



ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES 'Hasina herself was involved'

Says commission's preliminary report to CA

ZYMA ISLAM

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her defence adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, and senior police officers Monirul Islam and Md Harun-Or-Rashid were all involved in enforced disappearances.

Commission for inquiry into enforced disappearances found prima facie evidence of their involvement, said a preliminary report submitted to the chief adviser yesterday.

The commission recommends disbanding Rab because of its inalienable involvement in enforced disappearances.

It found a "systematic design" that facilitated incidents of enforced disappearances go undetected, chairman of the commission Justice (ret'd) Mainul Islam Chowdhury said while submitting the report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.



A homeless individual, wrapped in a hoodie and light quilts, spent his night at the foot of the Raju sculpture (not in picture) on the Dhaka University premises amid a cold spell that has gripped the country since Friday. The photo was taken around 7:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Remembering the dark day in solemnity

JCD, BSU hold exhibitions at DU

MASHFIQ MIZAN

"Sonar Banglay Manob Itihaser Nrishongshotomo Hottakando" (The most brutal massacre in human history of Bengal), read the lead headline in an issue of The Daily Ittefaq published in December 1971.



The article's intro roughly translates to: "The Daily Ittefaq announces with profound grief that almost all of the intellectuals, journalists, professors, writers, and doctors who were abducted by the local collaborators of the Pakistani army, far right Jamaat-e-Islami's militia forces -- Razakars, Al Badr, and Al Shams -- just days before their fall, have been killed at the hands of these murderers."

A clipping of this chilling news piece was one of several on display at one of two exhibitions that were launched yesterday at Dhaka University's TSC area.

Jaiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Students' Union (BSU) organised the two exhibitions, marking the Martyred Intellectuals' Day.

The three-day programme features relics from one of the nation's darkest chapters.

There was another newspaper clipping with the headline "Intellectuals murdered in cold blood" that also recounted the targeted killing of Bangladesh's brightest minds on December 14, 1971.

A clipping from an article in the Daily Sangram from 1971 titled "Momen Shahhi,"

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For our extended coverage of Martyred Intellectuals' Day SEE PAGE 3

- 27pc victims in 758 complaints scrutinised never returned
Commission for amending or repealing Anti-Terrorism Act 2009
It urges dropping death penalty from act
Calls for new law criminalising enforced disappearances
Finds another secret detention centre, bringing total to 9

ACC, NBR, CID teams to probe 10 corporate giants

BB-led taskforce aims to bring back money they siphoned off

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A government taskforce will investigate the country's 10 major business groups' alleged money laundering and other misdeeds.

For the probe, 10 separate inter-agency teams will be formed within this week and necessary directives have already been issued to the offices concerned, officials said.

The teams will comprise members of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the Criminal Investigation Department of Police (CID), they said.

The move comes as the

interim government intensifies its efforts to recover money allegedly laundered by the corporate giants that thrived under the Awami League rule.

A government-commissioned white paper committee on the economy estimated that \$234 billion was siphoned off from Bangladesh between 2009 and 2023.

The 10 business groups are: S Alam Group, Beximco Group, Summit Group, Bashundhara Group, Gemcon Group, Orion Group, Nabil Group, Nassa Group, Sikder Group, and Aramit Group.

Last month, the government formed an

MARTIAL LAW FIASCO South Korea's President Yoon impeached

AFP, Seoul

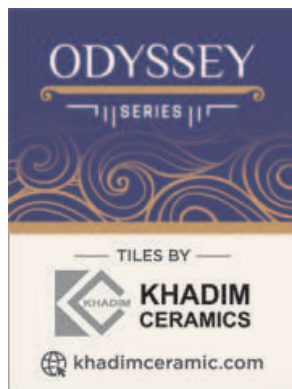
South Korean lawmakers yesterday impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his failed martial law bid, with the opposition declaring a "victory of the people".

The vote capped more than a week of intense political drama in the democratic South following Yoon's failed attempt to impose martial law on December 3.

Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of the capital Seoul in rival rallies for and against Yoon yesterday.



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SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: AHMAD ISTIAK

Recent photo of Hemanandakathi in Jhalakathi. Here, 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed as freedom fighters of the Purbo Banglar Jatiya Mukti Bahini, led by Siraj Sikder, attacked an enemy vessel on May 7, 1971.

REGIONAL RESISTANCE

PART 10 (LAST PART)

During the 1971 Liberation War, a number of regional forces emerged across Bangladesh. Research suggests that dozens of such forces actively participated in the war. Just as the freedom fighters trained under the sub-sectors and the Bengal Regiment fought valiantly, these regional forces also displayed immense courage in battles against the Pakistani forces. In this month of victory, we bring you the stories of some of these heroic forces.

PURBO BANGLAR JATIYA MUKTI BAHINI

AHMAD ISTIAK

The floating guava markets in the southern districts of Jhalakathi, Barishal and Pirojpur are so picturesque that they have in recent years started drawing tourists, along with the traders. During the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, however, the densely planted trees in the guava orchards on both sides of the roads and canals in the region became an impenetrable base for Purbo Banglar Jatiya Mukti Bahini, a local force of freedom fighters.

Under the leadership of revolutionary communist leader Sirajul Huq Sikder, better known as Siraj Sikder, the freedom fighters of the force liberated



the vast region in the early phase of the war, terrorising the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators.

In October this year, The Daily Star spoke to over 10 freedom fighters of the force during a visit to Jhalakathi, Barishal, and Pirojpur.

Siraj, then a leftist student leader, built the Purbo Bangla Sramik Andolan, a workers' movement, in 1968, according to the books "Lal Santras" by Mohiuddin Ahmed, and "Siraj Sikder O Purbo Banglar Sorbohara Party" by Munir Morshed.

The Siraj-led group published a pamphlet titled "Swadhin Purbo Bangla Kayem Korun" on January 8, 1971. After the war had begun, Siraj left Dhaka for the Barishal region and took shelter at Runsi village in Jhalakathi's Kirtipasha on April 18, considering

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WE MOURN Mr. Mohammad Hanif (1948-2024)



We express our deepest compassion on the passing of Mr. Mohammad Hanif, Vice Chairman of Dhaka Bank PLC.

Mr. Mohammad Hanif made remarkable contributions towards business and banking in Bangladesh. A seasoned industrialist, his illustrious career spanned over 54 years. He was the Managing Director of Hanif Steels Ltd., Hanif Spinning Mills Ltd., and National Foundry & Engineering Works (Pvt.) Ltd.

Mr. Hanif served as a Sponsor Director and one of the longest-serving Board Members of Dhaka Bank.

Dhaka Bank Family extends heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family & prays for strength to endure this irreparable loss.

May Almighty Allah grant him Jannatul Firdaus and keep his departed soul in eternal peace.





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People throughout the country observed Martyred Intellectuals' Day yesterday. Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus visited the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial in Mirpur to honour the fallen heroes. Similarly, BNP and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad also laid wreaths at the same spot, paying tribute to those killed by the Pakistani army and its collaborators in 1971.

PHOTO: PID, STAR

## HEALTH REFORM Priorities primary healthcare: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Primary healthcare must be placed at the centre of health sector reforms and health insurance should be introduced in a way that it ensures healthcare for all, said policymakers and health professionals at an event yesterday.

Strengthening secondary and emergency healthcare systems is equally critical, they said during a national dialogue, titled "Reform Pathways for the Health Sector", organised by the UHC Forum in collaboration with BRAC at the BRAC Centre Auditorium, marking Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day 2024.

Speakers urged the government to grant hospitals financial autonomy to manage resources, including manpower, salaries, and allowances.

Md Saidur Rahman, Secretary of the Health Services Division, highlighted the role of collaboration, saying, "We must recognise the valuable contributions of NGOs and the private sector and support their efforts so we can all work cohesively under a unified framework."

Former Director General of the Directorate General of Health Services Dr Abul Kalam Azad said, "Healthcare in Bangladesh suffers from inequitable access and inadequate service delivery, leaving providers and patients dissatisfied. To address this, UHC must be prioritised."

He also stressed the need for comprehensive reforms across primary, referral, intermediary, and emergency care services to achieve an equitable and accessible healthcare system.

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## Martyred Intellectuals' Day observed countrywide

BSS, Dhaka

The nation yesterday observed Martyred Intellectuals' Day paying glowing tributes to the intellectuals who were brutally killed by the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators at the end of the Liberation War in 1971.

Sensing their eventual defeat, the occupation forces and their Bangalee collaborators carried out a systematic massacre to cripple the country's intellectual potential.

National programmes were observed yesterday, honouring the fallen heroes.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus gave separate messages paying profound respect to the memories of the martyred

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## Sweeping reforms must for gender equality

Says Naripokkho

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Naripokkho, one of the country's oldest feminist movements, has called for sweeping reforms to promote gender equality, including a demand that political parties nominate women for one-third of their electoral rolls.

At a press conference, titled "Women's Rights and Freedom: Expectations and Actions", held yesterday at Dhaka Reporters Unity, the platform also urged for direct elections to women's reserved seats, replacing the current practice of political parties selecting candidates. "Reserved seats for women must be kept in all 64 districts," they added.

Naripokkho further demanded the reinstatement of the "no-vote" option to allow voters to express a lack of confidence in an election.

The organisation also called for the separation of religion from the state, emphasising the need to make Bangladesh secular and humane.

Other key demands included amendments to the Uniform Family Law, the Inheritance Law, and laws on guardianship, compensation, and citizenship to ensure equal rights for

women in both family and public life.

Naripokkho urged the government to amend labour laws to recognise women's work in informal sectors such as domestic work and street vending. They also insisted that all Birangonas, including those working

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase women's representation in parliament

Direct polls for reserved seats

Reinstate "No Vote"

Ensure secular governance

Amend family laws

Recognise informal work

as sex workers, be accorded due respect and state benefits.

The platform called for the full implementation of the National Drug Policy 2016 and an update to the National Health Policy 2011.

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## Indo-Bangla ties should be based on mutual respect

Says foreign adviser

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Narsingdi

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain has emphasised Bangladesh's commitment to fostering cordial relations with India, based on mutual respect and shared interests, akin to its approach with all nations.

"The interim government is working towards this goal," he said during a meeting in Belabo upazila of Narsingdi yesterday.

Touhid underscored the government's primary objective of ensuring a fair and credible election. "Our first task is to restore stability in the country. We aim to organise elections while paving the way for fundamental reforms, ensuring no future government deviates from this path," he said.

He acknowledged the demands of those who ousted the oppressive regime, noting that reforms would take time. "We urge everyone to remain patient," he added.

Touhid also called on political parties to work towards a future where students no longer feel compelled to protest on the streets.

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A wreath being placed on the coffin of Helal Hafiz to pay him last respect at Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The poet passed away in Dhaka on Friday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Tribute paid to Helal Hafiz

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Best known as the poet of rebellion and love, Helal Hafiz was laid to rest with state honours yesterday at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur in Dhaka.

For a man who cherished solitude throughout his life, his final moments were anything but lonely.

State advisers, journalists, poets, writers, and people from all walks of life flocked to honour him one last time, adorning his coffin with flowers and shedding heartfelt tears.

The poet's body was brought to the Bangla Academy premises at 11:00am, where his first namaz-e-janaza took place.

Later in the afternoon, following a second funeral prayer at the National Press Club, his body was taken to the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mirpur, where he was laid to rest.

Among those who paid tribute were Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, and the Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam.

At the Bangla Academy, freedom fighter and Liberation War Affairs Adviser Faruk E Azam (Bir Protik) and Bangla Academy Director General

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## Don't waste second chance to build nation

Says Asif Nazrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "second chance" to build Bangladesh, earned through the sacrifices of its youth, must not be squandered, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said yesterday.

Speaking at the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial in Mirpur, Dhaka, on Martyred Intellectuals' Day, Nazrul told reporters, "The opportunity we have to build the nation, through the sacrifices of our youth, must not be wasted. This is our commitment today."

