalchhera canal in Char Rajibpur.

At this time, a 40-mile defensive perimeter, stretching from Char Rajibpur to Ghughumarir Char, was put up by the 3rd Bengal and Aftab Bahini freedom fighters, said Sabur Farooqi.

"On August 8, the Pakistani army attempted to advance towards Rowmari with gunboats and launches through the Jalchhera canal.

"After a day-long battle against fierce resistance from the freedom fighters, the Pakistani forces were forced to retreat," he added.

Despite numerous skirmishes in August and six major attacks between September 21 and 26, the Pakistani



Force chief Aftab Ali (1925 - 2017)

PHOTO: COLLECTED

- Area: Kurigram, Jamalpur, and Gaibandha.
- Key feat: Defended 600 square-mile liberated zone in Rowmari.
- Timeframe: March- December.
- Operations: At least 30.
- Members: At least 700.



Recent photo of Rowmari CG Zaman High School ground. During the war, this was the biggest training camp in the country. Here, around 30,000 freedom fighters were trained.

PHOTO: AHMAD ISTIAK



Recent photo of Balabari railway station in Chilmari upazila of Kurigram. Here, Aftab Bahini fought the Pakistani army on October 17, 1971.

PHOTO: AHMAD ISTIAK

Migrants in KSA, Malaysia to get MRPs

FROM PAGE 12

caused a delay of nearly one and a half years due to resistance and tendering complications," he alleged.

He added that the current government had cancelled the earlier process and implemented the fastest possible solution, apologising for the hardships faced by expatriates.

To ensure such issues do not recur,

he said that a significant number of MRPs have been issued to clear the backlog, with no major disruptions expected in the next two to three years.

Regarding e-passports, Asif said plans are underway to send teams to collect biometric data from expatriates abroad, with further updates to be provided soon.

This newspaper on December

8 reported that over 26,000 Bangladeshis in Malaysia were facing a delay in passport renewal, which made their lives abroad uncertain.

It also reported that a nexus between touts and a section of officials at the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur is allegedly behind the situation surrounding the migrant workers' passports.

3 pro-BNP bodies march to Akhaura

FROM PAGE 1

of leaders and activists in minibuses and private cars joined the march from the party's Naya Paltan headquarters in the capital at 9:00am and reached Akhaura around 4:00pm.

The march was organised to protest against the attack on the Assistant High Commission of Bangladesh in Agartala, desecration of the national flag in Kolkata, and an alleged conspiracy to incite communal unrest.

Addressing the concluding rally in Akhaura as the chief guest, Jubo Dal President Monayer Munna said, "The people of Bangladesh want to see India as a friend. But when the question of sovereignty comes, Bangladeshis are ready to take risks if necessary."

"We must strongly resist anyone who looks at Bangladesh with ill intent," he remarked.

"India supported and sheltered the previous fascist government, and it still does," he said, urging the interim government to talk to India about bringing Sheikh Hasina and her accomplices back to Bangladesh for trial over the killings during the July-August uprising. "We demand trial for every life lost. Awami League terrorists hiding in India must be brought back to face accountability," he added.

Swechhchasebak Dal President SM Jilani slammed India for killing Bangladeshis along the border, "repeatedly interfering in Bangladesh's internal affairs and conspiring against its interests."

"We hope this long march will awaken India's conscience. We will stand guard at every part of Bangladesh," he added.

Jubo Dal General Secretary Nurul Islam Noyon alleged India has exploited

Bangladesh since independence. "We send them Jamdani saris and hilsa fish, but in return, they give us Felani's body and phensedyl."

Chhatra Dal President Rakibul Islam Rakib said, "If Sheikh Hasina engages in another conspiracy or if any extremist organisation dares to insult Bangladesh's national flag, we will respond appropriately."

"No matter how much India conspires, nothing will be successful. The student community across the country, under the leadership of the Chhatra Dal, is united to counter India's aggression."

Many leaders from Dhaka missed the Akhaura rally due to a massive traffic jam that stretched for about five kilometres near the venue.

Party members from the three organisations, coming from various districts such as Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria, Cumilla, Feni, Noakhali, Bogura, Rajshahi, and Sylhet, participated in the rally.

As the convoy made its way through Narayanganj, Narsingdi, and Brahmanbaria, leaders and activists from three organisations greeted them enthusiastically, chanting slogans in support.

The vehicles in the convoy bore stickers labelled "Long March" and displayed Bangladesh's national flag and the BNP's party flag.

The government beefed up security along the India-Bangladesh border and Brahmanbaria to avoid any untoward incident.

Brahmanbaria Superintendent of Police Mohammad Jabedur Rahman said that 200 police personnel were deployed around 350 yards from the Bangladesh-India border.

In addition, Border Guard

Bangladesh's 60 Battalion Commander Lt Col AM Jaber Bin Jabbar said that a large number of BGB personnel were deployed in the land port area and immigration check post during the pro-BNP organisations' long march programme. BGB personnel were also on alert to avoid any kind of chaos at the border.

Traders at the land port said goods would be exported to India until midday.

Akhaura International Immigration Check Post authorities said that passengers holding passports of the two countries would be allowed to cross the border during the demonstration.

While inaugurating the programme in Dhaka, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi alleged that India supported the "bloodthirsty Lady Pharaoh Sheikh Hasina" over the last 16 years.

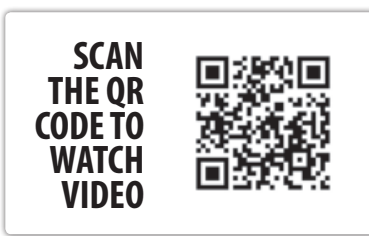
India, despite being a democratic country, does not want its neighbouring countries like Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka to be governed by the will of their peoples due to its hegemonic attitude, he said.

"Why should they [neighbouring countries] follow Delhi's words?" he asked.

On their way, the participants of the long march held a brief rally at Bhairab intersection in Kishoreganj at 1:00pm.

Earlier on December 8, the three organisations affiliated with the BNP submitted a memorandum to the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

[Our Brahmanbaria Correspondent Mashuk Hridoy also contributed to this report]



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fighters and two Pakistani patrol teams that entered the village.

"In the confusion of the battle, the two Pakistani teams mistakenly engaged each other in friendly fire," said Sabur.

"Our platoons, led by Riazul and Mansur, seized this opportunity and attacked. The ensuing chaos led to the elimination of both Pakistani companies, resulting in the deaths of over 150 Pakistani soldiers."

Later, the Pakistani forces were compelled to abandon Kodalkathi and retreat to Chilmari upazila. This marked the liberation of an 800 square-mile area east of the Brahmaputra.

Till December, the Aftab Bahini fought and defended the Rowmari Muktantchal.

Translated and edited from Bangla by Subrata Roy.

forces were unable to reach the Rowmari front due to the vigilance of the Aftab Bahini.

RECLAIMING KODALKATHI

In late September, Major Ziauddin, commander of the 1st East Bengal Regiment, ordered Aftab Bahini to capture Kodalkathi Char.

On October 1, nearly 300 Aftab Bahini freedom fighters crossed the Sonabhorri River and set up camp in Shankar Madhabpur village.

The following morning, a fierce clash broke out between the freedom

IMF offers extra \$1b for reforms

FROM PAGE 1

The policy documents are a memorandum of economic and financial policy of the government, a letter of intent, a technical memorandum of understanding and a memorandum of understanding.

While the IMF is satisfied with the interim government's various reform initiatives, it will impose specific conditions for the next loan tranches, the officials said.

This time, IMF is giving more emphasis on revenue collection, reducing the subsidy for power, energy and fertiliser sectors and banking sector governance.

In case of increasing revenue collection, the IMF wanted to know the government plans regarding tax

exemption in the next fiscal budget.

Besides, the IMF may impose a condition to separate policy and administration at the National Board of Revenue and reduce the multiple VAT rates.

In the case of the central bank and banking sector, the IMF could impose various conditions for the amendments of the Bangladesh Bank Order, the Bank Company Act, and Bankruptcy.

The IMF could also give a condition for bringing down arrears in government subsidy and price adjustment.

As of June, the government's arrears was about Tk 60,000 crore. However, after taking charge, the interim government brought the amount

down significantly, according to finance ministry officials.

The finance ministry is aiming to clear the arrears by half by June next year and the rest in the next fiscal year.

In case of price adjustment, the IMF has suggested raising the electricity tariffs further.

However, the interim government is unwilling to adjust the price this fiscal year because it could fuel inflation further.

The government, however, will cut expenditures of power plants in a bid to reduce subsidies, the finance ministry officials said.

A closing meeting of the IMF mission will take place on December 17 with the finance adviser.

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Politics won't influence ACC any longer

Says new chairman after assuming office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) will no longer be influenced by any political ideology or bias, said its newly appointed chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen, after assuming office yesterday.

"It would not be right to promise complete eradication of corruption. However, we must strive to do our best. We will be neutral, adhering to the law," he said while addressing a press briefing at the commission.

Momen acknowledged the potential challenges posed by corruption within

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Speakers at a roundtable discussion titled "Towards Safer Digital Spaces: Enhancing Legal and Policy Responses to VAWG in Bangladesh", at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The event was jointly organised by The Daily Star and NETZ.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Japan to continue supporting reforms of Bangladesh

Outgoing ambassador tells CA

BSS, Dhaka

Japan will support Bangladesh's ongoing reform, and its investors will continue to stay beside Bangladesh to help boost the country's economy, said outgoing Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori yesterday.

He made the remarks as he paid the farewell call on Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna.

Praising the leadership of Prof Yunus, Ambassador Kiminori said the Japanese government will cement ties with Bangladesh on three pillars -- peace and

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Govt revising energy master plan

Power adviser says move aimed at ensuring sustainable energy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is revising the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) and reevaluating the renewable energy policy, said Power Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan yesterday.

The aim is to ensure sustainable electricity, he said while inaugurating the 2nd Conference on Bangladesh Energy Prosperity 2050 at BIAM Foundation Auditorium.

The IEPMP was adopted in 2023 by a team of Japan International Cooperation Agency and The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan.

Many local energy experts criticised the IEPMP.

Fouzul said, "The government had begun issuing tender documents to produce electricity from renewable energy. Efforts are being made to build factories to manufacture solar power equipment."

Enabling corruption rather than achieving sustainable development seems to be the primary goal of the previous Awami League-led government, he said.

The current interim government is eliminating practices that enable corruption and moving towards sustainable power policy and practice, he added.

At the event, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the interim government has been reviewing power purchase agreements signed by the AL government.

"Cancelling the power sector deals is easier said than done. Getting out of such deals is very costly," she said.

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Over 78pc women face tech-based violence in Bangladesh

Says study by NETZ Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 78 percent of women in Bangladesh have experienced technology-facilitated violence against women (TF-VAW), reveals a new study by NETZ Bangladesh.

The study found that 78.4 percent of these incidents occurred on Facebook, followed by 28 percent through messaging services, like WhatsApp and lmo.

These findings were presented at a roundtable discussion, titled "Towards Safer Digital Spaces: Enhancing Legal and Policy Responses to VAWG in Bangladesh," held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The event was jointly organised by The Daily Star and NETZ.

As per the findings, around 50 percent of women reported avoiding online activity or hiding their identities on social media due to safety concerns. Additionally, 35 percent of women reported experiencing mental health issues as a direct result of online harassment.

The study was conducted between July and November 2023 across eight districts with a sample size of 300 respondents.

At the programme, Taherul Huq Chauhan, additional deputy inspector general of police, highlighted the risks of unregulated

online behaviour.

"The current generation often seeks popularity and trends on online platforms by sharing personal activities without fully understanding the potential consequences. In some cases, this includes sharing intimate or inappropriate content, which requires greater awareness," he said.

Cyberbullying frequently escalates into blackmail, with perpetrators often targeting women for financial exploitation. Cyber harassment has also become a significant factor contributing to adolescent suicides. Addressing the gaps in existing laws and policies is essential to creating a safer cyberspace for everyone.

TAHERUL HUQ CHAUHAN
Addl deputy IGP

"Cyberbullying frequently escalates into blackmail, with perpetrators often targeting women for financial exploitation. Cyber harassment has also become a significant factor contributing to adolescent suicides. Addressing the

gaps in existing laws and policies is essential to creating a safer cyberspace for everyone," he added.

Abu Sayed Md Kamruzzaman, additional secretary of ICT division and director general of National Cyber Security Agency, emphasised the importance of reinforcing social values, norms, and ethical education among the younger generation.

He stated, "Parents need to be more vigilant. Under the guise of education, children are being given smartphones, but it is the parents' responsibility to monitor the apps their children use. The government cannot do this for them. A nation cannot function solely through laws; our culture must take a proactive approach rather than a reactive one."

Speaking about including internet safety lessons in textbooks, he said it is not feasible to include everything in the curriculum.

"We have drafted a Cyber Security Ordinance and submitted it to the Cabinet. This ordinance will address issues such as freedom of speech, cyberbullying, and harassment," he added.

Md Monir Hossain, additional director (deputy secretary) of Department of Women Affairs at MOWCA, said, "The advancement and widespread use of technology

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Govt moves to curb officials' foreign trips

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has issued a series of guidelines for the foreign travel of government officials as part of its austerity measures.

In a circular dated Monday, Principal Secretary Siraj Uddin Mia said foreign travel will generally be discouraged for government officials, and they must submit a list of potential foreign trips for the year in advance.

The circular mandated that while submitting a foreign travel proposal, details of the proposed official's travel history for the previous year must be attached.

Non essential foreign trips funded by government resources are to be strictly avoided, said the circular.

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Action against misclassification of murders: DMP chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali yesterday warned his officers against misclassifying murders as unnatural deaths in police records.

