



IMF presses for more reforms to unlock \$750m

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Lifeline by boat faces dry season challenges

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## Framed by AL regime, they're in the clear now

Accused in political cases finally getting acquitted; law ministry seeks list of such cases

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

After 13 years of legal battle, BNP leader Moinul Islam and seven others have been acquitted in a case filed over arson, vandalism, and assault on law enforcers in Mohakhali.

Moinul is a joint convener of Banani Thana committee of Jubo Dal, BNP's youth wing.

At least 30 leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations were accused in the case filed with Gulshan Police Station in 2011.

On December 28 last year, a little over a week before the national election, a Dhaka court sentenced Moinul and seven others to 42 months in prison.

Following an appeal, the Special Judge's Court-1 of Dhaka on November 19 this year overturned the verdict citing flaws in the

"We are now seeing judicial confirmation of what political parties have long alleged, that cases were filed for harassment."

TAWOHHIDUL HAQUE Associate Prof of DU

trial court judgment.

"The trial court did not properly scrutinise the evidence. The judgment was neither legally nor factually sound," the special judge court said in its verdict.

The prosecutor failed to prove the charges beyond reasonable doubts, it added.

Moinul's lawyer Eltut Mish said, "My client did not get justice from the trial court. Besides, only seven witnesses testified and most of them were police personnel."

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and other D-8 leaders pose during a photo session at the D-8 summit at the New Administrative Capital of Egypt yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

## 3 youths try to rob bank, end up in detention

Police say suspects used toy pistols

RAKIB MADBER

Two boys aged 16 and a 22-year-old man brandishing "toy pistols" kept the entire nation in suspense yesterday afternoon while trying to rob a bank being inspired by "video games and movies".

After a three-hour-long standoff at the Jinjira branch of Rupali Bank in Keraniganj, they surrendered to law enforcers, claiming they wanted to rob the bank to save a patient suffering from terminal kidney disease and to buy an iPhone.

Police recovered Tk 18 lakh in cash, four toy pistols, and two knives from their possession.

Ahmad Moyeed, superintendent of police of Dhaka, disclosed the preliminary findings while talking to reporters at Keraniganj Model Police Station last night.

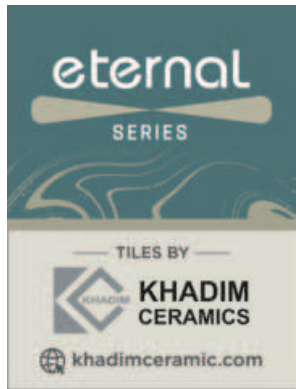
The 16-year-old suspects' identities were not revealed for legal reasons. The 22-year-old youth was identified as Lion Molla Nirob from Gopalganj.

Citing statements made by the detainees during primary interrogation, SP Moyeed said they needed Tk 15 lakh to help the patient.

"Police are now investigating and verifying the address of the patient they have given. They had also planned to buy an iPhone with the remaining Tk 3 lakh," he said.

Witnesses, police, and Rab officials said three persons wearing masks entered the bank in the Chunkutia area around 2:00pm and held the

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CA'S SPEECH

## No mention of election date frustrates BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP expressed its disappointment yesterday over the absence of a specific date for the next parliamentary polls in the chief adviser's recent address to the nation.

The party urged the interim government to set an election date through dialogues with political parties and other stakeholders.

It also pointed out that conflicting statements from the chief adviser and his press secretary about the election timeline have created confusion.

"We had hoped that the chief adviser would come up with a clear election roadmap, but he did not do so. This has left us and the nation disappointed," said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

He was speaking at a press conference at the party chairperson's Gulshan office in the morning.

In an address to the nation on Monday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus hinted that the 13th parliamentary polls could be held either at the end of 2025 or in the first half of 2026.

However, his Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam on Tuesday said the next general election could be expected by June 30, 2026.

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## Invest in youth to build tomorrow's economy

Yunus urges D-8; bats for 'two-state solution' for ending conflicts in ME

"It is not an issue that merely concerns the Muslims. ... It is about the universal pledge to protect the vulnerable. It is indeed our moral duty to stand by them, resolutely."

PROF YUNUS on the plight of Palestinian people

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged the D-8 countries to invest in youth and youth-based startups to build an economy of the future.

He also urged the D-8 to open result-oriented conversations involving the youths and youth-driven businesses and work in unison to improve the lives of people of the bloc.

The Nobel Laureate praised the theme of the summit "Investing in Youth and Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises: Towards Shaping the Economy of Tomorrow" and said the youth and technology-driven businesses would be the driving force of future economies.

He also offered Bangladesh's leadership in convening a multi-stakeholders meeting in 2025 in this regard.

"In the time of changing world of work, we need to rediscover and reposition learning regarding youth and work to redesign

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Hasina among 58 sued at ICT over Pilkhana BDR carnage

Families of 20 slain army officers filed the case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The family members of 20 army officers who lost their lives in the 2009 BDR massacre lodged a complaint against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 57 others with the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday.

The complaint was submitted to ICT Chief Prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam over the killings that took place at the headquarters of the erstwhile Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh) in the capital's Pilkhana on February 25, 2009.

Apart from Hasina, her former defence adviser Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique and ex-army chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed have also been named in the complaint, said lawyer SM Tasmiur Islam, who assisted the victims' families.

Speaking to the media after filing the complaint, the families called for the release of the innocent ex-BDR soldiers who have been imprisoned for years.

"Fifty-seven unarmed army officers were killed because of their patriotism, honesty, and skill. This massacre was

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POLLS PARTICIPATION

## 'No barriers for those compliant with the law'

Says Badiul Majumdar

STAR REPORT

Badiul Alam Majumdar, chief of the Election System Reform Commission, yesterday said he sees no obstacles for those who comply with the law and prepare accordingly to participate in future elections.

"This, however, falls under the jurisdiction of the Election Commission," he wrote in a Facebook post.

He added that the Awami League's electoral activities would depend on the resolution of the cases filed against its leaders. Many AL leaders, including the deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, stand accused in murder cases, including those filed under the ICT Act.

Majumdar came up with the post to clarify the comments he had made earlier in the day after a dialogue with stakeholders at the Rangpur Deputy Commissioner's Office, organised by the Election Reform Commission.

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Scores of people from the low-income group had been waiting near the TNT field in the capital's Khamarbari for the TCB truck, so that they could purchase kitchen essentials at subsidised prices. However, as the truck arrived around 12:00pm and distribution went on till late in the afternoon, many missed the chance to go home and cook lunch for their families. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## EMBEZZLING TK 1,092CR ACC files case against S Alam's son, 57 others

STAR REPORT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has filed a case accusing Ahsanul Alam, former Islami Bank chairman and son of Mohammed Saiful Alam, and 57 others of embezzling Tk 1,092.43 crore.

The money was taken from the bank in the form of loans issued to shell companies, an investigation has found, officials said.

Banking rules were violated and forged documents were used when the loans were issued, said the complaint.

Most of the other accused are former and current bankers who played a role in issuance of the loans from Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC's Chaktai Branch in Chattogram city, ACC Deputy Director Nazmus Sadat told The Daily Star.

The loans were taken by Murad Enterprise, a shell entity that resorted to forgery to get the money, officials said.

ACC Deputy Director Yasir Arslan

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Ahsanul Alam



# Settle issues of 1971 to take forward ties

Yunus tells Pakistan PM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has urged Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to settle the issues of 1971 and help Dhaka move forward with its relationship with Islamabad.

“The issues have kept coming again and again. Let’s settle those issues for us to move forward,” Yunus told Sharif during a meeting at a hotel in the Egyptian capital Cairo on the sidelines of the D-8 summit yesterday.

Prof Yunus said it would be nice to resolve things “once and for all for the future generations”, according to the chief adviser’s press wing.

Sharif said the 1974 tripartite agreement involving Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India settled things, “but if there are other outstanding issues”, he would be happy to look at them.

Bangladesh has long been demanding that Pakistan formally apologise to Bangladesh for the genocide committed by the Pakistani military during the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh.

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Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus exchanges greetings with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif yesterday during a meeting with him at a hotel in Cairo on the sidelines of the D-8 summit.

PHOTO: PID

# Hasina among 58 sued

FROM PAGE 1

a deliberate and planned attempt to destroy the Armed Forces and the BDR, and prolong Sheikh Hasina’s autocratic regime. The bodies of the victims were burned. Such brutal killings are consistent with crimes against humanity,” said Tasmirul.

Nehreen Ferdousi, wife of late Col Mujibul Hoque, requested all not to call the 2009 incident a mutiny. “It was a killing and part of a

planned conspiracy.”

Advocate Sakib Rahman, son of late Col Quadrat Elahi, shared, “I studied law only to avenge my father’s murder. I will fight against my father’s killers.”

Rakin Ahmed Bhuiyan, son of late Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed, said the 2009 incident was a conspiracy to kill the skilled army officers, destroy the army and BDR, and undermine the country’s sovereignty.

“It pains me deeply to

speak of how they murdered my parents. When I asked an officer if I could see their bodies, he advised me against it, warning that I wouldn’t be able to bear it.

“Why were they killed? They were killed because they loved and defended their country. They were targeted and killed as part of a conspiracy. We demand justice. You cannot fathom how I have been living alone since then.”

A press release issued by

the complainants alleged that Sheikh Hasina identified officers who might stand in the way of her autocratic rule, and planned a massacre to strengthen her grip on power.

The ICT is scrutinising the complaint to assess whether the accusations against the 58 individuals fall under the purview of the International Crimes Tribunal Act, Abdullah Al Noman, a prosecutor of the tribunal, told The Daily Star.

# Framed by AL regime

FROM PAGE 1

“All the witnesses lied before the court,” he told The Daily Star.

The Daily Star has found that in at least 12 other violence-related cases, hundreds of BNP leaders and activists were accused and convicted and then those convictions were overturned.

On October 28, 2017, police filed a case accusing 26 leaders and activists of the BNP, and 80 to 90 unidentified people of illegal gathering and assault on law enforcers.

On November 20 last year, a Dhaka court sentenced 25 of the BNP activists to two years in prison. The court delivered the verdict after hearing the testimonies of four cops and a civilian.

One of the convicts, Main Uddin, appealed against the verdict and was acquitted on November 21 this year. BNP Joint Secretary General Habib Un Nabi Khan Soheli was acquitted on November 25 this year in a case filed with Paltan Model Police Station over violence in February 2018.

He was sentenced to two years in prison on December 20 last year, a little over two weeks before the polls. The court delivered the verdict based on five testimonies, all of which were made by police.

Now, the law ministry has taken a step to address the problem – people

accused in criminal cases for their political identities. On December 3, it asked all public prosecutors for lists of political cases filed during the Awami League’s rule from January 6, 2009, to August 5, 2024.

HIGH ACQUITTAL RATE

As per police data between July and September, at least 22,222 cases were resolved across the country. These cases were filed when the AL was in power.

CASES FILED (2009 to Sept 2024)	
Murder	59,823
Theft	1,23,167
Robbery	23,016
Abduction	10,419
Rape	69,938
SOURCE: PHQ	

In these cases, 72 percent of the accused were acquitted.

Legal experts attribute the high acquittal rates to flawed cases, insufficient evidence, and poor investigations.

Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi said half the cases in which people got acquitted were political and many people were framed in those.

“The fascist [Awami League] government focused its energy on political cases,

# No mention

FROM PAGE 1

The BNP said since the new Election Commission has already been formed, there is no justification for delaying the next general election.

“It is possible to hold the election after completing the election-related reforms. Hence, the people expect a clear statement from the chief adviser on this matter,” said Fakhru.

The chief adviser has delivered five speeches to the nation since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5. Following each speech, the BNP has called for a clear election roadmap with a specific timeline.

Fakhru said although the new EC has already been formed, the BNP does not see any preparations for the general election.

He said the CA in his speech mentioned a possible timeframe for the election, but failed to provide clear details about the election roadmap.

“The chief adviser referred to late 2025 or January 2026 as possible dates for the next general election, but his press secretary later stated that elections might be held in June 2026. These contradictory statements will only cause confusion.

“We are uncertain about which statement is correct. It

does not seem logical and it has left us disappointed.”

Asked whether political parties are prepared for elections, he replied that parties are always ready for elections. “Everything will become clear once the election date is announced.”

Enquired whether the BNP would take any measures against former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque over the scrapping of the caretaker government system,

Fakhru said, “Whenever the right time or opportunity arises, he [Khairul] will be brought to book.”

The party welcomed the recent High Court verdict that scrapped part of the 15th amendment.

“We welcome and appreciate this verdict,” said Fakhru.

BNP standing committee member Salahuddin Ahmed also spoke at the press conference.

On Tuesday, the HC scrapped part of the 15th constitutional amendment that abolished the non-party caretaker government system. It also gave some observations.

Fakhru said the HC recognised that the next elected parliament will be the only appropriate forum for amending the constitution.

# ACC files case

FROM PAGE 1

the case with ACC’s Chattogram Integrated District Office-1.

On November 23, 2021, that Chaktai branch lent Tk 966.65 crore to Murad Enterprise just six days after the firm opened an account there, according to the complaint.

The bank’s investment committee did not follow the standard investigative procedure, it adds.

Some of the other accused are former Islami Bank directors Selim Uddin, Asim Alam, Kazi Shahidul Alam, and Sirajul Kabir, and former vice president Tanvir Ahmed.

In another development, the ACC yesterday decided to investigate allegations that Awami League General Secretary and former road transport minister Obaidul Quader, Salman F Rahman, and former chairman of the National Board of Revenue Nazibur Rahman, and six others were involved in corruption.

Another case has been filed accusing former minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder of amassing illegal wealth worth Tk 25.35 crore.

At a press briefing at the ACC headquarters in the capital, ACC’s Director General (prevention) Akhtar

Hossain said there were allegations that Quader and former road transport secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri indulged in corruption during procurement of 137 buses.

According to the complaint, a process of purchasing buses for the 20km specialised lane between Dhaka airport and Gazipur stopped because Quader and Nuri wanted to give the contract to a company of their preference. They failed to do it and delayed the entire process.

Former IFIC Bank chairman Salman F Rahman and its managing director

Shah Alam Sarwar face accusations of violating loan approval procedures and enabling embezzlement through fraud.

The loans to Blue Moon Trading Ltd, Exim Business Ltd, Everest Enterprise, Glowing Construction & Engineering Ltd, Vista International Ltd, and Skymark International Ltd amount to Tk 1,907 crore.