He reminded the nation that the spirit of the Liberation War, driven by the freedom fighters' love for the country, continued in the July mass uprising. "In July, students fought fearlessly for democracy, people's rights, and a society free from discrimination," Nazrul said.

The adviser also expressed his disappointment over Bangladesh's failure to achieve the dream of a prosperous and just nation. He attributed this failure to a particular mindset and shortcomings in political leadership.

"Despite the sacrifices of many in 1971, we have not realised the dream of a just, prosperous Bangladesh. Let us not allow this failure to repeat," he added.

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## RANGPUR DIVISION

## Organic fertiliser spurs high yields for farmers

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Farmers in five districts under the Rangpur division – Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, and Nilphamari – are delighted as their winter vegetable yields have significantly increased after using vermicompost, following advice from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

Vermicompost is an organic fertiliser made by composting cow dung, eggshells, vegetable scraps, used tea leaves, and rotting tree bark with the help of earthworms.

The DAE has long recommended that farmers use vermicompost for cultivating vegetables, as it enhances yields and improves soil health.

Azaharul Islam, 45, a farmer from Chawratari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, shared that he has been cultivating vegetables with organic fertilisers for the past four years.

"I produce some vermicompost at home and purchase the rest from the local

market. I have been achieving good crop yields while also improving soil fertility," he said.

Echoing him, Dhaniram Chandra Das, 65, a farmer from Mahipur village in Rangpur's Gangachhara upazila, said, "Earlier, I used chemical fertilisers before switching to vermicompost. This organic fertiliser is toxin-free, cost-effective, and provides better yields."

According to DAE sources, around 15,000 farmers across the five districts of the Rangpur division have been benefiting from producing, using, and selling vermicompost. Each farmer produces up to 10 tonnes of vermicompost annually at a cost of Tk 6-7 per kilogram, which is then sold for about Tk 12-13. Over the years, the use of vermicompost for vegetable cultivation has gained popularity, particularly among small and marginal farmers.

Sahera Banu, 55, from Thanahat village in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila, said she produces 300kg of vermicompost and

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Workers transport crushed ice from this mill in the Harta Bazar area of Wazirpur upazila of Barishal. They take this ice to various fish markets. By working from the morning to evening, a worker can earn around Tk 20,000 per month. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## Left destitute by Teesta, Rahima now struggling to survive

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Rahima Begum, 78, was married at the age of 15 to a prosperous man in Dhubani village on the Teesta shoal under Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila.

However, only four years later, her husband passed away before they could have a child.

Despite her family's repeated requests to remarry, she chose to stay in her husband's village, determined to spend the rest of her life there. She owned arable land where she cultivated paddy and raised cattle, earning enough to sustain herself and help others in the village.

That was before the Teesta River devoured all her land and homestead, leaving her destitute.

Now old, lonely, landless, and penniless, Rahima spends her days in starvation, largely dependent on assistance from others.

Her neighbours, who were once beneficiaries of her generosity, later built her a hut to live in and have been supporting her with food as much as they can. However, the hut has become dilapidated and nearly uninhabitable due to years of neglect.

"Rahima Begum became a widow without a child, and her relatives never came to look for her. Even though the government allocated houses to many landless people, Rahima couldn't get one for herself.

She can neither work nor move around much because of her age. There is no electricity in her hut. She once helped almost everyone in the village, but now she is in desperate need of help," said Amjad Hossain, 56, a neighbour.

"As neighbours, we try to do as much as we can to support her, but it's not always possible because of our busy schedules," he added.

"My hut has become rundown and could collapse completely any day. I have no money to repair it. I have been wearing the same saree all year because I can't afford a new one. I hardly manage to eat every day. On days when no one gives me food, I am forced to starve," Rahima said.

She has appealed to the government to provide her with a home to live in and some financial assistance to sustain her.

Dulal Hossain, acting upazila nirbahi officer of Hatibandha, said he would inquire about Rahima Begum's situation and arrange support from the upazila administration.



## A treasure under threat of encroachment

Around 250 acres of Lawachhara National Park remain occupied

MINTU DESHWARA

The Lawachhara National Park has long been the victim of continuous encroachment over the years. According to local environmentalists, approximately 250 acres of the park is currently occupied, mostly by various local influential figures.

At the heart of the problem lies the fact that no proper boundary was ever established for the park. Without a comprehensive survey, the process of demarcation cannot be initiated. In the 28 years since the forest was first declared a national park, no survey has been conducted and as such there is no established boundary.

Adding to the woes, the Forest Department is rarely engaged in efforts to recover occupied land within the park.

The park, rich in diverse flora and fauna, is home to various endangered and rare species of wildlife, making it a popular destination for environmentalists, wild animal lovers, and tourists. Located in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar, Lawachhara National Park spans 1,250 hectares and was designated as a national park in 1996.

The park is home to 167 species of trees, 246 species of birds, 20 species of mammals, 59 species of reptiles, and 22 species of amphibians.

Surrounding the park are villages and privately owned land. This is where some landowners have encroached onto the forest land – planting seasonal fruit trees and even constructing homes.

The village of Baghmara, for instance, is located about three kilometres from the park. The park is currently engaged in a legal dispute that involves hundreds of

residents living across 155 acres of forest land.

Shahidul Islam, Sreemangal Range Officer of the Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department, said, "There are public land right next to the park. However, without a survey I cannot even place a marker because the boundaries are undefined. A survey would clarify the park's borders."

On a positive note, recent efforts

former agriculture minister Abdus Shaheed, near the National Park's student dormitory – an attempt that had previously failed in 2018.

The Forest Department believes that further land remains under the control of various individuals, complicating additional recovery efforts.

On November 3, local Awami League leader Zenar Ahmed reportedly occupied approximately 4 acres of the Lawachhara forest.



Officials of the Wildlife and Nature Conservation Department are reclaiming this portion of land and removing the lemon trees that were planted there. Md Shah Alam, who planted the trees, claimed that he had leased this land from Awami League leader Zenar Ahmed, paying Tk 1,20,000 in advance for two years.

PHOTO: STAR

by the Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department successfully recovered six acres of land from two locations, both deep inside the park, thus needing no disputes over the boundary.

On September 22, one acre was reclaimed from an individual named Jamshed Mia in the Battali area.

Then, on September 15, around five acres were recovered from

Despite efforts to contact Zenar Ahmed, he could not be reached.

Md Shah Alam from Sreemangal upazila, claimed to have leased the land from Zenar Ahmed.

He said, "I have cultivated lemons here under a 5-year lease from Zenar Ahmed. I paid Tk 1,20,000 in advance for 2 years. The remainder will be paid as I sell the lemons, according to our lease agreement.

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## Cold wave hits north; more relief efforts needed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A sweeping cold wave has disrupted daily life in the northern region, with the lowest temperature recorded at 9.2 degrees Celsius in Panchagarh's Tentulia at 9:00am yesterday.

Yesterday, the temperature in Tentulia was recorded at 8.4 degrees Celsius.

The biting cold has taken a toll on the low-income population, significantly affecting their livelihoods and daily routines.

Julfa Bewa, a 60-year-old resident of Sonapatila village in Panchagarh's Boda upazila, described her struggle to cope with the chilling weather saying, "The cooler wind from the north makes it tough to carry on daily activities."

Even multiple layers of blankets fail to keep her warm, especially after sunset when the icy wind penetrates her thatched house.

Farm labourer Babul, 58, of Shahapara village, shared the difficulty in preparing Boro seedbeds amidst the freezing winds.

"This is the peak time for preparing seedbeds, but the icy wind makes it almost impossible to work in the fields," he said.

Day labourer Jotis Barman from Basiadebi village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila was found waiting for work at Thakurgaon intersection but lamented the lack of job opportunities due to the adverse weather.

"It's already 10:00am, but no one has hired me yet," he said.

Rafiqul Islam, a rickshaw-puller shared a similar plight, reporting a drop in daily income as people avoid venturing out unless absolutely necessary.

"Our earnings have been severely impacted because most people are staying indoors," he said. Farmers are also struggling to protect their Rabi crops, including potatoes and vegetables, from diseases exacerbated by the cold.

The adverse weather has increased the demand for warm clothes, but relief efforts remain insufficient.

Jitendranath Roy, assistant officer at the Tetulia Weather Observatory Centre, said the cold wave is expected to persist for the next few days.

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## 3 more die of dengue

STAR REPORT

At least three dengue patients died and 316 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the deaths, one was reported in Dhaka South City Corporation, and one each in Barishal and Khulna divisions.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, with the new deaths and cases, the total number of deaths rose to 548 while total number of cases rose to 98,508 of which 59,072 are from outside Dhaka.

Currently, 1,777 dengue patients are undergoing treatment, of which 1,080 are from outside Dhaka.

A total of 96,179 patients have been released till yesterday.



Even in the afternoon, heavy fog over the Kirtankhola river stops the sun, making it appear as if it is still dawn. As a result, cargo ships slow down to ensure they reach their destination safely. The photo was taken recently from the Doldopia Bridge.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## JCD president slams anti-discrimination student leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chhatra Dal President Rakibul Islam Rakib yesterday criticised the anti-discrimination student movement for not doing enough to ensure justice for those accused of killing during the mass uprising.

Speaking at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur yesterday, Rakib pointed out that despite the protests spearheaded by the movement over the past four months, no concrete steps have been taken to ensure accountability for Chhatra League leaders and activists involved in the killings.

"Their demands are limited to speeches. There has been no effort to ensure exemplary punishment for Chhatra League," Rakib said.

He stressed the need for accountability for the deaths of students and citizens during the uprising. "Those responsible for the killings must face trial, yet we see no progress on this front," he added.

Rakib also alleged that members of Chhatra League, a banned organisation, continue to occupy university dormitories despite public

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## JAYA AHSAN starts work on first Bangladeshi web series 'Jimmi'

Jaya Ahsan, who has already made a significant mark on India's OTT platforms, is now set to venture into Bangladeshi web series with her debut project, *Jimmi*. Directed by Ashfaq Nipun, the web series was first announced in March, later Jaya confirmed that the project is finally moving forward, with shooting scheduled to begin this week. "The work on this series was supposed to start earlier, but got delayed for various reasons. Finally, it is beginning. The shooting for *Jimmi* will start in a few days. This is my first web series," shared Jaya, expressing her enthusiasm for the upcoming venture. Jaya will be seen playing the role of a low-ranking government employee who has not received a promotion in 10 years.

## Chirkutt to perform in Victory Day concert at London

On the occasion of Victory Day, Chirkutt will be performing in London for their solo concert, *Love Bangladesh*. Fans in London will have the chance to experience live renditions of Chirkutt's hit tracks, including *Ahare Jibon*, *Jadur Shohor*, *Khajna*, *Kanamachi*, and *Duniya*.



The concert, organized by NextStage Events, is scheduled for December 16 at the Mayfair Venue in Romford, London, running from 4:30 PM to 10:00 PM. Open to all, including expatriate Bangladeshis, the event requires no tickets, but attendees must register for entry. The band will team up with international musicians for this performance. Chirkutt's vocalist Sharmin Sultana Sumi revealed, "We have collaborated globally many times to showcase Bengali music to the world. This event will be no exception, as artistes from different countries will join us. Chirkutt will be the same familiar band, but in a new style."

## Austin Butler to play Patrick Bateman in new adaptation of 'American Psycho'

Luca Guadagnino is bringing a fresh take on Bret Easton Ellis' 1991 novel *American Psycho* to the silver screen.



As reported by Variety, Austin Butler has been cast in the iconic and chilling role of Patrick Bateman. The upcoming film, starring Austin Butler as Patrick Bateman, is not a remake of the 2000 adaptation with Christian Bale but a fresh take on Bret Easton Ellis' novel, with reports hinting at a markedly different interpretation by Guadagnino. *American Psycho*, featuring Christian Bale, was released in 2000. The film tells the story of Patrick Bateman, a wealthy investment banker in 1980s New York City, who leads a double life as a Wall Street yuppie and a serial killer.