"If any such incident takes place, strict punitive action will be taken, and the officers-in-charge of the police stations will be responsible for it," he said during a monthly crime review meeting at Rajarbagh Police Lines in the city.

The police's primary duty is to apprehend criminals and ensure justice through the courts, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Police blocked protesters -- who oppose the age limit in government jobs -- as they attempted to march towards Shahbagh yesterday. The protesters had initially gathered at TSC, Dhaka University, and planned to march to the National Museum but were stopped by the law enforcers.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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Bhasani's 144th birth anniversary today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today marks the 144th birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Hasani



Khan Bhasani, a legendary politician and dreamer of independent Bangladesh.

Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Bhasani's family and various social and political organisations will be placing wreaths at the grave of the great leader at Santosh in Tangail.

Besides, doa and milad mahfil will be held at the central mosque of the university after the Zohr prayers.

Born at Dhagara village in Sirajganj in 1880, Bhasani was the founder president of the Awami Muslim League, which afterwards became Awami League. He later formed a left-leaning political organisation called the National Awami Party (NAP).

He played a leading role in the 1969 mass uprising and also led the historic Farakka March in 1976 to ensure Bangladesh's right to a fair share of the Ganges river waters.

Bhasani's relentless work for the common people earned him the title Mazlum Jana Neta (leader of the oppressed). He passed away on November 17, 1976.

The forgotten lens of Liberation War

Iconic, vivid photographs taken by Naib Uddin Ahmed serve as invaluable documents of '71

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Naib Uddin Ahmed alias Manik Mia, an internationally reputed photographer, preserved some of the most striking scenes from the Liberation War of 1971 with his camera -- scenes of torture, aggression, and grave injustice.

One of his most iconic works is the historic photograph titled "Muktijuddhe Tin Kishore (Three Freedom Fighters)".

The photo, displayed at the main corridor of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, surprisingly does not bear Naib's name.

Despite his immense contribution to capturing many such images, which are now invaluable for their vivid portrayal of the scenes from the warfront, Naib's name is now almost forgotten.

Only a few of his colleagues, well-wishers and family members still remember this veteran behind the lens during the Liberation War.

Naib is also the elder brother of the eminent photographer late Dr Noazesh Ahmed.

Many of the photographs Naib had captured during the Liberation War are used massively on different occasions across the country, but his name is often not credited, which is painful, said Mahmuda Nasrin Kajol, his daughter-in-law.

Born in Paril Nauda village under Singair upazila of Manikganj in 1927, Naib joined Public Relations and Publications Department of Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh in 1961 as chief photographer. He went on retirement in 1990 and passed away on December 14, 2009.

"Taking great risk, Naib captured striking images of brutality unleashed by the Pakistani forces and their local cohorts in 1971. These

the occupying forces' claim of 'normalcy' and exposed the atmosphere of terror that prevailed everywhere in the country to the rest of the world," Bimol said.

In later years, Naib organised many solo exhibitions of his photographs at home and abroad, including in India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

He was also founder of Alokchitra Shilpi Sangsad in Mymensingh city,

and achieved many awards for his brilliant photographs, including the United Nations Award, Unicef Award, award in Photo Contest on Liberation of Bangladesh, World Photo Contest in Moscow, Pravda Award, and Life-time Achievement Award by Drik Picture Library.

"We pursued on different occasions, but Naib did not get recognition as a freedom fighter," said Kajol.

"We just want him to be recognised as a freedom fighter by the state for his contributions behind the lens on the warfront," she added.

photographs helped publicise the war to the world and now survive as documents of the Liberation War," said Md Nowab Ali, 81, one of his colleagues.

Bimol Pal, a valiant freedom fighter, said Naib had managed to send some photographs to Col Abu Taher, commander of Sector-II, with the help of local Budhhijibi Sangram Parishad members.

"One of the photographs of a rape victim, which was published in The Washington Post, invalidated



Sundarbans robbers

FROM PAGE 5

of abduction, physical abuse, and ransom demands.

Meanwhile, at least six cases of abduction have been reported in the West Sundarbans in the last four months.

On November 8, two fishermen from Koyra upazila -- Atahar Hossain, 35, and Rafiqul Islam, 38 -- were abducted while fishing in the Malanch river within the forest, while their six companions were released to arrange a ransom.

"A group of robbers posing as Dayal Bahini abducted the two in Dune area of Satnala, and demanded a ransom of Tk 4 lakh," said Rabiul Islam, one of the six fishermen who were released.

The two fishermen later returned home after paying the ransom, confirmed Ferdous Dhali, a local union parishad member.

Dhali expressed concern about the safety of honey collectors and fishermen in the area and urged immediate administrative action in this regard.

According to sources, there is another group of 10-15 robbers called Abdullah Bahini, which patrols the Raimangal, Dargang, Atharobaki, Kachikata, Kachukhali, and Maondo rivers in the West Sundarbans and robs fishing boats and trawlers.

The leader Abdullah Taraldar, 42, of Sathkira's Shyamnagar upazila, who was in jail in a woman trafficking case, escaped from prison on August 5, when Sathkira District Jail was vandalised, said

sources.

On November 12, Coast Guard (West Zone) personnel arrested two robbers, including Asabur Sana, 42, leader of Asabur Bahini, and seized two single-barreled guns and four bullets.

Rafiqul Islam, member of Nolian Union Parishad in Dacope upazila, said Asabur Bahini has abducted at least 40 fishermen recently, releasing them after collecting ransom.

Ahidul Sheikh of Kalabagi village, one such victim, recounted, "Asabur's men abducted me from the Sorbotkhali canal, beat me, and forced me to call my family for ransom. I was released after paying Tk 10,200."

Contacted, AZM Hasanur Rahman, assistant conservator of forests, said, "On information, we conducted drives and rescued 10 fishermen, three boats, a solar panel and one bullet so far. We have also increased patrolling, and robust actions are underway."

Anwarul Kadir, director of Sundarban Academy, stressed the need for strict law enforcement and improved surveillance to nab the robbers and ensure the safety of fishermen and others.

Capt Faiz Uddin Ahmed, commander (West Zone) of Coast Guard, said their regular patrols, drives and intelligence operations against robbers are ongoing.

The commander of Rab-6 could not be reached for comment despite repeated calls and messages.

Govt revising

FROM PAGE 3

In the past, Bangladesh had to go to the international court to cancel a deal with Niko, she said, adding that the interim government has to spend a lot of time in damage control.

"Some projects have been implemented, and the debt burden is huge.... The responsibility for dealing with the consequences of unfair agreements and exorbitant costs is on the government."

Prof M Tamim, former adviser to a caretaker government, said a party that cancels a power deal often has to pay a fine of US \$8 to \$12 billion.

"There are long-term agreements here. Breaking them before the term ends will lead to legal complications and penalties," he said, adding that the power sector transformation must be approached cautiously with proper planning.

The three-day-long conference is organised by Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development, a coalition of several NGOs.

Action against

FROM PAGE 3

The accurate documentation is key to maintaining transparency, ensuring justice, and upholding public trust in the police force, police officials said.

The DMP chief also instructed the police officers to act promptly on any complaints or general diaries (GDs) filed at police stations.

"Police must reach the scene of an incident within an hour and conduct initial investigations. If necessary, a case must be filed," he said.

The prompt action will foster a positive perception towards police, he added.

Sazzat Ali said the DMP has undertaken initiatives, including engaging directly with the public, listening to their concerns, and providing them with the best service "to restore the lost glory." He also called for strict action against muggers, extortionists, and teen gangs.

To combat these crimes, he proposed forming citizen forums involving community leaders and different professionals.

Over 78pc women

FROM PAGE 3

has made women, especially teenagers and young women, more vulnerable to threats. This is also putting pressure on their education and mental development. The responsibility does not end with just formulating laws; this law needs to be enforced. It is also necessary to make everyone aware at the community level. Steps must also be taken on how to deal with online harassment urgently."

A few students from various districts shared their community's situation regarding tackling cyberbullying.

Jinat Ara Haque, chief executive of WE CAN, said, "In our society, parents only think about the safety of their daughters, but they should also think about their sons. Because girls are not responsible for violence against women."

"In addition to adopting

new technologies, it is the responsibility of the government to conduct campaigns on cybersecurity and increase awareness about helplines," she added.

Masuma Billah, programme head of the gender, justice and diversity programme at BRAC, said, "Just as parents once married off girls to secure their place in society, we are now neglecting their digital security. We are restricting girls from accessing digital spaces and tools, which is widening the digital divide. If they are not digitally empowered, they will ultimately fall behind in the job market."

Nishath Sultana, director of influencing, campaign and communication of Plan International, and Hasne Ara Begum, social development and gender expert of Asian Development Bank, also spoke at the event.

Japan to continue

FROM PAGE 3

stability, economic cooperation, and human-to-human interactions. "We'll do our best to support Bangladesh based on the three pillars," Kiminori said, reiterating Tokyo's "strong support" for the reform initiatives undertaken by the Interim Government in different areas.

Prof Yunus thanked the outgoing ambassador for his contribution to

improving the Bangladesh-Japan relationship.

Calling for more Japanese investment in Bangladesh, Yunus said, "The presence of Japanese investors in Bangladesh sends a good message for us."

The Japanese envoy said, "No Japanese company withdrew their business from Bangladesh after the July-August mass uprising, and they are willing to stay in Bangladesh."

Politics won't influence Govt moves to curb officials

FROM PAGE 3

"If the society is corrupt, even the ACC might be affected by corruption. There are allegations against me as well, which you should investigate. Allegations against anyone should be reviewed with fairness and integrity," he said.

"Corruption is the root cause of inequality. If corruption is curtailed across all sectors, inequality will reduce. I firmly believe we will succeed in reducing corruption. We seek everyone's cooperation in addressing the challenges," he added.

Momen officially took charge of ACC 42 days after the resignation of the previous commission, led by Moinuddin Abdullah, on October 29.

The Ministry of Public Administration issued the official notification regarding appointments for the new commission earlier this week.

Meanwhile, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) called on the newly appointed

ACC chairman and commissioners to ensure transparency by publicly disclosing their income and asset statements.

It also requested ACC's clarification regarding their position on corruption allegations and any political affiliations.

In response, Momen said, "In the next seven days, we will publicly release the asset statements for the entire commission, including myself."

Addressing the allegations against him, he said, "The complaints date back to 2009 and have been investigated multiple times between 2009 and 2022. In 2023, long before the August 5 changeover this year, the ACC certified that the allegations were unsubstantiated."

"The interim government does not carry any political character like other political governments. Its objective is to move forward with the people, without being influenced by politics, and we will also work impartially and with integrity," he added.

FROM PAGE 3

The government directed all levels of government officials to refrain from undertaking recreational trips abroad. It also said that government officials and employees should avoid taking long term leave for education abroad.

The circular stated that a ministry-based database for foreign trips must be created, and the structure of the database will be developed by the Chief Adviser's Office, which will also maintain the data.

The circular advised government officials at all levels to avoid foreign travel simultaneously.

The adviser and secretary of a ministry should generally refrain from travelling abroad together, stated the government order.

However, if such travel is deemed absolutely

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 12

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:20 12:45 3:45 5:22 7:00
JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Future govt must

FROM PAGE 5

use Facebook, we no longer need to use backspace," he said.

He further said the younger generation is angry at those judges who sentenced the innocent to death.

"We are in a generational conflict," Hasnat said. "The older generation wants to force the younger generation into submission, but the youth who fought against oppression will

never give in. The fight against oppression will continue, and the youth will never compromise."

Regarding the political activities of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, Hasnat said, "It is not an active [political] organisation; rather a platform to unite all the anti-fascist forces, including Chhatra Dal, Chhatra Shibir, and Adhikar Parishad, and to serve as a symbol of national unity."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka Mohila Polytechnic Institute
Office of The Principal
email: dhakampi1985@gmail.com
www.dmpil.polytech.gov.bd

১১/১২/২৪

e-Tender Notice
e-Tenders are invited through e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Principal, Dhaka Mohila Polytechnic Institute under the Directorate of Technical Education for the procurement of following package Which will be available at e-GP website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) from date and time as follows:

Tender ID No.	Package No	Description	Publication date Closing Date
1045012	DMP/ASSET/e-GP/2024-25/GD-01/12	Goods Supply of Furniture	12-Dec-2024 10:00:00 02-Jan-2025 12:00:00
1045247	DMP/ASSET/e-GP/2024-25/GD-02/13	Goods Supply & Installation of laboratory equipment's for Electrical Technology.	12-Dec-2024 10:00:00 02-Jan-2025 12:30:00

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

(Shaifano Begum)
Principal (Additional Charge)
Dhaka Mohila Polytechnic Institute
Shere-E-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207

GD- 1165

মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা বোর্ড, চট্টগ্রাম
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ফলাফল বাতিলসংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

নাম : মাক্কেদ দেব নাথ
পিতার নাম : মারায়ন চন্দ্র নাথ
মাতার নাম : বন্দী নাথ
রোল নম্বর : ১০৮৫৫৪
রেজিস্ট্রেশন নম্বর : ১৮১৪৭০৬০৮০৮
শিক্ষাবর্ষ : ২০২১-২০২২
পরীক্ষা পাশের সন : ২০২৩
পরীক্ষার নাম : উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট পরীক্ষা (এইচএসসি)
বিভাগ : বিজ্ঞান
কলেজের নাম : চট্টগ্রাম ক্যান্টনমেন্ট পাবলিক স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ, চট্টগ্রাম।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগের শুল্কবিহীন শিক্ষা শাখার স্মারক নং-৩৭.০০.০০০.০৬৫.২৭.৩০.২০২৪.৫১২ তারিখঃ ১৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৪খ্রিঃ, ৩১ ভাদ্র ১৪৩১ বাংলা মূলে উক্ত শিক্ষার্থীর ফলাফল জালিয়াতির বিষয়টি সন্দেহ প্রমাণিত হওয়ার তদন্ত প্রক্রিয়ার অঙ্গ হিসেবে ২৪/১০/২০২৪ইং চট্টগ্রাম শিক্ষা বোর্ডের শুল্কবিহীন সত্যায়ন এবং ২৩/১১/২০২৪ তারিখের বোর্ড কমিটির সভায় উক্ত পরীক্ষার্থীর ফলাফল বাতিল করার সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হয়েছে। উক্ত সিদ্ধান্তের আশেপাশে উক্ত পরীক্ষার্থীর ফলাফল, সনদ ও আক্রেডিতিক ট্রান্সক্রিপ্ট (সেরিফাইড কপি) বাতিল করা হলো।

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586.000

USAID BANGLADESH
Position Vacancy Announcement

Position: Acquisition and Assistance Agent, FSN - 8, 9 (ladder position)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bangladesh is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals for the position of Acquisition and Assistance Agent, FSN - 8, 9 (ladder position) in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA).