Ex-NBR chairman Nazibur is accused of bribery and corruption.

Former lawmaker Elias Uddin Mollah is accused of grabbing 700 acres of government land in Mirpur and amassing illegal wealth.

# ‘No barriers for those compliant with the law’

FROM PAGE 1

After the discussion, when a journalist asked if AL could participate in the polls, he replied, “Like you, we too are waiting to see. I don’t see any barriers and neither have I observed any deliberate obstacles for them [to participate].”

Stressing the need for an inclusive election, he also said, “Any party that is prepared to contest [the polls] will be able to do so without any barriers. I hope, all parties will participate in the election.”

In his post, Majumdar said the media had misquoted him, “which is undesirable”.

Hours after the dialogue in Rangpur, the Anti-discrimination Students’ Movement in a press release sharply rejected his comments.

Fatema,

spokesperson for the platform, wrote, “The Awami League had unlawfully manipulated the last three elections to hold on to power. Allowing a party that has tarnished Bangladesh’s electoral system to participate in the election is a direct affront to the people’s aspirations ... It would undermine the sacrifices of the July uprising martyrs.”

In the release, the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement called on Majumdar to retract his statement and take appropriate measures to prevent the AL from participating in the election.

In his response, Majumdar wrote, “Following the discussions, some local journalists asked me about future polls. I stated that our commission would

propose necessary reforms to electoral laws, rules, and regulations to ensure fair, impartial, and participatory elections.

“Unfortunately, some media outlets have misinterpreted my statement and published misleading news.”

He also wrote that the AL government was ousted on August 5 through a mass uprising that saw immense sacrifice and deaths of many students and others. He said that over the years he too played a role towards that ouster and was harassed in many ways.

Majumdar added that the misinterpretation (of his words) saddened him, and that such propaganda is tantamount to disrespecting the blood of martyrs Abu Saeed and Mir Mugdhoo.

He, however, stated

that the dialogue with the stakeholders in Rangpur was successful.

At that discussion, Majumdar also said, “This election will be festive with the participation of all political parties. No party will face any obstacle.”

Speaking about past polls, he observed the elections under political party-led governments had obstructed the Election Commission from functioning impartially.

He then assured that this time, the election officials would be free from influence and able to conduct a fair, transparent and unbiased election.

Majumdar also mentioned that the Election Reform Commission plans to submit reform proposals to the chief adviser by December 31, after discussions with all political parties and stakeholders.

# 3 youths try to rob bank

FROM PAGE 1

officials and customers hostage to rob the bank.

Sensing something bad happened inside, the locals locked the gate from the outside and informed law enforcers, they said.

Members of the police, Rab, and army rushed to the spot and started negotiating with the alleged robbers to make them surrender.

The security forces warned that a joint operation would be launched if the suspects refused to comply. After hours-long conversations, the robbers finally surrendered around 5:15pm.

The three robbers were whisked away on a microbus escorted by members

of police and Rab, Rab-10 commanding officer Kahalilur Rahman Hawlader told reporters on the spot around 5:30pm.

No casualties were reported, and the bank authorities will assess the damage, he added.

Matiur Rahman, a resident of an adjacent building, said he and others rushed in front of the bank upon hearing about the robbery, and they locked the gate from outside.

“As we tried to talk to robbers, they brandished their firearms at us and asked us to leave the place. They threatened to open fire otherwise,” he said.

Matiur along with others then stepped back and waited

for the arrival of the law enforcers.

He said the robbers continued threatening to harm the hostages even after the arrival of the police and Rab. However, they appeared to calm down slightly after the army personnel arrived.

After visiting the bank, Ismail Hossain Sheikh, a general manager of Rupali Bank, said the robbers held 10 bank officials, employees, and six customers hostage and demanded Tk 15 lakh for their release.

“The robbers entered the bank posing as customers and immediately seized the phones of all the hostages. They used one of the phones to communicate with the

bank officials for ransom,” he said.

“No bank money was lost. From next Sunday, transactions will continue in this branch of the bank,” said Ismail.

The bank officials and customers who were held hostage by the robbers were safe.

SP Moyeed said Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam gave instructions from the beginning of the incident to end the operation without any casualties. “That’s why I talked to the robbers for a long time.”

“To frighten us, they initially told us they had people outside. But there were none.”

# Invest in youth

FROM PAGE 1

the economy of tomorrow,” he said, warning about the risks of governments falling behind of the pace of the time.

“Things often evolve too fast and get difficult for governments to comprehend and also to implement. But we must keep on recalibrating our efforts to match the difficulties,” he said.

He called on the countries to build on their heritage and take advantage of the digital revolution that has been with us for years, including using AI.

On SMEs, Prof Yunus said that most of them thrive within informal economies, but aspire to grow and connect to the global supply chain.

Praising the competitive nature of SMEs, Prof Yunus said, “In the D-8 countries, collectively we possess enough wealth to stand by these SMEs. With our modest support, we can shape a virtuous ‘cycle of good’, for them and for our people. We need to let money flow to them,” he said.

Mentioning Bangladesh’s median age of just 27 years, he said every year, around two and a half million young people enter the labour market.

Pointing to the low skill level of millions of workers in the manufacturing landscape of D-8 nations, Prof Yunus said that artificial intelligence, machine learning, data-

driven tools and applications have come up with a new horizon of opportunities to develop efficiency.

He proposed two specific actions for youth development.

Firstly, building and deepening functional, impact-driven connections between universities and equivalent knowledge institutions and the youth.

Secondly, he proposed thinking deeply about how to skill up millions of young adults in workplaces as well as confronting the challenge of re-skilling millions at different vocational streams, on a continuous basis.

He proposed thinking of a cooperative learning agenda that can complement the national undertakings of the D-8 countries.

Yunus thanked all the member states for supporting Bangladesh during its presidency of the bloc and wished Egypt the best for taking the role.

End brutalities in Palestine, Lebanon  
Prof Yunus also called upon the international community to take decisive and collective actions to end the brutalities unleashed by the Israeli forces in Israel and Lebanon.

“We call upon all actors and stakeholders to take decisive and collective actions to end the brutalities,” he said while addressing a special session on the Humanitarian Crisis and Reconstruction Challenges in Gaza and

Lebanon.

“From Cairo, we must voice our unity and unwavering commitment, in solidarity with our Palestinian brothers and sisters, at this existential time in their history,” the chief adviser said.

The massacres in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon, are clear violations of international law and constitute war crimes. Those responsible must be held accountable, he added.

Urging for the “two-state solution,” he feared further escalation if hostilities in Lebanon continued.

This may destabilise the whole region, impacting global society and polity, not just the economy, he added.

He said Palestine has to emerge as a fully independent state based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

“It is not an issue that merely concerns the Muslims. Rather, a universal cause where human dignity is tested. It is about the universal pledge to protect the vulnerable. It is indeed our moral duty to stand by them, resolutely.”

He said more than six million Bangladeshis are living across the Middle East, including in Lebanon and the violence is a threat to their safety and security.

He said beyond humanitarian interventions, it is time to prioritise thinking of the reconstruction of Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon.

# Murder case

FROM PAGE 14

and 50 others injured in the clash between the two groups.

Meanwhile, Reza Arif, who is looking after the foreign guests of Saad’s faction, told The Daily Star that around 1,000 supporters of Zubair still occupied the Ijtima ground despite a ban on gatherings in the area after the deadly clash.

Gazipur Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner NM Nasiruddin told The Daily Star that after a meeting at the Home Ministry on Wednesday, it was decided that 500 of Zubair’s followers would stay in the field to protect their goods. Since Saad supporters have no belongings there, they cannot stay there, he added.

Zubair faction’s media coordinator Habibullah Raihan said 300-400 followers were still guarding their belongings, while Saad faction media coordinator Md Sayem called the arrangement discriminatory.

BLAME GAME

Thousands of Muslim devotees congregate during Ijtima every year in the Ijtima Maidan, a large field on the bank of the Turag river in Tongi. The two factions have been organising the Ijtima in two phases over the past few years due to the dispute.

Both factions in separate press conferences in the capital yesterday said that their phase of Ijtima would be held as per the schedule.



# Internet was shut down on Hasina's orders

## Palak confesses at ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, former state minister for posts, telecommunications and information technology, has confessed to deliberately shutting down the internet nationwide during the July uprising on former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's orders.

His testimony was recorded by the International Crime Tribunal's investigation agency following a questioning session held on Wednesday, said Chief Prosecutor Md Tajul Islam while addressing journalists at the tribunal yesterday.

"They [Hasina and Awami League lawmakers] wanted to ensure that Bangladesh was disconnected from the rest of the world to hide the instances of mass killings during the protests," Tajul said.

According to the chief prosecutor, Palak also said he had lied by saying that the internet blackout was caused by a fire incident in data centres in Dhaka's Mohakhali and destruction of telecommunication infrastructure by protesters.

"A WhatsApp group was created with International Internet Gateway service providers. A direct order was

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Environmental activists, under the banner of the "Bangladesh Tree Protection Movement," demonstrate at the Panthakunja Park in the capital's Panthapath area yesterday, demanding an end to pollution and tree felling in the name of development projects.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# 'Improve within a month, or face consequences'

## Adviser says 'heads will roll' if BRTA doesn't upgrade services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take action against Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials, including its chairman, if the authority fails to improve its services within a month, Road Transport and Bridges Ministry Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan announced yesterday.

He also suggested that BRTA could seek assistance from private service providers for vehicle fitness verification and driving licence issuance if necessary.

The adviser briefed the media on a series of decisions made at a meeting held at Bidyut Bhavan aimed at bringing discipline to the

### DECISIONS FROM MEETING

- Remove buses over 20yrs old
- Remove trucks over 25yrs old
- Police to identify traffic congestion areas
- Tow illegally parked vehicles
- Loan assistance for new buses
- Encourage school buses for transport
- Company-operated buses on 9 routes

road transport sector, reducing traffic congestion, and curbing air pollution. The meeting was attended by four advisers and senior officials from police and other government agencies.

During the meeting, the police were instructed to identify congestion-prone areas and take immediate action to improve traffic conditions, with a visible improvement expected within a week.

The adviser said that vehicles parked illegally, causing traffic congestion, will be towed as a punitive measure.

In line with a previous decision made in October, all buses over 20

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## NIPAH VIRUS IN 2024

# Five cases, five deaths!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All five people identified to be infected with the Nipah virus in Bangladesh so far this year have died, according to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). The victims include four men and one woman, with two of them being children

The IEDCR revealed these findings yesterday during a view-exchange meeting titled "Spread and Risk of Nipah Virus" at its auditorium.

In her keynote speech, Prof Tahmina Shirin of the IEDCR said that while winter brings seasonal delicacies, such as raw date palm sap, many remain unaware of the risks associated with consuming it. The sap, potentially contaminated by bats, is a primary transmission route for the virus in Bangladesh.

Highlighting surveillance data, Prof Tahmina said Nipah virus was first detected in the country in 2001. Since IEDCR began its surveillance in 2006, 334 cases have been reported, resulting in 245 deaths—a fatality rate of 71 percent.

This year's deaths include two individuals from Manikganj, while the others are from Khulna, Shariatpur, and Naogaon.

Prof Tahmina said Nipah virus was first identified in Malaysia in 1998-99, spreading

to Singapore and later becoming endemic in Bangladesh and India from 2001. In 2023, 13 cases were reported across eight locations in the country, with the virus now detected in 34 districts.

"Raw date palm sap remains the primary vehicle of transmission in Bangladesh," she said. Twelve tertiary hospitals have observation centres for monitoring Nipah virus patients, she added.

Symptoms of Nipah infection include fever, which may appear within eight days of consuming contaminated sap. The virus can also be transmitted to infants through breastfeeding, and neurological complications may persist in survivors for extended periods.

Prof Tahmina advised, "Before consuming fruits and vegetables, they must be washed thoroughly. Any fruit bitten by bats, animals, or birds should be avoided." She called for heightened awareness, particularly in upazila and district-level hospitals, where testing facilities remain unavailable. With no vaccine currently available, the Nipah virus continues to pose a significant health risk nationwide.

- Overall case fatality rate 71pc
- Since 2001, 343 patients identified, 245 died
- Cases found in 4 districts this year

# A dream trip ends in tragedy

RAFIUL ISLAM

Kamrul Hasan, 23, stepped off a bus on the Mayor Hanif Flyover on Wednesday night, eager for a long awaited trip to Cox's Bazar with friends.

As he made his way to the Sayedabad Bus Terminal to meet them, his life was tragically cut short.

Unknown assailants attacked Kamrul, stabbing him repeatedly in the chest before fleeing with some of his belongings. A passerby later found him lying on the street and gasping for air, and contacted his family using a phone number Kamrul provided.

Kamrul's father, Imam Hossain, rushed to the spot after being informed, only to find him in a critical state.

"My son left the house excited for a trip to Cox's Bazar with his friends... but he came back to us as

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



# Continue struggle to safeguard independence

## Tarique urges party activists

BSS, Dhaka

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman has urged party activists to continue their struggle to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty.

"Today's war is to protect independence and sovereignty, and we are all fighters in this war. To win this war, we must continue our struggle relentlessly," he said while virtually addressing a workshop titled "31 points for repairing the state structure and public involvement".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



# MJF condemns systematic failure to end child abuse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has expressed outrage over the ongoing incidents of child sexual abuse in Bangladesh, particularly girl children.

The organisation said so in light of the recent death of the 10th-grade madrasa student in Nandail upazila, who endured months of continuous rape and physical torture before succumbing to her injuries.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, condemned the incident as a reflection of systemic failure in protecting children.

"This incident is not just a singular tragedy; it reflects systemic negligence and a failure to protect our children," Shaheen Anam said.

"Children, especially those from low income families, are disproportionately vulnerable to such atrocities. The lack of accountability and urgency in addressing these issues is appalling," she added.

Referring to a report by Ain O Salish Kendra which states that over 222 children were raped from January to November 2024, she said, "The justice system and preventive mechanisms are failing our children. This is unacceptable."

"Child abuse is not an isolated issue -- it is a societal crisis that requires urgent and concerted efforts. We owe it to our children to act now," she added.

MJF has long been advocating for stronger measures to combat child abuse. Their recommended measures include strengthening child protection systems, increasing the accountability of law enforcement agencies, and enhancing judicial responsiveness.

The organisation has called on the government, civil society, and all stakeholders to collaborate in ending the culture of impunity surrounding child abuse and to prioritise the safety and well-being of children across the country.