## Vikrant Massey blames social media pressure for 'retirement'

Vikrant Massey recently surprised fans by announcing a break from acting. He revealed that his decision was fueled by social media pressure. During an interview at Agenda AajTak, Vikrant explained that his demanding career had been limiting his time with his wife, Sheetal Thakur, and their son.



Vikrant shared, "I finally achieved the life I had always dreamed of, so I felt it was time to truly live it. Taking a break seemed necessary because, at the end of the day, everything in life is transient. That's why I've decided to work on just one film next year." He admitted that social media pressure played a major role in his decision to announce the break. "I lead a public life and am somewhat introverted," he said. "Social media is something one has to engage with, but if I had the option, I'd prefer to use it selectively—only when I genuinely want to share something."

## Allu Arjun pledges cooperation in stampede case

Telugu superstar Allu Arjun has pledged full cooperation in the investigation following his brief detention related to a fan's tragic death at the premiere of *Pushpa 2: The Rule* on December 4. Addressing the media after his release, Arjun expressed condolences to the bereaved family, calling the incident "immensely unfortunate".



The tragedy occurred when a stampede broke out after Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna made a surprise appearance. Among the casualties, 35-year-old Revathi lost her life, and her son remains critically injured. The victim's husband filed an FIR naming Allu Arjun as an accused. The actor was taken into custody on Friday from his Banjara Hills residence and initially

remanded to 14 days of judicial custody. Although the Telangana High Court granted him interim bail, procedural delays forced him to spend a night in jail.

### WHAT'S THE HAPS?



## Shobar Agye Bangladesh concert on Victory Day

On the occasion of Victory Day (December 16), a concert has been organised by *Shobar Agye Bangladesh* at Capital's Manik Mia Avenue. The concert is open to all and will feature performances by popular bands and solo artistes. **Date: December 16**  
**Time: 12 pm**

## COUNTRYWIDE

### BARGUNA'S AMTALI UPAZILA

## Unabated encroachment continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

An important canal in Bagruna's Amtali upazila headquarters has become badly polluted and almost dead due to mindless filling and continuous encroachments. The century-old canal, locally known as Basugi Khal, flows through different areas of Amtali town and falls into the Payra river. Besides, the canal, which splits into two branches at the heart of the town, flows through Basugi, Nayavanguli, Manikjhuri and New Bazar areas is also connected with another canal called Chawra Khal. During a recent visit to the upazila headquarters this correspondent saw different structures, including dwelling houses and shops, are constructed after filling of the canal at different places, which threatens the town dwellers with environment pollution and water-logging. Locals said a group of local influential people have continued to grab Basugi Khal (canal) at different places of the town although it plays a vital role in the lives of the residents of nearby villages. Nearly two acres of the canal land, starting from the iron bridge area, have been completely occupied by more than 50 people, including Mosharof Howlader and Rubel Howlader, locals alleged.



A section of local people have continued encroachment on Basugi Khal in Barguna's Amtali upazila. PHOTO: STAR

One Saiful Islam has built an ice mill by occupying a portion of the canal land, while on the opposite side Mosharef, Razzak Mridha and Nurul Islam erected at least eight to ten shops and earning a handsome amount from those. Meanwhile, at least 20 to 25 people including Harun Hawladar, Kalam Hawladar and many others have built more than 100 structures in between Amtali Upazila Health Complex and Kamal Talukdar's house and enjoying benefits. Local farmers said alongside encroachments, the water of the canal has been badly polluted as fish traders, who sits along the banks of the canal, often throw various types of waste materials into the canal. Gafur Pada, a local farmer, said due to continuous encroachment normal water flows of the important canal has been severely disrupted, resulting in flooding during the monsoon. Another farmer Shamim Chaprasi said they cannot cultivate any crops including paddy in their land as the canal needs to be cleared first to maintain its natural flow. Amtali Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) Tarek Hasan said they will conduct eviction drives to free the canal as early as possible.

## Rizwana's comment misleading

FROM PAGE 12 Injured, Siraj was taken to Al-Haramain Hospital around 4:00am, where he underwent a minor surgery on his left leg, said the hospital's director Nahian Ahmed Chowdhury. "His family told us that he had been in a motorbike accident in which he was injured. He was discharged the next morning as his condition was good," the doctor said, adding that the victim's family had not mentioned any attack and thus, the hospital authorities did not inform the police. Siraj is currently under treatment at another hospital, his daughter Muntaha Misbah told local newspaper Shyamal Sylhet yesterday morning. She, however, declined to say anything more. An accused in seven cases filed over attacks on protesters during the July uprising, Siraj was the president of the now-banned student organisation Chhatra League's Sylhet district unit. He also served as permission to lend money to Beximco. Janata mentioned that its clients had defaulted on 61 percent of the loans, and the bank was facing a liquidity crisis. Of the total sum lent by Janata, over 45 percent was taken by loan defaulters Beximco Group, S Alam Group, AnonTex Group, Crescent Group and Thermex Group. As of September, defaulted loans at the bank was Tk 60,489 crore, the highest in Bangladesh, according to central bank data. This amount represents 61 percent of the bank's total disbursed loans and 21.22 percent of the sector's total non-performing loans of Tk 2,84,977 crore. The bank recently requested Tk 20,000 crore from the interim government and the central bank to overcome its crisis, maintain a normal cash flow, and protect depositor confidence. The decision to let Janata lend money to Beximco was made on November 28 at a meeting with Labour Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain in the chair.

## AL leader Siraj abducted, freed

FROM PAGE 12 However, he holds no post in AL's current committee and has been in hiding since August 5. "We are sure that he was attacked and abducted but we do not know his current location. He has been in hiding as he is accused in multiple cases. We are investigating this attack and trying to locate him," said Mohammad Saiful Islam, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

## Janata Bank exempted

FROM PAGE 12 had not paid back most of the sum. The amount borrowed by Beximco is 410 percent of its own capital, according to records. The company's Vice-Chairman Salman F Rahman, a former adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, is currently in jail. Mazibur Rahman, managing director of Janata Bank, said his bank would lend the conglomerate Tk180 crore. On December 5, Janata Bank requested the BB's

the public prosecutor of the Sylhet District Judge Court. However, he holds no post in AL's current committee and has been in hiding since August 5. "We are sure that he was attacked and abducted but we do not know his current location. He has been in hiding as he is accused in multiple cases. We are investigating this attack and trying to locate him," said Mohammad Saiful Islam, additional deputy commissioner (media) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

## Man dies

FROM PAGE 12 and Family Planning Officer Mizanur Rahman said the man was dead on arrival around 8:30pm. After the incident, locals kept three of the policemen confined to a shop. Around two hours later, Border Guard Bangladesh personnel went there and rescued them. Talking to The Daily Star, Chandgam Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Hafiz Tapan said, "I was in my office that is adjacent to the bridge. Hearing the hue and cry, I went out and saw that the people had confined three policemen. They were saying that the policemen killed Dudu." Dudu's son Shawkat Ali said, "Police have killed my father without any reason. I want justice." Bheramara Police Station's Officer-in-Charge Sheikh Shahidul Islam claimed that police had information that Dudu was involved with drug peddling even though there was no case filed against him. But police did not physically assault Dudu. Rather, Dudu himself came out of his shop and jumped off the bridge to escape the police, said the OC. Kusthita's Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman said he has formed a probe body to investigate the incident.

## Unite to build a fair, inclusive Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12 Earlier in the morning, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the national election will be held soon in line with people's wishes. "We're always hopeful. An interim government has been established, and we're all cooperating. Hopefully, arrangements for polls will be made very soon as per the people's wishes" he told reporters after paying tribute at the

Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in the capital's Mirpur around 9:30am on Martyred Intellectuals' Day yesterday. He added, "Through a free, fair and impartial election, the people will get the opportunity to elect their representatives, form the parliament, and establish the government." Earlier, Fakhrul and some senior party leaders, including BNP standing committee

Nazrul Islam Khan and Abdul Moyeen Khan, placed wreaths at the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial around 9:15am. They then stood in a solemn silence for some time to remember the fallen national heroes who lost their lives for the country. Fakhrul also told reporters that new opportunities have been created after fascism was removed from the country through the July uprising.

"By making full use of this opportunity, we want to establish a democratic Bangladesh and a modern state free of discrimination." Responding to a question, he criticised the Awami League for losing connection with the people. "Those who have distanced themselves from the people, killed democracy, suppressed democracy and freedom-loving individuals, and sold our independence have

naturally become isolated. That's why they are absent today." Meanwhile, BNP kept the national flag at half-mast and hoisted black flags atop all its offices, including the central Nayapalton office, to mark the day. The party's associate bodies, including Jubo Dal, Chhatra Dal, Swachhasebak Dal and Krishak Dal, also paid their respects to the martyred intellectuals.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Russia pulling back but not out of Syria: sources

REUTERS, Tartous

Russia is pulling back its military from the front lines in northern Syria and from posts in the Alawite Mountains but is not leaving its two main bases in the country after the fall of President Bashar al-Assad, four Syrian officials told Reuters.

The ousting of Assad, who along with his late father, former President Hafez al-Assad, had forged a close alliance with Moscow, has thrown the future of Russia's bases - the Hmeimim airbase in Latakia and the Tartous naval facility - into question.

Satellite footage from Friday shows what appeared to be at least two Antonov AN-124s, among the world's largest cargo planes, at the Hmeimim base with their nose cones open, apparently preparing to load up.

Syrian military and security sources in contact with the Russians told Reuters that Moscow was pulling back its forces from the front lines and withdrawing some heavy equipment and senior Syrian officers.

But the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation, said Russia was not pulling out of its two main bases and currently had no intention of doing so.

Some equipment is being shipped back to Moscow as very senior officers from Assad's military but the aim at this stage is to regroup and redeploy as dictated by developments on the ground, a senior Syrian army officer in touch with the Russian military told Reuters.

A senior rebel official close to the new interim administration told Reuters the issue of the Russian military presence in Syria and past agreements between the Assad government and Moscow were not under discussion.

The Kremlin has said Russia is in discussions with the new rulers of Syria over the bases.

Russia's defence ministry did not respond to a request for comment on Reuters reporting.



Protesters calling for the ouster of South Korea President Yoon Suk Yeol react after the result of the second martial law impeachment vote outside the National Assembly in Seoul yesterday. Story on page 1.

PHOTO: AFP

## 18 killed as Israel strikes shelters, aid point in Gaza

REUTERS, Cairo

At least 18 Palestinians were killed in Israeli airstrikes in Gaza on Saturday, medics said, while the Israeli military said it targeted gunmen operating from shelters and aid storages.

At least 10 people were killed in an airstrike near the municipality building in Deir Al Balah in the central Gaza Strip where people gathered to receive aid, medics said.

Casualties were being carried by foot, on rickshaws and private cars from the site of the attack to the hospital, medics said. The strike killed the head of the Hamas-run administrative committee in central Gaza, a Hamas source said.

The Israeli military was looking into the report, a spokesperson said. Earlier, Israeli aircraft struck militants and weapon caches near an aid warehouse, the military said, after gunmen had fired rockets into Israel from there.

A separate strike in Gaza City on a



former shelter housing displaced people targeted Hamas fighters, the military said. At least seven people were killed in that attack, Palestinian medics said, including a woman and her baby.

It was unclear whether any of the other people killed were fighters. The military said it had taken precautions to reduce risk of harm to civilians.

A separate strike in Gaza City killed a local journalist, medics said. The

military was looking into the report, a spokesperson said.

The war in Gaza began on Oct 7, 2023 when Israel then launched an air, sea and land offensive that has killed at least 44,000 people, mostly civilians, according to authorities in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, displaced nearly the entire population and left much of the enclave in ruins.