Location: USAID/Bangladesh, Deadline for application submission: December 26, 2024.

For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/work-with-us/careers and www.bdjjobs.com

D-42

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১৭-২৪.০৫.০০০০.৫১২.৫৪.০০৭.২৪-৩৩০

তারিখঃ ১২/১২/২০২৪ ইং

বাংলাদেশ জীৱ বোর্ডের প্রধান কার্যালয়ের কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের যাতায়াত কাজে ব্যবহৃত টোকা মেট্রো-৫-৫১-৪১০২ গাড়িটি বর্তমানে একেছো হিসাবে মিরপুর বেনারশী পল্লি, ভাওয়ানটেকে যে অবস্থায় আছে সে অবস্থায় ভিত্তিতে বিক্রয়ের নিমিত্ত সিলমোহরকৃত দুইটি পৃথক খামে (১টি মূলকপি ও ১টি ফটোকপি) নিলাম দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১। কাজের নাম	২। একেছো গাড়ি (টোকা মেট্রো-৫-৫১-৪১০২) নিলামে বিক্রয় ও অপসারণ।
২। কাজের অবস্থান	৩। মিরপুর বেনারশী পল্লি ভাওয়ানটেক।
৩। নিলাম দরপত্র দাখিল কারির যোগ্যতা	৪। যে কোন আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান।
৪। দরপত্র জমাানের পরিমাণ	৫। ১০,০০০ (দশ হাজার) টাকা (ফেরতযোগ্য)।
৫। দরপত্র দাখিল বিক্রির তারিখ ও সময়	৬। ১৫/১২/২০২৪ ইং হতে ২৩/১২/২০২৪ ইং (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে)।
৬। দরপত্র দাখিল বিক্রয় ও গ্রহণের স্থান	৭। প্রধান কার্যালয়, অর্থ ও হিসাব বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ জীৱ বোর্ড, বিটিএমসি ভবন (৫ম তলা), ৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫।
৭। দরপত্র দাখিল গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	৮। ১৫/১২/২০২৪ ইং হতে ২৪/১২/২০২৪ ইং দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৮। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	৯। ২৪/১২/২০২৪ ইং বেলা ০১.০০ ঘটিকা। প্রধান কার্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ জীৱ বোর্ড।
৯। দরপত্র দাখিলের বিক্রয় মূল্য	১০। প্রতি সেট ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (নগদ এবং অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১০। দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত যোগাযোগ	১১। ফোনঃ ০২৭৩৪০৪৬৬৬৬, ০২৭৩৪৬৪৬৩৭৮, ইমেইলঃ mahfuzce05@gmail.com
১১। নিলামের অন্যান্য শর্ত ও নিয়ামাবলীঃ	১২। দরপত্রের দাখিলের সাথে সংযুক্ত রয়েছে।

১২/১২/২৪
মোঃ মাহফুজুর রহমান
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (পুরঃ)
ও
আবায়ক পঠিত নিলাম কমিটি
বাংলাদেশ জীৱ বোর্ড

GD- 1163

Future govt must include youngsters

Says Hasnat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Those aiming to assume state power in Bangladesh without involving the younger generation are under a wrong impression, said Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, yesterday.

"The younger generation must come forward to build a new Bangladesh. Any force that thinks they can shape Bangladesh's future without including the youth in the state structure, and reach parliament on their own, is mistaken," he said at a discussion.

The discussion, titled "The Contribution of Dhaka College in the July Mass Uprising," was held at the Dhaka College Auditorium.

Hasnat said the younger generation is angry with bureaucrats, businessmen, and police officers who supported fascism.

"Today, we can speak freely. When we SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



A farmer transporting a stalk of bananas by bicycle to the Doctor Bazar market in Noakhali union, Feni, early yesterday morning. The market, known for its vibrant activity, is bustling with buyers and sellers even before dawn, showcasing fresh produce straight from the fields. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

579 DNC officials authorised to use weapons

UNB, Dhaka

The Ministry of Home Affairs has granted permission to 579 field-level officials of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) to use weapons.

These officials, ranging from deputy directors to sub-inspectors, will now be authorised to use 9 mm semi-automatic pistols.

Alongside this approval, the ministry has issued the "Department of Narcotics Control (Officers-Employees) Weapon Procurement and Usage Policy 2024."

The Security Services Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs announced the policy on Tuesday.

According to the policy, the DNC serves as the nodal agency for curbing narcotics abuse in Bangladesh. Field-level officials regularly conduct narcotics recovery operations, arrest drug traffickers, and manage case investigations.

The ministry developed the policy to strengthen the DNC and address the security risks its officials face during these operations.

Sundarbans robbers resurface, make lives difficult for locals

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Following a successful campaign by the Rab to facilitate the surrender of robbers in the Sundarbans, the region was declared robber-free on November 1, 2018.

Between 2016 and 2018, 328 robbers from 32 groups surrendered, handing over 462 weapons and 22,504 rounds of ammunition, according to the Forest Department and police sources.

After the surrender, many robbers received financial assistance under a government rehabilitation programme.

However, lack of monitoring over the past few years saw several of these individuals return to criminal activities, including armed robberies targeting fishermen and honey collectors and

Following a decline in monitoring, robber groups have resurfaced in the Sundarbans, targeting fishermen and honey collectors. Abductions, ransom demands, and violent robberies are on the rise, making the region unsafe again for those dependent on the mangrove forest.

abductions with demand for ransom, among others.

As such, the Sundarbans have again become unsafe for those who depend on the mangrove forest for their livelihoods.

Locals complained that several new groups -- Asabur Bahini, Sharif Bahini, Abdullah Bahini, Manjur Bahini, and Dayal Bahini -- have become active, particularly in the western Sundarbans, across Khulna's Koyra and Dacope upazilas and Satkhira's Shyamnagar upazila.

Additionally, some prisoners, including identified criminals, who managed to escape jail during the July uprising, have also joined these criminal activities.

These groups intercept fishing boats under the guise of forest officials, robbing fishermen of their catch, money, and valuables.

Fishermen who managed to escape captivity shared harrowing experiences SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Collective efforts key to justice

Justice Ziaul Karim tells his farewell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Syed Md Ziaul Karim, a judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, yesterday called upon all officials of the judiciary to unite in order to establish justice and ensure fairness.

"No one has sole authority in the judiciary and it cannot be sustained by a single effort. A concerted and collective effort is the only prerequisite for establishing justice. Therefore, everyone involved in the judiciary, including the judges, must work closely with each other," he said.

Justice Ziaul Karim made the remarks while receiving a farewell from the Attorney General's Office and the Supreme Court Bar Association at Court-1 of the Appellate Division. He retired from the office yesterday.

"We often hear that 'the dark cloud of corruption in the judiciary is hovering over us' nowadays. Today, at the time of farewell, my sincere request to you is that we should not do anything that will stain the white building [of the Supreme Court], the symbol of justice, even a little bit," he added.

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman and SCBA President AM Mahub Uddin, were, among others, present.

3 sent to jail over gang rape of PUST student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna


A Pabna court yesterday sent three people to jail over gang rape of a student of Pabna University of Science and Technology in Sadar upazila.

Police arrested Mehedi Masud, 26, Mahamudul Hasan, 23, and Harunur Rashid, 27, in Pabna town yesterday morning, after the student's mother sued four people, including the three, on Tuesday night, said Sanjoy Kumar Saha, inspector (operation) of Sadar Police Station.

Citing the case, Sanjoy said Mehedi developed a relationship with the female student. They broke up recently after he got married to another.

However, they remained in touch, he added. On Monday evening, Mehedi called the student and visited different areas riding a bike. Later, he took her to an isolated place in Shalgaria-Baganpara area where he and other accused raped her.

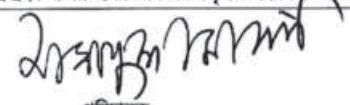
Sanjoy said they were trying to nab the other accused.



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১/ক, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা ১০০০
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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা বিভাগ।			
২	সংস্থা	আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট			
৩	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা	পরিচালক, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা।			
৪	সংগ্রহকারী সত্তার জেলা	ঢাকা।			
৫	যে কাজের জন্য দরপত্র	আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা জাতীয় পদক ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা আন্তর্জাতিক পদক ২০২৫ প্রদানের নিমিত্ত স্বর্ণপদক, স্বর্ণ দ্বারা ইলেকট্রোপ্রেসেড রেশ্মা নির্মিত রেশ্মিকা, স্বর্ণপদক রাখার বাস, রেশ্মিকা রাখার বাস ও স্ফিটা (রিবন) ইত্যাদি সরবরাহ।			
৬	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	৩৭.২৬.০০০০.১১৬.২৯.০০৩.২৪-৭০৯; তারিখ: ১১ ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪ খ্রি।			
৭	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OPEN TENDERING METHOD)।			
৮	বাজেট তহবিল সূত্র	রাজস্ব বাজেট।			
৯	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির নাম	আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা জাতীয় পদক ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা আন্তর্জাতিক পদক প্রদানের নিমিত্ত স্বর্ণপদক ও রেশ্মিকা সরবরাহ।			
১০	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	১১.১২.২০২৪ খ্রি।			
১১	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	০২.০১.২০২৫ তারিখ।			
১২	দরপত্র প্রার্থনের তারিখ ও সময়	০২.০১.২০২৫ তারিখ, বেলা ০১:০০ টা।			
১৩	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০২.০১.২০২৫ তারিখ, বেলা ০২:০০ টা।			
১৪	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়কারী	সহকারী পরিচালক (ভাষা জাদুঘর ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা পদক), কক্ষ নং ০০২ ভেলে-৩, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা।			
১৫	(ক) দরপত্র দলিল প্রার্থনারী দপ্তর (খ) দরপত্র দলিল খোলার দপ্তর	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট, ১/ক, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা।			
১৬	দরপত্রাদানের যোগ্যতা	(ক) দরপত্রের সাথে হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট, আয়কর সমন ও বাৎসরিক আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতার সনদপত্র, জেলা প্রশাসক কর্তৃক ভিসিং লাইসেন্স এবং জাতীয় পর্যায়ে কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতার সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি প্রমাণক হিসাবে দাখিল করতে হবে। (খ) দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের কাজের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন প্রকৃত জুয়েলারি ব্যবসায়ী হতে হবে। (গ) অন্যান্য বিষয়াদি টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট অনুযায়ী হতে হবে।			
১৭	মালামাল সংগ্রহ ও কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বর্ণনা	ক. স্বর্ণপদক ও রেশ্মিকা নির্মিত মানসম্পন্ন হতে হবে ও ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক সনদীভিত জাতীয়ভাবে স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক মান যাচাই ও অক্ষত থাকতে হবে। খ. আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা জাতীয় পদক ও আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা আন্তর্জাতিক পদক প্রদানের নিমিত্ত স্বর্ণপদক ও রেশ্মিকা সরবরাহ (১৯ নং ক্রমিক বর্ণিত সিডিউল অনুযায়ী)।			
১৮	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	অগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে নির্ধারিত নগদ ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা প্রদানপূর্বক প্রতিদেষ্টে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করতে হবে এবং দরপত্র ক্রয়ের রশিদ টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।			
১৯	ক্রমিক	সরবরাহযোগ্য মালামাল/কাজের বর্ণনা	অবস্থান	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি (টাকা)	সরবরাহের সময় (দিন)
০১.	১৮ কার্টেট মানের ৩৫ (পঁয়ত্রিশ) গ্রাম সলিড স্বর্ণ দ্বারা নির্মিত ডাবল সাইডের স্বর্ণপদক (রিবনসহ) সরবরাহকৃত ডিজাইন অনুযায়ী প্রস্তুত করে সরবরাহ করতে হবে। স্বর্ণপদকের সংখ্যা ০৪ (চারটি) বা তার কম/বেশি হতে পারে।	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়	৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার) টাকা, পরিচালক, আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউটের অনুকূলে তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংকের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট আকারে দাখিল করতে হবে।	০৭ (সাত) দিন	
০২.	ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত স্পেসিফিকেশন অনুযায়ী বুপার তৈরি প্রতিটি ০.৩৬ গ্রাম স্বর্ণের ইলেকট্রোপ্রেসেড রেশ্মিকা সংখ্যা মোট ৬টি (০৬টি জাতীয় ও ৩টি আন্তর্জাতিক পদক) বা তার কম/বেশি হতে পারে।				
০৩	স্বর্ণপদক রাখার বাস ০৪ টি (নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী)				
০৪	রেশ্মিকা রাখার বাস ০৬ টি (নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী)				
২০	দরপত্র আদানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, পদবি, ঠিকানা ও ফোন/ফ্যাক্স নম্বর	পরিচালক আন্তর্জাতিক মাতৃভাষা ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা। ফোন: ০২৮০১১০৪৬			
২১	দরপত্রের সাথে ০১ (এক) টি স্বর্ণ পদকের এবং ০১ (এক) টি রেশ্মিকার নমুনা দাখিল করতে হবে। নমুনা ব্যতীত কোন দরপত্র প্রার্থনাযোগ্য হবে না।				
২২	দরপত্র আদান ও কার্যসম্পন্ন প্রদানের যে কোনো পর্যায়ে কোনো কারণ বশীতলে যে কোনো বা সকল দরপত্র প্রার্থনা বা বাস্তবতার অধিকার কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।				


 পরিচালক
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 ১/ক, সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা ১০০০।

GD-1170

Three killed in 3-way collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Three people were killed and six others injured in a collision involving a truck, a pickup, and a microbus in Brahmanbaria's Bijoyagar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Fazilatunnesa, 75, Pavel Miah, 30, and 11-month-old Raisa Aktar, daughter of Manik Mia.

