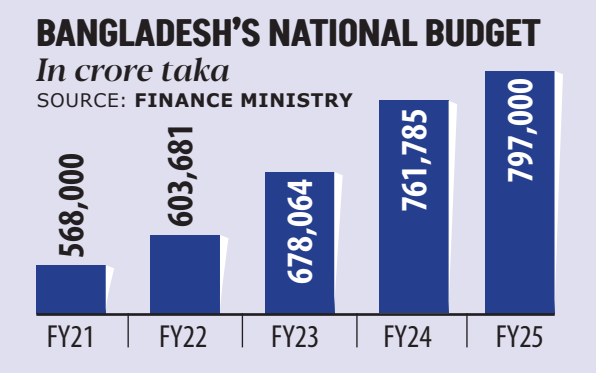




Large budget looms amid high inflation

Next budget to be 6.3pc higher than the current one



REJAUL KAIRM BYRON

The government has planned a Tk 8.48 lakh crore budget for the next fiscal year, up 6.3 percent from this year's budget, as it looks to usher in a period of moderate growth and low inflation.

The GDP growth target could be set at 5.5 percent and the inflation at 7 percent. The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with working out the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



1941-2024

Adviser AF Hassan Ariff no more

STAR REPORT

AF Hassan Ariff, adviser to civil aviation, tourism and land ministries, has passed away at a hospital in the capital. He was 83.

His personal secretary

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



From left, Rumana Ahmed, director of Logic Software Limited; Kowser Ahmed, managing director and CEO of The KOW Company; Rafel Kabir, managing director of Instasure Limited; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; Afeef Zaman, founder and CEO of ShopUp; Selim RF Hussain, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank; Sadia Haque, co-founder and CEO of ShareTrip; Ahmed Kamal Khan Chowdhury, group adviser of SSL Wireless; Shahir Chowdhury, founder and CEO of Shikho; and Nazim Farhan Choudhury, chairman of The KOW Company, pose for a photo at the 9th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards ceremony at Le Meridien Dhaka yesterday. Five firms and two individuals were honoured for their outstanding contributions to the ICT sector in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

ICT leaders honoured

5 companies, 2 individuals get 9th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five companies and two individuals were honoured yesterday at the 9th BRAC Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards ceremony in recognition of their exceptional contributions to the advancement of Bangladesh's information and communication technology sector.

Selim RF Hussain, managing director and chief executive officer of BRAC Bank, along with Mahfuz Anam, editor and

publisher of The Daily Star, handed over the awards to the winners at Le Meridien Dhaka, the hospitality partner for the event.

The event, which was organised in association with BRAC Bank and Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, began with a minute's silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives and for all those injured during the mass uprising that ousted the Awami League regime.

Afeef Zaman, founder and CEO of ShopUp, was recognised as the ICT Business Person of the Year, while Sadia Haque, co-founder and CEO of ShareTrip, was awarded as the ICT Woman of the Year.

Logic Software won the ICT Solution Provider of the Year award in the local market focus category and The Kow Company in the international market focus category.

Software Shop (SSL Wireless) was awarded the Digital

Commerce of the Year, while Shikho and Instasure were the ICT start-ups of the year.

Although ICT has been regarded as the future, it has not been given due importance in Bangladesh, Mahfuz Anam said.

"We haven't given the ICT sector enough support, enough importance, enough legal supportive environment, enough financial incentives for it to flourish."

Only through ICT can

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

THE ECONOMIST Bangladesh named the 'Country of the Year'

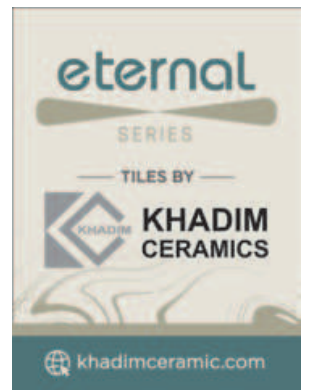
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been named as The Economist's "Country of the Year" for "toppling a despot and taking strides towards a more liberal government".

Each December, The Economist picks a country for this title.

The accolade is not about being the richest,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



WB okays \$1.16b for 3 projects

Tigers end year on a high

SEE PAGE 12



CONSTELLATION 28 MM

TIME TELLING JEWELLERY

The new Constellation Collection. Like the star at six o'clock that sends a ripple of light across the dial. Its brilliance finds its muse in Kaia Gerber who embodies the watch in luminous Moonshine™ Gold. Two stars in play in a balance of light and shadow, precision and beauty.



SACO WATCH CO:
Iqbal Center, Banani • Tel: 01868985756
Bashundhara City • Tel: 01703254435
Jamuna Future Park • Tel: 01714082196

9TH BRAC BANK-THE DAILY STAR ICT AWARDS

Bangladesh has made great strides in the ICT sector in the last two decades thanks to the exponential growth achieved by the country's IT professionals and entrepreneurs riding on the favourable policy support. Now, nearly 2,000 IT firms and thousands of youths and IT experts are engaged in the sector to cater to local and international markets through their innovations, creativity and excellence. To raise awareness about the role of ICT in nation-building and to encourage innovation and excellence among ICT talents and enterprises, The Daily Star has been recognising and celebrating extraordinary achievements by IT entrepreneurs since 2016. This year, seven trailblazers in the ICT sector were honoured with the 9th Brac Bank-The Daily Star ICT Awards for their contribution to the development of country's IT sector and the society.



DIGITAL COMMERCE
SSL Wireless
Ahmed Kamal Khan
Chowdhury, Group Advisor of
SSL Wireless

Founded in 1999, SSL Wireless (Software Shop Limited) has been a pioneer in Bangladesh's ICT sector, evolving from software development to a leading provider of digital commerce solutions.

With a dedicated team of more than 400 employees, the company serves businesses of all sizes, delivering innovative solutions that address the unique challenges of the Bangladeshi market.

One of SSL Wireless's major achievements is Hercules One, an ERP solution that digitally integrates over 250,000 merchants, reducing reconciliation errors by 89 percent.

This has streamlined business operations and boosted efficiency across industries.

Additionally, Hercules One has facilitated microloans for retailers, promoting their growth and contributing to a cashless economy in Bangladesh.

SSL Wireless's commitment to innovation extends beyond commerce, continuously adapting to emerging technologies and positioning Bangladesh as a global tech contender.

As the company celebrates 25 years, its legacy highlights the transformative power of technology in empowering businesses and communities.



ICT STARTUP
Shikho
Shahir Chowdhury, Founder and
CEO, Shikho

Shikho is pioneering a digital revolution in Bangladesh's education sector, blending cutting edge technology with a hyper-local approach to transform how 85 million young people learn.

As a category-defining edtech start-up, Shikho is building a comprehensive learning ecosystem that spans schools, universities and professional development, offering interactive live classes, AI-driven personalisation and gamified content – all in Bengali.

By addressing systemic gaps in traditional education, Shikho ensures students across all 64 districts, including underserved rural areas, gain access to high-quality, affordable learning tools tailored to a digital-first world.

With 2.5 million registered users and \$8 million in funding from global investors like Learn Capital, Wavemaker Partners and Anchorless Bangladesh, Shikho is bridging the divide between outdated methods and modern educational needs.

Named to the Forbes Asia 100 to Watch list, Shikho is not just transforming education – it's empowering a new generation to thrive in Bangladesh's rapidly evolving economy.



ICT STARTUP
Instasure Limited
Rafel Kabir, Managing Director,
Instasure Limited

Founded in 2022, Instasure has quickly emerged as a leader in Bangladesh's fintech sector with its pioneering embedded insurance platform.

By integrating seamlessly with third-party businesses like e-commerce platforms, banks and travel portals, Instasure has expanded access to tailored insurance products, offering customers affordable solutions at the point of purchase or service.

The platform's key features include customisable insurance options, a mobile-first design and streamlined workflows for policy issuance, claims processing and transactions, making insurance more accessible to a wider audience.

Despite being a young company, Instasure has formed strategic partnerships with major Bangladeshi companies, such as Robi, Grameen Digital Health and MasterCard, giving it access to over 300 million customers.