Several attempts to a ceasefire have failed to stop the bombardment on the tiny Palestinian territory.

A fresh bid by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to reach a truce has gained momentum in recent weeks.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi yesterday discussed with visiting US officials efforts to reach a ceasefire in Gaza and a hostages for prisoners deal in the Palestinian enclave, Sisi's office said.

The killings came on the same day as top US officials and regional Arab power met to discuss the conflicts in the region - in Gaza, Syria, Lebanon.

## Iran won't impede IAEA access

REUTERS

Iran will not impede the UN nuclear watchdog's access and inspection of its sites, the head of the country's Atomic Energy Organization said yesterday.

According to a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) earlier this week, Iran has agreed to tougher monitoring by the agency at its Fordow site after it greatly accelerated uranium enrichment to close to weapons-grade there.

Last week, the IAEA reported that Iran had multiplied the pace of its enrichment to up to 60 percent purity, close to the 90 percent of weapons-grade, at Fordow.

"We have not created and will not create any obstacles for the agency's inspections and access," Atomic Energy Organization head Mohammad Eslami was quoted as saying by Iranian media.

## Israeli strike kills 1 in south Lebanon

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon's health ministry said an Israeli drone strike in the south killed one person yesterday, the latest deadly raid despite a more than two-week ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

"An Israeli enemy drone strike... killed one person" in Marjayoun district, the health ministry said in a statement. The official National News Agency said a vehicle was hit.

A ceasefire came into effect between Israel and Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah on November 27 but both sides have accused the other of repeated violations, with Lebanon reporting multiple deadly Israeli strikes, including five people killed on Wednesday.

## MIGRANT BOAT SINKING

## Five killed in Greece

AFP, Athens

Five migrants died early yesterday when a migrant boat sank off Crete, Greece's coastguard said, leaving 40 people reportedly missing while 39 survivors were rescued. The boat sank 12 nautical miles southwest of the island, according to ERTNEWS, which reported the 40 missing.

A huge rescue operation involving vessels and aircraft was under way in the sea south of the island of Gavdos, south of Crete, after the boat capsized shortly after midnight, the coastguard said.

## AI with reasoning power will be less predictable: expert

REUTERS, Vancouver

Former OpenAI chief scientist Ilya Sutskever, one of the biggest names in artificial intelligence, had a prediction to make on Friday: reasoning capabilities will make technology far less predictable.

Accepting a "Test Of Time" award for his 2014 paper with Google's GOOGL.O Oriol Vinyals and Quoc Le, Sutskever said a major change was on AI's horizon.

An idea that his team had explored a decade ago, that scaling up data

to "pre-train" AI systems would send them to new heights, was starting to reach its limits, he said. More data and computing power had resulted in ChatGPT that OpenAI launched in 2022, to the world's acclaim.

"But pre-training as we know it will unquestionably end," Sutskever declared before thousands of attendees at the NeurIPS conference in Vancouver. "While compute is growing," he said, "the data is not growing, because we have but one internet."

## Intellectuals failed to organise consent

FROM PAGE 12

barricades to new sensibilities and thoughts, and then he invoked another group, i.e. the "organic" ones who wanted change especially in the face of a desire to establish justice in society. "Desire," Khan said, "is metonymy whereas deception is a symptom, that is to say metaphor."

Talking about the recent mass upsurge, he said it has created hope among many, as many of the organisers of the uprising are young and organic intellectuals with foresight.

"Our society is not infertile. No one knew from where these leaders would emerge. Whether they will survive or not, I can't really say anything as a fortune-teller."

He said that old leaderships are failing to understand that they are on the verge of the end of their political career. The old is dying

but the new cannot be born. In the interregnum, a whole set of morbid symptoms appear.

He said that a section of teachers worship some people for personal and professional benefits.

"University teachers have destroyed universities for a plot of land or for a steady job for a relative or even to secure a transfer from one place to another. They have destroyed institutions for getting own benefits."

Talking about the education system, Khan said medium of classroom instructions at general schools, madrasas and others should be the mother tongue, and a foreign language must not supplant it.

He said that someone can learn different languages but that should not be in place of Bangla, and that the present system of "Englishing" Bangladesh is just "killing Bangla" as

## Won't spare anyone, even if it's Prof Yunus

FROM PAGE 12

the July uprising.

Mentioning that they are not the generation that sells their conscience, Sarjis said the relation of Bangladesh with other countries must be of respect and equal dignity.

"We want to say one thing to India: our relationship with you will be determined through your work. If you want relationship with Bangladesh, you must send back Sheikh Hasina. Hasina's trial will be done by the people of Bangladesh," he added.

a culture and as an identity marker.

"If you want to make the education generally available, there is no alternative to having education in the natural language of the student populace."

Journalist and writer Kajal Rashid Shahin said that during the independence struggle and Liberation War, intellectuals played a glorious role. He said it is important to know the roles of the architects of the nation and reforms should be carried out in line with their thoughts.

Government Titumir College Vice-Principal and writer Prof. Mizanur Rahman said there should be a process to groom intellectuals and there should be discussions about their role in nation-building.

The Daily Star editor and publisher Mahfuz Anam moderated the programme.

## US, regional diplomats meet

FROM PAGE 12

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas, Fidan and foreign ministers from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar met around a circular table at a Jordanian government guesthouse. There was no Syrian representative at the table.

The Arab diplomats earlier met separately and issued a statement calling for a peaceful and inclusive political transition that leads towards elections and a new constitution for Syria. The foreign ministers said they were committed to combating terrorism, which they called a threat to security in Syria, the region and the world.

Blinken, meeting Pederson at his

hotel earlier on Saturday, said it was a time of "both opportunity but also real challenge" for Syria.

Arab diplomats attending the talks told Reuters they were seeking assurances from Turkey that it supports an inclusive political process that prevents the partition of Syria on sectarian lines.

Turkey and the United States, both Nato members, have conflicting interests when it comes to some of the rebels. Turkish-backed rebels in northern Syria have clashed with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The SDF, which controls some of Syria's largest oil fields, is the main ally in a U.S. coalition against Islamic State militants. It is spearheaded by

YPG militia, a group that Ankara sees as an extension of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants who have fought the Turkish state for 40 years and who it outlaws.

Blinken told Turkish officials during a visit to Ankara on Thursday and Friday that Islamic State must not be able to regroup, and the SDF must not be distracted from its role of securing camps holding IS fighters, according to a U.S. official. Turkish leaders agreed, the official with the U.S. delegation said.

Fidan told Turkish TV later on Friday that the elimination of the YPG was Turkey's "strategic target" and urged the group's commanders to leave Syria.



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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## A tribute long overdue

We must promptly complete the martyred intellectuals' list

As we observed Martyred Intellectuals' Day yesterday, honouring the bright minds of this land who were brutally murdered by the Pakistani occupation forces with the help of their local collaborators before our liberation in 1971, it is deeply disappointing that we have yet to finalise a complete list of these martyred intellectuals. Reportedly, the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs initiated efforts in 2020 to prepare a comprehensive list, as no complete record has been compiled even after five decades of the country's independence. Although the work was supposed to be completed by December 16 this year, it has remained suspended since July, casting uncertainty over its progress.

Over the past four years, the ministry published four gazettes listing the names of 560 intellectuals based on recommendations from a national committee, which also had a sub-committee to scrutinise the list. However, the sub-committee held its last meeting on July 1, and there have been no updates on the project since then. It appears that the political transition in the country might have created a vacuum in the committees, stalling progress. Some committee members have anonymously suggested that the work was postponed to avoid potential debates over the number of martyred intellectuals. Nevertheless, we believe that transparency and efficiency in the enlisting process can prevent any such controversy.

There should be no controversy or disagreement about the invaluable roles these intellectuals played in shaping the course of our history. These luminaries—academics, journalists, politicians, artists, litterateurs, philosophers, scientists, physicians, and engineers—played a pivotal role in the mass movements against the widespread inequality and oppression of the Pakistani regime, culminating in our Liberation War. Beginning on the night of March 25, 1971, the Pakistani army, aided by local collaborators, started abducting and killing these intellectual leaders. As their defeat became imminent, they intensified efforts to eliminate these prominent figures in the lead-up to December 16, 1971, to intellectually paralyse the emerging nation. Their loss has left an irreplaceable void in the intellectual sphere of the country.

Compiling a complete list of these national icons and learning from their lives and contributions is more critical now than ever, as we endeavour to build a nation free from discrimination following the ouster of a 15-year autocratic regime. Numerous sources exist from which information about the martyred intellectuals can be collected. For example, their names can be found in *Shaheed Buddhijibi Koshgrantha*, the 1972 documentary *Bangladesh*, *Banglapedia*, postal stamps, and various books and research works. These sources should be properly verified to ensure accuracy and inclusivity, avoiding any disputes.

We, therefore, urge the interim government to promptly resume the initiative to create a comprehensive list of martyred intellectuals and complete this vital project without further delay.

## We must have breathable air

Urgent steps must be taken to address the air quality emergency

Physicians and health workers at Dhaka Shishu Hospital are struggling with a surge of child patients suffering from pneumonia. All the hospital beds are full and each day hundreds of children are treated as outdoor patients. Adults with breathing related problems are also suffering. Doctors say that air pollution is one of the main contributing factors behind cold-related diseases. As we know, Dhaka's air pollution has reached unbearable levels, recently ranking as the second highest in the world, prompting a government advisory for people to wear masks outdoors and for individuals with respiratory issues, allergies, or other vulnerabilities to avoid going out unless absolutely necessary.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year, mainly due to increased mortality from stroke, heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and acute respiratory infections. Over the last decade, the air quality in Dhaka, as well as in towns and villages near toxic smoke-emitting industries, has deteriorated significantly. Air pollution worsens during the colder months, with a persistent smog that lingers, unlike the monsoon months when rain temporarily alleviates the issue. However, the air quality remains poor throughout the year, causing chronic respiratory problems, particularly among children and the elderly, who are more vulnerable.

Unfortunately, little has been done over the years to mitigate the factors contributing to air pollution. Dust is a major nuisance for Dhaka residents, caused by year-long infrastructure and real estate development projects. This unregulated construction has led to unprecedented levels of airborne dust. Additionally, unfit vehicles spewing noxious fumes into the air worsen the situation, especially during daily traffic gridlocks, trapping people, including children, in clouds of poisonous gases. Brick kilns, which have proliferated on the outskirts of cities, further contribute to air pollution, affecting nearby residents.

The current interim government, along with future administrations, must take responsibility for controlling or eliminating the factors that have made our air almost unbreathable. Measures include banning unfit vehicles, enforcing public safety rules during construction, and prohibiting developers from leaving piles of dust on the streets. Air quality must be monitored regularly, particularly in high-pollution areas. Implementing low-emission zones, such as pedestrian-only streets and public spaces, creating more cycling and rickshaw lanes, and facilitating pedestrian-friendly areas are additional ways to improve air quality.

In the long term, Bangladesh must phase out fossil fuels and adopt renewable energy sources. Preserving existing greenery, planting more trees, and encouraging rooftop gardening will also contribute to making the air more breathable.

# Time for many to apologise



Muhammad Nurul Huda  
is former IGP of Bangladesh Police.

MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

Given the politico-administrative culture of Bangladesh, it was quite refreshingly surprising to watch the Inspector General of Police (IGP) apologising to the citizens for the criminal excesses committed by the police during July-August mass uprising. He promised to bring the deviant police officials to book for their blatant criminal acts to meet the ends of justice. In fact, this is the minimum he must do to assuage the agonies of the near and dear ones of the victims who suffered immeasurably from the deaths and injuries caused by police action. The enormity of the casualties, numbering a thousand, and the injuries of several thousand shall remain an indelible shame on our national consciousness.