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# Stakeholders urge specialised credit for small farmers



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Small farmers and agro-businesses in Bangladesh are facing significant barriers in terms of accessing loans. This can be solved by creating specialised credit products for them, said speakers at an event yesterday.

These remarks were made at a stakeholder consultation workshop, hosted by USAID's Feed the Future (FtF) Bangladesh Inclusive Access to Finance Activity (IAF), implemented by Palladium International in partnership with SAJJIDA Foundation.

Policymakers, high officials from financial institutions, and other stakeholders came together at the event to validate the preliminary findings of the assessment "Access to Finance Landscape and Inclusive Development in Bangladesh".

Kazi Rafiqul Hassan, Executive Director of Bangladesh Bank, Joseph Lessard, Director, Office of Economic Growth, USAID Bangladesh and Nasir Ahmed, Chief of Party at FtF spoke at the event, among others.

Alexis Polovina, Farzana Yasmeen, and Farhad Hossain from the USAID mission attended the workshop.

## Internet was shut

FROM PAGE 3

communicated through this group to shut down the internet immediately. They were asked to confirm after completion of the order," said Tajul.

Tajul said the interrogation was done in the full presence of lawyers. "There was a glass partition between Palak and the investigation agency, and his lawyers. This is as per the international standard. There is no scope for torture or coercion."

The prosecution was expected to submit a probe report against several government officials, including Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, yesterday, but the bench granted them an additional two months.

The bench, led by tribunal chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder and members Justice Md Shofiul Alam Mahmood and Judge Md Mohitul Haq Enam Chowdhury, passed the order.

## A dream trip ends

FROM PAGE 3

a lifeless body," said Hossain, his voice cracking with grief.

He was first taken to a nearby hospital, and from there he was shifted to Mugda Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Kamrul, the eldest of four siblings, hailed from Noakhali and was living with his family in the Rayerbagh area. He used to run a cloth shop on a footpath in the Maniknagar area.

"He was the family's hope. My son dreamed of creating a better future for all of us. He had been very excited about his upcoming trip as he hardly found the time to go anywhere," Hossain added.

On Wednesday evening,

Kamrul packed his bag and left home. His mother observed him having a heated exchange with someone over the phone.

She never imagined it would be the last time she would see him alive, said Hossain.

According to his family, Kamrul was carrying a smartphone and Tk 10,000 with him. The murderer only took away his phone and Tk 3,000.

The family would later find Tk 7,000 inside one of his pockets, smeared in blood.

Police suspect it to be a mugging incident but are not ruling out other motives.

"We are trying to arrest those responsible for the murder," said Sub-inspector Atikul Islam of Jatrabari Police Station.



A family of seven has packed themselves into this battery-run auto-rickshaw. With three children in tow, this risky behavior could endanger their lives in the event of an accident. The photo was taken on Satmasjid Road yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Prawn production declines due to feed costs, fry shortage

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

Bagerhat district is renowned for commercially producing giant freshwater prawns, which is an important export commodity besides being a popular delicacy across the country.

The production volume of giant freshwater prawns has been on the decline in recent time due to shortage of good quality prawn fries and rising cost of feed, making farmers wary.

The local shrimp cultivators' association believes that the country's export volume of prawns could be tripled if these issues are addressed and resolved.

Giant freshwater prawns, locally known as 'golda chingri', have distinctive tiger-striped brown or black shells, can reach lengths of 35-40 centimetres each, and just four or prawns can weigh up to total one kilogramme.

However, these prawns take around a year of care to reach their full size, thereby requiring a lengthy cultivation process. Medium and

large-sized prawns are usually exported, while smaller-sized prawns are sold domestically at Tk 700-800 per kg. Larger prawns currently fetch a market price of Tk 1,800-1,900 per kg.

Many farmers engaged in prawn farming in Kachua upazila of Bagerhat have expressed concerns over the adverse impact of shortage of high-quality fries and soaring cost of feed on the production of this much sought after export item.



"We are struggling to source good quality fries, while the cost of feed has skyrocketed. This is disrupting the production of prawns and hindering export potential," said Gopal Das, a local prawn farmer.

Fakir Mohitul Islam Sumon, president of Bagerhat Shrimp Cultivators' Association, stressed for government support to address the issues.

"If farmers have access to high-quality prawn fry and reasonably priced feed, the production could be increased by three times. Additionally, government-led training programmes for farmers could help improve yields and exports," he said.

The Department of Fisheries, however, suggested the farmers to modernise their farming practices to boost production. "By using subsidised electricity, improving feed quality, and ensuring virus-free fry production, farmers can enhance prawn size and yields considerably. Increasing pond depth and adopting modern farming techniques will also help in this regard. We are encouraging farmers to shift from traditional to modern farming methods to improve productivity and export capacity," said ASM Russel, district fisheries officer in Bagerhat.

## Improve within a month, or face consequences

FROM PAGE 3

years old and trucks over 25 years old must be removed by May next year. Transport association leaders have already agreed to this decision, and advertisements were published in national newspapers yesterday to announce it.

The government will provide assistance to vehicle owners, if needed, to secure bank loans for purchasing new buses, he added.

School authorities will be encouraged to use school buses for transporting students in a bid to reduce traffic jams, with a directive from the education ministry expected soon.

The adviser also revealed that company-based bus operations will be launched on nine routes in the capital on a pilot basis starting February 25 next year.

Meeting sources reported that several participants accused the BRTA of poor service, particularly the long delays in issuing driving licences and the inadequate vehicle fitness tests.

"There are countless allegations against BRTA... I cannot shut BRTA down, I will take action against each and every employee of BRTA, including its chairman, if they fail to improve service," a participant quoted Fouzul

Kabir as saying.

After the meeting, he told reporters that BRTA had been given one month to improve. If it fails to do so, action will be taken.

BRTA's arrangements for issuing fitness clearance and driving licences were deemed inadequate, and the authority was advised to involve private garages, driving schools, and police in these processes.

In response to questions about whether the government would seek private services, he said that BRTA was failing to meet its responsibilities, causing public suffering and indulging in corruption. He stressed that everything must be done to change the

situation.

When asked about the consequences if BRTA fails to improve, he warned, "Heads will roll."

**AIR POLLUTION MEASURES UNDERWAY**  
Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan said efforts were underway to provide some relief from air pollution, adding controlling pollution would not be possible within a day, month, or even year.

She highlighted the brick kilns in the Ashulia area as a major source of air pollution in Dhaka and mentioned that they were considering declaring Ashulia a brick kiln-free zone.



# NU unveils new ICT building

STAR REPORT

The National University (NU) is set to enhance its Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) services, benefiting both affiliated colleges and students, said a press release.

The announcement came from Vice Chancellor Prof ASM Amanullah at the inauguration of a new ICT building on the NU campus.

Dr Amanullah emphasised the importance of modernising the university to meet global demands and improve access to ICT knowledge.

He also highlighted the need for training faculty and officials abroad to further develop their professional skills.

The VC called for cooperation in making NU a key player in national development.

The ceremony began with a moment of silence to honour the martyrs of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

Special guests included Pro-VC Prof Md Nurul Islam and Treasurer Prof ATM Jaforul Azam. The event was chaired by Shahnewaz, the ICT department's director-in-charge, with deans, staff, and faculty members also in attendance.

## Continue struggle

FROM PAGE 3

The workshop, part of a nationwide programme, was organised by BNP's training affairs committee in Muktarpur, Munshiganj, yesterday evening. It was attended by designated representatives of the party from Manikganj, Narsingdi and Munshiganj.

Tarique stated that the conspiracies of allies of the ousted dictator have not ceased.

"Many BNP leaders and activists have been killed, imprisoned, or subjected to enforced disappearances in their fight to establish democracy," he said.

He added that due to the oppression and torture inflicted by the dictatorial regime, party members were often forced to flee, sometimes seeking refuge in paddy fields.

"Now... the struggle to rebuild the country has begun. The fight to restore the political rights of the

people and to strengthen their economic foundation is underway. Only you can lead this struggle because you are the strength of BNP," he told party members.

The acting chairman highlighted BNP's contributions to establishing multi-party and parliamentary democracy.

He further said, "The mischief of wicked individuals continues, whether outside or within our party, or even beyond our borders. Many are eyeing the country's financial and natural resources with greed."

Tarique Rahman asserted that the country's safety lies in the hands of those who prioritise national interests above all else. He called on party activists to earn the trust and confidence of the people to secure victory in the upcoming general election.

## Affordable beef

FROM PAGE 5

package will help people a lot," said Baki Billah, a customer.

Earlier on November 24, the market was jointly launched by the upazila administration and Amra Kalaparabashi, a voluntary organisation.

There is also a donation box placed in the market, where people can leave some goods for those who are financially struggling to get essential items.

Nazrul Islam, a member

Amra Kalaparabashi, said, "Our initiative aims to provide some relief to both farmers and buyers as they can buy and sell goods in this market without involvement of any syndicates."

Echoing him, Md Rabiul Islam, upazila nirbahi officer of Kalapara, said, "Syndicates have continuously increased the prices of daily necessities through market manipulation. That is why such a farmers' market is so important."

### Tender Cancellation Notice

Date: December 19, 2024

**Tender title: Procurement of Cleaning Services**  
Invitation Ref. No. & Date: icddr,b/SCM/GoB/OTM/Pkg#PS-04/2024-25, Dated: 10-11-24  
Published in: The Daily "Ittefaq" & "Daily Star" on November 10, 2024 and Addendum published on 04-12-2024.

The above tender for Procurement of Cleaning Services is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

**Senior Manager**  
Supply Chain Management  
Tel: 02-222277001-10, 16340  
Ext. 4405/4400

### ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

বঙ্গবন্ধা ডি-ব্লক ২০০০ বর্গফুটের সিঙ্গেল ইউনিটের সেমি ফেয়ারেসেস নির্মাণাধীন ফ্ল্যাট।  
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিম।

০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮  
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬

### ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

আপার্লিও জনতা হাউজিং-৫১৩২৫ বর্গফুটের দক্ষিণমুখী নির্মাণাধীন ফ্ল্যাট।  
ম্যাজিক ব্রিকস হোল্ডিংস লিম।

০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭  
০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮

### ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

বঙ্গবন্ধা এল-ব্লক একই ব্লকিং এ ১৫২০ বর্গফুটের ৩ টি রেডি ফ্ল্যাট।  
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Affordable beef packages at Krishak Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

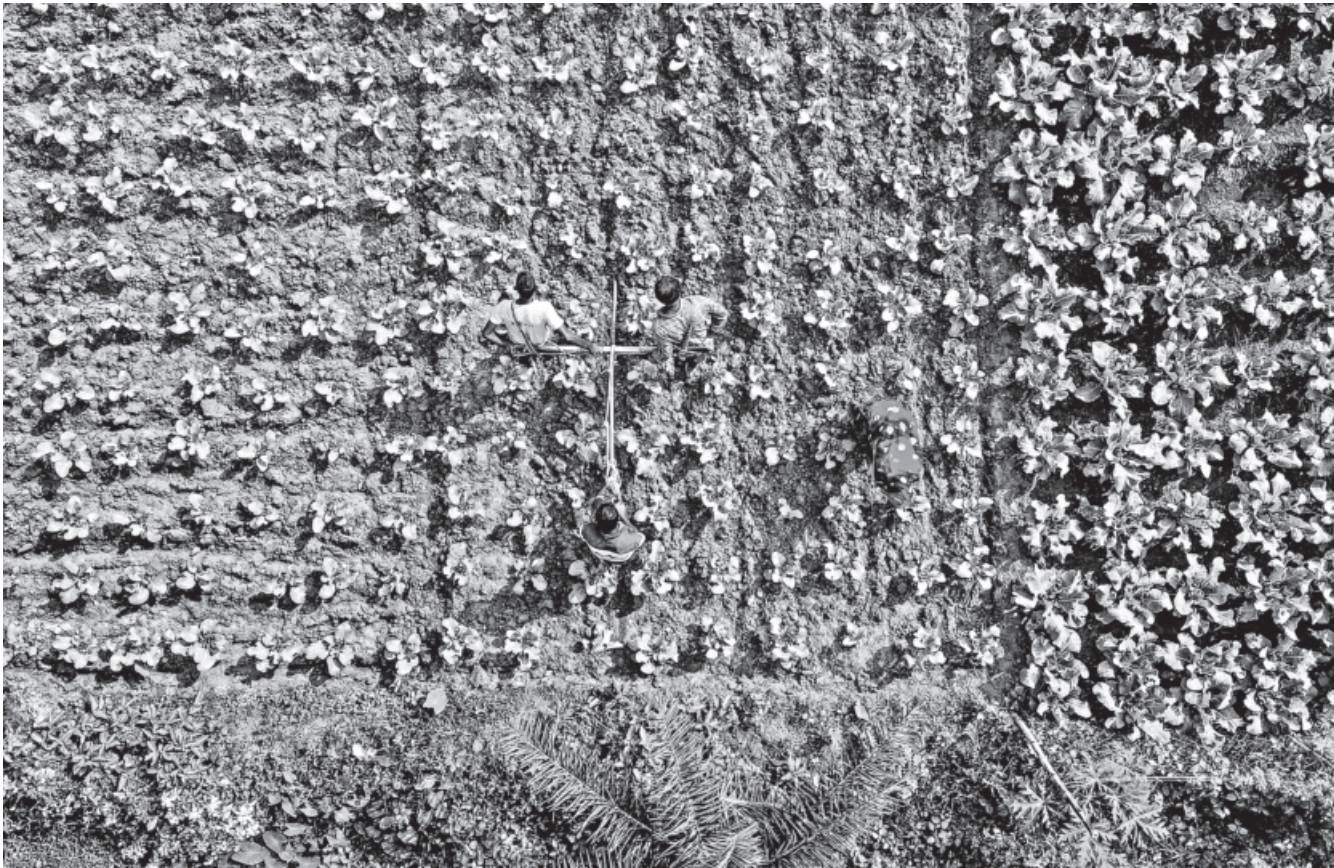
Rampant inflation over the last year has resulted in many items like beef, oil and eggs almost become luxury items for the average Bangalee families. For many, it almost becomes a choice between eating something like beef for a day or surviving through month.

To provide some relief to consumers, the Krishak Bazar (Farmers' Market) in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila recently launched a beef combo package with two options – one where customers can purchase 200 grammes of beef along with three pieces each of potatoes, onions and green chillies for Tk 200, or just 500 grammes of beef for Tk 325.

After the package was launched, it received overwhelming response from local consumers.