Instasure addresses Bangladesh's low insurance penetration, currently at 0.4 percent, by introducing the "insurance-as-a-service" model.

Its innovation empowers individuals and businesses, enhancing financial security and driving social and economic progress in the country.



ICT SOLUTIONS PROVIDER
(International Market Focus)
The KOW Company Limited
Kowser Ahmed, Managing
Director & CEO, The KOW
Company

The KOW Company has established itself as a global leader in content post production and 3D innovation, setting new standards in the creative industry.

Powered by AI technology and a skilled team of over 500 professionals, the company processes up to 32,000-35,000 assets daily, ensuring efficiency and precision for world-renowned brands.

Partnering with Straub Collaborative and Nureg GmbH, KOW Company serves major names like Adidas, Reebok, Pierre Cardin, Wrangler, Lee and many more.

The KOW Company delivers exceptional results across sectors such as luxury fashion and retail. Its expertise spans 3D modelling, advanced CGI and intricate image manipulation, allowing clients to craft compelling visual narratives.

The company's commitment to innovation is reflected in its adoption of AI with the launch of retouched.ai, streamlining workflows and enhancing precision.

This forward-thinking approach enables greater customisation, ensuring that each client's unique vision is brought to life with excellence.



ICT SOLUTIONS PROVIDER
(Local Market Focus)
Logic Software Limited
Rumana Ahmed, Director, Logic
Software Limited.

Founded in 2010, Logic Software has become a leading provider of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solutions in Bangladesh.

Specialising in industries like textiles, garment, leather and spinning mills, the company offers scalable software that addresses critical business challenges such as inventory control, production planning and financial management.

With its ERP systems processing over \$15 billion in transactions, Logic Software has made a significant impact on the Bangladeshi economy.

The company has earned the trust of big organisations like Fakir Fashion, Urmi Group and Standard Group, helping them streamline operations and drive efficiency.

Innovation is at the heart of Logic Software's success. By integrating advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things into their ERP solutions, they ensure clients stay competitive in a rapidly changing market.

Beyond ERP, Logic Software has developed systems for diverse sectors, including the Bangladesh Air Force and the University of Dhaka, showcasing their versatility and broad expertise.



ICT BUSINESSPERSON
OF THE YEAR
Afeef Zaman
Founder and CEO, ShopUp

Afeef Zaman, a visionary entrepreneur from Bangladesh, has revolutionised the country's commerce landscape through ShopUp, a leading full-stack B2B platform.

As the founder and chief executive officer, Zaman has empowered over 655,000 merchants by providing them seamless access to B2B sourcing, logistics and business management tools.

Zaman's entrepreneurial journey began at 20 with his first tech startup, where he led a 150-member team and achieved \$3 million in revenue.

The idea for ShopUp arose from his visits to Bauphal, Patuakhali, where he saw the challenges small pottery businesses faced in sourcing, logistics and financing.

Determined to help, he launched ShopUp to equip SMEs with the tools needed to compete with larger companies.

Under Zaman's leadership, ShopUp raised \$174 million in South Asia's largest Series B funding round, cementing its role in transforming digital commerce.

By 2024, ShopUp's network reached 31 million people, connecting millions of small businesses across Bangladesh.



ICT WOMAN OF THE YEAR
Sadia Haque
Co-founder and CEO, ShareTrip

Sadia Haque, co-founder and chief executive officer of ShareTrip, has revolutionised Bangladesh's travel industry.

Since its inception in 2019, ShareTrip has become the country's largest online travel platform, generating more than \$100 million in gross merchandise value under Sadia's visionary leadership.

Sadia's entrepreneurial journey is marked by strategic innovation, transforming how Bangladeshis plan and book travel.

ShareTrip offers a range of services, including flight bookings, hotel reservations and transportation, making travel more accessible.

The platform's user-friendly interface and customer-centric approach have established it as a leader in the competitive market.

Her leadership has been key to ShareTrip's success, helping the company secure \$11.5 million in investment. These achievements have earned ShareTrip accolades, solidifying its position in digital commerce.

Before founding ShareTrip, Sadia gained experience at Banglalink, Nokia and Grameenphone, honing the skills that have made her a prominent figure in Bangladesh's start-up ecosystem and a role model for aspiring entrepreneurs.

ICT leaders honoured

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh catch up with the developed world.

"The application of ICT can advance our health to a much higher standard, provide access to global experts in Bangladesh and connect experts in Dhaka with patients in rural areas. Similarly, in the education sector, whatever we try, whatever money we spend, we cannot keep our education aligned with the evolution of education in the world except through technology."

Besides, the digitisation of the government system could lower corruption overnight, he added.

BRAC Bank MD Selim RF Hussain said there are many who feel that the banking sector should be investing much more in ICT, and perhaps there is something to be said about that.

"The future does belong to ICT usage and we are confident that banks in Bangladesh will continue to invest in and expand their digital banking capabilities in areas such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve customer service, fraud detection and prevention and become

cost-efficient," he said.

Going forward, banks will increasingly partner with fintech companies to gain access to new technologies and services to stay competitive in the rapidly changing digital landscape.

"Obviously, this is also an exciting time for banks and financial institutions – many of them have already significantly upgraded themselves with their digital-first strategies to serve the customers."

The adoption of digital banking channels, implementation of digital onboarding processes (eKYC), use of advanced analytics, development of digital products and services and automation of back-office processes are taking place with great momentum, Hussain added.

Ahmed Kamal Khan Chowdhury, group adviser of SSL Wireless; Shahir Chowdhury, founder and CEO of Shikho; Rafel Kabir, managing director of Instasure; Kowser Ahmed, MD and CEO of The KOW Company; Rumana Ahmed, director at Logic Software; Afeef Zaman and Sadia



"The future does belong to ICT, and we are confident that banks in Bangladesh will continue to invest in it and expand their digital banking capabilities in areas such as artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve customer service and become cost-efficient."

SELIM RF HUSSAIN
Managing Director and CEO
BRAC Bank PLC

Haque received the awards.

Also at the event, a panel discussion took place with the theme "Deep dive with founders: Understanding why a large population isn't yet driving tech market growth in Bangladesh."

The biggest problem in Bangladesh is that the data is not accurate, said Adnan Imtiaz Halim, founder and CEO of Sheba Platform, adding that the government data on the number of internet users is misleading.

"If we assume that at least 50 million people in Bangladesh are tech savvy, meaning they each have a device in hand, the question is why are we still unable to monetise technology? This means there is a choking point in our technology sector."

When forecasts are made on

incorrect data, the forecasts turn out to be incorrect, he said, while calling for easy availability of smartphones and cheap internet packages.

In India, what was forecasted to take 40 years was unlocked in just six years because of some policy decisions, Halim said.

Drastic decisions will need to be taken at the policymaking level if the choking points in the technology sector are to be removed.

"There is a learning curve in technology. When we talk about transformation, those traditionally doing business or purchasing need to adopt technology. To make that happen, customers need to be incentivised," he added.

Referring to data which says that



"We haven't given the ICT sector enough support, enough importance, enough legal supportive environment, enough financial incentives for it to flourish."

MAHFUZ ANAM
Editor and publisher
The Daily Star

quality. But ultimately, patients need to be seen in person by a well-trained doctor, and they need to be able to trust the quality of lab tests, she said.

Explaining why his firm has not built products for the local market, Raisul Kabir, CEO of Brain Station 23, said: "We actually started internationally and later moved into the local market. After coming here, we noticed that people don't trust Bangladeshi providers."

Also, clients have no problem paying Tk 1.2 lakh to a foreign company, but many hesitate to pay even Tk 14,000 to a Bangladeshi company.

"Bangladeshi entrepreneurs are still not willing to make high payments. This is an area we need to break through," Kabir added.

Large budget looms amid high inflation

FROM PAGE 1
budget for the next fiscal year.

In the new budget, the size of the next annual development programme (ADP) will be Tk 2.70 lakh crore. Though the original ADP budget for this fiscal year is Tk 2.65 lakh crore, it will be revised down to Tk 2.16 lakh crore.