The injured are Abu Hanif, 40, Runa Aktar, 35, Safia Begum, 60, Tanveer, 10, Abdul Hamid Masud, 60 and Billal Hossain, 30.

Khantihata Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Margub Touhid said the incident took place at Birpasha on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway around 5:30am.

OC Touhid said the injured were transferred to Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital from a health complex for better treatment.

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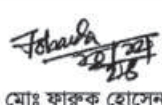
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নিলাম দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয়ের নাম	বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	সংস্থার নাম	ওয়েস্ট জোন পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড, যশোর।
৩	নিলাম আহবানকারী দপ্তরের নাম	নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, আঞ্চলিক মেরামত কারখানা, গুজোপাড়িকা, যশোর।
৪	নিলামের মালামালের বিবরণ	আঞ্চলিক মেরামত কারখানা, গুজোপাড়িকা, যশোর দপ্তরের ভাতারে রক্ষিত ১৫ (পনের) আইটেম অব্যবহারযোগ্য নষ্ট মালামাল।
৫	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	খোলা দরপত্র।
৬	নিলাম দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৭/০১/২০২৫ইং (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)।
৭	নিলাম দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৮/০১/২০২৫ইং, দুপুর ১২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৮	ক) অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী	গুজোপাড়িকার ওয়েবসাইটে (www.wzpdcl.org.bd) পাওয়া যাবে।


 মোঃ ফারুক হোসেন
 নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী

GD-1167



Tasnia Farin
PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED



Mosharraf Karim

Mehazabien Chowdhury

Nasir Uddin Khan

Azmeri Haque Badhan

OTT stars to land on the red carpet today

The third edition of 'Blender's Choice The Daily Star OTT & Digital Content Awards' is set to unfold this evening, promising to celebrate the finest talents in the OTT industry.



Nazia Haque Orsha

Afran Nisho

Rafiath Rashid Mithila

Siam Ahmed

Over the past two years, the awards have spotlighted outstanding achievements in the vibrant digital entertainment sector, and this year's event at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) Hall of Fame, starting at 4:30pm, is no exception. Spanning 30 categories, the awards will honour excellence in both Popular and Critics' segments, including 12 Critics' and nine Popular awards. Additionally, there are five categories each for music and individual content.



Ashfaque Nipun



Shihab Shaheen



Mizanur Rahman Aryan



Raihan Rafi



Vicky Zahed



Shankha Dasgupta



Dibya Joyti

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK
In the Best Director (Popular, Film) category, nominees include Mizanur Rahman Aryan (*Unish20*), Raihan Rafi (*Friday*), Rubel Hasan (*Nikosh*), Shihab Shaheen (*Baba Someone's Following Me*), and Vicky Zahed

Actor, Siam Ahmed received a nomination for his performance in *Punormilone*. Nasir Uddin Khan, last year's winner in the Negative Role category, has now been nominated for his lead role in *Myself Allen Swapan*. Mosharraf Karim's consistent brilliance in *Mohanagar*

Shamol Mawla (*The Silence*), FS Nayeem (*Mission HuntDown*), and Ziaul Faruq Apurba (*Buker Moddhye Agun*) join him in the race. The Best Actor, Female (Critics) category features stellar performances from Mehazabien Chowdhury (*Ami Ki Tumi*), Nazia

Villains continue to captivate audiences in recent productions. Abdun Noor Shajal broke stereotypes with his portrayal of Lucifer in *The Silence*, while Afran Nisho's portrayal of a lawyer in *Sharey Showlo*, Irfan Sajjad's performance in *Baba Someone's Following Me*, Mostafa Monwar's role in *Procholito*, and Nasir Uddin Khan's character in *Guti* have all earned nominations.

Supporting actors have made equally strong impressions, with Abu Hurayra Tanvir (*Buker Moddhye Agun*), Dibya Joyti (*Mohanagar 2*), FS Nayeem (*Overtrump*), Partho Sheikh (*Odrishshyo*), and Shashwta Datta (*Punormilone*) vying for the male category, while Bijori Barkatullah (*The Silence*), Makhnun Sultana Mahima (*Nikosh*), Mousumi Hamid (*Guti*), Shilpi Sarker Apu (*Mobaraknama*), and Tanzika Amin (*Mohanagar 2*) represent the female category.

The red carpet will be hosted by rising stars Sarah Alam and Shommo Joyti, while the event itself will be anchored by FS Nayeem, Naziba Basher, Azra Mahmood, and Rafsan Shabab. Notable productions such as *Ami Ki Tumi*, *Guti*, *Mobaraknama*, *Mohanagar 2*, and *Myself Allen Swapan* will compete for Best Drama/Series in the Popular category, while *Baba Someone's Following Me*, *Friday*, *Nikosh*, *Punormilone*, and *Unish20* vie for Best Film.

The evening will be enlivened by performances from Pritom Hasan and his band, Elita Karim, Tashfee, Tama Mirza, Mumtaheena Chowdhury Toya, Shahnaz Sumi, and the Alifia Squad, promising a night of surprises and celebration.



Tanzika Amin



Tama Mirza



Shahnaz Sumi

(*Kajoler Dinratri*). The web-series category has also seen a leap forward, with nominations for Ashfaque Nipun (*Mohanagar 2*), Shankha Dasgupta (*Guti*), Shihab Shaheen (*Myself Allen Swapan*), Tanim Rahman Angshu (*Buker Moddhye Agun*), and Vicky Zahed (*Ami Ki Tumi*).

In the Critics' category for Best

2, Ziaul Faruq Apurba's reinvention in *Buker Moddhye Agun*, and Mostafizur Noor Imran's compelling portrayal in *Jahan* have added depth to this fiercely competitive lineup.

In the Popular category, Mosharraf Karim (*Mohanagar 2*) stands out for his portrayal of OC Harun, while Nasir Uddin Khan (*Myself Allen Swapan*),

Haque Orsha (*Jahan*), Azmeri Haque Badhan (*Guti*), Tasnia Farin (*Nikosh*), and Tama Mirza (*Friday*). In the Popular category, nominees include Azmeri Haque Badhan (*Guti*), Tasnia Farin (*Nikosh*), Rafiath Rashid Mithila (*Myself Allen Swapan*), Tama Mirza (*Friday*), and Shahnaz Sumi (*Mobaraknama*).



FS Nayeem



Ziaul Faruq Apurba



Abdun Noor Shajal



Shamol Mawla



Mostafizur Noor Imran

INTERNATIONAL

Russia teams up with BRICS to create AI alliance

Says President Putin

REUTERS, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that Russia would develop artificial intelligence with BRICS partners and other countries, a bid to challenge the dominance of the United States in one of the most disruptive technologies of the 21st Century.

"I am confident that the international alliance of national associations and development institutes in the field of AI of BRICS countries and other interested states will give a significant boost to such cooperation," Putin told an AI conference in Moscow.

"We will launch this alliance today," he said.

SPYING FOR IRAN
Israel arrests almost 30 Jews citizens

REUTERS, Tel Aviv

Israel's arrest of almost 30 mostly Jewish citizens who allegedly spied for Iran in nine covert cells has caused alarm in the country and points to Tehran's biggest effort in decades to infiltrate its arch foe, four Israeli security sources said.

Among the unfulfilled goals of the alleged cells was the assassination of an Israeli nuclear scientist and former military officials, while one group gathered information on military bases and air defences, security service Shin Bet has said.

Last week, the agency and Israel's police said a father and son team had passed on details of Israeli force movements including in the Golan Heights where they lived.



Protesters attend a rally calling for the impeachment of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, who declared martial law which was reversed hours later, in front of the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea yesterday. South Korean police tried to search Yeol's office yesterday but have not been able to enter the main building, Yonhap news reported.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israeli strikes kill 38 in Gaza
Women, children among dead; several trapped under rubble

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli air attacks across the Gaza Strip killed at least 38 Palestinians yesterday, most of them in an airstrike on a house in Beit Lahiya town in the north of the enclave, medics said.

The Beit Lahiya strike killed at least 22 people, including women and children, health officials said. Relatives listed the names of the dead on social media.

More than 30 people were living in the multi-storey building before it was struck, and several family members remained missing as rescue operations continued through the morning, the Palestinian Wafa news agency said.

At least 44,805 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since October 7, 2023, the Gaza health ministry said in a statement yesterday.

In nearby Beit Hanoun, where the Israeli forces have operated since October, medics said an Israeli airstrike killed and wounded several people, without giving an exact toll. Rescue workers said several

people were trapped under rubble.

Earlier yesterday, at least seven Palestinians were killed and several others wounded in an Israeli airstrike on a house in the Nuseirat camp in central Gaza, medics told Reuters.



The Palestinian Civil Emergency Service and medics said four other people were killed in separate Israeli airstrikes on two houses in Gaza City.

The Israeli military said in a statement that two rockets were fired from the central Gaza Strip into Israel, but fell in

open areas and caused no injuries. It signalled the ability of Hamas rebels in Gaza to continue to stage rocket attacks despite 14 months of devastating Israeli aerial and ground offensives.

Later yesterday, the Israeli military ordered residents in the Al-Maghazi camp in central Gaza to evacuate, citing rocket launches from the area. It urged them to head towards a humanitarian-designated zone near the Mediterranean coast.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in the devastated enclave. Israel accuses Hamas of hiding among the civilian population, a charge Hamas denies as a pretext by Israel to "justify its indiscriminate attacks".

Israeli forces have been operating in Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya and the nearby Jabalia refugee camp since October 5.

The UN General Assembly was set to vote yesterday on a draft resolution that seeks an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, a symbolic gesture after the US previously vetoed a similar action in the UN Security Council.

Flourishing tech urgently needed

FROM PAGE 1

"The naturally beautiful and resource-rich hill districts could have been the most developed region in Bangladesh, but it is lagging behind others. This should not be the case," Prof Yunus said.

He said crops, fruits and traditional products of the CHT could drive the economy forward.

Recalling his meeting with women's football team's players who have come from the hilly districts, Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Yunus said the girls of Bangladesh have defeated teams of other countries and become champions in football.

"How splendidly your local girls played! How can you say they are behind?"

I have spoken to those who have come from your area. What a challenging situation! How hard it is for them to move through the hills to reach home!" he said.

Mentioning that when their parents come to Dhaka, they face difficulties, the chief adviser said despite these hurdles, they have won the world.

Expressing his hope that the youths of the hilly region will be turned into global citizens, he said, "Your girls have won the world in football. The youth must become not only citizens of Bangladesh but also global citizens."

Despite being people from remote areas, the youths of CHT should not be left behind, he said.

"There will be limitations, but you need to expand the boundaries of your mind. You must reach out to people around the world with your achievements," he added.

Noting that in January, he encouraged the youths of the hilly region to participate in the Youth Festival, Prof Yunus asked the hilly people to encourage their children and youths to join this festival.

They should participate in local games, writing, singing and dancing competitions — whatever they can and wish to do, he said.

This is a festival for everyone, and it should be a diverse one, he added.

The chief adviser also spoke about the need for reforms in the education

system of the hilly region and the importance of proper training.

He said the country's educational system is in a severe crisis, while it is even more challenging in the hilly region.

The teachers face hardships and students suffer, Prof Yunus said, adding the irregularities exist throughout Bangladesh, but it is even severe in the hilly region.

He said the interim government will try to determine what can be done from its perspective.

"The youths of the hilly region should not be left behind in education just because they are in remote areas. They must make progress in their studies," Prof Yunus said.

Death penalty provision

FROM PAGE 12

international standards are maintained, some amendments are yet to be made.

Cadman is a prominent British attorney and co-founder of Guernica37 Law Chambers, a firm specialising in international law.

Cadman was once barred from entering Bangladesh, and he was Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami's legal adviser in London in 2011, during the trials of several top Jamaat leaders over war crimes committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Briefing reporters at the

court yesterday, Cadman expressed hope that India will respect Bangladesh's judicial process and extradite former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

"There is an extradition treaty between Bangladesh and India, but we are also aware of what has been stated so far. I don't want to prejudice what India is going to do."

If India refused, Cadman suggested that a trial, in absentia, could proceed under the relevant international law.

He added that Bangladesh can potentially seek assistance from the

International Criminal Court (ICC) if India refuses to give up Hasina.

"The International Criminal Court has jurisdiction over Bangladesh if Bangladesh is unwilling or unable to prosecute themselves.