"This is a very good initiative at a time when spiraling prices of essentials have left people grappling to make both ends meet. Normally, beef is not sold in markets below 1 kg in quantity, which makes it difficult for people from middle or low-income families to buy beef. Therefore, this

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Farmers in Khulna use a manual plow to keep the base of their cauliflower plants free from weeds. This activity helps the plants grow faster and ensures an overall good yield. The photo was taken from the Chakundia village of Dumuria upazila of Khulna recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

NAZIRPUR'S FLOATING MARKET

Lifeline by boat faces dry season challenges

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur

On the canals of Pirojpur's Nazirpur upazila, men can be observed selling vegetables straight from their boats at the Boithakata floating market.

"I have been coming to the market every Tuesday and Saturday to sell vegetables since my childhood. We mainly rely on boats to communicate to different areas within the upazila as we don't have any feasible alternatives in the absence of proper rural roads connecting the areas," said Iskandar Ali, 65.

Md Abual Hossain, another vegetable seller, echoed him.

Numerous others were seen coming to the market from different areas in the upazila – including Manoharpur, Sonapur, Padmadubi, Beel Dumuria, Pakuria, and Madhubhanga villages – all using boats to buy and sell an array of goods such as rice, puffed rice, plant saplings and vegetables.

Almost all activities in the market, including transactions, are conducted on boats.

"We are largely dependent on boats for buying or selling goods, as it is the only convenient mode of transport in this area," said Nanna Mia, a local.

Vast areas within Daulbari, Dobra, Kolaroania and Malikhali unions of Nazirpur upazila; Boldia union of Nesarabad upazila in Pirojpur, and some areas under Barishal's Banaripara upazila are mostly marshland. Thus, they do not have well developed rural road communication, thereby making boats the most important mode of transport in the area. As a result, boats are an important part of the local economy.

While the boats can usually serve this purpose without any issues, the dry season



often negatively impacts this. During the dry season, the water level in the marshes and canals falls, making it difficult for boats to navigate the water.

"Crops are usually harvested when the dry season is approaching. As a result, using boats to sell our harvest can sometimes be difficult when water in these canals dry up," said Abdur Razzak, a local resident.

Mizanur Rahman, a businessman at Boithakata Bazar, said there is only one road from the market that connects to the Nazirpur upazila headquarters. Other than that, there is no direct road communication facility in the area. "It would have benefitted the people of the region significantly if the various areas could be connected through rural road networks."

Contacted, Arup Ratan Singha, upazila nirbahi officer of Nazirpur, said they are aware of the poor road communication facilities

within four unions under the upazila.

"We have addressed this issue in our monthly development meeting. The upazila administration will communicate with departments concerned of the government for developing the rural road networks in the upazila," he said.

"Presently, we are prioritising renovation of the around 17km Nazirpur-Boithakata road that connects the four unions with the upazila headquarters," the UNO also said.

"The upazila administration has some limitations in conducting construction of roads and bridges. On the other hand, the Local Government Engineering Department can do these development works on a larger scale," he added.

Contacted, BM Mahmudul Hasan, upazila engineer of LGED in Nazirpur, could not provide any information in this regard as he had joined the office only a month back.

JOURNO KILLING

Former cop placed on 5-day remand

UNB, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday placed former additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police Sadeq Kawsar Dastagir on a five-day remand in connection with the killing of journalist ATM Turab during the July uprising.

Sylhet Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Abdul Momen ordered the remand while Dastagir was produced before the court.

Advocate Abdur Rob, lawyer for the plaintiff, said a seven-day remand had been sought, and the court granted five days.

A Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) team arrested Dastagir from Sherpur on Wednesday.

The murder case was filed by the deceased's brother Abul Hasan Md Azraf on August 19.

PRAYER TIMING  
DECEMBER 20

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
5:25	12:45	3:45	5:24	7:00

JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:00 5:27 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Students' fair price shop draws good response

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

Students from the Kachua upazila in Bagerhat recently came up with a fair price shop initiative in the Signboard area. The initiative drew a large crowd on Friday as customers flocked to the spot to purchase essential commodities at significantly lower prices.

Organised by Kachua General Students' Society and supported by "Cholo Paltai", the shop aimed to provide fresh produce directly from farmers to consumers, bypassing intermediaries.

The shop, which opened at 9:00am and operated until stocks lasted, offered items like potatoes and onions in limited quantities and other vegetables without restrictions. Imported onions were sold at Tk 90 per kg, lentils at Tk 100 per kg, bottle gourd Tk 20-30 each, green chillies at Tk 70 per kg, aubergines at Tk 60 per kilogram, potatoes at Tk 70 per kg, sweet pumpkin at Tk 30 per piece, hyacinth beans at Tk 60 per kg, and four eggs for Tk 46.



Imran Hajra, a representative of the student society, explained, "Farmers normally sell their produce at low prices, but consumers pay a premium due to middlemen. We buy directly from farmers and sell to consumers at lower rates."

Moniruzzaman, organisational secretary of Cholo Paltai, said, "If students run such shops on weekends, both farmers and consumers will benefit, and syndicates will lose their grip on the market. Last week, we sold goods through a similar shop. Today, we purchased produce worth Tk 30,000 directly from farmers." Customers expressed great satisfaction with the initiative.

Nazim Sheikh, one customer, said, "The prices are much lower than the market. I've bought several items and will return every Friday."

Another buyer, Rahman Sheikh, said, "In the market, green chillies are Tk 80 per kg, but here it's Tk 70. This initiative is a blessing for ordinary people and should continue. The fair price shop has proven a win-win for farmers and buyers, sparking hope for a more equitable system."

SAINT MARTIN'S ISLAND

Man's tied-up body washes ashore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A semi-decomposed tied-up body of a man was recovered from the north beach of the St Martin Island of Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The hands, legs, and mouth of the body were bound with rope, said Sub-Inspector Abdur Baten, in charge of the island's police outpost.

The body was washed ashore in the morning, he said, adding that the person might have been killed 8-10 days before. There were several stabbing marks on the body, he said.

"We sent the body to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy," he said.

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Soydabad, Sirajganj.

Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.14 Date: 19/12/2024

**e-Tender Notice**

The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date
1	1030845	Supply of Jockey Pump for fire water system.	18/12/2024	05/01/2025, 15:45	06/01/2025
2	1037101	Supply of Metering Tank for Water Treatment Plant.	18/12/2024	05/01/2025, 15:45	06/01/2025
3	1041888	Spare parts of Switchgear and Protection System.	19/12/2024	09/01/2025, 15:00	09/01/2025
4	1041615	Spare Parts of Battery & Battery Charger System.	19/12/2024	09/01/2025, 15:00	09/01/2025
5	1049814	Procurement of PAC/24-25	19/12/2024	08/01/2025, 15:30	09/01/2025

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

**Engr. Brojendra Kumar Sarker**  
Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)  
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)  
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

**We are largely dependent on boats for buying or selling goods, as it is the only convenient mode of transport in this area.**

NANNA MIA, a local

National University, Bangladesh  
Head Office: Board Bazar, Gazipur  
Procurement & Store Department

Memo No. PSD40-0/00074/2024/1/2598 Date: 19/12/2024

**e-Tender Notice**

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Procurement nature, type & method	Online tender notice publication and closing date
1.	1049605	Purchase of Paper, Stationary and Toiletries Goods for National University	Goods NCT OTM	19-Dec-2024 16:00 09-Jan-2025 14:00
2.	1049203	Purchase of Steel Trunk for Examination Department in National University	Goods NCT OTM	19-Dec-2024 12:00 07-Jan-2025 12:00

The interested persons/firms may visit the website [www.eprocurement.gov.bd](http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd). This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Md. Parvez Sazzad**  
Director (In-charge)  
Procurement and Store Department  
National University, Bangladesh  
E-mail: [procurement@nu.ac.bd](mailto:procurement@nu.ac.bd)

Office of the Director  
Planning, Development & Works  
Sylhet Agricultural University, Tilagor, Sylhet-3100  
Tel: 02-996642193

No. SAU/PDW/APP-2024-25/308/24/442 Date: 19/12/2024

**e-GP Re-Tender Notice**

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

Name of packages	Publication date & time	Tender ID	Downloading the e-Tender documents up to and closing date
Construction of Retaining Wall of Central Lake (Mural to Auditorium and Boishaki Chottor to Auditorium)	22-12-2024 11:00 Hrs	1053918	07-01-2025; 11:00 Hrs 07-01-2025; 12:00 Hrs
Construction of Pre-Loading of Main Road (Main Gate to Boishaki Chottor) including RCC Link Road Beside Main Gate	22-12-2024 11:00 Hrs	1054135	07-01-2025; 10:30 Hrs 07-01-2025; 12:30 Hrs
Earth filling in front of PMAC Veterinary Teaching Hospital	22-12-2024 11:00 Hrs	1054259	07-01-2025; 12:00 Hrs 07-01-2025; 15:00 Hrs
Repair and Maintenance works of Abdus Samad Azad Hall	22-12-2024 11:00 Hrs	1049638	07-01-2025; 12:00 Hrs 07-01-2025; 15:30 Hrs

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

**Prof. Dr. Md. Siddiqui Islam**  
Director (Additional Charge)  
Planning, Development & Works  
Sylhet Agricultural University, Tilagor, Sylhet-3100  
Phone: 02-996642193







## Civil service must not repeat past mistakes

### High number of supernumerary promotions raises concerns

It is quite disturbing that the problems that plagued the administration under the ousted Awami League government continue to persist despite promises of change following the mass uprising. According to a report, since the interim government took charge, the number of officials in the upper echelons of public administration has ballooned to over three times the number of approved posts. Thanks to the surge, there are now 467 officers against the 150 additional secretary posts, 861 officers against 250 joint secretary posts, and 1,599 officers against 450 deputy secretary posts. The surplus is largely due to unchecked supernumerary promotions without actual vacancies, which have made the administration further top-heavy. While most of the new promotions may have been intended to address grievances from the AL era, it has ended up creating fresh challenges.

Besides disrupting hierarchy and balances in the administration, this practice causes various logistical challenges, inefficiencies, as well as inter-departmental discord, thanks to feelings of deprivation by other officers. It also means increased burden on the tax-paying citizens. Meritocracy and accountability are the two biggest casualties in such a situation, which is totally unacceptable. Currently, the public administration has 26 cadres. Among them, administration, foreign affairs, and police cadre officers get supernumerary promotions, with the first receiving the majority of promotions. In contrast, officials from other cadres are promoted only when positions are vacant.

Recovering from the fallout of supernumerary promotions may take years as promotions, once given, cannot be taken back. While addressing past grievances over deprived benefits and promotions is important, it must not be at the expense of meritocracy and accountability. Our report cites some cases where officers, once punished for corruption, have been promoted after August 5. The committee formed to address grievances among administration cadre officers deemed to have been deprived in the past also recently recommended compensations, including retrospective promotions, for 764 of them. Surely not all grievances are justified, or deserving of selective intervention, especially if it involves providing unethical benefits or forgetting past transgressions.

Compounding this issue is the controversy surrounding the recent recommendations of the Public Administration Reform Commission. The commission's proposals—including introducing exams for promotions to deputy secretary and joint secretary positions, and ensuring a 50:50 ratio between administration and non-administration cadres for deputy secretary promotions—have sparked outrage among various cadre groups. While these measures aim to promote fairness and competence, resistance from entrenched interests threatens to derail the ongoing reform drive.

This calls for decisive but carefully-thought-out interventions from the authorities, including the reform commission which must prioritise the interests of citizens while formulating policies. The higher authorities also must resist the temptation to appease any interest group, and undertake comprehensive reforms in public recruitment and promotion processes to restore trust in the civil service.

## Identify all martyrs of the mass uprising

### How else can we honour them for their sacrifices?

The delay in identifying hundreds of individuals killed during the July-August uprising is quite disappointing. According to a *Prothom Alo* report, 80 unclaimed bodies were buried in July and 34 in August at the burial ground adjacent to the Rayerbazar Mass Killing Site Memorial by the volunteer organisation Anjuman Mufidul Islam. Despite clear evidence that some of the graves at the cemetery contain the remains of those killed in the uprising, the exact number remains unknown.

Anjuman Mufidul Islam reported burying 515 unclaimed bodies between January and November, an average of 47 per month. In July, however, the number surged to 80. In August, 34 bodies were buried, with no burial requests made during the first 11 days due to the unrest. Identifying those who died in the protests requires investigation and DNA testing, but progress has been slow. As a result, many protest victims buried in Rayerbazar remain unidentified, leaving their families unable to locate their loved ones' graves or claim compensation. While some families have confirmed through personal efforts that their relatives were buried as unclaimed bodies at Rayerbazar, they remain unable to identify the specific graves.

One such victim is Mahin Mia. His brother, Abdul Jabbar, recounted that they had both participated in a protest at Town Hall in Mohammadpur on July 18. When Mahin did not return home, Abdul searched police stations and morgues in surrounding areas before learning, through photographs from Anjuman Mufidul Islam's office, that Mahin had been killed and buried in Rayerbazar. Fifteen days after Mahin's death, his wife gave birth to their only child. Unfortunately, such heartbreaking stories are quite common, but we are yet to have a comprehensive list of those killed during the uprising.

As of December 18, the Health Directorate's website listed the names and identities of 860 individuals who were killed. Earlier, the health subcommittee for the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement reported 1,581 deaths based on available data. This discrepancy suggests that nearly half of those killed remain unidentified. It is crucial for the government to preserve the graves of the martyrs, including those at Rayerbazar, to allow families to identify them. The government established a Special Cell on the Mass Uprising to create a final list of the deceased, and on November 10, it issued a public notice requesting relatives of individuals who were killed, went missing, were buried as unclaimed, or died during treatment between July 15 and August 5 to register their names. However, as an official from the cell has noted, no significant applications have been received.

Therefore, it is high time the government stepped up efforts to identify those killed. Preserving the memories and graves of these martyrs is essential to honour their sacrifices and provide closure for their families.

# Election in first half of '26 is not unreasonable, but Dec '25 is doable

### The chief adviser should consider the first option

#### THE THIRD VIEW



Mahfuz Anam  
is the editor and publisher of  
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

prove to the world.

Both can be achieved within the next 12 months.