At the Fiscal Coordination Council meeting where the budget for fiscal 2025-26 was discussed, directives were issued to the Finance Division and Planning Division to sit with different ministries and divisions to start preparation for the next budget.

Allocations for the health and education sectors would be increased, while more allocation was suggested for priority projects and those expected to be completed by the next fiscal year.

Moreover, an instruction was given not to undertake any new mega projects if they are not important and foreign funds are not confirmed. Also, the meeting suggested taking on a few innovative projects.

The government's interest payments and expenditure for subsidies rose significantly in the past couple of years and are likely to increase further in the next fiscal year, said finance ministry officials.

In the budget for the present fiscal year, Tk 113,500 crore was allocated for interest payments, of which Tk 42,388

crore was spent in the first quarter. This is a 92 percent increase compared with the same period of fiscal 2023-2024.

Though the government cleared a significant amount of arrears for subsidies in power, energy and fertiliser sectors this fiscal year, it has a plan to clear another big chunk in the next fiscal year as well.

In the next budget, big allocations will be made for these two sectors, the officials said.

Besides, the interim government is also considering giving dearness allowance to government employees.

As a result, the allocation in this sector could cross Tk 100,000 crore in the next budget from Tk 82,000 crore this year.

Besides, even if the government cuts some ongoing "prestige or political projects" from the ADP, it will have very little scope to cut the ADP size next year considering other ongoing large projects including various infrastructure projects, the finance ministry officials said.

The upcoming budget would be implementable as people would not have to bear extra tax burden, said Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed.

Both the monetary and fiscal policies would be synced by way of the next budget.

"I know there will be criticisms about

this budget – we can't make everyone happy at once," Ahmed added.

However, economists questioned the wisdom of having such a large budget given the present context.

"Considering the actual situation of high inflation and low revenue collection, there is no logic to go with such a large budget for which you will have to borrow from domestic banks," said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

It is important what goals the government wants to set while preparing the national budget in the context of the present situation, Hussain said.

In the present context, the main priority should be to control inflation so that an additional stress is not created in the economy.

If the size of the next budget actually surpasses the present one, the government might have to borrow from banks for financing, which could negatively impact both investment and inflation, Hussain added.

There needs to be a realistic assessment of the existing budget before starting preparations for the next one, said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

He said he had made a proposal

for a quick assessment of the present budget by November before revision. It would have been better to come up with targets for the next budget based on that assessment, said Raihan, also a professor of economics at Dhaka University.

A committee should have been formed comprising experts for reviewing the projects instead of assessing those on an ad hoc basis and depending only on the bureaucrats.

About increasing the health and education sector allocations, he said problems in the two sectors will not be solved by providing more funds to them.

"The capacity of the relevant ministries has to be strengthened. Otherwise, the money will be sent back."

For this, he suggested that the government should take measures to improve services at delivery points.

There is scope to reconsider many of the budget expenditures, Hussain said, adding that it is possible to cut various expenditures for subsidy.

On increasing health and education sector allocations, he said opportunities for poor people to get healthcare services and education declined for high inflation.

In this regard, the government could increase allocation for conditional cash transfer programmes in these two sectors, he added.

Bangladesh named the 'Country of the Year'

FROM PAGE 1
happiest, or most virtuous country, but about making significant strides in the last 12 months, according to a report published on Thursday by the globally acclaimed UK-based magazine.

This year's runner-up is Syria, where the ousting of Bashar al-Assad on December 8 ended half a century of depraved dynastic dictatorship.

The shortlist this year also included Poland, South Africa, and Argentina. The report reads, "In August, student-led street protests forced out Sheikh Hasina, who had ruled the country of 175m for 15 years."

"A daughter of an independence hero, she once presided over swift economic growth. But she became repressive, rigging elections, jailing opponents and ordering the security forces to shoot protesters."

"Huge sums of money were stolen on her watch."

The Economist also said Bangladesh has a "history of vengeful violence" when power changes hands.

"The main opposition party, the BNP, is venal. Islamic extremism is a

threat." However, the report expressed optimism, saying that this time "the transition has so far been encouraging."

"A temporary technocratic government, led by Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel peace prize winner, is backed by students, the army, business and civil society. It has restored order and stabilised the economy."

Looking ahead, the report highlights the challenges Bangladesh faces.

"In 2025, it [Bangladesh] will need to repair ties with India and decide when to hold elections—first ensuring that the courts are neutral and the opposition has time to organise."

"None of this will be easy. But for toppling a despot and taking strides towards a more liberal government, Bangladesh is our country of the year."

Previous winners include Colombia (for ending a civil war), Ukraine (for resisting an unprovoked invasion) and Malawi (for democratising).

In 2023, the prize went to Greece for dragging itself out of a long financial crisis and re-electing a sensible centrist government.

DNA reports confirm remains belong to him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

DNA tests by West Bengal CID have confirmed that human remains recovered from a septic tank and canal belong to former Bangladesh MP Anwarul Azim Anar, who was killed in Kolkata.

Azim, a three-time Awami League MP from Jhenaidah, was allegedly murdered in a New Town flat on May 13, a day after arriving in Kolkata for medical treatment.

CID investigators recovered body parts during searches and sent them for forensic analysis. DNA samples collected from Azim's daughter, Mumtaz Ferdous Doreen, during her visit to Kolkata in November matched the recovered remains, a senior CID officer confirmed.

"The DNA test reports confirmed the remains belonged to MP Anwarul Azim," the officer said, adding that the samples were analysed by the Central Forensic Science Laboratory.

Kolkata police initially confirmed Azim's murder on May 22, following his disappearance. Flesh specimens were retrieved from a septic tank in North 24 Parganas, and bones were found on the banks of a nearby canal in South 24 Parganas. Investigators suspect Azim was strangled, dismembered, and the remains disposed of in multiple locations.

Kolkata police handed the case over to CID, while Dhaka Metropolitan Police's detective branch arrested seven suspects, and West Bengal CID apprehended two others.

Azim's business partner, Aktaruzzaman Shaheen, an American national and the alleged mastermind, remains at large.

Authorities in both countries continue their investigation into the high-profile case.



MP AZIM MURDER



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus presents the "Art of Triumph", an artbook prepared by Bangladeshi students after the July mass uprising, to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The photo was taken at the Presidential Palace in Cairo on Thursday.

Take risks to fulfil dreams Yunus urges Egypt university students

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus urged students of Al-Azhar University to take risks to fulfil their dreams in life.

He was delivering a lecture at the university in Cairo on Thursday night.

Referring to challenges he faced during the establishment of Grameen Bank, he said the people of Bangladesh are enjoying the benefits from the bank today as he accepted the challenges.

"If you don't have a dream, you won't succeed in life," he told the students.

Referring to his "Three Zero Theory", the Nobel Laureate said it is urgent to give importance to these three issues -- zero carbon emission, zero poverty and zero unemployment -- to move the world forward.

Earlier, Al-Azhar University President Prof Salama Dawoud welcomed Prof Yunus on his arrival on the university campus.

ALL THREE HOSPITALS RUN BY DSCC

Limping along due to shortage of manpower, limited resources

DIPAN NANDY

Acute manpower shortages, underutilised facilities, and the plights of patients -- these are the things this correspondent observed while visiting all three hospitals under Dhaka South City Corporation.

These hospitals serve as a crucial lifeline for the lower-middle class and impoverished communities, offering essential medical services at affordable rates.

However, the reality is that these institutions are now limping along, struggling under the weight of neglect and mismanagement.

Patients, many of whom rely on these hospitals as their sole recourse for treatment, often find themselves waiting for hours, even days, for attention, while doctors and nurses are stretched too thin to offer the level of care that's desperately needed.



Service seekers wait for a long time at the outpatient department of Dhaka Metropolitan Children's Hospital.

PHOTO: DIPAN NANDY

no one is around to help."

Her words echoed the frustration felt by many others who have no other choice but to endure the long wait to receive care.