The question will be whether, in light of certain individuals being outside of the jurisdiction [of Bangladesh], they can be brought back to the country or whether it is more appropriate for the ICC to issue warrants for arrest, as they have done in relation to Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu

recently," he said. Cadman, however, believes the vast majority of those who should be prosecuted need to be tried in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, speaking on Cadman's role in these proceedings, ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam said, "Toby will advise and cooperate with the prosecution agency to ensure a free, fair, and impartial trial."

"He will make efforts to ensure that the trial is accepted as a legitimate judgement by the international community, and he will continue his efforts in this regard."

CA press wing debunks more misinfo

FROM PAGE 2

claimed that an attack took place on an ISKCON member in Dhaka's Uttara area. The outlets, however, did not reveal the victim's identity.

The Press Wing of CA said the news is also misleading.

Krishna Priya Nitai Das, the priest of Radharaman Temple (ISKCON Uttara), said that he was not aware of any such attack on any ISKCON devotees or

members in the area, the post cited him as saying.

According to the post, police also said they did not receive any such complaints.

According to the post, Hrishikesh Gouranga Das, a central leader of Bangladesh ISKCON, said an attempt is being made to give a communal twist to a recent incident of familial dispute in Uttara.

The youth in question is not an ISKCON member, he

added. Since the student-led uprising toppled the 15-year rule of the Sheikh Hasina-led government, the relations between India and Bangladesh remain under considerable strain.

India — Hasina's biggest international patron and the destination of her exile — has accused the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus of failing to protect minority Hindus. Dhaka

has accused New Delhi of destabilising the country by spreading fictitious stories.

The Yunus administration has acknowledged and condemned attacks on Hindus but said in many cases they were motivated by politics rather than religion.

It has accused India of exaggerating the scale of the violence and running a "propaganda campaign".

Court denies Chinmoy bail

FROM PAGE 12

and fabricated case. He also cited Chinmoy's health issues, saying his client was a priest and was suffering from diabetes, asthma and other issues.

Chinmoy's lawyer Advocate Shuvashish Sharma did not attend Chinmoy's bail hearing on December 3 due to security reasons, Rabindra told The Daily Star, adding that he had applied for permission to conduct a hearing for Chinmoy, advancing the date for the bail hearing, and requested permission to submit documents related to the case.

"Despite having no Vakalatnama, I can handle any case in any court across the country as I am a High

Court lawyer, as per the Supreme Court's directive," he mentioned, adding that other lawyers at the court "misbehaved" with him.

According to court sources, hundreds of lawyers gathered in the courtroom during the hearing, which caused chaos. The judge rejected the bail plea amid the mayhem and left the court.

Rabindra, however, admitted that he did not go to the prison to obtain the document, adding, "I will visit Chinmoy in the prison now and obtain the Vakalatnama."

Public Prosecutor Advocate Mafizul Hoque Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that the application was denied as he failed to show

12pc Bangladeshis undernourished

FROM PAGE 2

The values of four component indicators — undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting, and stunting — are used to calculate GHI scores.

Although Bangladesh has made strides in tackling hunger, the country's moderate score emphasises the continued need for all-encompassing approaches to fight malnutrition and guarantee food security.

"We cannot satisfy our hunger by bringing food from outside. We must therefore grow our own food," said Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter, highlighting the importance of food self-sufficiency.

She also stressed ensuring food safety since contaminated food is making people sick, adding, "If the food is unsafe, it is useless to be free from hunger." "Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in reducing hunger," said Pankaj Kumar, country director of Welthungerhilfe Bangladesh.

"However, nearly 12 percent of the population remains undernourished, and over 23 percent of children are stunted. To break the cycle of hunger, we need community-driven

solutions, inclusive policies, and climate resilience. We must empower youth and marginalised groups to design and govern food systems, ensuring no one is left behind."

This year's GHI report also highlighted how gender discrimination limits people's access to and control over resources, which in turn limits their ability to cope with climate shocks and food insecurity.

"Besides assessing trends and rankings in hunger by country, this year's GHI report takes a deeper look at the importance of addressing gender inequality in achieving climate resilience and zero hunger," said Manish Kumar Agrawal, country director of Concern Worldwide.

Gender justice is central to effective climate action and food systems transformation, he said, adding that achieving gender justice requires change at all scales and levels, ranging from individuals to entire systems, and from formal conditions like legal rights and material resource claims to more informal social and cultural norms that often conflict with relationships of respect and dignity.

Mob beats man

FROM PAGE 12

started beating Haider and ransacked his home. Haider died on the spot," said Nurul Alam, chairman of the local union parishad who witnessed the incident.

Contacted, Faridpur Additional Superintendent of Police Shoilen Chakma said there were some 15 to 20 policemen on the spot,

but they could not control the mob.

Later, police recovered both the bodies. The girl's body was sent to a hospital for medical tests.

Haider's body was sent to the hospital for autopsy.

Legal action will be taken upon investigation, said Md Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Faridpur Kotwali Police Station.

Political parties

FROM PAGE 1

"Thus, they [political parties] are putting more on importance to elections rather than reforms," he told Giorgio Jackson, former Chilean minister for social development, when he was asked about reforms and elections.

Giorgio was part of the British Global Partners Governance (GPG) delegation that met with Nahid to discuss the challenges faced by Bangladesh's interim government following what Nahid described as an unprecedented uprising.

During the meeting, Nahid highlighted the primary challenges confronting the interim administration.

"Maintaining law and order, addressing economic issues, advancing reform efforts based on consensus with political parties, and establishing global communication are among the most pressing concerns," he said.

Addressing the delegation, Nahid also highlighted the interim government's efforts to safeguard human rights and counter international misconceptions.

"Bangladesh has faced a long-standing human rights crisis. People could not vote, and thousands were forcibly disappeared. The people of the country were in a suffocating situation. Therefore, protecting human rights is one of the primary goals of the interim government."

"People do not understand how such a powerful dictator fell in such a short time. As a result, various conspiracies are going on both inside and outside the country. Propaganda is also being spread about minority repression. Many are trying to deny that this movement was a people's uprising," Nahid said.

When Lord Jeremy Purvis, former member of the Scottish Parliament, asked about the support required from the international community, Nahid said, "Your experience and advice on the post-uprising democratic process and the trial of genocide are crucial for us."

George Katrougalos, the UN special rapporteur on the promotion of democratic and equitable international order, meanwhile described Israel's actions in Syria as "part of a pattern".

"It is another case of the lawlessness that Israel demonstrates in the area: attacks without provocation against a sovereign state."

Iran, Saul decreed that the current strikes were "a continuation of what Israel has been doing in Syria for at least a decade".

He pointed to "many, many hundreds of preventative attacks" launched by Israeli forces into Syria over the years against Hezbollah weapons dumps and storage facilities, despite the fact that the Lebanon-based militants were not attacking Israel from Syria.

"That would be the only circumstance in which it could use self defence against Hezbollah in Syria," Saul said.

"But you can't just follow your enemy wherever they are in the world, and bomb them in some third country, which has been Israel's approach."

George Katrougalos, the UN special rapporteur on the promotion of democratic and equitable international order, meanwhile described Israel's actions in Syria as "part of a pattern".

"It is another case of the lawlessness that Israel demonstrates in the area: attacks without provocation against a sovereign state."

Israeli strikes in Syria illegal

FROM PAGE 1

weapons production sites, combat aircraft and missiles.

In addition, missile vessels struck the Syrian naval facilities of Al Bayda port and Latakia port, where 15 Syrian naval vessels were docked.

Israeli officials said the strikes across Syria were aimed at destroying strategic weapons and military infrastructure to prevent them being used by rebel groups that drove Assad from power, some of which grew from movements linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State.

"There is absolutely no basis under international law to preventively or preemptively disarm a country you don't like," said Ben Saul, UN special rapporteur on the promotion of human rights while countering terrorism.

"If that were the case, it would be a recipe for global chaos," he told reporters in Geneva, pointing out that "lots of countries have adversaries they would like to see without weapons".

"This is completely lawless," Saul, who like other

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Fast-track services at Dhaka ward offices

Delays in providing birth and other certificates unacceptable

We are worried that the process of obtaining necessary documents from the offices of Dhaka city corporations and wards hasn't improved much despite the administrative restructuring following the political changeover in August. According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, residents seeking certificates, registrations, or attestations continue to face delays and disruptions. With December already underway, this is particularly problematic for parents seeking school admission for their children, for which birth certificate is mandatory. Add to that the cumbersome process of birth registration—requiring the submission of parents' birth certificates and NID numbers which, in many cases, are either non-existent or fraught with discrepancies, adding another layer to their distress.

The ward councillor offices usually provide 14 types of services, including certifications and attestations, mosquito control, distribution of TCB products, etc. However, since the blanket removal of ward councillors on September 26, these services have been provided by regional executive officers. The problem is, Dhaka city has 129 wards, divided into 20 regions, which means each officer often has to oversee multiple wards simultaneously, stretching their capacity. For example, the workload of the 75 former ward councillors of Dhaka South City Corporation is now being handled by only 10 officers. Additionally, the lack of clear schedule about their time or place of duty, relocation of some ward offices without proper public notification, officers' lack of familiarity with local residents, and high demand for services are also complicating operations. Moreover, due to the vandalism caused during July-August protests, many ward offices lack necessary equipment, further disrupting their operations.

All these problems have combined to cause confusion and inconvenience for residents, who are having to wait for multiple days or even weeks for basic certificates and attestations that should be available within hours. The ward councillor offices under the two city corporations of Dhaka had never been known for their efficient delivery of services when there was a political government. There were many problems, while corruption allegations abounded. But to see some of these problems persist even now is disheartening, given people's expectations from the interim government. Dhaka residents deserve better and faster services.

Therefore, we urge the authorities to take necessary measures to equip all ward offices properly to meet growing demand. First, problems and inadequacies facing the "ward secretaries" and their offices must be addressed urgently. Moreover, it is essential to restore and upgrade the equipment in ward offices to enable efficient service delivery. The verification process for services like birth and death certificates should also be streamlined so that dependency on manual checks can be reduced. Finally, the city authorities must actively engage with residents to address their grievances promptly.

Take strict action to improve Dhaka's air

Govt must introduce alerts for citizens, punish air polluters

Dhaka's air quality has consistently ranked among the worst in the world for several years. While it remains unhealthy during the dry season, it improves slightly during the monsoon. However, with the onset of winter, the city's air quality has reached "unhealthy," "very unhealthy," and even "hazardous" levels on some days, according to AQAir. On Wednesday, for instance, the concentration of particulate matter or PM2.5—the primary component of air pollution—was 34 percent higher than the World Health Organization's standard, with the city being ranked second worst globally with an AQI of 249. Previously, on December 5 and 9, its air quality was classified as "hazardous," with the AQI exceeding 300.

If pollution remains at "hazardous" levels for at least three hours over three consecutive days, a health emergency is supposed to be declared. However, in Dhaka, we have never seen the authorities declare such an alert. While residents suffered from the extremely polluted air, the authorities were either inactive or misappropriated funds intended for air pollution control projects. This time, however, the environment ministry has urged people to wear masks outdoors and recommended that "sensitive individuals" avoid going outside unless absolutely necessary. But we must ask, is this enough?

For years, reports have repeatedly highlighted the health risks of polluted air, but little has been done. According to a World Bank report, air pollution accounts for about 20 percent of premature deaths in Bangladesh. Another study found that poor air quality is contributing to rising rates of premature births and low birth weight in babies born in Dhaka. Yet another study revealed that the average life expectancy in Bangladesh is being shortened by 6.8 years due to continuous exposure to polluted air. Air pollution has now become the leading cause of death in Bangladesh, surpassing deaths caused by high blood pressure, poor diet, and tobacco use, according to a global study.

While past governments failed to act, we hope the interim government will not make the same mistake. In addition to implementing a regular alert system for the public, as directed by the High Court in February, the government must take decisive action to tackle the known sources of pollution. It is crucial that they urgently enforce environmental guidelines for construction firms and brick kilns and also remove all outdated vehicles from our roads. The time to act is now.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

The Paris Agreement reached

On this day in 2015, a landmark climate change agreement was reached at a UN conference in Paris as 195 countries agreed to limit greenhouse gas emissions; the accord effectively replaced the Kyoto Protocol.



The media's role in Bangladesh 2.0



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MAHFUZ MISHU

The July-August 2024 uprising marked a historic turning point for Bangladesh. It was more than just a series of protests—it was a collective demand for a future built on accountability and transparency. Across cities and towns, the youth spearheaded this call for change. Their courage and determination resonated with millions, inspiring a vision of "Bangladesh 2.0," a new era that prioritises good governance, public interest, and systemic reform. A key expectation of this transformation was for the media to step up as a pillar of democracy.

Yet, as the movement's fervour begins to fade, troubling patterns suggest that the media's longstanding flaws remain largely unaddressed. While faces in positions of power have changed, the structures and practices that define Bangladesh's media landscape have shown remarkable resistance to change. For decades, the country's media has functioned less as a watchdog for democracy and more as a guard dog, protecting the interests of its owners rather than serving the people.

In Bangladesh, businessmen-politicians have dominated media ownership for years, turning some television channels and newspapers into tools of influence. These media houses, rather than pursuing independent journalism, have been used to shield their owners from tax scrutiny, evade customs regulations, and manoeuvre through bureaucratic hurdles. This entrenched dynamic has eroded the boundary between journalism and propaganda, leading to a loss of public trust in the media.

During the uprising, these media dynamics were laid bare for all to see. As students and citizens demanded justice on the streets, risking their lives, much of the media shied away from supporting them. Instead, some editors aligned themselves with the toppled regime, exposing where their true loyalties lay. Even when the regime fell, these outlets hesitated to question authority or challenge the narratives propagated by those in power. This reluctance underscores how deeply entrenched self-censorship and fear have become in Bangladesh's media ecosystem.