All the main six reform committees, the most important ones as stated by the chief adviser himself, are scheduled to submit their reports by the end of 2024 or maximum by January next



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

year. The chief adviser's suggestion about the formation of a consensus commission is, in our view, a brilliant innovation that will help us move towards a stable future. The consensus commission will engage with all the political parties to reach consensus on which recommendations are to be implemented by the interim government—through ordinance—and which are to be left for the elected government. Achieving a consensus among all parties will be a major political goal, which has not been achieved since the all-party charter during the fall of the Ershad government in 1990. Since the chief adviser himself will chair the consensus commission, we feel confident that a positive outcome will certainly emerge.

Coming back to the timeline, if the commission starts its work following the submission of reports by December-January, the interim government will have nearly 10 months to move towards the election.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin said on Tuesday that the Election Commission has been preparing for the election from the day of their taking office, and it is ready

of the reduced prospect of natural disruptions like rain, floods, cyclones, etc must not be overlooked.

The actors in the political field today are Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islami, and numerous smaller political parties. The new entry, which is likely to be a significant player, is the political party of the student groups that played a decisive role in toppling the old regime. They have declared their intention of forming a political party within a very short time, with its own student wing.

BNP is the party waiting at the doorstep of assuming power. Therefore, its eagerness to push for the earliest timetable for the election is predictable. The speech by Tarique Rahman, the party's acting chairman, on December 18, urging his party members to focus on "reforms and not revenge" deserves commendation. He further said, "If you want to respond to the injustice, oppression and suppression done to you, you should not imitate what they [Awami League] have done. If we do so, there will be no difference between them and us." This is a highly refreshing and welcome position, and a very powerful and

farsighted one.

Even before the submission of the constitutional commission's recommendations, Tarique has said he and his party will recommend two terms for the prime minister, to be fixed by the constitution. As the person who may hold that position, if voted so, he was in fact putting restrictions on his own possible future tenure—a most appreciable and hitherto unprecedented gesture. He also expressed his support for a bicameral legislature for the future. Both these suggestions have far-reaching political consequences for us, and clearly shows that the acting chief of today's BNP is thinking ahead.

The party's 31-point programme, which was prepared some time ago, lays out clearly what the BNP proposes to do once in power. However, we are used to our political parties promising the moon before the election and then forgetting everything once in power. But given the July-August uprising, we hope things will be different this time.

Jamaat has extended a conditional support to the chief adviser's polls plan, with the secretary general saying, "Despite our initial reluctance regarding the delay, we will remain patient as long as the chief adviser honours his commitment to hold elections... we are ready to cooperate with him." This clearly shows that Jamaat is not in any hurry. The reason is obvious: the more time it gets, the more will Jamaat, as the second biggest party right now, be organised when the election comes.

It is our view that smaller parties will acquiesce to the chief adviser's mid 2026 timeline as they may not expect too much from the election and are better off now in terms of being treated on an equal footing with all others.

Among the most interesting political developments that are likely is the new party planned by the students. It will be interesting to see them emerge as a political force, get voters' support by joining the election, and participate in the governance process, being elected MPs. The new party may bring about a refreshing change in our political scene with new and bold ideas aimed at removing discriminations from our society. However, they would prefer more time to be able to organise themselves better, and hence are opposed to an early election.

Whatever the differing stances of various political parties may be, people in general would, we think, prefer to exercise their franchise to elect their government, something they have been deprived from for the last 15 years.

# The hidden cost of workplace oppression



Taslima Tinni  
is a human rights activist.

TASLIMA TINNI

Beneath the surface of professional relationships lies a troubling culture of psychological oppression, domination, and exclusion. Workplace intimidation remains pervasive and deeply entrenched. Unlike physical violence, this invisible sadism leaves no bruises but profoundly impacts mental health, career progression, and organisational well-being. Alarming, such dynamics are not exclusive to male supervisors; women in authority often perpetuate these behaviours, inadvertently upholding patriarchal systems that resist genuine gender equity.

Workplace violence is often narrowly defined as physical altercations or blatant harassment. Yet its most insidious form manifests through psychological harm rooted in power imbalances and gender oppression. This systemic violence festers in environments where dominance is normalised, dissent discouraged, and authority unchecked. It corrodes not just mental well-being but also the broader integrity of workplace culture.

At the core of professional hierarchies lies an unequal relationship between supervisors and subordinates. Supervisors, regardless of gender, often misuse power through harmful behaviours shaped by societal conditioning and organisational structures. Male supervisors may wield psychological violence to

reinforce patriarchal dominance, while female supervisors may adopt authoritarian methods to align with patriarchal leadership standards. This misuse of authority, cloaked as "tough love" or "professional rigour," creates what can be termed "invisible viciousness"—subtle, pervasive, and difficult to challenge.

This harm manifests in various ways: silencing employees, undermining contributions, blocking career advancement, or perpetuating microaggressions that erode confidence. The psychosocial toll is immense, leaving victims grappling with stress, diminished self-worth, anxiety, and depression. These emotional wounds often go unacknowledged, extending far beyond the workplace and impacting broader organisational potential. As long as these behaviours remain overlooked, true equity and inclusion will remain elusive.

Workplace violence is an extension of societal patriarchy. Historically, workplaces were designed by men, for men. Despite progress, gendered power structures persist, with male supervisors dominating not just through overt acts but also through systematic exclusion of women and gender minorities from decision-making, career development, and leadership opportunities.

For women, this psychological

violence has severe consequences. Being undermined in meetings or dismissed sends a message that their voices do not matter. Such experiences foster a culture of silence and fear, stifling ambition and creating long-term mental health challenges. Women are often made to feel lucky to have a seat at the table instead of empowered to lead it. This diminishment chips away at confidence, amplifies stress, and fuels burnout, yet it is rarely addressed in workplace policies.

One significant arena for this invisible violence is participation in decision-making. Women frequently find their ideas sidelined or accredited to male colleagues, their expertise dismissed, or their efforts blocked. For supervisees under patriarchal leadership, this violence takes the form of micromanagement, constant monitoring, or outright dismissal of their capabilities. Such domination fosters isolation, silences dissent and discourages victims from speaking up due to fear of retaliation.

Internalised patriarchy compounds these issues, as societal norms pit women against each other as competitors rather than collaborators. Women leaders face a double bind: labelled "too soft" or "too aggressive," they often adopt harsher leadership styles to prove their competence. Studies show women managers are 40 percent more likely than men to face criticism for their leadership approach, prompting authoritarian behaviours that perpetuate patriarchal systems.

Organisational blind spots further enable harm. Emotional harassment is addressed in only 20 percent of global workplace policies, and accountability is often weak unless scandals emerge. In patriarchal cultures, leadership is equated with dominance, silencing supervisees—particularly women—

who are labelled "difficult" for challenging authority. This toxic cycle sustains inequality and undermines workplace well-being.

Despite moral and legal obligations to address workplace violence, existing safeguards are ill-equipped to handle gender-based psychological violence. Policies typically focus on overt harassment, ignoring subtler forms of harm. Worse, reporting mechanisms often retraumatise victims, especially when the accused is a supervisor with institutional backing.

To create truly inclusive and safe workplaces, organisations must adopt a holistic view of violence. Safeguards must extend to subtle oppression, holding supervisors accountable for exclusion, favouritism, or verbal abuse. Anonymous reporting systems, gender-sensitivity training, and external audits are essential to identify and address systemic power abuses.

Real change requires acknowledging the prevalence of psychological violence and dismantling its roots in patriarchal power structures. It is not enough to celebrate token achievements or count women in leadership roles. The real work lies in confronting the invisible barriers perpetuating harm, particularly in supervisor-supervisee relationships.

True gender equality demands more than policies—it requires a cultural shift in how power is understood, shared, and exercised. Only by addressing the systemic violence woven into workplace hierarchies can organisations create environments that foster equity, inclusion, and collective well-being. Without addressing these psychosocial dimensions, the cycle of invisible violence will continue to sabotage the progress we desperately need.



# Our expectations of this government should match its competence



**Zia Haider Rahman,**  
a former international human rights lawyer and head of research at Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), is the author of the novel 'In the Light of What We Know.' His Facebook handle is @ZiaHaiderRahmanBD.

ZIA HAIDER RAHMAN

However lacklustre the interim government might seem today, it is still the best government one could have hoped for in August. Amid the chaos, an administration was cobbled together and appointments made with only such care and political acumen as an academic and his confidantes could muster under pressure.

Prof Muhammad Yunus was, of course, the right person at the right moment. He brought huge symbolic power, and, more importantly for a mandate, he enjoyed the respect of the student movement that had led the revolution, suffered for it, and had thereby come to define the nation's moral compass. But, even as we fully supported Yunus's leadership, older observers no doubt recalled the professor's abortive attempt 17 years ago to start a party. The hope this time around was that an older and wiser Yunus would enlist enough talent to make up for any shortfall in capability and vision.

The availability and conscription of talent has been an issue. In the first few months, a number of senior appointments were made only for the appointee to withdraw their name within days. And there has been a failure to recruit people with requisite skills into poorly paid government and agency roles relating to finance and economics, such as at the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

Moreover, if diaspora associations of Bangladeshis are to be believed, the interim government has failed to avail itself of the country's brain drain of talented Bangladeshis who left for American universities and then went on to develop skills in demanding professional roles abroad, but who, apparently, stood ready to return and provide their services *pro bono publico*. But quality was never the priority in exigent circumstances. This was and remains an emergency government.

If we grasp that our expectations were unrealistic, a decline in our expectations of the interim government need not entail a sense of disappointment. In a recent interview with the editor of this daily, the chief adviser issued a corrective, again, when he said, "We are not rulers but facilitators." This is hardly the revolutionary rhetoric of radical reform; our expectations should correspond accordingly.

What expectations, then, should we have? Told repeatedly to vest hope in various commissions, we might have looked to their terms of reference. But, despite promises, terms were never published, and it now appears none of the commissions received any.

Mercifully, if promises are kept, we are only two or so weeks from recommendations from key commissions. But, again, we

should temper expectations: in the same aforementioned interview, the chief adviser emphasised that recommendations would be acted on if and only so far as consensus among political parties allowed. In recent comments, he added that another commission would be formed, this time to build such consensus. And, in a dramatic turn, he indicated that elections might come as early as the end of 2025, which immediately had many wondering whether anything more than anaemic reforms could achieve sufficient political consensus to be pushed through in under a year.



**Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus is sworn in as the chief adviser of the interim government by President Mohammed Shahabuddin in Dhaka on August 8, 2024.**

FILE PHOTO: PID

No sooner had the chief adviser mentioned the prospect of a short timetable than leaders of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement, and the Bangladesh Students' Union all demanded that key reforms be completed before holding elections.

It is increasingly apparent that the student movement could emerge next year as the interim government's greatest critics. Driven by a sense of justice, not least to honour the sacrifices of their peers, will students abide anything less than radical reforms? Adviser Nahid Islam, for instance, has scarcely been shy with talk of banning political parties and punishing journalists deemed to have aided the former regime. His public remarks have often been hastily followed by other advisers' efforts to roll back what he said.

The dynamic between the interim government and the student movement may yet decide the former's fate. To some, a full-

manage our expectations of the interim government. If Bangladesh aspires to have liberal democracy—meaning, broadly speaking, democratic pluralism with the rule of law and protections for the rights of minorities—it will be swimming against the global current. These days, the US, France, Germany, and a host of other countries (such as South Korea) are hardly resounding advertisements for liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is losing or loosening its moorings, in countries where one might once have naively thought a version of liberal democracy had achieved permanence, marking an end to a history of grand, ideological struggles.

The theme throughout is the failure of a global economic order to deliver to most citizens; the majority in the US, the UK, France and elsewhere have seen no real growth in household incomes in decades—in the case of the US, for well over three decades. In a climate of economic insecurity and disappointment, right-wing

demagogues have marched in with little more to offer than a pretence of upsetting the applecart.

I mention all this because speaking to the business community has concentrated my attention on economic missteps, as has recognising that it's rare—some would say unheard of—for a country to secure liberal democracy without first finding a firm economic foundation. I can't think of any.

Since August, there have been too many economic errors and missed opportunities. One of the world's leading venture capital operations visited Bangladesh to discuss investment in the country. They were not taken seriously, I'm informed, by that tired old Dhaka elite we're all familiar with, an elite that stands to lose some privileges when or if Bangladesh enters the next phase of economic development, a phase in which, among other things, investment capital must be better able to reach the best and the brightest, and, incidentally, stem the drain of talent.

There are also global reasons to

## REMEMBERING SIR FAZLE HASAN ABED

# A life fulfilled



**Prof Rehman Sobhan,**  
one of Bangladesh's most distinguished economists and a celebrated public intellectual, is founder and chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

REHMAN SOBHAN

I first met Fazle Hasan Abed at Oxford, though our paths had briefly crossed before. At the time, he was an executive at Shell in Chattogram, a position that placed him within a distinct social circle. However, Abed had already begun to transcend those boundaries. Mutual friends, Viqar and his wife, had spoken to me about his involvement in relief efforts following the devastating cyclone of 1970. He had mobilised a group of like-minded individuals to address the crisis, which deeply impressed me. Here was a corporate executive stepping beyond his domain to directly engage with a national tragedy.

Unbeknownst to me, Abed's commitment was only deepening. When the Liberation War erupted, he made the remarkable decision to resign from Shell, relocate to London, and immerse himself in the cause. London was a hub of activity for the liberation movement, with numerous groups working under the leadership of Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury. The environment was fragmented, with each faction pursuing its agenda, often casting aspersions on others' motives. It was in this complex setting that I reconnected with Abed.

Abed sought me out at Oxford, accompanied by his close associate Marietta. They were actively channelling resources to those affected by the genocide in Bangladesh. His approach was twofold: immediate relief and long-term planning. Even amid the uncertainty of July-August 1971, Abed was optimistic about liberation and was already contemplating the kind of society we would want to build in a free Bangladesh.

Our discussions were speculative as the future of Bangladesh remained unclear. The economy was in disarray, and the social fabric had been torn apart by war. Yet, what stood out to me was Abed's determination to become a catalyst for change. He belonged to a new generation that sought not merely to envision

aimed to empower the landless by enabling them to sell water to landowners, faltered due to the entrenched power hierarchies in rural Bangladesh. Still, Abed's willingness to take risks, adapt, and learn remained unshakable.