A senior doctor at one of the facilities, seeking anonymity, shared, "We are fighting an uphill battle. The number of patients keeps growing, but we're working with half the manpower we need."

DHAKA MOHANAGAR GENERAL HOSPITAL

Dhaka Mohanagar General Hospital, established in 1989, has 150 beds and facilities for 31 types of diagnostic tests. Despite the installation of ICU units and high-flow oxygen equipment during the Covid-19 pandemic, these facilities remain unused due to a lack of personnel.

The hospital provides diagnostic tests at Tk 20-600 and offers 45 types of medication free of charge.

On average, 400 outpatients are treated daily, while only 5-6 patients are admitted.

Badsha Mia, a patient, said, "As a poor man, I can't afford treatment at big hospitals, so I come here. But there are very few doctors, so it takes a long time to get treatment."

The hospital's surgery department has been non-functional since 2015 due to the departure of a consultant. While gynaecological surgeries continue, high-dependency unit (HDU) beds installed in 2021 remain unused.

The hospital's director, Dr Ammata Noor Wahida Sultana, said, "We have written to

the health ministry and DGHS several times requesting staff but to no avail."

Currently, only 17 of the required 32 doctors are employed, leaving 15 positions vacant. Most doctors focus on outpatient services, disrupting care for admitted patients. "Since 2015, the hospital has had no surgery consultants, effectively reducing it to a 100-bed facility," Dr Sultana said.

DHAKA METROPOLITAN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Established in 1990, the Dhaka Metropolitan Children's Hospital serves 200-250 children daily but shuts its doors by 8:00pm due to staff shortages. Critical patients are referred elsewhere, and the surgery department has been closed for over a decade.

Since 2012, the paediatric surgery department has remained locked due to the absence of a surgical consultant, leaving 40 of the hospital's 100 beds unused. The physiotherapy department operates only once a week, relying on an external physiotherapist.

The hospital employs six consultant doctors and 13 medical officers, but only two consultants and seven medical officers are currently available.

Patients from low-income families crowd the outpatient department for affordable care.

Hazera Khatun, a slum resident from Lalbagh, said, "Getting treatment here costs much less than other hospitals. That's why daily wage earners like us come here."

The hospital's director, Salina Akhter, said, "We have written to authorities. They assured us that the problem would be resolved soon. The manpower crisis is why

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



Empty beds at the high-flow oxygen ward at Dhaka Mohanagar General Hospital.

At one of the hospitals, Sabera Khatun, a frail woman, clutching her young son in her arms, described her experiences: "I've been here for over 12 hours, waiting for a doctor. My child is burning with fever, but

Leader of Maulana Saad faction held

STAR REPORT

Police arrested Muaz bin Nur, a leader of the Tablighi Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, early yesterday in connection with a case over the killing of three devotees at the Biswa Jtama ground in Tongi.

Muaz, 40, known as a spokesperson for the Saad faction, was detained during a raid in Uttara, said Iskander Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Tongi West Police Station. He is the fifth accused in the murder case filed by SM Alam Hossain, a follower of rival Tablighi leader Maulana Zubair Ahmed.

Alam, a Kishoreganj resident, lodged the case on Thursday, naming 29 Saad supporters and hundreds of unidentified others.

The deadly clash, which broke out early Wednesday over control of the Jtama Maidan, left

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3

CRACKDOWN ON POLY BAGS Over Tk 25 lakh collected in fines

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 199 mobile court operations have been conducted across the country since November 3, collecting Tk 25,72,300 in fines on 414 establishments and the seizure of 50,556kg of polythene shopping bags.

Tapan Kumar Biswas, additional secretary and chairman of the Monitoring Committee under the environment ministry, yesterday vowed to intensify enforcement efforts alongside raising public awareness about eco-friendly alternatives to polythene bags.

He shared these updates during a press briefing held in the capital's Karwan Bazar following a monitoring operation aimed at curbing the use of polythene bags in the area.

Tapan reiterated that the ban on polythene bags is important for protecting the environment and reducing plastic pollution.

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

TURNING THE TIDE

How to revive Dhaka's canals and fix waterlogging

HELEMUL ALAM

Throughout this month, we have published six reports on Dhaka's canals, detailing how these water bodies, once the lifeblood of the capital's drainage system, are now clogged, encroached upon, and reduced to narrow, polluted channels.

Many canals have completely disappeared, replaced by roads and structures. This in turn has put the city's draining system into disarray, with the capital drowning every time it rains above a certain threshold. People even die in the waterlogged streets of Dhaka, coming in contact with live wires underneath or simply drowning.

Without immediate and sustained intervention, the waterlogging crisis will worsen,

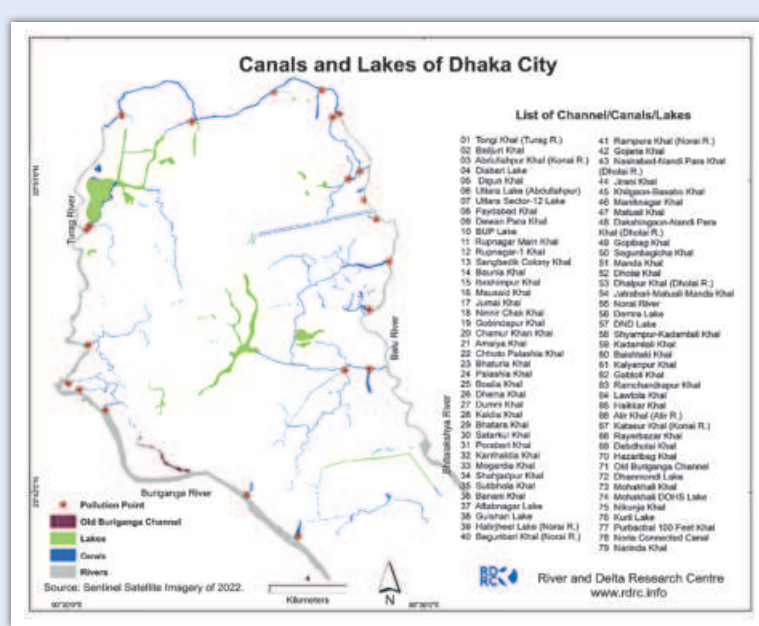
as climate change means the city may experience unusually high rainfall anytime -- already seen in many places near Dhaka this year, according to experts, policymakers, and planners.

THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, Dhaka has lost significant canal space due to unchecked encroachment. Major water bodies have been filled, converted into box culverts, or obstructed by infrastructure projects.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the environment ministry, said, "Canals formed the natural drainage system of this city. Regrettably, we lost most of them due to urbanisation, conversion into culverts, and encroachments."

"Then there is pollution.



Sewage and industrial effluents are discharged into the canals in a manner as if they are meant to be used as private drainage. Added to this, solid waste and plastic clog the waterways, further obstructing their flow," Rizwana said.

Mohammad Azaz, chairman of the River and Delta Research Centre, said, "Dhaka was a wetland city, but it should have been a sponge city. Due to unplanned urbanisation, we no longer have spaces to retain water for a certain period."

RECOVERING, PROTECTING CANALS

At the heart of reviving Dhaka's canals lies the need to recover encroached areas and establish clear demarcations based on CS and RS maps. Authorities at both the Dhaka North City Corporation

(DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) have finally begun addressing this critical step.

Md Mahmudul Hasan, administrator of DNCC, said, "We are demarcating 29 canals and setting up pillars to prevent further encroachment. More than 1,000 pillars out of 1,100 have already been set up, and the rest will be completed by December. The army is implementing the project."

Meanwhile, the chief engineer of DSCC, Md Aminul Islam, said they have decided to earmark the boundaries of canals based on CS maps, a step that had not been undertaken earlier.

"We will apply it in the project to develop four canals, which have already been approved by the Encc. The design that was prepared earlier

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

How to revive Dhaka's canals and fix waterlogging

FROM PAGE 3
did not consider the demarcation of CS maps. As a result, residents on both sides of the canals slowed down the project by creating obstacles," he explained. "In a recent meeting, it was decided to consider only CS maps during the demarcation of the canals, and the canals will be dug up accordingly," Aminul said. "If we find even a person with legal documents within the alignment of the canal, we will remove them through due process," he added.