With the fall of the regime came a fleeting hope that the media would

embrace its role as a cornerstone of democracy. The expectation was clear: a free press that would amplify the voices of the people, hold power to account and operate without fear or favour. However, the early signs of this so-called "Bangladesh 2.0" have been disheartening.

The chief adviser, for instance, is yet to engage in an open press conference—a crucial forum for accountability and transparency. Instead, he has opted for carefully



PHOTO: ANWAR SOHEL

curated interviews with senior editors who refrained from posing hard questions, opting instead to glorify his leadership. This pattern reflects a continuation of the old norms, where deference to authority outweighs the public's right to know.

Moreover, the harassment of journalists and media workers affiliated with the previous regime is a stark reminder of how vulnerable the press remains. Many reporters and television workers have been arrested and accused of crimes ranging from murder to corruption. While it is undeniable that some individuals supported the fallen regime in unethical ways, the arbitrary nature of these arrests raises serious concerns.

The filing of dubious cases against journalists undermines the rule of law and fosters a culture of fear. Justice cannot be served through vengeance. Even those who were complicit in the regime's wrongdoing deserve due process, not hasty, politically

motivated accusations. When the legal system is weaponised to settle scores, it erodes trust in institutions and perpetuates a cycle of lawlessness.

Journalists already operate under immense pressure, facing job insecurity, political harassment, and limited protections. The abrupt criminalisation of media workers not only stifles dissent but also sends a chilling message to others in the profession: stay silent or risk retaliation. For a country striving to rebuild its democracy, this culture of fear is antithetical to progress. If "Bangladesh 2.0" is to succeed, justice must be pursued with fairness, transparency, and accountability—not as a tool for silencing dissent.

Beyond the immediate challenges of political interference and legal harassment, Bangladesh's media faces deeper structural problems. Most media organisations operate on

a journalist. This lack of professional accreditation and training has further eroded public trust in the media.

Reforming Bangladesh's media sector requires a multi-pronged approach. First and foremost, journalists and editors must reclaim their commitment to truth and public service. This will demand extraordinary courage, particularly in a political environment where questioning authority often invites retaliation.

However, courage alone is not enough. Structural reforms are essential to support fearless journalism. Media organisations must explore sustainable business models, such as subscription-based services or reader-funded journalism, to reduce their reliance on politically motivated advertisers. Policymakers, meanwhile, must enact legal protections for journalists, ensuring that they can report without fear of harassment or job loss.

An independent regulatory body for journalism is also imperative. Such an institution could establish accreditation standards, offer professional development programmes, and enforce ethical guidelines. By holding media practitioners accountable for their conduct, it could help restore public confidence in the press.

Despite the challenges, there are reasons for cautious optimism. The repeal of the Digital Security Act, a law that stifled free speech, is a step in the right direction. However, repealing harmful legislation is only the beginning. The true test lies in fostering a culture that values press freedom.

The media's role in this new era cannot be overstated. It must serve as a pillar of democracy, a guardian of the public interest, and a watchdog that holds power to account. This transformation will not happen overnight. It will require a collective commitment from journalists, media owners, policymakers, and civil society. This uprising envisioned a media landscape that amplifies the voices of the people, challenges authority and resists the pull of partisan agendas. Achieving this vision will demand courage, integrity, and systemic reform.

Change is never easy, and progress is rarely linear. But if the movement taught us anything, it's that the people of Bangladesh are ready to demand better. It is now up to the media to meet this moment, proving itself as a force for truth and accountability in this new chapter of the nation's history. The journey to "Bangladesh 2.0" has only just begun, and the media has a vital role to play in shaping its future.

Choking on Dhaka's signature smog



Barrister Noshin Nawal
is a member of the editorial team at *The Daily Star* and an environmental activist.

NOSHIN NAWAL

If you've been in Dhaka lately, congratulations—you're essentially chain-smoking without lifting a single cigarette to your lips. Yes, folks, our city's air quality has reached such hazardous levels that stepping outside is now equivalent to puffing on 22 cigarettes a day. This makes Dhaka the only place where non-smokers can get lung cancer while saving on lighter fluid, fighting the cost of living one Sunlite lighter at a time.

In light of these alarming developments, the environment ministry has swooped in with groundbreaking advice: "Wear masks" and "stay indoors unless absolutely necessary." A heartfelt thanks for that nugget of wisdom, but isn't this like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet wound? I mean, we're not exactly breathing air anymore; it's more of a gritty, sandpaper-like cocktail with top notes of carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide. The kind of drink even a drunk factory chimney would reject. But maybe staying indoors might aid the deadly traffic congestion if not our nasal congestion?

To point out the obvious irony of the situation here. Just a few years ago, masks were an accessory forced on us by a pandemic. We hated them. Now, thanks to our government's stellar environmental policies (read: none), masks are back, this time to save us from turning our lungs into charcoal

briquettes. I wonder what's next? Oxygen tanks as the new trend-bags? "Winter 2024 must-have: portable air purifiers. Available in matte black and Gulshan gold."

Moreover, the ministry's suggestion to "sensitive individuals" during these escalated circumstances is to avoid going out altogether! Define sensitive. Do they mean people with asthma, young children, or anyone who likes their lungs functioning? Or does it include those of us who can't handle

their boss's micro-management but still must trudge to work through this invisible soup of death?

One would think Dhaka's air would clear up after the rains. Nope. We're so committed to pollution that not even nature can wash away our sins. Construction dust, unregulated factories, and traffic fumes combine



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

politicians are busy pointing fingers instead of planting trees. It's like living in a dystopian film where the characters are blissfully unaware that the apocalypse is well underway.

Meanwhile, those trying to quit smoking might as well give up their nicotine patches. Why go cold turkey when you can get your daily fix just by breathing? Dhaka's air isn't unhealthy—it's efficient. One deep inhale, and you've got a pack of Marlboro Reds in your system without the pesky expense.

Of course, there's always someone trying to see the silver lining—or in this case, the grey smog. "But it's winter! The weather is so wonderful!" Yes, wonderful enough for the haze to settle like a toxic blanket, smothering every attempt at optimism. Try sipping tea on your balcony while pretending you're in a Jane Austen novel when your chest feels like it's auditioning for a respiratory clinic's version of Lux Superstar.

And let's not forget the *global index shame*. Dhaka consistently ranks among the most polluted cities in the world. We're number one, but not for anything we want to brag about. This isn't the Cricket World Cup, folks—it's a health crisis. Yet, here we are, at least some Dhakaites, more concerned about how to navigate the tri-state (Gulshan-Baridhara-Banani) traffic crisis than how to navigate the air that's trying to kill us.

What's the solution, you ask? Oh, it's simple—move to Mars, because fixing this mess would require actual commitment to reducing emissions, regulating construction, planting trees, and, you know, caring about the people breathing in this city. Radical ideas, I know. Until then, invest in good masks, or get a lifetime air purifier subscription for clean lungs—if such a thing even exists.

Bangladesh's governance crisis is beyond superficial solutions



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HABIB ZAFARULLAH

In the wake of the Monsoon Revolution, Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture, facing what could be its last chance to establish genuine democratic governance. In the past, while the nation's leadership touted various reform initiatives and grand visions, the fundamental issues plaguing the country's governance structure remained largely unaddressed. The current situation demands more than just superficial changes; it requires a complete overhaul of the systems that allowed corruption, inefficiency, and anti-democratic practices to flourish.

The most glaring issue is the hollow nature of Bangladesh's democratic institutions. While the country maintained a facade of democracy from 1991 to 2007, the subsequent years saw an alarming erosion of democratic norms. The judiciary struggled with political interference, the parliament became increasingly ineffective in its oversight role, and anti-corruption bodies like the ACC became mere symbolic entities. This institutional decay wasn't merely an administrative concern; it represented a fundamental betrayal of the democratic aspirations that drove Bangladesh's independence movement.

The economic cost of governance failure

The economic implications of Bangladesh's governance crisis are far-reaching and severe. Foreign direct investment, crucial for economic growth, remained well below potential due to investors' concerns about regulatory unpredictability and corruption. The World Bank estimated that corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies cost Bangladesh several percentage points in GDP growth annually—a staggering loss for a developing economy.

The banking sector provided a stark example of how poor governance translates into economic losses. Political lending, inadequate oversight, and corruption led to mounting

non-performing loans, threatening the stability of the entire financial system. The cost of recapitalising state-owned banks diverted precious resources from critical development needs like education and healthcare.

Small and medium enterprises, which should be the backbone of economic growth, faced particularly harsh conditions. Unable to navigate the complex web of bureaucratic requirements without political connections or substantial bribes, many promising businesses either failed to launch or remained trapped in the informal sector, limiting their growth potential and tax contributions to the state.

The syndicate stranglehold

The entrenchment of syndicates in Bangladesh's economy created a parasitic system that affected every aspect of daily life. In the essential commodities market, powerful cartels manipulated supply chains with devastating efficiency. During religious festivals like Ramadan, these syndicates artificially inflated prices of basic necessities, forcing millions of low-income families to reduce their food consumption.

The transportation sector provides another telling example. Bus and trucking syndicates not only controlled routes and fares but also resisted safety improvements and professional training requirements, contributing to Bangladesh's appalling road safety record. The human cost was enormous—thousands of preventable deaths annually—while the economic cost in terms of lost productivity and healthcare expenses ran into billions of takas.

Even the construction industry couldn't escape syndicate control. A small group of contractors, backed by political patrons, dominated public infrastructure projects, leading to inflated costs and substandard work quality. The collapse of several infrastructure projects highlighted how this system

compromised public safety while draining public resources.

Learning from others

While serious, Bangladesh's governance challenges are not unique. Other developing nations have successfully implemented reforms that could serve as models. Indonesia's post-Suharto reforms offer valuable lessons in transitioning from an authoritarian system

A blueprint for reform

Bangladesh needs comprehensive reforms across multiple fronts. First, the judiciary must be granted genuine independence, not just in theory but in practice. This means establishing transparent appointment processes, ensuring adequate funding, and creating effective mechanisms to prevent executive interference. The current backlog of cases—over 37.29 lakh pending cases—must be addressed through

a multi-pronged approach: establishing an independent competition commission with real enforcement powers; creating transparent market monitoring systems for essential commodities; implementing strict penalties for price manipulation and anti-competitive practices; developing alternative supply chains to reduce market concentration; and protecting whistleblowers who expose cartel activities.

Fifth, strengthening local governance requires increased fiscal decentralisation and direct election of local officials. There is no alternative to local democratic governance in the true sense of the term. Deployed officials from the centre must be accountable to the elected leadership. Both capacity building for local administration and community participation in development planning are critical for development at the grassroots.

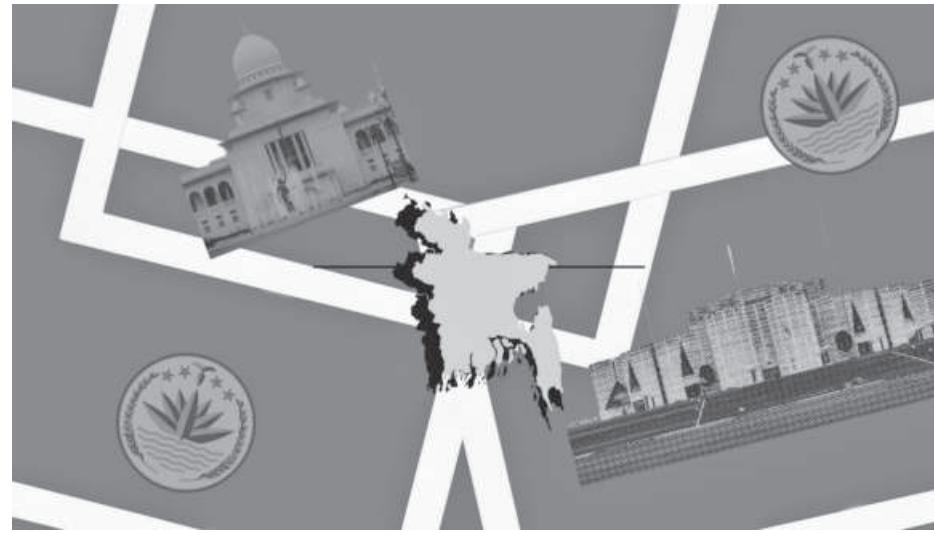
The road ahead

The current global landscape, characterised by uncertainty and rapid transformation, makes these reforms even more urgent. Bangladesh cannot afford to continue with business as usual if it hopes to achieve sustainable development and maintain its economic progress.

The recent mass uprising suggests that citizens are increasingly unwilling to accept the status quo. However, turning this popular dissatisfaction into meaningful change will require more than just street protests. It demands sustained pressure for reform, coupled with clear alternatives to current governance practices.

Success will require building broad coalitions for reform, including business leaders who understand that poor governance ultimately threatens their interests, civil society organisations that can mobilise public support, and reform-minded government officials.

The choice facing Bangladesh is stark: either embrace fundamental reform now or risk deeper instability in the future. The country's leadership must recognise that genuine democratic consolidation, while potentially threatening current power structures, is essential for long-term stability and development. The time for half-measures and symbolic reforms has passed. Bangladesh needs decisive action to address its governance crisis before it's too late.



FILE VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

to a more democratic governance structure. The country's success in strengthening its anti-corruption commission, Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK), demonstrates the ability to achieve institutional reform despite political resistance.

Georgia's dramatic transformation of its civil service and reduction in petty corruption provides another instructive example. Through comprehensive reform of police services and government bureaucracy, Georgia significantly improved its business environment and public service delivery within a relatively short period.