While the police force appears to be the visible principal offender in the indiscriminate loss of lives, a question arises as to whether other organs of the state that resorted to disproportionate use of lethal force have similarly apologised to the nation or, at the least, displayed some remorse or repentance. Then there are others at the policy level and at the strategic command position who are no less culpable in the deaths of scores of defenceless civilians

**Our leaders need to apologise because they have not ventured beyond the safe provision of personal gratifications and have strengthened the autocrat by acting as sycophants and time-servers. History will apportion blame and responsibility among a wide spectrum of politicians who betrayed their trust. Their pretensions to infallibility will remain a sad chapter in our political existence.**

during the uprising. Don't they need to apologise, notwithstanding their corporate criminal liability? Specifically, shouldn't our



Our politicians, civil servants, kleptocrats, media, and educators must apologise for their collaboration with Hasina's fascist regime.

FILE PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

politicians, whose unbridled desire for power and single-minded pursuit of money have landed us in this mess, atone?

It is time for discerning citizens to ponder over the factors and circumstances that have brought us to this precarious condition. During the preceding years, particularly in the last 15, the establishment has subordinated the individual to the government so completely that, with few exceptions, the nation is now made up of one-dimensional human beings. The government has dwarfed its citizens so that they may be docile instruments, without realising that with small men, no great thing can really be accomplished.

We have devalued the judiciary, as we have devalued every other important institution. Instead of defending our judges against political pressures and threats, and instead of insisting upon integrity and impartiality in judicial appointments, we have deliberately allowed the executive to supersede judges of calibre and courage and appoint persons who "subscribe to

ignorance, incompetence, and dishonesty are no disqualifications for high public office. Sadly, persons have been appointed to such offices because they represent a group or belong to a particular region. The ethos of public service has been badly compromised, and many government officials have behaved and acted subversively.

Our leaders need to apologise because they have not ventured beyond the safe provision of personal gratifications and have strengthened the autocrat by acting as sycophants and time-servers. History will apportion blame and responsibility among a wide spectrum of politicians who betrayed their trust. Their pretensions to infallibility will remain a sad chapter in our political existence.

It is no secret now that some of our prominent businessmen and bankers have fleeced the economy so comprehensively that it is becoming a mind-boggling exercise to put the house in order. Our kleptocrats had a field day while the nation bled. Don't they need to apologise to the nation?

an unbecoming manner, creating unhealthy precedents. Don't these educators need to apologise for their failings?

A segment of the media, the vital corrective institution aptly called the Fourth Estate, has been sadly and conspicuously biased and polarised in reporting and commenting on the state of public affairs. Some of them have towed official propaganda in the most unprofessional manner. The deviance in the media, no doubt, makes us look petty and small. Don't the conscientious gentlemen and women in the media need to apologise?

It is an unfortunate fact of our public life that the majority of our leaders personify the arrogance of power—the exact opposite of the unfeigned humility of great souls. One might not be wrong to assume that we now have two sharply divided castes—the rulers and the ruled. The ruling caste too often displays a dangerous blend of unscrupulousness and plain wickedness. It is now time for them to apologise and atone to the ruled.

## Could the Indian foreign secretary's visit create positive optics?



Pallab Bhattacharya  
is a special correspondent for The Daily Star. He writes from New Delhi, India.

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

Given the steady decline in Bangladesh-India relations since August, it is tempting to view Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's December 9 visit to Dhaka and his talks with top leaders, including the interim government's Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, either negatively or positively. It all depends on one's own perception.

However, Misri's visit, the first by a top Indian diplomat since Hasina's escape to India, appears to have provided a much-needed welcome break from the rising cacophony of megaphone diplomacy and the shriller voices emanating from a section of the media which made the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India frosty, if not downright hostile.

It may be argued that Misri's interaction with Yunus, Bangladesh Foreign Adviser Md Touhid Hossain and Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin did not yield new meeting ground, nor were they expected to during this initial round of talks. What it did at best was for the two sides to bring to the table their respective concerns and expectations of each other. Yunus flagged the issue of Hasina's continued stay in India and her statements from there which he

says added to the strained ties. Jashim Uddin conveyed Dhaka's concern over border killings and described India's comments on the plight of minorities in Bangladesh as "interference" in his country's internal affairs.

Bangladesh has resented a security breach at Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala during a large protest there against alleged attacks on Hindus. In Dhaka, Misri articulated the attacks on "religious, diplomatic and cultural properties" which fuelled resentment in India.

But it would be grossly unfair to just look at areas of concern. More than anything else, the Indian foreign secretary's visit underlines that the two countries are willing to not allow the incidents since August to prevent the efforts for charting a new journey. According to media reports, Yunus, during his meeting with Misri, said that the relations between Bangladesh and India were "very solid" and "close" and asked India to help "clear the clouds."

For his part, Misri stressed India's "desire to work closely with the Interim Government of Bangladesh." The Indian foreign secretary made it a point to recall that since the political changes in Bangladesh, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi was the first world leader to greet Chief Adviser Yunus on his assumption of office, the two leaders had a "very cordial" telephone conversation thereafter, and Yunus accepted Modi's invitation to speak at the online event 3rd Voice of Global South Summit in August. Plus, there was the meeting between Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Bangladesh Foreign

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# Right to information is meaningless without information commissioners

Dr Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). They can be reached at rib@citech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

Over one hundred days have passed since an interim government took over the reins of power in Bangladesh, promising a more just, democratic, law-based, and discrimination-free society. Fulfilling such expectations is not easy, as the transition from the violent overthrow of the previous regime is challenging and time-consuming. The new government soon recognised that a priority area for its attention would be governance and restoring governmental authority to ensure a smooth transition.

The Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 has rich potential to contribute to good governance at this critical moment in our history. There can be no better law to promote a collaborative interaction between public authorities and citizens for transparent and accountable governance. But it needs guiding hands.

Like many other institutions of governance in the country, the RTI regime was disrupted in the aftermath of the July-August mass uprising. Following the spate of resignations or forcible removal of high officials of key public bodies, the country's three information commissioners also had to go. The Bangladesh RTI Commission was thus left rudderless and remains so till date. This must end quickly as citizens' role in utilising the law to monitor the work of all public bodies

is crucial at this critical juncture of the nation. The Information Commission must be reconstituted as a matter of priority.

The RTI Act allows citizens to request information from public bodies primarily to check if they are fulfilling their duties abiding by the laws of the land. In recent years, such information requests have increasingly pertained to areas of government activities that are of public interest and susceptible to abuse. For example, inhabitants of an upazila may ask a concerned authority's Designated Officer (DO) for information relating to its tendering process for awarding a contract for the repair work of a local road. If the DO does not respond within 20 working days, applicants can appeal to the appellate authority within the same office. If that, too, does not yield a satisfactory response, the applicant can complain to the Information Commission, which must take the necessary action to resolve the dispute.

Without a functioning Information Commission, there is no one to attend to the complaint, and citizens' role in promoting transparent and accountable governance is thwarted. In the absence of the Information Commission, DOs can disregard citizens' RTI requests without fear of repercussion; any abuse or misuse of their authority remains unchecked, and the Information Commission's general role in promoting the proper implementation of the RTI Act is held in abeyance. An important area in the latter regard is ensuring that public



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

bodies fulfil their proactive disclosure responsibilities under the law through their inclusion and regular website updates. The more public interest information is disclosed proactively, the less pressure there is to use the reactive disclosure process through individual requests.

Data from the Secretariat of the Information Commission revealed that from the time the three commissioners left in September 2024 until now, aggrieved citizens have filed around 190 complaints. All of these have remained unattended. The figure would be even higher if the

commission were fully operational. There may be other complaints filed before the July-August uprising that have remained unattended. This is not healthy for the RTI regime.

Given the circumstances in the country, where other urgent matters await government attention, the seeming delay in filling the vacant posts of the three commissioners is understandable. Nevertheless, if the government assures citizens that the matter is under active consideration, this will encourage the use of the law. Even more reassuring would be a clear indication from the government

that due process for selecting the commissioners would be respected, which was not the case previously. The law specifies the participation of all critical stakeholders, including citizens, who are the law's key players and primary beneficiaries. The interim government could set an example to ensure that transparency is respected in all processes related to the RTI Act, a law that promotes transparency.

The need for extra caution in selecting the commissioners will be evident from even a cursory look at the work of the Information

Commission in the past 15 years. As a law that empowers citizens to monitor the work of government officials, there is an inbuilt assumption that citizens' requests should deserve priority at any complaint hearing. Unfortunately, this was not the case as most commissioners, as former bureaucrats, felt an affinity with respondent public officials who they considered old colleagues. As a result, such officials were allowed to get away lightly for their willful neglect of the law.

More importantly, the lack of legal expertise of past commissioners often resulted in the wrong interpretation—and hence misuse—of the law. For example, there is a tendency among public officials to use the exemption provisions of the law, which are there to safeguard the interest of the state over citizens, without careful justification. The only way to challenge the Information Commission's acquiescence with public officials' use of the exemption provisions is to resort to a writ petition in the High Court, which most citizens cannot afford. All such hurdles have cumulatively added to citizens' frustration.

Reanimating the Information Commission and establishing a transparent selection process for the information commissioners would be a lasting contribution of the interim government to ensuring accountable governance in the country. It will be a step towards meeting the important aspirations of the people who put this government in place.

# International courts impel advisory climate action



MIZAN R KHAN

Mizan R Khan is a board member at Scientific Council of COP29 Presidency, visiting scholar at Brown University, and technical lead at LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCC).

The quarters concerned with climate change are aware that since December 2, 2024, the world is witnessing oral hearings on climate change and state responsibility at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague. More than 100 states and international organisations (IOs) will participate in the process. China and the US as the two largest global emitters will also attend the pleadings. This is perhaps the most attended hearing ever in the ICJ's history. The historic resolution adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on March 29, 2023, requested the ICJ to deliver its Advisory Opinion (AO) on climate change. Then the ICJ president set the deadline for states and IOs to make written submissions by March 22, 2024. The deadline to respond to written submissions was extended till August 15, 2024.

Vanuatu as a Pacific Small Island Developing State (SIDS) requested the UNGA for the AO. We may recall that Vanuatu was among a few SIDSs which maintained the reservation to approach alternative forums other than the UNFCCC process before ratifying the UNFCCC. As the SIDS are "nano-emitters" in real sense, they are likely to face "watery death" due to rapid sea level rise engendered by an ever warming world. Developed countries, as historically the largest emitters, are mainly responsible for this. The hearings come at a time when the impacts of climate change are more evident than ever. But the just-concluded COP29 achieved a lackluster outcome, particularly in mitigation, transitioning away from fossil fuels and climate finance.

In response to such "active inaction," as I started calling the COPs years ago, 62 countries including Bangladesh have made written submissions and more than 90 comments have been recorded.

The Paris Agreement (PA), though, has an Article 8 on Loss and Damage, the decision text of the PA forecloses any step for liability and compensation under it. Then why did the developing countries

accept such a provision? I have argued elsewhere that IPCC science has established "general causation" for the ever-increasing fever of our planet, liability and compensation through courts warrant "specific" causation that can link climate events to consequences. But it is still not possible to link specific climate events to specific consequences, as attribution science is not perfect yet. Under the PA, country-parties cannot go to court for litigation and seek for compensation. So, countries from both sides have agreed to go for negotiated settlements in loss and



At the International Court of Justice, Bangladesh highlighted that the unendurable impacts of climate change are getting worse. FILE PHOTO: STAR

damage under Article 8 of the PA. But totally inadequate mitigation by major emitters is failing to curtail the rising harm and the antecedent depositions are making the climate system increasingly unstable, causing unprecedented impacts.

During the last two days, many countries from both the Global North and South have attended the hearings. There is a clear divide on perspectives. Developing countries have been stressing on climate science, violation of development and human rights from climate change, controlling harm through ambitious

mitigation, due diligence, equity and climate justice, etc. Against this, developed countries have been arguing for limiting discussions on climate change within the UNFCCC process, restricting human rights in relation to climate change amongst other issues.