Meanwhile, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) on October 11, 2022, approved a Tk 898.73 crore project to revive four canals -- Kalunagar, Jirani,

Manda, and Shyampur -- to alleviate Dhaka's chronic waterlogging woes.

Aminul said the work has already started, and they are hopeful to complete the project by February 2026.

While such efforts are promising, experts argued that authorities must take tougher measures against encroachers and ensure accountability.

Adil Mohammad Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), said, "Vested interest groups that destroyed flood flow zones for housing or industries must be penalised. Culpable officials from Rajuk, the Department of Environment (DoE), and other government offices should also face consequences."

Environmental laws must be strengthened to ensure no one dares to encroach flood flow zones, he said.

Connectivity between different canals, water bodies and water channels with flood flow zones should be restored, he added.

ROLE OF FLOOD FLOW ZONES, RETENTION PONDS

Dhaka's canals do not operate in isolation. Retention ponds and flood flow zones play a vital role in holding excess water and maintaining the natural flow. However, these lifelines have also fallen victim to neglect and encroachment.

At Kalyanpur, a retention pond meant to safeguard Mirpur and adjacent areas from waterlogging has been reduced to just a fraction of its recommended capacity.

Originally designed for 514 acres, only 53 acres have been secured over three decades.

"We will increase the area of the retention pond,"

DNCC administrator Mahmudul said.

"We are cleaning floating plastic waste and increasing its depths to increase the retention capacity. This project is ongoing, and we hope it will be completed within the next five or six months," he said.

Meanwhile, Adil Mohammad Khan urged strict protection of flood flow zones, saying, "Any development must be completely restricted in these zones. Main flood flow and sub-flood flow zones should be merged under the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) to safeguard them."

TURNING BOX CULVERTS BACK INTO OPEN CANALS

One of the most controversial decisions in Dhaka's drainage history was the conversion of canals into box culverts. While initially seen as a solution to waterlogging, they have proven ineffective. Box culverts quickly accumulate sediment and waste due to

poor maintenance, reducing water flow drastically.

Iqbal Habib, vice-president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA), said, "Box culverts are a faulty design. No country in the world uses this system. The government must turn these back into open canals to achieve lasting results."

Fazle Reza Sumon, convenor of the advisory council of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said box culverts cannot be an alternative to canals as they do not function in the same way.

"Box culverts obstruct natural water flow, leading to gradual sedimentation that reduces capacity over time due to a lack of regular maintenance," he said. "In contrast, open canals allow for better water flow and are easier to clean and maintain."

RESTORING CANAL-RIVER CONNECTIVITY

Reviving Dhaka's canals will also require restoring their connectivity with

rivers. Once linked to the Buriganga, Turag, Balu, and Shitalakhyarivers, the canals could seamlessly transport excess water, said experts.

Today, unplanned construction of embankments, sluice gates, and roads has severed these links.

Dr Ainun Nishat, a water resources specialist, called for the revival of circular navigation routes.

"The government must acquire land if necessary to restore smooth navigation and canal-river connectivity," he said.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH
Experts stressed that recovering canals and flood flow zones is only part of the solution. Dhaka's drainage system must also be kept clean and functional.

Dr Akter Mahmud of BIP said, "Protecting retention ponds, recovering canals, and maintaining drainage networks -- both surface and stormwater -- are crucial to reducing waterlogging."

Meanwhile, RDR

Chairman Mohammad Azaz said, "Despite excavation efforts, canals are losing water cover to waste dumping and encroachment. So, protecting what remains is far more critical than digging new ones."

PROMISING INITIATIVES
While challenges abound, there are signs of progress. DNCC's plans for a hydro-eco park at Kalyanpur envision a retention pond surrounded by trees, increasing water-carrying capacity while maintaining ecological balance.

Similarly, DNCC's projects to develop canals like Bounia and Sangbadik Colony include excavation, walkways, and improved vehicular movement.

However, regarding boat communication, Mahmudul said it is still possible from Rampura TV station, but he is not sure whether they will be able to create a boat communication network across all the canals as the widths of many canals are

insufficient. Meanwhile, Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan remains cautiously optimistic about the interim government's plans to recover canals and create a blue network -- an interconnected system of canals, rivers, and water retention areas designed to improve drainage and restore natural water flow.

"We are anticipating a final work plan by December and hope to kick off implementation in the new year," she said.

Preserve food

FROM PAGE 5
concerns about food wastage and the encroachment on indigenous lands, while VC Dilip Kumar Barua of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman University said indigenous food items are uncontaminated and pure.

The fair, featuring 18 stalls with indigenous foods and grains, concludes today.

Flat For Sale
6 UN Road Baridhara Diplomatic Area
Size-4381sqft., 4 Bed, 2 Car Park
Keep & Quiet Locations
01844600353 01891782762

বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
Website: www.butex.edu.bd
ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি, শিক্ষাবর্ষঃ ২০২৪-২০২৫

বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে বিভিন্ন অনুষদে নিম্নবর্ণিত বিভাগসমূহে ৪ (চার) বছর মেয়াদী বি. এস. সি. ইন টেক্সটাইল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং প্রোগ্রামে ২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে সেপ্টেম্বর-১ এ ভর্তি প্রার্থীদের নিকট থেকে নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতিতে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। বিভাগ অনুযায়ী আসন সংখ্যা, আবেদনের তারিখ, লিখিত পরীক্ষার জন্য যোগ্য প্রার্থীর তালিকা, প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড, ভর্তি পরীক্ষা ও ফলাফল প্রকাশের তারিখ এবং নিয়মাবলী নিম্নরূপঃ

বিভাগ	আসন সংখ্যা	আবেদনের সময়সীমা	লিখিত পরীক্ষার জন্য যোগ্য প্রার্থীর তালিকা প্রকাশ	প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোডের সময়সীমা	ভর্তি পরীক্ষার তারিখ ও সময়	ফলাফল প্রকাশের তারিখ
(১) ইয়ার্ক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০	০১/০১/২৫ তারিখ সকাল ১০:০০ টা হতে ১০/০২/২৫ তারিখ রাত ১১:৫৯ টা পর্যন্ত	২০/০২/২৫	২২/০২/২৫ তারিখ সকাল ১০:০০ টা হতে ২৮/০২/২৫ তারিখ রাত ১১:৫৯ টা পর্যন্ত	০৭/০৩/২৫ তারিখ সকাল ৯:৩০ টা হতে ১১:৩০ টা পর্যন্ত	২৩/০৩/২৫
(২) ফেব্রিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
(৩) ওয়েট প্রসেস ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
(৪) এ্যাপ্রোবেল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
(৫) টেক্সটাইল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ম্যানেজমেন্ট	৮০					
(৬) টেক্সটাইল ফ্যান্ডামেন্টাল ডিজাইন	৮০					
(৭) ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল এন্ড প্রোডাকশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
(৮) টেক্সটাইল মেশিনারী ডিজাইন এন্ড মেইনটেনেন্স	৮০					
(৯) ডাইইং এন্ড কেমিক্যালস ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
(১০) এনভায়রনমেন্টাল সাইন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
(১১) টেক্সটাইল ম্যাটেরিয়ালস ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং	৮০					
সর্বমোট আসন সংখ্যাঃ	৬৪০					