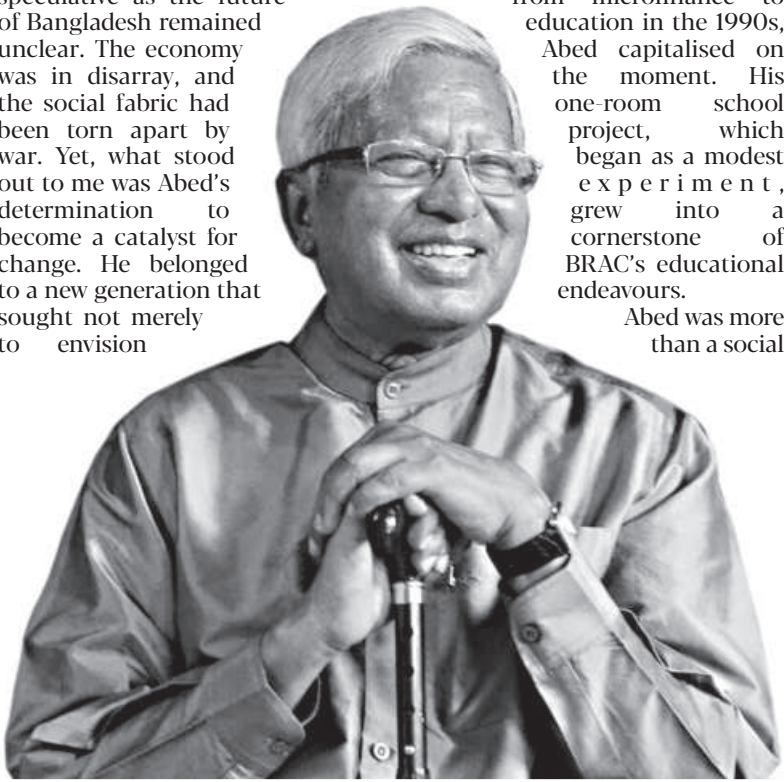
I vividly recall his support when I sought to establish the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). The idea was modest: to create a platform for public discourse and policy innovation. Abed was among the first to back the initiative, contributing generously and without hesitation. His commitment to fostering dialogue and intellectual growth was emblematic of his broader vision: encouraging systemic change through collective effort and shared knowledge.

One defining aspect of Abed's leadership was his adaptability. He understood that sustainable development required innovative, self-sustaining models rather than perpetual reliance on donor funding. He was acutely aware of shifting donor priorities and adept at aligning BRAC's initiatives with emerging trends.

An illustrative example was the one-room schoolhouse initiative. My cousin, Kaniz Fatema, was involved in this project, which drew inspiration from successful models in Pune, India. Abed strategically delayed scaling up the programme until education became a priority for the donor community. When the time was right, he secured significant investments, transforming it into a cornerstone of BRAC's work.

Abed's entrepreneurial spirit extended beyond BRAC. He understood the importance of aligning his initiatives with global trends and donor interests. When the world's focus shifted from microfinance to education in the 1990s, Abed capitalised on the moment. His one-room school project, which began as a modest experiment, grew into a cornerstone of BRAC's educational endeavours.

Abed was more than a social



**Sir Fazle Hasan Abed (April 27, 1936 - December 20, 2019)** SOURCE: BRAC

transformation but to actively participate in it.

After liberation, Abed returned to Sylhet. There, he embarked on what can only be described as a revolutionary journey, immersing himself in rural Bangladesh—a stark contrast to his previous corporate life. The challenges were immense: a shattered economy, devastated communities, and a nascent government struggling to take shape. Yet, through trial and error, Abed persevered. Whether experimenting with microfinance, initiating one-room schools or rebuilding livelihoods, he was guided by a singular principle: bringing about incremental, sustainable change. His work in Sylhet laid the foundation for BRAC, which would go on to become the world's largest NGO.

Each step Abed took was original and daring. He did not merely adopt tried-and-tested methods; he invented new pathways. His approach to microfinance, for example, emerged as a pioneering model that would eventually uplift millions. Yet, not all his experiments succeeded. The deep tube-well programme, which

entrepreneur; he was a visionary leader who could have excelled in any corporate boardroom. His business acumen, coupled with an unwavering commitment to social justice, made him a transformative figure. He was a pioneer of social entrepreneurship, demonstrating that impactful change could be achieved through innovative, sustainable practices. His initiatives improved the lives of millions, not only in Bangladesh but globally.

What distinguished Abed was his relentless pursuit of fulfilment. He derived satisfaction not from wealth or accolades, but from the tangible impact of his work. By the time of his passing, Abed had touched countless lives, leaving behind a legacy of hope and progress.

In reflecting on his life, I am struck by the profound sense of accomplishment he must have felt. Fazle Hasan Abed departed this world as a fulfilled human being—a rare and extraordinary achievement. His life serves as an enduring inspiration, reminding us of the power of vision, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the greater good.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**  
1 Somewhat  
5 Cockpit guesses  
9 Madrid museum  
10 Arrival of a sort  
12 Copter part  
13 Baseball's Yogi  
14 Factory store  
16 Lifeboat need  
17 Takes advantage of  
18 Get the better of  
21 Bear's lair  
22 Writer Hemingway  
23 Eat away  
24 Gaming spot  
26 Crater part  
29 Beginning

- 30 Blood fluids  
31 Western Indian  
32 Equip  
34 Laundry problem  
37 Scoundrel  
38 Physicist Nikola  
39 Lecturer's aid  
40 Depend  
41 Pub pints  
**DOWN**  
1 Wake up  
2 Fasten, as the hatches  
3 Pop stars  
4 Ripped  
5 Flow out  
6 Make a bow in  
7 Quiver contents

- 8 Narrow passage  
9 Strutting  
11 Hind,s counterpart  
15 Ontario city  
19 Take apart  
20 Casual shirt  
22 Lake near Buffalo  
23 Snaky shape  
24 Patrol boat  
25 Relaxed  
26 Prove false  
27 Van Gogh painting  
28 Partners  
29 Eject  
30 Bar seat  
33 Arm bone  
35 Sick  
36 Dissenting vote



## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS





# Graft allegations against Tulip

officials” to orchestrate the £10b Rooppur Power Plant Project deal and that Hasina and family members received “30 percent of the embezzled funds in exchange for their mediation”.

Footage from 2013 appears to show Siddiq attended the deal’s signing by Hasina and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin, recorded by the Associated Press.

The BBC understands that Siddiq has not had any contact with the ACC as part of the investigation.

Syed Faruk, who runs the UK branch of Hasina’s Awami League party, said the claims were “fabricated”.

Siddiq was elected MP for Hampstead and Highgate in 2015, the north London constituency neighbouring


Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer’s seat of Holborn and St Pancras.

Corruption allegations and convictions against top leaders of ousted governments are not new in Bangladesh.

Hasina’s main predecessor as prime minister, Khaleda Zia faced similar charges, which she also dismissed as politically motivated. As did ex-president Hussain Muhammad Ershad, who seized power as head of the army during a bloodless coup in 1982.

The Bangladeshi judiciary’s independence has long been questioned.

Government changes often bring judicial reshuffles, with ruling parties regularly accused of targeting political opponents.



# Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS)

67, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

BCPS No. 355/2024/29556
Date: 12-12-2024

**Schedule of FCPS Part-I, FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS written examinations - January, 2025.**

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FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS and MCPS Examinations.

Subject	Paper	Date & Day	Time	Venue
All Subjects	Paper – I	01.01.2025 (Wednesday)	9.00 A.M. to 12.00 Noon	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper – II	02.01.2025 (Thursday)		

FCPS Mid-Term Examination

Subject	Paper	Date & Day	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics 3. Dermatology & Venereology 4. Haematology 5. Medicine & Allied 6. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 7. Ophthalmology & Allied 8. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery 9. Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopaedics 10. Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery 11. Paediatrics & Allied 12. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 13. Psychiatry & Allied 14. Radiology & Imaging 15. Radiotherapy 16. Surgery & Allied	Paper – I	01.01.2025 (Wednesday)	9.00 A.M. to 10.40 A.M.  9.00 A.M. to 12.00 Noon	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper – II	02.01.2025 (Thursday)		

FCPS Part-I Examination

Subject	Date & Day	Time	Venue
Medicine & Allied	04.01.2025 (Saturday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
1. Biochemistry 2. Dental Surgery (Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopaedics and Prosthodontics) 3. Dermatology & Venereology 4. Microbiology 5. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 6. Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery 7. Pathology 8. Pharmacology 9. Physiology 10. Psychiatry & Allied 11. Radiology & Imaging	05.01.2025 (Sunday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Anatomy 3. Community Medicine 4. Family Medicine 5. Forensic Medicine 6. Haematology 7. Ophthalmology & Allied 8. Paediatrics & Allied 9. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 10. Radiotherapy 11. Surgery & Allied 12. Transfusion Medicine	06.01.2025 (Monday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Program for OSCE, IOE, Oral, Clinical & Practical examinations for FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be notified on the notice board and website of BCPS well in advance.


The list of the examinees and the name of the venue of the OSCE, IOE, Oral, Clinical & Practical examinations will be notified on the notice board and website of BCPS on the day before examination (after 8.30pm).

The Admit Card for FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be available through online only from 20 December 2024 to 02 January 2025 (**till completion of the written examination**) and for the FCPS Part-I examination will be available through online from 20 December 2024 to 06 January 2025 (**till completion of the FCPS Part-I examination**). Please visit BCPS website ([exams.bcps.edu.bd](https://exams.bcps.edu.bd)) and login password protected profile and print admit card. Please contact examination department by 27 December, 2024 if there is any problem related to download of the admit card. **Admit Card of January 2025 session is a prerequisite for entering the examination hall.**

- > No Admit Card will be issued after the deadline.
- > No Admit Card will be printed and distributed from BCPS campus.

Instructions for Examinees

- Examinees are requested to report no later than 40 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Carrying mobile phones/laptops/tabs/wrist watch/calculator/other electronic devices/bags/packets/water bottles/beverage cans/lighter/coins/metal objects other than keys by the examinees is prohibited. Carrying such materials shall be subject to expulsion from the examination.
- Examinees are not allowed to write anything on the admit card/instruction sheet or keep any other papers. These may lead to the cancellation of the paper.
- FCPS (Final) written qualified examinees have to submit an "Information Update Form" immediately after publication of the written result through a link (<https://sds.bcps.edu.bd/bcps-eip/exam-info-update>). It is mandatory to submit the form. If found, incorrect information and an incomplete form, the examination will be held up/legal action will be taken against the candidate.

  
**Professor Md. Billal Alam**  
 Controller of Examination, BCPS

GD- 1228



কাইজার মোহাম্মদ ফারাবী  
প্রধান সম্পত্তি কর্মকর্তা (উপ-সচিব)  
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন  
ফোন : ০২২২৩৩৮৫৯৮৬



LAW REVIEW

# Revisiting the Draft Personal Data Protection Act 2023



DR. MD. TORIQUIL ISLAM

In digital age, personal data fuels the online ecosystem while also raising privacy concerns. To address this issue, Bangladesh aims to strengthen its data privacy framework by adopting the draft Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (PDPA). The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union (EU) serves as a global benchmark for data protection, influencing privacy laws worldwide through its robust framework and the European Commission's adequacy status. However, the current draft of the PDPA falls short of the GDPR's rigorous standards for the following reasons.

The first concern is regarding the grace period. Section 1(2) of the latest draft of the PDPA, states that the bill will take effect on a date specified by the government in the official gazette. International best practices recommend a minimum two-year grace period for preparation. For instance,

the EU GDPR was adopted on 14 April 2016 and took effect on 25 May 2018, providing over two years for compliance preparation.

The draft Act also inadequately emphasises 'personal data' over 'data'. Indeed, the primary focus of a robust data protection law is 'personal data,' as it seeks to protect individuals' privacy and prevent the misuse of their personal information. To effectively protect 'personal data,' it must be explicitly defined. However, the draft PDPA's definition of personal data in section 2(o) is ambiguous, covering legal persons along with natural persons and lacking any reference to the identification of the natural persons it seeks to protect from data breach. Conversely, the GDPR in Article 4(1) precisely defines 'personal data' as any information that can identify a natural person, directly or indirectly. To align with global best practices, it is necessary that the proposed bill puts more emphasis on 'personal' data over 'data' as a whole.

Furthermore, the draft PDPA lacks a clear articulation of the key data protection principles established by the OECD Privacy Guidelines of 1980, which were later adopted by dominant data protection regulations, such as the GDPR. To align with global standards, the PDPA should explicitly incorporate GDPR aligned principles, including lawfulness, fairness, transparency, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity and confidentiality, and accountability.

The next concern is regarding an independent data protection board. The provisions for establishing an independent data protection authority are essential for the unbiased enforcement of privacy laws and the protection of citizens' rights. While Section 35 of the draft PDPA details the composition and operations of the Data Protection Board, it lacks explicit guarantees of the agency's independence. Without clear safeguards for autonomy, there is a risk of conflict of interest that

could undermine its impartiality as a regulatory body.

Moreover, the draft PDPA conflates 'anonymised' and 'pseudonymised' data, although they are distinct. Pseudonymised data can still identify individuals through additional information and remains subject to data protection laws, while anonymised data cannot be traced back and is not subject to these laws. Hence, the PDPA should clarify that these terms are not interchangeable.

Yet another area of concern is the data localisation principles that the draft bill embodies. Sections 50 and 51 of the draft PDPA restrict the transfer of government-classified data outside Bangladesh, except in specific circumstances like international trade or under international agreements. While data localisation policies can be motivated by privacy and security concerns, they often fail to effectively protect data privacy and can negatively impact economic activities, as demonstrated by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation (ITIF).

Section 28 of the draft PDPA mandates data-fiduciary (*upatta jimmdar*) to notify the Data Protection Board within 72 hours of a data breach, similar to the GDPR. However, it lacks provisions for notifying affected individuals in high-risk cases that could impact data subjects' fundamental rights. The draft should be amended

criteria for foreign data subjects, and potential limitations to enhance clarity and transparency.

The draft PDPA excessively relies on rule-making powers, which may lead to broad, potentially misused interpretations. Without mandatory publication requirements, there's risk of executive overreach. Before Parliamentary approval, the PDPA's rule-making provisions should be limited, well-defined, and transparent. The bill also lacks any specific provision on 'data protection by design and by default,' which integrate privacy measures from the outset, ensuring automatic protection of personal data. While Article 25 of the GDPR mandates this, the current PDPA should also include similar provisions.

Yet another area of concern is the many exemptions that the bill provides for. Section 33 of the draft PDPA grants exemptions to government agencies for specific data processing activities, including crime prevention or investigation, health data, research, and journalism. Section 34, however, permits additional exemptions via the official Gazette, raising concerns about transparency and potentially weakening data protection enforcement.