On December 2, Bangladesh participated in the hearings. Its main arguments, in line with other climate-vulnerable countries, stressed the importance of climate change-human rights nexus, highlighting that unendurable impacts will increasingly worsen in the coming years. The oral submission pointed out the need to clarify state obligations due to the slow progress of the climate negotiations. They rightly pointed out that to remedy harm, the applicable law that the court needs to consider must go beyond the climate regime, to clarify the secondary and primary obligations that states have in relation to adaptation and keeping

and Atlantic regions. COSIS came into being immediately after COP26 held in Glasgow, when SIDS joined forces to solicit AOs on international legal obligations to prevent climate change. ITLOS was requested for clear interpretations on the specific obligations of parties to UNCLOS arising from Article 192 to protect and preserve the marine environment and their obligations under Article 194 to "prevent, reduce and control" marine pollution. ITLOS AO detailed out the links between UNFCCC and UNCLOS, arguing that under UNCLOS, countries must reduce GHG emissions to protect the marine environment and its resources.

This ruling is the first from an international tribunal about state obligations regarding climate change mitigation. It also emphasised that Article 194.1 of UNCLOS imposes a duty of care and due diligence on states in combating climate change, focusing particularly on marine environments.

The ITLOS' AO is expected to influence legal opinions and significantly impact the international regimes regarding climate-related obligations. It reinforces the scientific consensus on climate change and underscores the urgent need for states to phase out fossil fuels to protect our oceans. The ITLOS' AO is the first of three advisory opinions, the other two to be issued after due process including by the ongoing ICJ proceedings and the third AO is expected from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR), initiated by Chile and Colombia in March 2023.

The mission of all these AOs is to seek explication of the state obligations under related legal regimes toward climate change. While the legal nature of AOs is non-binding, it provides authoritative interpretations of obligations under global regimes. Positive AOs from the ICJ and IACHRs will surely galvanise global public opinion to impel speedier actions, and the global youth is likely to capitalise on the outcomes for pressuring their politicians to act and not just talk in the COP jamborees. Reports suggest that such AOs are being sought by countries and CSOs in other regional courts including the African Court of Human Rights. The more such AOs from global and regional courts, the better for the countries and communities facing existential threats from the runaway climate change.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**  
1 Mass unit  
5 NYC cultural attraction  
9 Dance party attendee  
11 Lock setting  
12 "Skyfall" singer  
13 Houston player  
14 Polite address  
15 Fire  
17 Quarterbacks, at times  
19 Homer's bartending pal  
20 Inclines  
21 Kingsley or Affleck  
22 Canyon of comics  
24 Sit-up targets  
26 Comfy spots  
29 Hotel amenity  
30 City north of Newark  
32 Whole heaps  
34 Sea, to Simone  
35 Massage targets  
36 Wipe away  
38 Paper unit  
39 Buoyant tunes  
40 Base meal  
41 Ham or lamb
- DOWN**  
1 Understand  
2 Tire type  
3 Reluctant  
4 Singer Tillis  
5 Church event  
6 Punctual  
7 Strand  
8 Without aid  
10 Advice to sinners  
11 One of the Mamas and the Papas  
16 Weapons store  
18 Pert talk  
21 Harry's wife  
23 Boat  
24 Cochise's people  
25 Big parties  
27 Tex-Mex treat  
28 Midday break  
29 Twitch  
30 Mosquito or gnat  
31 Wave's top  
33 Takes in  
37 Crater part



4-5

## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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Solidaridad The Daily Star

# How Bangladesh's Apparel Industry Can Adapt to EU Sustainability Rules

**The Daily Star and Solidaridad jointly organised a roundtable on "Bangladesh's Apparel Edge: Meeting the European Union's New Sustainability Directive (EUCSDDD)" on November 13, 2024, at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka. Speakers at the roundtable emphasised the country's readiness to comply with the EUCSDDD, given that the EU market holds a significant share of Bangladesh's garments and apparel exports. Ensuring the sustainability of the Bangladeshi garment and textile industry is essential to fostering the country's economic growth.**



**Selim Reza Hassan**, Country Manager, Solidaridad  
The apparel industry is vital to Bangladesh's economy, employing millions. The

industry's sustainability requires significant attention, particularly with the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EUCSDDD). This directive will reshape trade relations and establish new business standards for Bangladesh's textile and apparel sector within the EU market.

While compliance with the directive offers opportunities to maintain and expand market share, it also presents challenges, including the need for significant investment in social and environmental improvements, particularly addressing wages and living incomes. The industry's low-margin, high-volume business model complicates this process, and brands' moves towards net-zero and climate-positive production practices require further investments in energy and resource efficiency.

Bangladesh must focus on enhancing worker productivity, adopting resource-efficient production methods, and negotiating fair pricing with brands to overcome these challenges. The EUCSDDD provides an opportunity to improve social and environmental compliance, promote cleaner production, and establish fairer value chains. Bangladesh must adapt to this global shift, actively participate in sustainability initiatives, and engage in dialogues to secure a sustainable, resilient, and competitive textile sector. Additionally, the country must adopt carbon-neutral production practices to align with the 'Net Zero' concept.

Having already positioned itself as the second-largest exporter of ready-made garments globally, Bangladesh can successfully comply with brands' sustainability agendas if industry associations, civil society organisations, and the government work together. This collaborative effort will make compliance with the EUCSDDD more achievable and strengthen Bangladesh's position as a sustainable production hub for garments and apparel in the international market.

Compliance with the EUCSDDD will result in better trade relations with the EU market by:

1. Enhancing the protection of human rights and the environment.
2. Improving risk management (including liability risks), resilience, innovation, and competitiveness for more sustainable business operations.
3. Creating a level playing field for long-term trade relations.
4. Improving workers' living conditions, ensuring the sustainability of the industry.



**Mohammad Abdullah Yousuf Khan**, Programme Manager, Textiles & Apparel, Solidaridad

The CSDDD is designed to promote a sustainable global economy by enforcing processes to improve human rights, labour rights, and environmental protection. It applies to large EU companies and affects those with supply chains outside the EU, such as Bangladesh's garment industry. These EU companies are required to identify risks in their supply chains and take action to mitigate them. They must also ensure transparency, monitor the effectiveness of their efforts, and embed responsible business practices into their operations. The directive includes a requirement for companies to cooperate in remediation when adverse impacts occur, providing remedies in collaboration with affected stakeholders.

The directive came into force in 2024 and will be gradually implemented until 2029. By 2027, it will apply to EU companies with more than 5,000 employees and €1.5 billion in annual turnover. By 2028, it will extend to businesses with over 3,000 employees and €0.9 billion in revenue. In 2029, it will cover companies with 1,000 employees and €0.45 billion in turnover. This staged implementation means that, by 2029, the directive will apply to a wide range of EU companies, emphasising the importance of due diligence, transparency, and sustainability.

The directive introduces legal and financial implications for EU companies, including civil liability, sanctions, and fines. Companies failing to comply could face



lawsuits, compensation claims, and substantial financial penalties. These consequences underscore the importance of compliance and proactive risk management.

To remain compliant, factories must map out their entire supply chain and identify risks, including those related to raw materials. Digital tracking systems can enhance transparency and monitor the movement of goods. Factories should strengthen internal systems to align with local and international regulations, regularly assess risks through audits, and adopt environmentally friendly production methods.

In addition, business associations in Bangladesh have a critical role in helping suppliers navigate the evolving compliance landscape. The government plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with global sustainability standards. Strengthening labour and environmental regulations, introducing national grievance mechanisms, and offering financial support to SMEs will help suppliers meet international expectations. By taking these proactive steps, Bangladesh's apparel sector can strengthen its compliance, mitigate risks, and contribute to a more sustainable global supply chain.



**Dr. Mohammad Abbas Uddin Shiyak**, Associate Professor, BUTEX

Bangladesh's apparel sector has played a significant role over the past 40-50 years, despite facing various challenges such as labour unrest. One of its key advantages lies in the availability of cheap labour and affordable products. Historically, countries like Germany after World War II were known for being the cheapest producers of technology. Similarly, Korea and China followed this path but later transitioned towards value-added products. Today, these nations compete at the highest levels, with their companies rivaling giants like Tesla.

In contrast, over the last 40-50 years, Bangladesh has struggled to shift towards value-added production. The EUCSDDD could provide a strategic advantage in this regard. Proactiveness within the industry will be crucial.

However, this transformation might push small and medium enterprises (SMEs) out of the market. Large corporations are likely to continue growing, as established businesses tend to attract more opportunities and possess the resources to adapt.



**Mohammed Zahidullah**, Chief Sustainability Officer, DBL

As suppliers, our primary responsibility is to develop our capacities. This requires investment in market systems to support industry personnel. While we already have many qualified individuals in the sector, we need more strategic thinkers. Previously, the focus was on operational tasks; now, there is a shift towards strategic approaches.

Meeting EUCSDDD standards is an expensive endeavour. Furthermore, we do not receive fair prices from buyers, and there is a pressing need for transparency in pricing. As the cost of raw materials and labour rises, the prices of finished products continue to decline. This makes it challenging for the industry to invest further in sustainability. With the right pricing model, however, sustainability becomes achievable.



**Mohammad Monower Hossain**, Head of Sustainability, Team Group

Data is a decisive factor when it comes to effectively aligning with all directives. However, apart from the top 200 companies, data collection systems

remain inadequate, particularly for SMEs. Buyers face a significant gap in this area. Consumers' unwillingness to pay more cannot serve as an excuse; rather, it's about how pricing strategies are communicated and justified.

One notable initiative under the BGMEA was the development of a data disclosure platform for sustainability. This initiative was specifically tailored to support SMEs.

Brands also need to bear increased responsibility under legal directives. They cannot simply approve or disapprove of companies by ticking compliance boxes. Instead, brands must work collaboratively with their value chain partners. Bangladesh's RMG industry has consistently emerged stronger from every challenge it has faced and is well-positioned to comply with the EU CSDDD.

**Willem Grimminck**, Director, One to Watch

Sustainability is already a key focus for business leaders; however, it must

also be reflected in their operations. European buyers need to know where their products come from and whether the production processes are fair and sustainable, benefiting both people and the planet. Replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy is a quick win for garment factories in Bangladesh to stay competitive with EU buyers.

Brands also need to contribute to sustainability improvements through smart financial instruments, capacity building, and technology. Buyers must take responsibility for sustainability in the supply chain by ensuring fair pricing and transparency in business data to support sustainable business case development.

One to Watch provides green financial solutions to companies, helping them reduce emissions in line with the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Our work holds significant potential in Bangladesh, where the CSDDD presents a major opportunity for the apparel sector.

As a company or factory, it is essential to think about the next generation of leaders and workers. Brands in the Netherlands are actively engaging with sustainability issues, and factories and companies can support these brands by offering insights and recommendations. Additionally, skill development within the apparel sector and financing sustainable initiatives are critical components of the CSDDD.



**Dr. Carla Dohmwith**, Implementation Lead, IGS, GIZ

One key feature that makes the CSDDD truly unique is its participatory approach. Effective stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in this framework. Article 13 of the CSDDD mandates the involvement of stakeholders in key stages of the due diligence process, including risk assessments, the development of corrective action plans, and the provision of remedies to affected individuals. To ensure inclusivity, the article also requires international companies to address barriers that hinder stakeholders' participation. For example, companies must prevent retaliation by local employers against workers who engage in these processes.

This participatory model offers Bangladeshi workers and their communities a valuable opportunity to voice their concerns and needs directly to international companies. Their inclusion is vital for the success of due diligence, as those directly affected have the most accurate understanding of workplace and community conditions.