আবেদন ফিঃ
আবেদনকারীকে ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকা ফি প্রদানের মাধ্যমে অনলাইনে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং লিখিত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য যোগ্য প্রার্থীকে ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা প্রদান করে প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতাঃ
(ক) আবেদনকারীকে অবশ্যই জন্মগতভাবে বা নাগরিকত্ব গ্রহণে বাংলাদেশী হতে হবে।
(খ) আবেদনকারীকে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা বোর্ড/মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা বোর্ড/কারিগরি শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে মেট্রিক পদ্ধতিতে ৫.০০ এর ফেলে জিপিএ ৪.০০ পেয়ে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট/দাবিল/সমমানের পরীক্ষার পাশ অথবা বিদেশী শিক্ষা বোর্ড থেকে সমমানের পরীক্ষার সমতুল্য গ্রেড পেয়ে পাশ হতে হবে।
(গ) ২০২৪ সালে অনুষ্ঠিত মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষা বোর্ড/মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা বোর্ড/কারিগরি শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে এইচ. এস. সি. কিংবা উহার সমমানের পরীক্ষার গ্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে ৫.০০ এর ফেলে জিপিএ ৪.৫০ এবং গণিত, পদার্থ, রসায়ন ও ইংরেজি বিষয়ে সর্বমোট কমপক্ষে ১৮.৫০ গ্রেড পেয়ে পাস হতে হবে।
(ঘ) গণিত, পদার্থ এবং রসায়ন বিষয়ে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পরীক্ষার গ্রেড মোট নম্বরের উপর ভিত্তি করে মেথার ভিত্তিতে লিখিত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য ১২.৮০০ (বার হাজার আটশত) জন যোগ্য প্রার্থীর তালিকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েব সাইটে প্রকাশ করা হবে এবং একই সাথে SMS এর মাধ্যমে জানানো হবে।
(ঙ) প্রার্থী GCE 'O' লেভেল এবং GCE 'A' লেভেল পাশ করে থাকলে, তার ক্ষেত্রে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য GCE 'O' লেভেল পরীক্ষার গণিত, পদার্থ, রসায়ন ও ইংরেজি বিষয়ে আলাদা আলাদাভাবে 'A' গ্রেড পেতে হবে। GCE 'A' লেভেল পরীক্ষার পদার্থ, রসায়ন ও গণিত বিষয়ে আলাদা আলাদাভাবে 'A' গ্রেড পেতে হবে।
প্রার্থীকে ২০২৪ সাল বা তার পরে GCE 'A' লেভেলের ফলাফল প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। Equivalence Certificate প্রাপ্তির জন্য ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা অর্থ ও হিসাব দপ্তরে নগদ প্রদানপূর্বক 'O' লেভেল এবং 'A' লেভেল পরীক্ষার রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ড, নথ্যপত্র ও সার্টিফিকেটের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি সহ বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রেজিস্ট্রার বরাবর ২১/০১/২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদন করতে হবে।

SMS পদ্ধতিতে মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে ভর্তির প্রাথমিক আবেদন প্রক্রিয়াঃ
(ক) ভর্তি পরীক্ষার আবেদনের জন্য একটি টেলিটক প্রিপেইড মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে ম্যাসেজ অপশনে গিয়ে BUT<স্পেস>HSC শিক্ষা বোর্ডের নামের প্রথম তিনটি অক্ষর<স্পেস>HSC পরীক্ষার রোল নম্বর<স্পেস>HSC পাশের সাল<স্পেস>SSC শিক্ষা বোর্ডের নামের প্রথম তিনটি অক্ষর<স্পেস>SSC পরীক্ষার রোল নম্বর<স্পেস>SSC পাশের সাল লিখে 16222 নম্বরে SMS করতে হবে।
উদাহরণঃ BUT DHA 123456 2024 DHA 654321 2022 দিতে হবে। উদাহরণটি টাকা বোর্ডের জন্য। এখানে 123456 এর জায়গায় HSC ও 654321 এর জায়গায় SSC পরীক্ষার রোল নম্বর হবে।
বিভিন্ন বোর্ডের সফলিক্ত রূপ হবে: ঢাকা (DHA), রাজশাহী (RAJ), চট্টগ্রাম (CHA), দিনাজপুর (DIN), সিলেট (SYL), যশোর (JAS), কুমিল্লা (CUM), বরিশাল (BAR), ময়মনসিংহ (MYM), মাদ্রাসা (MAD), কারিগরি (TEC অথবা VOC), English Medium (GCE)।
(খ) উপরের SMS টি পাঠানোর পর সকল তথ্য সঠিক এবং প্রার্থী যোগ্য হলে ফিরতি SMS এ আবেদনকারীর নাম, ভর্তি পরীক্ষার ফি ও একটি PIN নম্বর জানিয়ে সম্মতি চাওয়া হবে। তখন 16222 নম্বরে আবেদনকারীকে আরেকটি SMS পাঠিয়ে সম্মতি জানাতে হবে। সম্মতি জানানোর জন্য প্রথমে BUT<স্পেস>YES<স্পেস>PIN নম্বর<স্পেস>আবেদনকারীর মোবাইল নম্বর লিখে 16222 নম্বরে SMS পাঠাতে হবে। এখানে মোবাইল নম্বরের জায়গায় আবেদনকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগের জন্য নিজে ব্যবহার করে এমন যেকোন অপারেটরের একটি মোবাইল নম্বর লিখতে হবে। উদাহরণঃ BUT YES 87654321 01XXXXXXXXXX। এই উদাহরণের 87654321 এর জায়গায় আবেদনকারীর নিজ PIN নম্বরটি বসাতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য, সম্মতি জানিয়ে SMS পাঠালেই কেবল আবেদনকারীর মোবাইল ফোন থেকে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার প্রাথমিক আবেদন ফি ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকা কেটে নেওয়া হবে, অন্যথায় কোন ফি কাটা হবে না।
আবেদনের সর্বশেষ সময়সীমা ০১/০২/২৫ তারিখ রাত ১১:৫৯ টায় শেষ সময়ে যারা প্রথম SMS সফলভাবে পাঠিয়ে PIN নম্বর পাঠাবে তারা পরবর্তী ২৪ ঘণ্টা অর্থাৎ ১১/০২/২৫ তারিখ রাত ১১:৫৯ টার মধ্যে দ্বিতীয় SMS অর্থাৎ টাকা জমাদানের SMS পাঠাতে পারবে।
(গ) আবেদনকারীর টেলিটক প্রিপেইড মোবাইলে পর্যাপ্ত পরিমাণ টাকা থাকলে তা থেকে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার আবেদনের নির্দিষ্ট ফি কেটে নিয়ে SMS এর মাধ্যমে Confirmation Reply জানিয়ে দেয়া হবে। একবার SMS করে আবেদন করলে তা আর প্রত্যাহার করা যাবে না। Confirmation Reply টি হবে এরকমঃ Application fee received successfully for BUTEX admission: 2024-2025, Receipt ID: 1XXXXXXXX. Eligible list of written test will be notified by SMS & published at www.butex.edu.bd

SMS পদ্ধতিতে মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে লিখিত পরীক্ষার আবেদন প্রক্রিয়াঃ
(ক) লিখিত পরীক্ষার জন্য যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের নামের তালিকা প্রকাশের তারিখ ২০/০২/২৫। গণিত, পদার্থ এবং রসায়ন বিষয়ে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পরীক্ষার গ্রেড মোট নম্বরের ভিত্তিতে প্রস্তুতকৃত মেধা তালিকা হতে লিখিত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য যোগ্য প্রথম ১২.৮০০ (বার হাজার আটশত) জন প্রার্থীর তালিকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েব সাইটে প্রকাশ করা হবে।
(খ) লিখিত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য একটি টেলিটক প্রিপেইড মোবাইল ফোনের মাধ্যমে ম্যাসেজ অপশনে গিয়ে BUT<স্পেস>HSC শিক্ষা বোর্ডের নামের প্রথম তিনটি অক্ষর<স্পেস>HSC পরীক্ষার রোল নম্বর<স্পেস>HSC পাশের সাল<স্পেস>SSC শিক্ষা বোর্ডের নামের প্রথম তিনটি অক্ষর<স্পেস>SSC পরীক্ষার রোল নম্বর<স্পেস>SSC পাশের সাল লিখে 16222 নম্বরে SMS করতে হবে।
উদাহরণঃ BUT DHA 123456 2024 DHA 654321 2022 দিতে হবে। উদাহরণটি টাকা বোর্ডের জন্য। এখানে 123456 এর জায়গায় HSC, 654321 এর জায়গায় SSC পরীক্ষার রোল নম্বর হবে।