In conclusion, while the draft PDPA represents a positive step towards establishing a comprehensive data protection regime in Bangladesh, it requires significant improvements

**While the draft PDPA represents a positive step towards establishing a comprehensive data protection regime in Bangladesh, it requires significant improvements to align with global standards. The adjustments outlined in this write-up will strengthen Bangladesh's data protection framework, align it with international standards, and help secure an adequacy decision from the European Commission, thereby enhancing global trade relations.**

to include such provisions, ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with the international best practices.

Notably, the draft bill also falls short on protecting rights of foreign data subjects. Section 17 of the draft PDPA grants foreign data subjects in Bangladesh the same data protection rights but lacks details on enforcement and exceptions. The PDPA should clearly outline enforcement processes,

to align with global standards. The adjustments outlined in this write-up will strengthen Bangladesh's data protection framework, align it with international standards, and help secure an adequacy decision from the European Commission, thereby enhancing global trade relations.

*The writer is an Assistant Professor at the School of Law, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).*

LAWS OF WAR

# Understanding the Syrian Armed Conflict

MD. SIAM SHAFI

Rebel forces, particularly Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Syrian National Army (SNA), carried out an offensive that ended the 50 years of the Assad family's authoritarian rule in Syria. An armed coalition, supported by both state and non-state actors, was involved in this offensive.

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) classifies two types of armed conflicts: International Armed Conflict (IAC) and Non-international Armed Conflict (NIAC). Common Article 2 of the Geneva Conventions defines international armed conflicts as all instances of declared war or any other armed conflict that may occur between two or more high contracting parties (i.e., States), whether or not one party recognises the *state of war*. On the other hand, Article 1 of the Additional Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions defines non-international armed conflict as all instances of armed conflict that may occur between state forces and non-state forces or between such non-state forces in the territory of any high contracting party (i.e., State). We cannot simplistically categorise the Syrian conflict as either IAC or NIAC alone as the Syrian conflict simultaneously demonstrates the traits of both IAC and NIAC.

Many armed forces were involved in the Syrian conflict, including state and non-state actors. The Assad regime received support from Russia and Iran to fight against many rebel factions. HTS is the Sunni Islamist paramilitary organisation that led the recent offensive and overthrow of Assad. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces

(SDF) is a Kurdish-dominated coalition of ethnic militias whose military aim is to defeat IS, which controls the northeastern part of Syria. The Free Syrian Army (FSA), a loose umbrella group of armed northern Syrian opposition factions, formed the Syrian National Army (SNA), a Turkish-backed coalition, which collaborated with other rebels, including HTS, to overthrow Assad.

The involvement of a foreign state in a non-international armed conflict presents a significant challenge for IHL in classifying these types of armed conflicts. A non-international armed conflict becomes an international armed conflict when foreign intervention is involved. This requires "overall control" on part of the foreign state as stated by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia Appeal Chamber in the *Prosecutor v Dusko Tadic* case. According to the Tadic Appeal Chamber decision, the degree of support, such as military, financial, logistical,

**The involvement of a foreign state in a non-international armed conflict presents a significant challenge for IHL in classifying these types of armed conflicts. A non-international armed conflict becomes an international armed conflict when foreign intervention is involved.**



political, etc., is required to transform an NIAC into an IAC. The Appeal Chamber further stated that:

"In order to attribute the acts of a military or paramilitary group to a state, it must be proved that the state wields overall control over the group, not only by equipping and financing the group but also by coordinating or helping in the general planning of its military activity. Only then can the State be held internationally accountable for any misconduct of the group. However, it is not necessary that, in addition, the State should also issue, either to the head or to members of the group,

instructions for the commission of specific acts contrary to international law."

Therefore, when a foreign state supports a non-state party through military, financial, logistical, political, and other means, we can say that the foreign state has overall control over that non-state armed group, thereby transforming an NIAC into an IAC.

The initial nature of the Syrian conflict was non-international, as it involved the Assad government and certain rebel groups. However, the question remains whether the conflict will remain non-international following the intervention of foreign states that have supported the rebel

groups through various means. Iran, Russia, and the Shia Islamist militia Hezbollah backed the Assad regime. Various state parties, including Turkey, Israel, the United States, the Netherlands, and many others, backed the rebel groups. Turkey has played a crucial role as the primary external supporter of the rebel faction since 2011. Turkey has provided arms, military, and political support to rebel factions, the majority of which still operate under the Syrian National Army (SNA) banner. Also, Turkey maintains a military presence in northwest Syria and extends support to certain rebel factions, including the SNA. In addition to providing the groups with the necessary equipment, it seems that Turkey was also actively coordinating and assisting in the planning of their overall military operations. The supply of modern weapons, strategic assistance, and the verifiable increase in military capabilities suggest a further degree of overall coordination. In my opinion, this level of coordination goes beyond the provision of mere material support and transforms the character of the Syrian conflict from NIAC to IAC.

In conclusion, the International Humanitarian Law does not provide any explicit provision for neatly distinguishing a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) from an international armed conflict (IAC). In author's view, factual categorisation classifies situations like the Syrian conflict as international, while a specifically legal categorisation classifies it as non-international.

*The writer is final year law student, BRAC university.*





## Leicester City's Hamza now Bangladesh's too

**"Hi everyone. It's Hamza here. So happy that everything's over the line. Can't wait to play for Bangladesh. Hopefully see you guys soon."**  
Hamza Choudhury's video message

"Hamza Choudhury has officially made the decision to represent Bangladesh at international level. The Leicester City player has been flying the flag for Bangladeshi footballers everywhere since making his Premier League debut in 2017.

"Back then, Choudhury became the first player of Bangladeshi heritage to play in the top flight of English football. But today's news marks the first time in history a Premier League footballer will play for the Bengal Tigers.

"Every step Choudhury has taken in his career has led him to this milestone moment. From annual visits to his local village back home in Bangladesh as a kid, to captaining and winning the FA Cup with his boyhood club, Leicester City. In an exclusive interview with VERSUS, the 27-year-old discusses his decision to represent Bangladesh, what can be done to make football more accessible for South Asian footballers and the responsibility that comes with being the first Bangladeshi to play in the Premier League."

HAMZA CHOUDHURY'S SOCIAL MEDIA POST

“

All the players and the whole nation have been waiting for him. It is a very positive news for the national team and the nation. Hamza plays in the world's strongest league, EPL, for Leicester City and his decision to represent Bangladesh will encourage other overseas and local players.

**TOPU BARMAN**  
National team defender

“  
Alhamdulillah, good news. I've been waiting for more than one-and-a-half years for this news to come. He will definitely be a great addition and a big boost for the team. I'm very happy for him and Bangladesh, I think he himself is feeling honoured and even more proud to represent Bangladesh now.

JAMAL BHUIYAN, Bangladesh captain

## Champions Trophy to be in hybrid model

AFP, KARACHI

India will play next year's Champions Trophy matches on neutral ground after refusing to visit tournament host and arch-rival Pakistan, the International Cricket Council said Thursday following weeks of wrangling.

The announcement ended a month-long standoff after India told the ICC it would not send its team to Pakistan because of security fears and political tensions.

Under the agreement, Pakistan will also play in upcoming ICC tournaments hosted by India in other countries, yet to be decided.

"India and Pakistan matches hosted by either country at ICC Events during the 2024-2027 rights cycle will be played at a neutral venue, the ICC Board confirmed," said a statement released by the council.

"This will apply to the upcoming ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 (hosted by Pakistan)."

PCB had earlier refused to play the Champions Trophy on a hybrid model but backed down after settling on neutral venues for both sides.

The agreement will extend to the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 hosted by India, and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

The Champions Trophy will also feature Australia, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

## Denied as a player, Munna finds success as coach in Malaysia

ANISUR RAHMAN

Mohammad Moynul Islam Munna, a Bangladeshi coach who has carved out a career in Malaysia, hardly had a moment to spare as he shuffled from court to court, giving instructions to his Malaysian students who are taking part in ongoing Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh International Challenge at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan.

Munna, a former junior level shuttler from Bangladesh, arrived in Dhaka as a coach of the seven-member Malaysian contingent taking part in the competition. His arrival set a rare precedent in the country's badminton, as a coach from Bangladesh, a nation very much in the backwaters of the sport, training a team from Malaysia, who are a leading force in badminton globally, is unusual to say the least.

Munna's incredible journey from being a Bangladeshi shuttler to a coach in Malaysia began from a rejection he suffered around a decade ago. In 2014, he was denied participation in the National Badminton Championship held in Sylhet, a rejection that disillusioned him and made him search for opportunities overseas.

"I wasn't allowed to take part in the 2014 national championship at the eleventh hour. After that, I broke down mentally and left the country the next year," Munna told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

With the help of his coach at the Knit Concern Club Ohiduzzaman Raju, who is also a former national badminton team player, Munna left for Malaysia in 2015 to try his luck as a coach.

The going was not easy for Munna at first, he had to toil hard to establish himself as a coach in Malaysia.

But his hard-work paid off as he became the head coach of the Mauritius badminton team in 2022, a post he held till this year's June before returning to Malaysia to join a prominent academy.

"They [Malaysians] did not accept me initially because I was a coach from Bangladesh. I had to prepare myself over



one-and-half years. I am now the senior assistant coach of New Vision Badminton Academy after working there as a junior team coach," said the Level-1 badminton coach.

Even though he is no longer involved in the local badminton scene, Munna felt sad at seeing Bangladeshi shuttlers, one after another, crashing out of the competition, knowing very well from personal experience the many difficulties and challenges faced by the badminton players from Bangladesh.

"As a professional coach, I must support my players. But of course, it feels bad when you see the Bangladeshi players getting

eliminated one after another.

"Bangladeshi players like [Khandokar Abdus] Soad, [Abdul Hamid] Lukman, Gourab [Singha] and [Abdul Jahir] Tanvir are talented but they don't get proper training round the year, neither from the federation nor the government. But, if you look at other countries, they have proper training facilities, dormitories and even provide salaries.

"The Bangladeshi players bear their own costs. They play for hire in localities but don't get to play in international tournaments. Everyone just wants to play for hire. It is impossible to progress if you don't have a big aim and don't play in international tournaments."

The lad from Sylhet's Baraikandi area, who once represented Bangladesh at junior international level, said, "Bangladeshi players are not just lagging behind in training, they are also lagging behind in technique, fitness and speed.

"There are good local coaches in Bangladesh and they need to be utilised. You will never get any result on the back of only one or two months' training ahead of international events."

Comparing the badminton scene in Malaysia and Bangladesh, Munna said, "Malaysians start playing badminton from childhood with their family investing a lot on them before the sponsors come in to support the players.

"Our players in Malaysia practice six days a week except Sunday. How can you expect something good from the Bangladeshi players on the back of only one month's training," said Munna, expressing desire to work in Bangladesh subject to getting a suitable offer.

## NCL T20 league phase ends with plenty of promise

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Cricket League (NCL) T20 has provided a laudable setting for Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to gauge performances in the shortest format with plenty of new names coming into focus and selectors getting to see players perform specific roles.

The tournament itself carries weight in terms of readying players for international cricket. In the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), the main goal of franchises is not to develop talents to serve the greater interest of Bangladesh cricket, but to field the team that gives them the best chances of lifting the trophy.

Even in the Dhaka Premier League (DPL), a competitive fervor overtakes everything as teams overlook young players in favour of aged stars who provide more solidity.

But young players getting sidelined in these competitions has resulted in the creation of a weak pipeline of players in the T20 format for Bangladesh, for which the Tigers have struggled plenty in international cricket.

The NCL T20 has given local players a platform to highlight their capabilities. A player like Akbar Ali for instance, who has not yet lived up to the promise he showed at the Under-19 level, batted at number five in six off his seven innings at the NCL T20 for Rangpur Division and has accumulated 201 runs averaging 50.25 and a strike close to 160.



Usually, Akbar bats at number seven in all competitions and as a result finishes lower down the run-scorer's charts. But in the NCL T20, the right-hander, like many others, has flourished.

A BCB official said, "This time a lot of players are batting higher, Akbar is batting at five. NCL is our tournament, so we can request teams to play some players in certain roles and positions. The selection panel had sought that opportunity with how players had been distributed."

A youngster like Jishan Alam has made a statement, finishing as the top-scorer in the group phase with 281 runs for Sylhet Division and even Under-19 team player Azizul Hakim Tamim has made an impression, finishing fourth in the run-getter's list, much to the delight of the selectors.

"We are overall very satisfied with how the tournament has went so far," selector Abdur Razzak told The Daily Star. "We have been able to see a lot of players... It has opened up opportunities for us to watch players and they are proving what they can do."

Yesterday, on the final day of the group stage in Sylhet, Khulna Division and Chattogram Division joined previously qualified Dhaka Metro and Rangpur Division in the knockout stage. Dhaka Division, despite a 19-run win over Barishal Division, finished fifth with Chattogram edging them in net run rate.

## 'Winning titles at Real easier than elsewhere'

AGENCIES

Carlo Ancelotti became the most decorated coach in Real Madrid's history on Wednesday, after the team's 3-0 victory over Pachuca in the FIFA Intercontinental Cup final made it 15 trophies won with the club.

In two spells in charge at Madrid -- between 2013 and 2015, and from 2021 -- Ancelotti has lifted three Champions League trophies, two LaLiga titles, two Copa del Rey, two Spanish Supercups, three UEFA Super Cups, two Club World Cups, and now the Intercontinental Cup.

The previous record was held by the legendary Madrid coach Miguel Munoz, who spent 14 years in charge between 1960 and 1974, winning two European Cups, nine league titles, two Copas del Rey and one Intercontinental Cup.

Ancelotti drew level with Munoz in August, when Madrid won the UEFA Super Cup, beating Atalanta 2-0.

He will next have the chance to add to his trophy haul in January, when Madrid will take part in the Spanish Supercopa in Jeddah,

Saudi Arabia.

The Italian reflected on a brilliant year in which the team won four trophies.

"It has been a fantastic year, and we have had different difficulties throughout the year, injuries... We have finished this year very well, to be honest, and this gives us the confidence we needed and the motivation to continue to have very good results in 2025."

AncelottiHe is the only coach to have won the league title in Europe's 'big five leagues' -- in Spain with Real Madrid, in Italy with AC Milan, in Germany with Bayern Munich, in England with Chelsea and in France with Paris Saint-Germain.

Ancelotti is also the only manager to have won five Champions Leagues, having twice won the competition as AC Milan coach in 2003 and 2007.