Even neighbouring India, despite its challenges, offers useful lessons in maintaining democratic institutions and an independent judiciary. The Indian Supreme Court's activism in governance issues and the election commission's relative independence provide models for institutional autonomy.

modernisation of court procedures and increased judicial capacity.

Second, anti-corruption efforts need to move beyond symbolism. The ACC should be restructured as a truly independent body with robust investigative powers and the authority to prosecute corruption at all levels, including the highest echelons of power. This requires not only legislative changes but also guaranteed budget allocations and protection for ACC officials from political interference.

Third, the civil service needs comprehensive reform focusing on merit-based recruitment and promotion, professional training, and clear accountability mechanisms. This must be accompanied by measures to insulate the bureaucracy from political interference while ensuring its responsiveness to public needs. Digital systems for government services should be expanded to reduce opportunities for corruption and improve efficiency.

Fourth, breaking syndicate control requires

SWAp's effectiveness for Bangladesh's health sector

UHC Forum is a coalition of health sector practitioners, advocates and academics dedicated to a strategic push on the universal health coverage (UHC) agenda. UHC Forum Health Debates is one of its flagship activities carried out in partnership with the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC). This op-ed is derived from the health debate on the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) modality adopted for health sector planning and implementation since 1998.



Dr Abu Jamil Faisel
is a public health expert.

ABU JAMIL FAISEL

The Sector Wide Approach (SWAp), introduced in Bangladesh in the late 1990s, sought to improve the health sector by uniting the efforts of government, donors, and NGOs under a unified national plan. The strategy proved effective in several areas—enhancing coordination, reducing duplication and ensuring more efficient use of resources. It fostered a government-led approach, empowering the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) to take ownership of health programmes and make decisions that align with national priorities. The pooling of funds from various donors simplified financial management and allowed for a more harmonised implementation of health services. Moreover, SWAp contributed to capacity building by strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing local expertise, and promoting evidence-based policymaking. However, SWAp also faced substantial challenges. Key stakeholders, such as the private sector and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, were excluded from planning processes, limiting its scope and effectiveness. Centralised decision-making created bureaucratic delays, slowing programme implementation. Additionally, larger donors, such as the World Bank, exerted disproportionate influence, at times, prioritising global agendas over local needs. The risk of mismanagement also grew as pooled funding lacked adequate oversight and accountability mechanisms.

To address these shortcomings, I advocate transitioning to a new model, termed Sector-Wide Inclusive Planning and Evaluation (SWIPE) to integrate private sector actors, and decentralised planning and budgeting to the district level.



Hossain Zillur Rahman
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HOSSAIN ZILLUR RAHMAN

SWAp has played a pivotal role in shaping Bangladesh's health sector, improving coordination, ownership, and resource management. However, its limitations, including rigidity, donor dependency, and exclusion of key stakeholders, necessitate a reimagined approach.

Hybrid models, public-private partnerships, national health insurance schemes, and

decentralised planning offer pathways to address these challenges. As Bangladesh works toward achieving universal health coverage and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, a collaborative, inclusive, and forward-looking strategy will be essential.

Health system reform requires technical solutions, strong political will, and a commitment to equity and sustainability. While reform is essential, political will and strategic intent are critical in driving meaningful health sector reform. Bangladesh's health system requires a clear focus on necessary and actionable reforms. The challenge lies in crafting precise recommendations and mobilising the political leadership needed to implement them effectively. Without sharp, actionable strategies, opportunities for impactful reform may be missed. It is essential to foster collaborative efforts across stakeholders to address systemic gaps and meet the health aspirations of the population.



Dr Md Aminul Hasan
is a health system expert.

MD AMINUL HASAN

Exploring alternatives to SWAp in Bangladesh's health sector is a pressing discussion, given the challenges faced in achieving sustainable programme outcomes. One of the critical considerations is whether it is time to pivot back to the original revenue-based system or implement a hybrid model that leverages the strengths of both

approaches. The revenue-based system, rooted in direct budget allocations, could potentially offer more flexibility and control for domestic health programme funding. Ensuring financial sustainability remains a key focus as stakeholders debate these alternatives. The path forward must address how Bangladesh can maintain or enhance programme effectiveness without depending heavily on SWAp, which, while comprehensive, often leads to dependency on external funding and complex coordination issues.

A well-articulated roadmap is essential for transitioning from SWAp to a new or modified system that prioritises local ownership and resilience. The government must lead with robust policy frameworks, while development partners can assist with technical expertise, transitional funding and access to global best practices.



Dr Abul Kalam Azad
is former director general of health services.

ABUL KALAM AZAD

There is an urgent need for a comprehensive overhaul of Bangladesh's health system. The existing dual-budget structure, which separates operating and development budgets, lacks coherence and prevents effective symbiosis between routine operational costs (staff salaries, fuel and utilities, repair and maintenance, travel, etc), and development costs for new infrastructure development and health service improvements.

The Health Population and Nutrition Sector Program (HPNSP) under SWAp brought advantages such as faster decision-making, delegation of authority to health managers, health workforce capacity building, improved coordination, monitoring and supervision. However, critical issues remain unresolved. Universal health coverage, elimination of healthcare discrimination, substantial improvements in healthcare quality, avoidance of verticalisation in healthcare delivery, and the reduction of out-of-pocket expenses continue to elude the system.

The fragmented and verticalised delivery of healthcare services limits integration and patient-centred care. Bangladesh's age-old health systems have many inherent defects. The HPNSP or any similar prescription will not remedy it. Bangladesh urgently needs a serious and massive overhaul of its health systems in overall structure and processes to enable it effectively meeting the population's health needs through integrated primary healthcare, sustainable universal health coverage, health sustainable development goals (SDGs), and client satisfaction.



Universal Health Coverage Day 2024

Bangladesh Towards Achieving Universal Health Coverage

Mean Age: 72.3 years
Female: 73.8 years
Male: 70.8 years

The number of pregnant female beneficiaries under demand-side financing has increased threefold between 2006 and 2023

Recognized as 1st country to eliminate Visceral Leishmaniasis and 18th country to eliminate Filariasis

Health expenditure in public hospitals has increased from 40% to 48% between 2015 to 2020



UHC Service Coverage Index of Essential Health Services						
Year	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
2023	52	63	45	67	54	60
2019	50	64	44	66	50	60
2015	45	57	40	61	47	53
2010	37	49	33	55	37	44

Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal and Child health						
Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
Demand for Family Planning satisfied by modern method (%)	74	73	49	74	62	85
% receiving all components of antenatal care	40.5	51	51	99	80.5	60.6
Child immunization coverage (DPT3) (%)	98	91	86	99	94	99
Treatment sought for acute respiratory tract infection (<5 years) (%)	55	78	71	52	65	74
Under 5 mortality rate (per 1000 live births) (%)	32.7	29.1	61	6.5	27.3	23.7

Non-communicable diseases						
Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
Prevalence of normal fasting blood sugar level (%)	51	49	73	90	41	44
Prevalence of normal blood pressure (%)	64	72	75	70	100	93
Tobacco non use (%)	50	61	71	69	57	65



Communicable Diseases						
Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
Tuberculosis (effective) treatment coverage (%)	80	85	69	65	54	65
HIV antiretroviral therapy (%)	75	70	15	71	82	55
Improve sanitation facilities (%)	70	78	71	95	80	78

Health Expenditure (except capital, education and training)						
Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
Out of pocket expenditure (%)	74	52	47	48.8	54.2	15.4
Per capita health expenditure (US\$)	50	61.6	41	163	57.7	143.1
Per capita Government expenditure on health (US\$)	9	21.8	18.8	75.3	17.4	105.1

Global Gender Gap						
Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
Gender based violence (GBV) prevalence ((%)	53.3	28.7	85	16.6	25	26.5
Birth attended by SBAs (%)	59	89.4	68	99.5	77.2	96.3
Total fertility rate (%)	2	2.05	3.56	2	2.06	1.43

Service Delivery Capacity, Accessibility, Health Security						
Indicators	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Srilanka	Nepal	Bhutan
Hospital Bed Density per 10,000 population	9	16	6	40	4	22
Doctors per 10,000 population	7.29	7.27	10.84	12.12	8.46	8.84
Health Security: IHR Score	71.3	86	50.7	70.7	47.6	63.9



T20s impact on ODIs hurting Tigers?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

One thing that has been evident from the 2023 ODI World Cup is that when playing on flat decks, Bangladesh often fail to approach the game in a manner that could help them get big runs in their favourite format.

A recurring pattern was seen in the Tigers' ongoing ODI series against hosts West Indies – a few batters managed to get some runs but the burst of acceleration needed in modern cricket was amiss, seeing the team settle for middling scores.

Even while playing on good batting surfaces, Bangladesh batters wear the same look of helplessness. They lose wickets in pairs, as they did in the second ODI against the Windies on Wednesday. Having failed to defend 294 in the first game, they looked out of sorts defending an even lower total of 227 runs in the second ODI yesterday.

It is as if the Tigers' grasp on their favourite format is slipping in spite of great conditions for batting. This year they have played just eight ODIs, losing five – and it was the batting that let the Tigers down on most occasions.

Bangladesh won 2-1 against Sri Lanka in March, their only ODI series win this year. In both the games that Bangladesh won, scores they needed to chase were around the 230-240 mark.

However, exciting shot-making in T20s has made it so that the ODI batting standard has also gone up a few gears.

Over the last decade, Bangladesh found a formula they were comfortable with. They targeted scores around 250 – the norm on low and slow tracks such as those in Mirpur. The winning formula – most witnessed during Chandika Hathurusingha's first stint – is that the opposition batters generally found it difficult to time their shots on such surfaces.

But with T20s dominating the landscape of white-ball cricket for a considerable period now, batters nowadays do not always wait for the last 10 overs or the first Powerplay to score in bulk in ODIs – case in point was how Sherfane Rutherford made up for dots played in the initial overs with a flurry of boundaries to help the Windies assail the 295-run target with 14 balls to spare in the first ODI against Bangladesh.

The Tigers' only problem is not the lack of explosive innings. Even when Soumya Sarkar made 169 against New Zealand in Nelson last year, none of the other batters played around this innings – something that the Windies did in the first ODI.

Another such instance was when Towhid Hridoy scored an unbeaten 96 on a good surface in Chattogram in March this year, but the Tigers' total remained in and around their ODI threshold as they made 286 in a game that they eventually lost by three wickets. Soumya and Najmul Hossain Shanto got runs in that match but were not able to stick around for long.

In those matches, the set batter could not go for acceleration at opportune moments – another problem for Bangladesh alongside the lack of explosiveness in the batting order.

While other top cricketing nations have already adapted to the modern style of cricket, Bangladesh seem to be way beyond in terms of understanding the new pattern of cricket that the modern era demands – a sign that does not augur well for the Tigers with the upcoming Champions Trophy 2025 just over a month away.



Youngsters shone bright on the opening day of the National Cricket League T20 as top-order batters Jishan Alam and [Inset] Ariful Islam, both aged 20, set the stage aight at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Jishan smacked 10 maxims and four boundaries for a blistering 53-ball 100 to guide Sylhet to 205-8 but it was trumped by Ariful's 46-ball 94, laced with eight sixes and six fours, which led Dhaka to a six-wicket victory. In one of the other three matches between Chattogram and Rangpur, 35-year-old Tamim Iqbal, already retired from international T20s, scored a 10-ball 13 for Chattogram, who lost by five wickets after posting 132 in 20 overs.

PHOTO: BCB

NCL T20 off to a blockbuster start

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Cricket League T20 couldn't have started in a better way as Shuvagata Hom's last-ball six ensured Dhaka Division a thrilling six-wicket win over Sylhet Division in the opening match at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The match witnessed some extraordinary power-hitting display by Sylhet's Jishan Alam and Dhaka's Ariful Islam – the former U-19 teammates who turned rivals for this tournament, striking 18 sixes combined, with the former also scoring the maiden T20 century of the competition. Jishan's effort, though, was outshone by Ariful's swashbuckling 46-ball 94, featuring six fours and eight sixes.

The highlight of Jishan's innings, which featured four fours and 10 sixes, was the 32 runs he took of the 14th over of the innings, smashing off-spinner Arafat Sunny Jr for five successive sixes following a double. The youngster reached his maiden T20 hundred off just 52 balls – joint third quickest for a Bangladeshi batter in this format – helping Sylhet post 205-4 after being sent into bat first.

Ariful's innings gave Dhaka the momentum in the massive chase but it was the unbroken 63-run stand for the fifth wicket between Shuvagata (31 off 18) and Mahidul Islam Ankon (30 off 11) and the former's hitting Sylhet pacer Tofael Ahmed for a six over long off when they required five runs off the final delivery, sealing Dhaka a cliffhanger.

The day's second game at this venue witnessed Tamim Iqbal's re-

turn to competitive cricket after a seven months but the southpaw could not make the occasion memorable as the Chattogram Division opener could only score 13 off 10 balls during their five-wicket defeat to Rangpur Division.

Rangpur pacer Mukidul Islam

Gazi made an unbeaten 32-ball 40 but those efforts went in vain as Barishal could only manage 161 for eight, losing the contest by 31 runs. Left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan of Dhaka Metro finished with 3-26.

Meanwhile, the day's last game witnessed Rajshahi winning



Mugdho was wrecker-in-chief with a 3-17 while Alauddin Babu took 2-9 to help their side limit Chattogram to 132-9 before Tanbir Hayder's 37-ball 41 guided Rangpur home with 19 balls to spare.

Meanwhile, Sylhet Outer Stadium produced high scores in both games on the opening day, with Dhaka Metro and Rajshahi Division coming out on top against Barishal Division and Khulna Division respectively.

In the morning contest, riding on fifties from Mohammad Naim (65 off 35) and Imranuzzaman (53 off 33), who also formed a 119-run stand for the opening wicket, Dhaka Metro posted 192 for four in 20 overs.