কোটা এবং সংরক্ষিত আসনঃ
কোটা এবং সংরক্ষিত আসনের প্রার্থীদের ভর্তি পরীক্ষার যথারীতি অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে এবং মেধা ভিত্তিক নির্বাচন করা হবে। মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটার প্রতি বিভাগে মেধা ও পছন্দের ক্রম অনুযায়ী ০১ জন করে সর্বমোট ১১ টি আসন এবং উপজাতীয় কোটার মেধা ও পছন্দের ক্রম অনুযায়ী ২টি আসন সংরক্ষিত থাকবে। সংরক্ষিত আসনের জন্য SMS এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন করার সময় নিজ নিজ কোটার অপশন অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অন্যথায় আবেদনকারী কোটা সুবিধা প্রাপ্য হবে না। সংরক্ষিত আসনের জন্য ভর্তি পরীক্ষার যোগ্য বিবেচিত হলে ভর্তির সময় অবশ্যই উপজাতীয় প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট হতে উপজাতীয় মর্মে প্রত্যয়ন পত্র এবং মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটার ক্ষেত্রে সরকারী বিধি মোতাবেক প্রদত্ত মূল সার্টিফিকেট দেখাতে হবে এবং এর সত্যায়িত কপি দাখিল করতে হবে।

বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলীঃ
(ক) ভর্তি পরীক্ষার দিন রবিন স্ক্রিন করা ভর্তি পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র এবং এইচ.এস.সি বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ডের মূল কপি অবশ্যই সঙ্গে নিয়ে আসতে হবে। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সময় আবেদনকারীর এইচ.এস.সি বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার মূল রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ড এবং আবেদন পত্রের সাথে ছবি মিলিয়ে পরীক্ষার্থীকে সনাক্ত করা হবে। কোন রকম অসামঞ্জস্যতা দেখা গেলে পরীক্ষার্থীর উত্তরপত্র বাতিল করা হবে।
(খ) মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটা শুধুমাত্র মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তানদের ক্ষেত্রেই প্রযোজ্য হবে।
(গ) ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত কারিগরি সহায়তার জন্য যেকোন টেলিটক নম্বর হতে ১২১ অথবা অন্য যেকোন অপারেটর থেকে ০১৫০০-১২১১২১ নম্বরে রাত দিন ২৪ ঘণ্টা ফোন করে জানা যাবে।
(ঘ) ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত যেকোন তথ্য অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (রিবির হতে বৃহস্পতিবার, সকাল ৯.০০ টা হতে বিকাল ৫.০০ টা পর্যন্ত) ০১৫৫৪-৯২৬২২০ নম্বরে ফোন করে জানা যাবে।
(ঙ) ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত যেকোন বিষয়ে ভর্তি কমিটির সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

GD-1237

CITY

Preserve food of ethnic minorities

Says fisheries adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has taken significant steps to curb the sale of adulterated food, said Farida Akhter, adviser to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, yesterday.

Speaking at the inauguration of the two-day "Indigenous Food and Grain Fair 2024" at Bonoful Indigenous Greenheart College in Mirpur-13, she said, "Contaminated food is a major cause of complex diseases, including cancer. The government has implemented noteworthy measures to address this issue."

The event was jointly organised by Nagorik Uddyog and Maha Pragma Education Trust.

Highlighting the importance of agricultural production in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Farida Akhter said the region's contribution to food grain production, including 82 fish species in Kaptai Lake and the production of pure vegetables. She urged collective efforts to preserve the food and culture of ethnic communities.

Prajananda Mahathero, president of Maha Pragma Education Trust, said indigenous students get limited access to higher education in Dhaka, highlighting the socio-economic challenges faced by the community.

Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagorik Uddyog, said the unique culture and agriculture of over 54 communities, including Bangalees, must be preserved.

Prof Robaet Ferdous of Dhaka University raised

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Performers from indigenous communities present a vibrant traditional dance during the inauguration of the two-day "Indigenous Food and Grain Fair 2024" at the Bonoful Indigenous Greenheart College in Mirpur-13 of the capital yesterday. The fair, jointly organised by Nagorik Uddyog and Maha Pragma Education Trust, will conclude today.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fire breaks out at Uttara restaurant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at a restaurant in Dhaka's Uttara yesterday morning, which was later brought under control after around three and a half hours.

Twelve firefighting engines worked to douse the blaze after it originated around 10:38am at Love Leen restaurant at Uttara-12, said Anwarul Islam, a fire station official.

He added the fire was brought under control around 2:02pm, and seven people were rescued.

The cause of the fire could not be known immediately.

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 21

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:25	12:45	3:45	5:24	7:00
JAMAAT 6:00	1:15	4:00	5:27	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Farmers plant Boro seedlings using a rice transplanter under the supervision of Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation. They work from 8:00am to 3:00pm daily and earn Tk 500. The photo was taken from the Lakutia area of Barishal Sadar upazila recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Rohingya child killed in landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya child was killed and two other children seriously injured in a landslide in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The deceased is Syed Ullah, 10, son of Imam Hussain of Shabullah Kata Rohingya camp, said police.

The injured Syed Noor, 15, and Enayet Rahman, 10, are also residents of the same camp.

The incident took place around 12:00pm at Camp 15 in Ukhiya, said Arif Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Ukhiya Police Station.

The injured are being treated at a hospital, said the policeman.

Local Rohingyas said a huge chunk of earth fell on the children while they were playing on the foot of a hill in Shabullah Kata Rohingya Camp 15.

Locals and firefighters went to the spot and rescued them.

The three were taken to a nearby hospital where doctors declared Syed dead, they added.

CHAR FASSON UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEX

Poor, inadequate treatment facilities irk patients

SUSHANTA GHOSH, from Bhola

Patients have raised complaints about the utterly poor and inadequate treatment facilities, as well as the lack of cleanliness in the 100-bed Char Fasson Upazila Health Complex in Bhola.

Visiting the health complex recently, this correspondent saw several patients were leaving after being deprived of proper treatment there.

"My 85-year-old father was admitted to the health complex with cardiac complications, but in the 72 hours since then, he received no treatment or attention whatsoever from the doctors and nurses here. So, we are taking him to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for treatment," said Yanur Begum while leaving the hospital premises.

Nargis Begum, a patient admitted to the hospital with cold-related issues, echoed her.

"I have been admitted here for two days. The treatment facilities here are grossly inadequate. Also, the surroundings are very dirty and unhygienic. I will return home and seek treatment elsewhere," she said.

This trend of patients leaving the hospital without receiving proper treatment has

been going on for quite a long while. While around 40 percent beds remain unoccupied, at least four or five patient leave the hospital for elsewhere due to dissatisfaction over treatment facilities provided in the hospital.

This correspondent also noticed that garbage has piled up at many places in and around the hospital premises, with no efforts to clean those up.



Patients also expressed dissatisfaction over the insufficient medicines and poor quality of food provided by the health complex. They also complained that the diagnostic services are largely non-functional, adding that brokers of numerous private

and diagnostic centres have plagued the hospital to the extent that patients are being compelled to get all necessary tests done outside, spending a hefty sum of money.

Talking to this correspondent, Dr Shovan Kumar Basak, upazila health and family officer of Char Fasson, said acute manpower shortage has severely affected the hospital's proper functioning.

"The hospital has 35 posts of doctors and consultants, but 18 of the posts have been lying vacant for a long time. Also, there is only one cleaner and two support staff at the hospital. Such manpower crisis makes it difficult to provide all services properly," he said.

"Even amid this situation, we are providing outdoor services to around 500 patients daily, while around 60-70 patients are provided treatment after they are admitted to the hospital. Even last month, around seven or eight surgeries were conducted at the hospital," he also said.

"Steps are being taken to improve the services. Budget allocation remains a key issue. Some 17 workers are being outsourced on an emergency basis to enhance cleanliness and other aspects," he added.