The Italian, though, admitted that it's easier winning titles with the Spanish giants than with any other club in the world.

"I want to be honest. Winning titles at Real Madrid is easier than elsewhere: you have a fantastic club, a fan base that pushes and a squad with the best players in the world."



PHOTO: FIRO Z AHMED

A Bangladesh Police defender catches a Fire Service & Civil Defence raider during the opening match of the Victory Day Kabaddi Competition at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali handball Stadium in Paltan yesterday, with Police winning the match by 56-28 points. Six teams each are participating in both men's and women's competitions, which will come to an end on December 24.



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## AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASE

# Expert agency should probe it

### HC observes

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court in the full text of its verdict in the August 21 grenade attack cases has observed that the cases should be referred to the home ministry for a fresh probe by a proper and expert investigation agency.

"It is a heinous tragic incident in the history of this country, where a lot of people, including Ivy Rahman, then Awami League leader, lost their lives. This killing needs to be investigated properly and independently in order to have a fair justice for the departed soul, which has totally been absent till date in this case," the HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain said in the 79-page full text of the verdict released yesterday.

On December 1, the bench delivered its verdict clearing BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfozzaman Babar and all the others convicts in two cases filed over the gruesome August 21, 2004, grenade attack.

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

In the full text of the judgement released yesterday, the HC bench observed, "In view of the above factual aspect of this case, it can safely be said that the impugned conviction was based mainly on a mere presumption without having any legal or corroborative evidence."

**A female greater painted-snipe, otherwise known as *Rostratula benghalensis*, spotted in Manikganj recently. The shorebird species is widely distributed across wetland habitats of Africa and southern Asia. They live solitarily or in pairs, but can sometimes also be found in large groups. The males and females are easily distinguishable from each other as the females are more boldly coloured and are bigger in size. The females are also polyandrous, meaning they can have more than one mate at a time, while the males are the ones in charge of incubating the eggs and caring for the young.**

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

## Hamza cleared to play for Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The anxious wait and anticipation of football-loving people of Bangladesh is finally over.

Leicester City FC midfielder Hamza Choudhury has officially been acknowledged as eligible to play for the Bangladesh national team by world football's governing body, FIFA, yesterday.

The 27-year-old midfielder himself broke the news to his fans through a video message shared by the Bangladesh Football Federation.

"Hi everyone. It's Hamza here. So happy that everything's over the line. Can't wait to play for Bangladesh. Hopefully see you guys soon," Hamza said in the video.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

## Come up with viable roadmap for Rohingya repatriation

### Dhaka asks Naypyidaw

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday asked Myanmar authorities for a viable roadmap to a safe and dignified repatriation of Rohingya people within a specific time.

"Bangladesh has every interest to see lasting peace, stability and democracy in Myanmar, and a conducive environment in Rakhine State for the Rohingya to have confidence to go back there in safety and dignity," Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said at an informal ministerial consultation with Myanmar and its five neighbouring countries.

The meeting was held in Bangkok, said a foreign ministry statement.

He also offered Bangladesh's support for rebuilding the Rakhine State economy when the time is right.

Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa chaired the meeting attended by Myanmar Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister U Than Swe and delegations from India, China, Laos and Cambodia.

More than 80 percent of Rakhine State and the 271-km border with Bangladesh are controlled by the armed group Arakan Army.

Since July this year, some 60,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh joining the already a million Rohingyas, most

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## FIRST SECURITY ISLAMI BANK

# Almost 90pc of Tk 2,254cr loan to Sikder Group sours

### Show bank records till October this year

MD MEHEDI HASAN

As much as 89.3 percent of the credit extended by First Security Islami Bank, when controlled by the major Awami League beneficiary S Alam Group, to AL-affiliated Sikder Group by violating banking rules and regulations has become defaulted.

The bank provided the loan facility to the business group without any review of the loan proposals, verification of the client's repayment capacity, risk analysis and evaluation of the client's mortgaged properties or collateral -- all major violations of banking rules and regulation, documents show.

The loans were disbursed by the Senanibash, Dilkusha, Banani, Dhanmondi and Kawran Bazar branches of the Shariah-based lender between 2009 and January this year.

The bank disbursed Tk 1,025.47 crore as funded loans and Tk 167.47 crore as non-funded loans (bank guarantee)

against collateral valued at Tk 149.15 crore collateral and Tk 8.69 crore cash.

In the 15 years, FSIB recovered Tk 573.86 crore from the borrower during the 15 years, leaving the total liabilities of the business group at Tk 2,254 crore including interest or profit, documents showed. Of the sum, Tk 2,013 crore has defaulted.

#### CREDIT PROVIDED WITHOUT

- Any review of loan proposals
- Verification of repayment capacity
- Risk analysis
- Evaluation of mortgaged collateral

companies of the Sikder Group against Tk 83.19 crore collateral. The outstanding amount is Tk 1,099.63 crore.

Besides, the branch issued five bank guarantees worth Tk 13.67 crore to two companies of Sikder Group against only Tk 1 crore as margin. No other collateral was taken against the non-funded loan facility.

The Kawran Bazar branch disbursed

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Murder case filed over Ijtema ground clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A murder case was filed yesterday over the clash between two factions of Tablighi Jamaat at Biswa Ijtema ground in Tongi

SM Alam Hossain, a resident of Kishoreganj and follower of Kakrail Mosque-based Tablighi leader Maulana Zubair Ahmed, filed the case with Tongi West Police Station in the afternoon, said Habib Iskandar officer-in-charge of the police station.

Alam named 29 followers of Delhi-based Tablighi leader Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and hundreds of unidentified others as accused in the case, the OC told The Daily Star last night.

In the case statement, the complainant said the accused tried to tarnish the image of Islam, embarrass the government and obstruct the first phase of Ijtema scheduled to be held by the followers of Zubair from January 31 to February 2.

Defying decisions taken in meetings with home ministry officials on November 4 and 7, Saad's followers are trying to gather their fellows at the Ijtema ground for Jor Ijtema, a preparatory event, from December 20 to 24, Alam said in the case statement.

Alam mentioned in the complaint that provocative statements of the accused led to attacks on followers of Zubair who were sleeping or guarding the ground around 3:00am on December 18.

At least four people were killed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 8

## Five killed as truck crushes autorickshaw

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Five people, including three of a family, were killed and two others injured in a road traffic accident at Pekua upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The accident occurred when a CNG-run three-wheeler carrying the victims collided head-on with a dumper truck around 7:30am in the Dhaniakata area on ABC regional road, said Mohammad Sirajul Mostafa, officer-in-charge of Pekua Police Station.

The deceased included Firoz Ahmad, 49, of Madhya Madarsha area of Chattogram's Hathazari upazila; his wife Shaheen Aktar, 29; and their six-month-old child Jahedul Islam.

The others were Monirul Mannan, 22, driver of the three-wheeler and resident of Dhaniyakata area; and another passenger Abdur Rahman, 32, of Sonali Bazar area of the upazila's Ujantia union.

## Graft allegations against Tulip make headlines in UK

AGENCIES

Several news outlets in the UK yesterday reported on the corruption charges brought against UK Treasury's Economic Secretary Tulip Siddiq by Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The ACC accused her and family members of embezzling billions as part of a deal for a nuclear power plant in Bangladesh -- Rooppur Power Plant Project.

Tulip Siddiq, 42, who is responsible for tackling corruption in UK financial markets, is alleged to have brokered a deal with Russia in 2013 that overinflated the price of a new nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.

The allegation is part of a wider investigation by the ACC into Siddiq's aunt, Sheikh Hasina, who was deposed as prime minister of Bangladesh in August.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## US welcomes interim govt's election plan

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has welcomed the interim government's announcement of holding the national election between late 2025 and mid-2026, and said it will monitor the timing.

"We welcome the steps that have been taken by this interim government of Bangladesh to prepare for elections that ultimately will allow the Bangladeshi people to choose their own government representatives," US State Department Spokesperson Vedant Patel told a press briefing in Washington DC on Wednesday.

Last Monday, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus announced the possible time of the national election.

Patelsaid the US will "continue to monitor the timing" and encourage the respect for the rule of law over the course of the whole election process,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## ACCREDITATION CARD PID to mull reinstating cancelled ones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Press Information Department (PID) will reconsider cancelled accreditation cards of journalists in applicable cases.

The PID issued a statement in this regard yesterday after a number of accreditation cards had been cancelled recently.

The statement said that the reasons for card cancellation included long delays in renewing the cards, more cards than the quota for an institution, yellow journalism, and being used as a political tool of the previous government for personal gains.

It said journalists also lost accreditation for being accused in criminal cases, being arrested and imprisoned for various reasons, receiving cards on political considerations by unprofessional individuals

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

**A Palestinian girl carries water containers on a broken wheelchair in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, as Palestinians wait to collect water following a Human Rights Watch report that says Israel's deprivation of water in Gaza is an act of genocide.**

PHOTO: REUTERS



9<sup>th</sup>

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The Daily Star



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DHAKA

PAST WINNERS (2016 - 2023)



Late Abu Yousuf Mesbah  
Uddin Ahmed



Mahboob Zaman



Syed Farhad Ahmed



Ziaur Rahman



A. K. M. Fahim  
Mashroor



ASM Mainuddin  
Monem



Kazi Saifuddin  
Munir PhD



AD Ahmad



A Towhid



M Rezaul Hassan



Shaikh Abdul Wahid



Raisul Kabir



Zia Ashraf



Adnan Imtiaz Halim



Hussain M Elius



Md. Sabur Khan



Shohorab Ahmed  
Chowdhury



Geeteara Safiya  
Choudhury



Syeda Kamrun Ahmed



Maliha M Quadir



Sonia Bashir Kabir



Habibullah N Karim



Prince Mojumder



Mike Kazi



A. K. M. Fahim Mashroor



Ayman Sadiq



Shaikh Abdul Aziz



Rafiqul Islam Rowly



Syed Mamnun Quader



Asif Zahir



Rashad Kabir



Tashfin Delwar



Tanvir Tabassum



Syed Mamnun Quader



Kamal Quadir



Mohammed E Rahman



Mir Monuwar Iqbal



Sinthia Sharmin Islam



Mahmudul Hasan Sohag



Moynul Haque Siddiqui



Late Luna Shamsuddoha



Fahad Ifaz



Azmal Haque Azim



Hosne Ara Jasmine



Sadia Haque



Morin Talukder



Iqbal Ahmed  
Fakhruul Hasan



Mojahedul Hoque  
Abul Hasanat



Kazi Saifuddin Munir



Tawhida Shiropa



Anayet Rashid

\*Participation is by invitation only.



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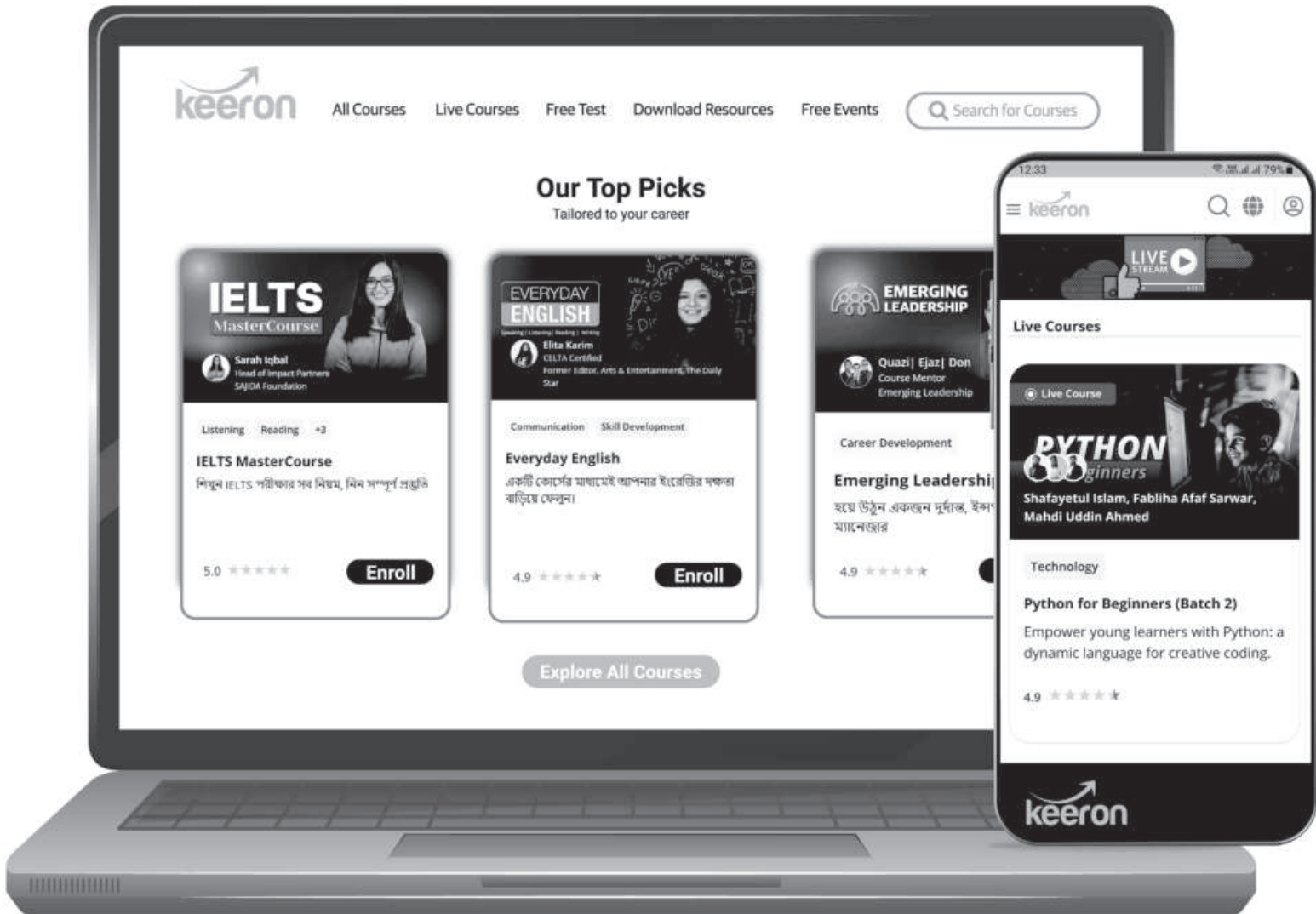
Industry Experts  
**30+**

Web Visitors  
**1.2 MILLION**

Learners  
**30,000+**

\*The information covers the period between September 2023 and November 2024.

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