Fazle Mahmud then struck 77 off 52 balls while skipper Sohag

against Khulna by 11 runs in D/L method after the last few overs of the contest could not take place due to bad light.

Rajshahi were cruising to victory when the game stopped after 17.2 overs as opener Habibur Rahman Sohan's 38 ball 66 pushed them to 153-3 while chasing 173 runs.

Earlier, Azizul Hakim Tamim, who recently led the U-19 side to Asia Cup triumph in the UAE and was playing his first T20 game, struck a blistering 31-ball 53 runs while Nurul Hasan Sohan (37) and Mritunjay Chowdhury (35 not out) made decent contributions to guide Khulna to 172-7 after electing to bat first.

The second round matches will take place today.

19 countries to take part in int'l badminton in Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Since the political changeover on August 5, a number of international sporting events were moved away from Bangladesh due to the evolving situation. But the country's capital, Dhaka, is now set to host two badminton tournaments this month.

More than 200 shuttlers from 19 countries are supposed to take part in two separate tournaments – Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Junior International Series beginning on December 13 and Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Challenge starting on December 17 – at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium.

Although the junior competition featuring US\$5000-prize money will be contested by only three countries including the hosts, 19 countries – India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Maldives, Thailand, Myanmar, Canada, England, Ukraine, Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Uganda, and Bangladesh – will fight for the US\$ 15000 senior tournament. Each tournament will feature five events – boys' and girls' singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

Around 55 shuttlers from Bangladesh will compete in the junior meet while 61 shuttlers from the host country will participate in the senior event.

"We are expecting that the shuttlers will produce some good results in both tournaments as we won some medals in junior tournaments in the past," Bangladesh Badminton Federation's acting president Qurrun Nahar Dana said at a press conference at the BOA auditorium yesterday.

Tournament director and executive member Taptun Nasrin said that they have taken all preparations to make both tournaments successful, including ensuring security for the players.

Elina Sultana and Mohammad Javed, former national women's and men's champions respectively, have been given the responsibility to guide the female and male shuttlers of Bangladesh.



BFF dissolves 29 elected DFA bodies

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday dissolved 29 elected bodies of district and divisional football associations (DFAs), citing unavailability and resignation of association officials as well as inactivity of the said associations.

The decision was taken at the second meeting of the BFF executive committee after a four-member DFA monitoring committee recommended to form ad-hoc committees in those associations. The DFA monitoring committee was also dissolved at the meeting.

BFF's media committee chairman Amirul Islam Babu said after the meeting that the ad-hoc committees will be formed immediately and that they will hold elections within 90 days.

Most of the dissolved bodies, formed during the regime of Kazi Salahuddin, casted their votes on BFF October 20 elections as well as tie-breaking elections on November 30.

Babu also informed that the executive committee decided to increase fees for the referees to Tk 5000 from Tk 4000.



Saudi Arabia confirmed as 2034 World Cup host

AGENCIES

Saudi Arabia will host the men's football World Cup in 2034 while the 2030 edition will be held in Spain, Portugal and Morocco, with one-off matches in three South American countries, FIFA confirmed on Wednesday.

The decision was announced by FIFA President Gianni Infantino following a virtual extraordinary Congress. The 2030 and 2034 World Cups each had only a single bid and both were confirmed by acclamation.

However, Amnesty International and 20 other organisations said on Wednesday that FIFA's decision to award the 2034 World Cup to Saudi Arabia "puts many lives at risk" due to its "well-known and severe risks to residents, migrant workers and visiting fans alike".

The 2030 World Cup will take place across three continents and six nations.

Saudi Arabia will become the second nation from the Middle East to host the quadrennial tournament in 2034, 12 years after neighbours Qatar staged the 2022 edition.

Mbappe hits 50 as Real revive UCL defence

Real Madrid got their Champions League title defence back up and running on Tuesday after coming through a tough battle to win 3-2 at Atalanta. Goals from Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham were just enough for Madrid to triumph in a red-hot atmosphere in Bergamo and move up to 18th place, on nine points from six matches. In Spain, Mohamed Salah helped maintain Liverpool's perfect record in Europe. Salah's 63rd-minute penalty proved decisive against dogged debutants Girona to extend the Premier League leaders' record to six wins in as many matches.

Kylian Mbappe netted his 50th Champions League goal when he skillfully skipped past a defender and slotted home from inside the box in the 10th minute to give Real Madrid the lead against Atalanta yesterday.

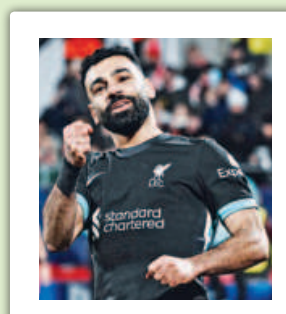
Mbappe reached the milestone at the age of 25 years and 356 days, making him the second-youngest player to this landmark after Lionel Messi, who reached a half-century of Champions League goals at just 24 years and 284 days in 2012.

Mbappe got his 50th Champions League goal in 79 appearances, becoming the fourth-quickest player to achieve this landmark. Only Ruud van Nistelrooy (62 matches), Messi (66 matches), and Robert Lewandowski (77 matches) have accomplished the feat faster.

Mbappe's goal was also the first time that Real Madrid managed to find the back of the net in an away Champions League game.

This was the first defeat in this year's Champions League for Atalanta, who sit ninth with 11 points from six matches. They had won three and drawn two other matches.

Mohamed Salah has 16 goals in 22 games in all competitions, and seven in his past six this season. It means he has the joint-most goals and assists in Europe's top five leagues this season (28 - level with Frankfurt's Omar Marmoush).



Workers of 12 RMG factories protest for 15pc increment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Workers of at least 12 garment factories in the Ashulia area of Savar demonstrated yesterday demanding 15 percent annual increment instead of the government proposed 9 percent.

Owners of the 12 factories declared a general holiday for today, said Mohammad Mominul Islam Bhuiyan, superintendent of Ashulia Industrial Police-1.

Workers of Ha-Meem Group, Sharmin Group, Medlar, Next Collection, Al Muslim, Setara Group and six other factories left their workplaces in the morning yesterday and demonstrated.

Police said the protests were peaceful and there was no chaos.

An annual increment and wage review committee on Monday recommended that the government raise the minimum wage of garment workers by 9 percent.

Over 99 percent of factories under the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) have implemented the previous minimum wage, as promised by the factory owners, according to a report from the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

In late November last year, the minimum wage board finalised Tk 12,500 as the minimum monthly salary.



An official X handle of India's defence ministry published this photo of detained Bangladeshi fishermen on Tuesday night. The Indian Coast Guard detained dozens of Bangladeshis from two trawlers on Monday on charges of illegally fishing in Indian waters.

PHOTO: PRO DEFENCE KOLKATA/X

Court denies Chinmoy bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday rejected the anticipatory bail appeal filed for ex-ISKCON leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari in a sedition case filed in connection with disrespecting the national flag of Bangladesh.

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Saiful Islam rejected the order after a lawyer from Dhaka placed the application, saying that the lawyer did not have a Vakalatnama to represent Chinmoy in court.

A Vakalatnama is a document that authorises a lawyer to act on behalf of his/her client.

On October 31, a BNP leader filed a case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing Chinmoy and 18 others of disrespecting the national flag in Chattogram's New Market area during a rally of the Hindu community on October 25. The BNP leader was later expelled from the party for breaching rules and regulations.

Chinmoy was arrested in Dhaka on November 25 and sent to jail the following day. Rajesh Chowdhury and Hridoy Das have also been arrested in the case.

The bail hearing for Rajesh and Hridoy was scheduled yesterday.

Rabindra Gosh, a senior high court lawyer, placed multiple applications to the metropolitan session judge court, saying his client was arrested in a false

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REGIONAL RESISTANCE

PART 8

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.

Aftab Bahini of Kurigram

AHMAD ISTIAK

The Aftab Bahini, led by Aftab Ali, a subedar in the 3rd East Bengal Regiment, was a formidable regional force that operated along the Brahmaputra and Teesta rivers during the 1971 war.

The force's influence extended from Dewanganj in Jamalpur to Ghughumarir Char in northern Kurigram near the Indian border.

The Aftab Bahini freedom fighters engaged in over 30 battles against the Pakistani forces and successfully defended the 600 square-mile "Rowmari Muktanchal" (Liberated Zone). These battles resulted in significant casualties among Pakistani soldiers and Razakars.

Colonel Abu Taher, Bir Uttam, commander of sector II, acknowledged Aftab's crucial role in defending Rowmari and his exceptional bravery in the book "Swadhinota Juddho: Dolil Potro (Volume 10)."

Abu Taher writes that when he briefed Aftab about the strategic importance of defending the Rowmari liberated zone, Aftab resolutely declared, "Sir, the Pakistanis will only enter Rowmari over my dead body."

Despite being shot four times on the battlefield, Aftab's unwavering courage and determination remained steadfast. His bravery, along with that of his forces, continues to inspire the people of Kurigram and Gaibandha to this day.

In May of this year, The Daily Star spoke to over 40 freedom fighters of Aftab Bahini during a visit to Kurigram and Gaibandha.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Noor Hossain, an Aftab Bahini freedom fighter, said, "Aftab was a man of unwavering courage and strong moral character. He had the ability to inspire and motivate us all."

In recognition of his heroic contributions to the war, the Bangladesh government honoured Aftab with the titles of Bir Uttam (the second highest gallantry award) and Bir Pratik (the fourth-highest gallantry award).

Many Aftab Bahini fighters were also awarded the titles of Bir Uttam and Bir Pratik.

Some of the notable operations conducted by Aftab Bahini between July and October include the Durgapur bridge operation and attacks on the Kamarjani police outpost and the Sundarganj Police Station in Gaibandha; and the capture of the Kalir Haat jute warehouse, the battle of Ulipur, and the Chilmari raid in Kurigram.

FORMATION, TRAINING

According to "Bangladesher Swadhinota



Juddho - Sector Bhattik Itihas (Sector II), in early March, Aftab Ali was serving in the Delta Company of the 3rd East Bengal Regiment, headquartered in Saidpur Cantonment.

Following the massacre of March 25, the Bangalee soldiers of Delta Company, deployed in Palashbari of Gaibandha, revolted and put up resistance against the Pakistani authorities.

By mid-April, a platoon of Delta Company relocated to Rowmari in Kurigram across the Brahmaputra and Teesta rivers to mobilise and train freedom fighters.

"From March, freedom fighters began training at Rowmari CG Zaman High School under the leadership of Constituent Assembly member Nurul Islam Papu Miya," freedom fighter Azizar Rahman told this newspaper.

He added that the initial progress was slow, but the arrival of the Delta Company platoon invigorated the freedom fighters.

Here, the Aftab Bahini was formed, and trained youths began joining the force.

"Initially, Aftab Bahini trained at the Rowmari High School ground. However, due to security concerns, Aftab shifted the force headquarters to the house of Jadurchar union chairman Matiur Rahman. A training camp was also set up at the nearby Jadurchar High School," said another freedom fighter Lutfor Rahman.

In early May, the main training

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STALLED PASSPORT RENEWAL

Migrants in KSA, Malaysia to get MRPs

Says law adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to start issuing machine-readable passports on December 15 to Bangladeshi migrant workers, who are facing uncertainty abroad over renewing their passports.

The decision was taken at a meeting between foreign and home ministries, along with representatives from the immigration departments, on Tuesday, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Adviser Asif Nazrul said yesterday.

During a Facebook live session, Asif assured that all applicants would receive their passports within three to four weeks after the distribution begins.

Priority will be given to expatriates in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, followed by those in other high-demand regions, he added.

Asif blamed the previous government's handling of the passport issuance process for the backlog.

"The problem originated under the previous fascist regime when an attempt was made to award the task to a company through illegal means. This



Asif Nazrul

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Mob beats man to death for 'rape, murder'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Faridpur

A man was beaten to death by a mob in the presence of police allegedly for killing a seven-year-old girl after raping in Faridpur yesterday.

Haider Mollah, 55, was a resident of Nashipur village under Faridpur Sadar upazila.

Locals said Tahiya, daughter of Zia Mollah of the same village, went missing on Tuesday afternoon. Her family members filed a complaint the same night.

Villagers suspected that Haider might have been involved in the incident as he had served time around 30 years ago on rape charges, said locals.

A police team with the help of villagers raided Haider's home and found the body wrapped up in a sack yesterday evening.

"Seeing this, hundreds of villagers became furious,

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EXTRADITION OF AL LEADERS

Death penalty provision has to be reconsidered

Says special adviser to ICT's chief prosecutor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has to rethink the death penalty if authorities want international support in trying members of the previous regime, said Toby Cadman, special adviser to the chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT).

"For a number of states, particularly European states, there is a refusal to extradite or to provide evidence about proceedings [to countries] where the death penalty is maintained," Cadman told journalists at a press briefing yesterday.

"That will have to be a discussion that the government will need to engage in about whether it is appropriate to maintain the death penalty in these proceedings.

"These proceedings will require the full assistance and support of the international community. I have discussed this with the United Nations, the UK and US embassies, and the European Union," said Cadman.

Describing the aim of this new chapter in the country's history as "towards justice, not retribution or revenge", the legal expert said that while the ICT has made significant improvements to ensure

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Toby Cadman



Wearing handcuffs, Chuadanga Municipal Chhatra League leader Jahangir Hossain, out of jail on parole for four hours, carries the body of his mother towards a graveyard on Tuesday afternoon. Chuadanga police allowed Jahangir, who has been in jail since November 12 in a case filed on August 5, to attend the funeral but did not uncliff him.

PHOTO: ANIS MONDOL