In addition to engaging stakeholders, the EUCSDDD empowers NGOs and workers'

representatives to act as "watchdogs." They can file complaints against companies under the scope of the law with the competent supervisory authority in the European Union. Although establishing a direct link between a violation or risk and a company's actions can be challenging, the process has proven impactful. For instance, under Germany's Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (2023), several complaints against international companies garnered significant media attention, prompting those companies to take corrective measures.



**Ashfike Khlaque**, Programme Coordinator, Fair Wear Foundation

We need to identify risks within the supply chain. One of our challenges in implementing the EUCSDDD is training, particularly with the introduction of new technological modules related to labour rights issues. Additionally, sustainability challenges, such as waste management, water conservation, and emission reduction, must be addressed.



**Tanzila Tajreen**, Senior Policy Advisor, The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh

Proactiveness is crucial. The existing and forthcoming regulations present a significant opportunity for progress. We must also explore diversification within our export basket. Within the RMG industry, there is considerable potential for diversification, and we should actively pursue these opportunities.

To remain competitive, we need to transition towards high-value production processes. Another critical issue for discussion is pricing, particularly in the countries where the brands are based. While our discussions on this matter may not yield immediate results, it is important to keep the conversation ongoing to maintain pressure.

Active engagement in sustainability is equally essential. The EUCSDDD emphasises worker safety and rights, as well as the environmental well-being linked to our production processes. Sustainability reporting demonstrates how environmentally friendly our companies are in their operations. Many of these measures are already in place, but more effective communication is needed to maximise their impact.



**Ole Rosenborg Justesen**, Sector Counsellor, The Embassy of Denmark, Bangladesh

The new EU directives on due diligence and ESG reporting have established a high standard for accountability and transparency, not only for European businesses but also for their suppliers outside the EU. We must not underestimate the challenges that our Bangladeshi partners will face in implementing these directives. This is why we are collaborating closely with the government, the business sector, and trade unions in Bangladesh to improve occupational safety, health standards, and regulations, among other areas.

It is crucial for Bangladesh to position itself competitively in the evolving landscape of ESG regulations. Strengthening the framework for investments in sustainable production processes, infrastructure, transport, and logistics is vital for Bangladesh to establish itself as a sustainable production hub.



**Fazlee Shamim Ehsan**, Executive President, BKMEA, Proprietor, Fatullah Apparels

As we know, the

EUCSDDD is a guideline transitioning into law for all European countries, making it essential for us to prioritise compliance. Hence, I would like to urge all stakeholders to approach this with utmost care. While this is not entirely new to us, the reporting and grievance mechanisms must be conducted with precision. Therefore, I strongly encourage everyone to take the EUCSDDD seriously and implement it with the highest level of importance.

We already have two sustainable business hubs under BGMEA and BKMEA, and we have been developing active grievance mechanisms over the past two years. However, our approach must also evolve in a new direction. Thus far, we have focused primarily on the manufacturing aspect and have not adequately addressed the broader dimensions of sustainability compliance.

Sixty percent of our buyers are small and medium-sized companies with fewer than 500 employees, which means they do not fall under the same regulatory framework as larger buyers. To address this gap, we need to train our legal practitioners to handle situations where buyers breach their contracts. By implementing such mechanisms, we can ensure fair and long-term relationships between suppliers and buyers.



**Shuly Aktar**, Senior Assistant Secretary, Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments

We learned about numerous standards following the Rana Plaza incident and had to work diligently to implement them. It is now essential to align our own standards with the EUCSDDD. The implementation process is complex and demands meticulous planning. To maintain focus throughout this process, we must establish a unified standard.

With only 44 inspectors currently in place, addressing all issues across all sections poses a significant challenge. This represents a considerable burden on the government, making it crucial to involve all stakeholders in the process.



**Sara van Hoeve**, First Secretary, Economic Affairs & Private Sector Development, The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh

The EUCSDDD aims to increase transparency and accountability across global supply chains, including Bangladesh as a production hub. It will support businesses in operating the right way, ensuring that business is not done at the expense of people or the environment. Together with brands, manufacturers, trade unions, and civil society organizations, the Netherlands and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh are working to mitigate risks in the supply chains and ensure that business is conducted in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

With the EUCSDDD, the guidelines and standards for responsible business will no longer be voluntary for many companies, particularly those in the EU. Over the past ten years, Bangladesh has made significant progress in sustainability compliance, which can be leveraged as a competitive edge in the future.

In the Netherlands, we consider it crucial to include the voices of supplier countries, such as Bangladesh, while discussing legislation.

The EUCSDDD will help create a level playing field. We must carefully examine the scope and impacts of this legislation on Bangladesh. This legislation safeguards supply chain transparency and sustainability by ensuring that buyers also take responsibility, something we must keep in mind.



**Tanjim Ferdous**, In-charge, NGOs and Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star

The apparel sector is crucial to Bangladesh's economy, employing 4.4 million people, with women making up 60% of the workforce. The European Union (EU) is our largest market, accounting for nearly 70% of garment and textile exports.

The newly introduced EUCSDDD sets higher standards for transparency, human rights, and environmental compliance. While this presents challenges, it also offers opportunities for growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- >>> Engage meaningfully with stakeholders to identify and mitigate risks, improving due diligence compliance and better positioning Bangladesh's textile and apparel industry in the EU market.
- >>> Undertake a collective approach to incentivise the adoption of socially and environmentally responsible business practices, fostering a culture of compliance and sustainability.
- >>> Introduce data-driven procurement processes to ensure transparency and accountability in the supply chain.
- >>> Take climate-positive actions to achieve cleaner production and carbon neutrality in the supply chain, contributing to improved environmental sustainability.
- >>> Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration with national and EU public authorities, industry associations, CSOs, and knowledge institutes to co-create solutions for a smooth transition towards capacity development, technological advancement, and climate-smart financial instruments aimed at improving sustainability in the supply chain.
- >>> Encourage innovation and value addition to diversify Bangladesh's export basket, reducing reliance on low-margin products.
- >>> Advocate for the integration of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (EUCSDDD) into national regulatory frameworks, including labour and environmental laws, to create a cohesive compliance structure aligned with global changes.

### A SPECIAL GESTURE FROM STOKES & CO:

New Zealand's Tim Southee, who is playing his final Test at the Seddon Park, received a guard of honour from England players yesterday. The visiting side, led by Ben Stokes, showed this heartfelt gesture as the retiring pacer walked out to bat on the opening day of the third Test in Hamilton. Southee, accompanied by his daughter and teammates, took to the field at the start of the play, marking an emotional moment in a career spanning 107 Tests. The 36-year-old then quickfired a 10-ball-23, helping the Black Caps breach the 300-run mark and finish the day at 315-9.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK



### Liton's form in focus as Tigers begin final assignment of 2024

SPORTS REPORTER

Stand-in skipper Liton Das's form will be in focus as Bangladesh begin their final international assignment of the year – a three-match T20I series against the West Indies – with the series opener taking place at the Arnos Vale Ground in Kingstown, St Vincent on Monday.

The wicketkeeper-batter has had a horrid time in both white-ball formats this year, averaging just 1.20 in five ODIs and 18.25 in 17 T20Is outings.

With the added responsibility of leadership thrust upon him in the absence of regular skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, it will be interesting to see whether the experienced cricketer can inspire both himself and the team during the T20I series after the 3-0 drubbing they received in the preceding ODI series in St Kitts.

Liton, who has led the Tigers in this format once before against New Zealand in Auckland in 2021, could not have asked for a better venue to change his fortune as it was this very ground where he scored his lone half-century in white ball cricket this year, an unbeaten 54 against Afghanistan during a T20 World Cup match.

Just like Liton, Bangladesh will also be looking for a change of fortunes in T20Is against West Indies, having lost their previous five meetings against the Caribbean side with their last win coming in 2018, when the Tiger won by 36 runs in the second match of a three-match series they lost 2-1.

To end this cycle of disappointment, Bangladesh would be hoping that Soumya Sarkar, who hit a run-a-ball 73 in the third ODI against West Indies,



will replicate his recent good performances in the format.

The southpaw was named the player-of-the-tournament in the recently-concluded Global Super League held in Guyana after finishing as the highest scorer with 188 runs for champions Rangpur Riders.

"I came here [Caribbean] few days earlier. I played in the GSL, it was a good opportunity for me, I had a good tournament," Soumya said ahead of the series opener.

"It's not about which is the big team and which is the small team. It's about which team plays better for 40 overs on the field. If we can do well in all three departments, batting, bowling and fielding, we believe that we can easily beat them."

"They are a good team in T20s. But rather than focusing on that, we need to focus on giving our best. That's how we can win the match," he said, adding that he hoped the bowlers will bounce back from their poor showing in the ODI series.

Meanwhile, West Indies have had an up and down year in T20Is, winning 14 of 24 games and failing to qualify for the knockout stage of the T20 World Cup they jointly hosted with the USA.

The hosts will get the services of their T20 stars like Rovman Powell, Brandon King, Johnson Charles and Nicholas Pooran in the series and will hope to carry the winning momentum from the 50 over series into the shortest format.

The match is scheduled to start at 06:00 am Bangladesh time and will be telecast live on T Sports.

### BCB seeks ICC clarification over Shakib's bowling suspension

SPORTS REPORTER

A Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official yesterday said they have sought clarification from the International Cricket Council (ICC) to understand whether the bowling suspension imposed on Shakib Al Hasan by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will also be applicable in international cricket.

"We have sought clarification from the ICC. When they inform us, we can talk about how we will go about this matter. The BCB will clarify its position regarding him soon," BCB's cricket operations in-charge Shahrar Nafees told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We got the mail yesterday [Friday]. We will assess it and then decide what to do," he added.

Earlier on Friday, Shakib was slapped with a suspension by the ECB after his bowling action during a County Championship match for Surrey in September was found to be illegal at independent testing at Loughborough University earlier this month. This suspension, which officially began on December 10, would not allow Shakib to bowl in any competition organised by the ECB.

However, according to section 11.3 of ICC Regulations for the Review of Bowlers Reported with Suspected Illegal Bowling Actions, ICC and other cricket boards can also enforce this suspension.

Shakib, who has not played international cricket for Bangladesh since the Test series against India in September-October, is currently in Sri Lanka, taking part in the Lanka T10 for Galle Marvels.

## Diabate 'inspires'

### Mohammedan, frustrates Abahani again

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club's dependency on their long serving striker Souleymane Diabate continues as they secured a 1-0 victory over archrivals Abahani in a crucial Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) fixture in Cumilla yesterday.

The 33-year-old Malian, who had scored the decisive goal against holders Bashundhara Kings in the previous match, rose high to nod home a well-judged cross from Minhajur Abedin from close range in first-half stoppage time.

Ahead of this much-anticipated clash, Mohammedan coach Alfaz Ahmed's decision to rest six players – including Diabate, adjudged player of the match, and Minhajur – during Tuesday's Federation Cup encounter against Rahmatganj MFS eventually paid off, as the fresh players played vital roles in the closely contested affair.

Since making his debut for the Black and Whites in 2019, Diabate has played 11 league matches against Abahani, scoring eight goals in seven of those matches, in which Mohammedan won one, drew four, and lost two. Diabate also frustrated Abahani by scoring four goals in last year's Federation Cup final, where Mohammedan clinched the trophy with a 4-2 victory in tiebreakers.

"There is no question about Diabate's goal-scoring ability, and he is still our main player, who regularly inspires others on the field," said Alfaz.

"He keeps lighting us up with his performances. Compared to last season, he has been performing well from the start of this season, and we are looking forward to seeing more from him in the coming days."

Alfaz expressed satisfaction after securing three points but

MATCH	RESULT	SCORERS
Mohammedan vs Abahani	1 - 0	Diabate (45+2)
Kings vs Rahmatganj	4 - 1	Fernandes (10), Ferreira (54+1), Rana (53), Tapu (76); Jibon (12)
Wanderers vs Police	0 - 4	Al Amin (36, 42), Dipok (79), Kirmane (84)



acknowledged there is still a long way to go as Mohammedan aim for the elusive professional league title this season.

"We have already crossed two big hurdles, and we need to stay focused in the remaining matches to avoid dropping points," said Alfaz, adding that Abahani, despite missing their foreign players, were still strong enough to challenge Mohammedan.

At Shaheed Dharendraanath Datta Stadium, Mohammedan dominated the opening half, ending up with a deserving lead. Abahani, however, responded strongly after the interval, creating several chances – most notably, Mohammad Ibrahim's powerful shot came off the post

early in the second half before Arman Faisal Akash narrowly missed the target late in the stoppage time.

"I am disappointed with the result because we deserved at least one point," said Abahani head coach Maruful Haque, adding that they never felt the absence of foreign players in terms of ball possession and creating chances against Mohammedan.

With three consecutive victories, Mohammedan now top the table with nine points, two ahead of second-placed Brothers Union and three clear of the joint third-placed teams Abahani, Bashundhara Kings, and Rahmatganj MFS.

### MANCHESTER DERBY

## City crisis overshadows United's malaise

REUTERS, LONDON

It would have seemed inconceivable at the start of the Premier League season that by the time the Manchester derby rolled around it would be Pep Guardiola's City enduring a crisis so serious it has distracted attention from United's malaise.

That has really taken some doing. After all, United sacked manager Erik ten Hag in October, parted ways with sporting director Dan Ashworth this week after just five months and sit 13th in the table under new manager Ruben Amorim.

United's 3-2 home defeat by Nottingham Forest last weekend underlined the size of the task Amorim faces at Old Trafford.

Yet it is City's meltdown which is the main talking point ahead of Sunday's clash at The Etihad Stadium.

Guardiola's side have won once in their last 10 matches in all competitions, sit fourth in the Premier League, eight points behind leaders Liverpool, and are in danger of a

humiliating exit from the Champions League.

Beset with injuries to key players and drained of confidence, City's 2-0 defeat by Juventus on Wednesday had some pundits declaring the end of Guardiola's golden era.

All things are relative though. Since United's last Premier League title in 2013, City have won it seven times, six under Guardiola including the last four.

City still possess a squad full of serial winners and Guardiola, having signed a two-year contract extension, is hardly likely to walk away or be shown the door any time soon.

The Spaniard is not immune to criticism though and City fans will demand a return to business as usual, starting with the visit of United on Sunday.

"Of course, I question myself in the good moments and the bad moments. I was stable in the good moments and I'm stable in the bad moments," Guardiola said after defeat in Turin left his side in 22nd place in the 36-team Champions League group.



### Shanto shines on return

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto marks a brilliant comeback from injury, smashing 80 off 54 deliveries for Rajshahi Division in their National Cricket League (NCL) T20 fixture against Barishal Division at Sylhet Outer Stadium yesterday. Despite the valiant effort of Shanto after over a month-long layoff from injury, sustained during last month's Afghanistan ODI series in Sharjah, Rajshahi lost by five wickets in a high-scoring thriller. Meanwhile, in other third-round matches, Rangpur Division, Dhaka Metro, and Chattogram Division secured victories in their respective encounters against Sylhet Division, Khulna Division, and Dhaka Division.

PHOTO: NCL



Way Way Shai Marma captivates the audience during the 5th National Age-Group Gymnastics Championship, sponsored by Sheltech Group, at the National Sports Council (NSC) gymnasium in Dhaka yesterday. Way, who competed in six events in the 13-15-year-old category for Quantum Cosmo School and College, finished first in parallel bars, high bar, and floor exercise, while securing runner-up positions in the rings and vault events. Quantum Cosmo, established in Bandarban with the aim of accommodating under-privileged children, claimed an overwhelming 70 out of 80 medals across six age-group categories -- ranging from seven to 15 -- while BKSP bagged the rest.

PHOTO: STAR

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## BANK COMPANY ACT Janata Bank exempted so it can lend more to Beximco

MD MEHEDI HASAN

State-run Janata Bank has been partly exempted from the Bank Company Act-1991 so that it can lend money to Beximco Group, a loan defaulter.

Bangladesh Bank had done this with the government's consent so that the workers of the conglomerate get three months' salary, said Mohammad Shahrar Siddiqui, director of the Banking Regulation and Policy Department-1 at the central bank.

The BB issued a notification with immediate effect on December 12, stating that the Janata Bank had been exempted from part of sections 26 and 27 of the act.

As per the sections, Beximco, the largest borrower from Janata Bank, is not eligible to get more loans because it's a defaulter and it has borrowed over 25 percent of Janata's capital.

Beximco has so far borrowed Tk 23,328 crore from the Janata, and

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Construction work is going on at the Panthakunja Park near Sonargaon intersection in the capital. Bangladesh Gacch Rakkha Andolon demonstrated at the park yesterday demanding cessation of the construction work for an elevated expressway ramp that they said would destroy park.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Unite to build a fair, inclusive Bangladesh

Says Tarique; Fakhru  
hopes for polls soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said his party aims to build a democratic, fair and inclusive Bangladesh through the united efforts of everyone.

"Let us all unite to build a democratic Bangladesh with a non-discriminatory, inclusive and liberal society," he told a views exchange meeting with a group of physically disabled individuals at the LGED auditorium in the capital's Agargaon.

Tarique, who attended the meeting virtually, pledged that if BNP comes to power, his government will ensure equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities, treating them with the same sincerity as all other citizens of the country.

He said his party is committed to taking concrete steps to improve the quality of life of the people with special needs, focusing on ensuring their economic independence, social empowerment and human dignity.

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## US, regional diplomats meet to discuss Syria crisis Arab FMs urge support for 'peaceful' transition

REUTERS, Aqaba

Top diplomats from the United States, Turkey, the European Union and Arab nations met in Jordan yesterday for talks on Syria as regional and global powers scramble for influence over whatever government replaces ousted President Bashar al-Assad.

Outgoing US President Joe Biden's administration has begun engaging with the victorious rebel groups including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which led a lightning assault that ended in the capture of Damascus on Sunday.

Biden sent Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region this week to seek support for principles that Washington hopes will guide Syria's political transition, such as respect for minorities.

Meanwhile, Syria's northern neighbour Turkey has for years supported Syrian opposition forces looking to oust Assad and is poised to play an influential role in Damascus.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Friday that his country's embassy in the Syrian capital would resume work soon after Turkey's intelligence chief visited this week.

The embassy opened yesterday after a 12-year closure, a week after rebels toppled longtime leader Bashar al-Assad. Representatives of the rebels' transitional government were present at the ceremony at the embassy in the capital's Rawda district, which also hosts other diplomatic missions.

Syria's neighbour Jordan was hosting the gathering in Aqaba. Russia and Iran, who were Assad's key supporters, were not invited.

Blinken, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pederson,

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## POLITICAL REFORMS Rizwana's comment misleading, incorrect Says Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday criticised recent comments of Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan on political reforms, and termed those "misleading" and "incorrect".

Speaking to reporters after paying homage at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur yesterday, Rizvi said Rizwana's remarks hinted at depoliticisation and could strain the relationship between politicians and the civil society.

"This statement by the adviser is wrong and misleading. All reforms have been carried out through the parliament. Various demands raised by the people were implemented in parliament, and politicians played a significant role in this process," Rizvi said.

On Friday, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan had questioned the

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## Intellectuals failed to organise consent for a democratic republic

Salimullah Khan tells *Star* discussion on  
Martyred Intellectuals' Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salimullah Khan yesterday said the task of intellectuals is to realise consent for the state. They constitute the civil society while the organ functioning as political society realises coercion.

"Intellectuals constitute civil society, which is another name for ideological state apparatuses. In Bangladesh, intellectuals failed to produce that consensus or that ideological persuasion in favour of the ruling class ever since gaining independence as a sovereign republic," he added.

"What I'm trying to point out is the two pillars on which the edifice of the state stands are civil society and political society – one being the pillar of consent and the other of coercion. When a state runs on the basis of consent, it constitutes a republic, a democratic state."

He observed that a state cannot run solely on coercion. It needs to operate on public consent, especially if it claims to be a democratic republic. Intellectuals are a vital cog in this process; they enable the state to function based on public consent.

Khan, a professor of General Education Program at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, was speaking at a discussion

titled "the role of intellectuals in reforming the state".

The Daily Star organised the discussion to mark the Martyred Intellectuals' Day, and also as part of storytelling sessions on the sidelines of an exhibition titled "36 Days of July – Saluting the Bravehearts" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Salimullah Khan, a leading academic of the country, said the history of the last 53 years in Bangladesh is a history of the "failure of intellectuals to organise consent of the ruled for the ruling class, and that is what made an event like the July-August revolution not only likely but real."

"Therefore, as the old generation of intellectuals failed them, the new generation of students had perforce to lead an upsurge as harbingers of a new generation of organic intellectuals."

Khan said the Pakistanis killed intellectuals just ahead of Bangladesh's victory as they understood they (intellectuals) had made people conscious about the neocolonial rule of the Pakistanis during the independence struggle.

He described a section of intellectuals as "traditional" ones who are conservatives, if not outright reactionaries ... who comprised

PHOTO ON PAGE 2 SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



## Man dies after 'cops pushed him off bridge' Police claim he jumped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A man was killed after being allegedly pushed off a bridge by police personnel in Kusthia's Bheramara upazila on Friday evening.

Rafiqul Islam Dudu, 44, was the owner of a tea stall in Chandipur under Chandgam Union. He was the younger brother of Mostafizur Rahman, general secretary of the union's Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal unit.

Denying the allegation, police said Dudu jumped off the bridge to escape the law enforcers.

Locals and witnesses said a five-member police team led by Bheramara Police Station's Sub-Inspector Salaudidin went to Chandipur around 7:00pm.

Four of them stood near Bridge-4 of the Ganges Kobadak project while the other one went to Dudu's tea stall, which was around 50 metres away.

When Dudu went to the bridge, he got locked in altercation with the cops. At one stage, the policemen started beating him up.

The Daily Star correspondent talked to at least two persons who claimed that they witnessed the incident.

Seeking anonymity, one of them told The Daily Star that he saw a policeman pushed Dudu off the bridge. Then, the team went below the bridge to get Dudu. He was taken to a local health complex.

Contacted, Bheramara Upazila Health

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## AL leader Siraj 'abducted, freed after payment of ransom'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Misbah Uddin Siraj, former organising secretary of Awami League central committee, was allegedly abducted, assaulted, and then released after payment of ransom early Friday in Sylhet, said sources in his family.

Siraj, a resident of the city's Shamimabagh area, was abducted by a group of men on bikes near Fazil Chistha area when he was going to a relative's house on an auto rickshaw late Thursday night, they said.

They beat him up and took him to an unknown place and later called his family for ransom, according to family members who wished to remain unnamed. They said there were a negotiations between them and the abductors over ransom.

The family members, after negotiations, paid the ransom. Following the payment, Siraj was dropped off in the city's Sagor Dighir Par area around 3:00am on Friday, they said.

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SELLING LIKE HOT CAKES...A sure sign of winter's arrival is the sight of people of all ages lining up at street vendors for traditional rice cakes. The photo shows customers crowding a roadside cake stall to indulge in these seasonal delicacies fresh off the stove in the capital's Farmgate area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Won't spare anyone, even if it's Prof Yunus Says Sarjis about those who'd betray spirit of the July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sarjis Alam, general secretary of the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation, yesterday said they would spare no one who would betray the ideals of the July mass uprising.

"From our position, we want to request everyone – police, the army, and the interim government – that we are not power hungry or blind agents of anyone. If we feel that you are betraying the spirit of the mass uprising, we will not spare anyone, even if you are Professor Muhammad Yunus," he said.

He was addressing a programme at Rajshahi Zila Parishad auditorium, organised by the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation to provide financial assistance to families of those killed in

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