Limping

FROM PAGE 3

the night shift remains non-operational." NAZIRABAZAR MATRI SADAN

Nazirabazar Matri Sadan, established in 2002 to provide maternal healthcare, faces critical manpower and infrastructure shortages.

Patients complain that outpatient services, scheduled to operate until 2:30pm, often close by 1:30pm.

Located on Bangashal New Road, the hospital is surrounded by narrow, congested streets, exacerbating access issues.

Inside, the six-story building has sparse activity.

The service centre on the second floor had one nurse on duty but no patients during a morning visit, while the third-floor wards were underused.

Talking to this correspondent, service seekers expressed frustration.

Rashida Khatun, from Mokim Bazar, said, "Doctors are not always available. Even when they are, basic medicines are missing. How can a maternity hospital lack essential medicines for expectant mothers?"

Faruk Ahmed, who sought care for his wife but left disappointed, said, "The hospital has failed to serve the community effectively. Despite having facilities, the lack of staff and medicines erodes trust."

Deputy Director Sathi Khanam acknowledged the challenges. "We have acquired an ultrasound machine and can conduct blood-type tests, but a lack of trained personnel prevents full utilisation. The shortage of doctors is another pressing issue," she said.

8 idols vandalised in M'singh, Dinajpur

STAR REPORT

Unidentified miscreants vandalised three idols at two temples in Haluaghat upazila of Mymensingh between early Wednesday and Thursday, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

Of these, two idols were damaged at Bonderpara Temple in Shakuai union on Wednesday, said Haluaghat Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abul Khayer, quoting locals and temple sources.

No case was filed, and no arrests were made till the filing of this report yesterday.

In another incident, an idol was vandalised at Polashkanda Kali Temple in Beeldora union of the same upazila early Thursday.

Suvash Chandra Sarker, president of the temple committee, filed a case against unknown persons.

Later, police arrested a man named Alal Uddin, 27, from Polashkanda village early yesterday.

Meanwhile, a Mymensingh court sent him to jail after he was produced before it, said the OC.

According to our Dinajpur correspondent, five idols were vandalised at Jharbari Shashan Kali Temple earlier on Tuesday.

The incident came to light on Thursday.

"We've never seen such an act here," said Janardan Roy, president of the temple committee. Officer-in-Charge Abdul Gafur yesterday said they are investigating the incident.

Five killed in road accidents in 2 dists

Three die in Sylhet alone

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

Three people died after a private car hit an electric pillar on the side of the Sylhet-Tamabil highway in Damri of Sylhet's Jaintiapur upazila yesterday morning.

Of them, two died on the spot while another died from injuries after being taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, said Mohammad Habibur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Tamabil Highway Police Outpost. However, their identities are yet to be confirmed, he said.

Around 10:00am, during heavy mist over the highway, the Jaflong-bound car lost control and hit the roadside electric pillar. Locals found two persons dead and took three others to the hospital.

The other injured persons are undergoing treatment at the hospital, the police official added.

In Dinajpur, two motorcyclists were killed as their motorcycle collided head-on with a speeding truck in Birganj upazila, said Birganj police.

The deceased -- identified as Dipu Roy, 30, and Madhab Roy, 25 -- were residents of Mashalpur village in Chirirbandar upazila, Dinajpur.

They went to Thakurgaon from Chirirbandar upazila in Dinajpur riding motorcycle on Thursday and were returning home. Madhab died on the spot and Dipu succumbed to his injuries at Birganj Upazila Health Complex.

Police seized the truck but its driver and helper fled the spot.

3&4 BEDROOM APARTMENTS

at Bashundhara Residential Area

Superbly designed, a very few of these modern Complexes consist of upgraded amenities such as swimming pool, community space, efficient lifts, beautifully landscaped gardens, gym and more.

Call: 16687

01713018405, 01713186944

www.asset.com.bd



ASSET DEVELOPMENTS

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD
Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.
Phone: 0299-6631506
E-mail: sesyl@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.9100.010.07.5/608(ka).24-4061

Dated : 19/12/2024

Tender Corrigendum - 03

Tender Package No : 01/PSN/SRC/2024-2025(Re-Tender)
Tender Package Name : Upgradation, Operation and Maintenance of a Real-time Web based Toll collection system of "Fenchugonj Bridge" Toll Plaza at 36th Km of Moulvibazar-Rajshahi-Fenchugonj-Sylhet Road(N-208) Under Sylhet Road Division during the year 2024-2025 for 03 (Three) years."

This is to notified for all concern that, the following amendments has been made to the Invitation of Tender Ref. No. 35.01.9100.010.07.5/608(ka).24-3636; Dated: 11.11.2024 for procurement of Non-Consulting Services.

IFT Notice SL No	Name of Criteria	Published in newspaper/Tender	Amendments
17	Tender Last Selling Date	22-12-2024 and 04.00 pm	05-01-2025 and 05.00 pm
18	Tender Submission Date and Time	23-12-2024 and 12.00 pm	06-01-2025 and 12.00 pm
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	23-12-2024 and 01.00 pm	06-01-2025 and 01.00 pm

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum notice will be treated as a part & parcel of the tender.

(Signature)
(Abbasuddin Ahmed)
ID No-601944
Superintending Engineer (C.C.), RHD
Sylhet Road Circle, Sylhet.

GD-1235

Sri Lanka navy rescues boat of 102 Rohingya refugees

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's navy said yesterday it had rescued 102 Rohingya refugees from war-torn Myanmar adrift in a fishing trawler off the Indian Ocean island nation, bringing them safely to port.

The group, including 25 children, were taken to Sri Lanka's eastern port of Trincomalee, a navy spokesman said, adding that food and water had been provided.

"Medical checks have to be done before they are allowed to disembark," the spokesman said.

The mostly Muslim ethnic Rohingya are heavily persecuted in Myanmar and thousands risk their lives each year on long sea journeys, the majority heading southeast to Malaysia or Indonesia.

But fisherman spotted the drifting trawler off Sri Lanka's northern coast at Mullivaikkal at dawn on Thursday.



Lawmakers from the main opposition Kuomintang (KMT) (in white) try to break into Parliament, where members from Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) occupy the podium to avoid the passing of the third reading of amendments to the Civil Servants Election and Recall Act and other controversial bills at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei, Taiwan yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Fighters from civil war aggravate India's ethnic conflict

REUTERS, Imphal

Indian militant groups that took refuge in Myanmar and fought in its civil war have been streaming back across the border to Manipur state this year, Indian security officers said, inflaming the bitter 19-month ethnic conflict there with weapons and battle-hardened cadres.

This has led to an increase in violence between Manipur's dominant and mostly Hindu Meitei community and the mainly Christian Kuki tribes - a conflict that critics say is the biggest law-and-order failure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 11-year-old government. Since May 2023, some 260 people have been killed in the fighting and more than 60,000 displaced.

Nine Indian military and police officers who spoke to Reuters, plus several politicians and rebel sources in Myanmar, described a conflict that is spreading to new areas as militants from the rival groups come across the border to Manipur.

Fighters are equipped with more sophisticated weapons, including rocket launchers, and 20 people were killed in fighting in November alone. In response, the federal government announced it was deploying 10,000 more soldiers in

Manipur, taking the total number of troops to nearly 67,000 in addition to the 30,000-strong police force.

The escalation has been accompanied by an increase in crime - mainly extortion and illegal drugs trade - to the weapons and operations of the rival factions, the police and military officers said.

Fighters are equipped with more sophisticated weapons, including rocket launchers, and 20 people were killed in fighting in November alone

"The insurgents who we had controlled about 10 years ago are gaining relevance again," said Yumnam Joykumar Singh, a former Manipur police chief and the state's deputy chief minister between 2017 and 2020. "Some of them are coming back from Myanmar, some have already come," said Singh, a Meitei, who led operations against Meitei militants in Manipur as a hardline chief of police between 2007 and 2012.

The federal interior ministry, Manipur

Police and the Myanmar junta did not respond to requests for comment.

Manipur is a hilly, forested region of 3.2 million people in India's northeast, bordered by Myanmar.

The fighting there was sparked last year by a court order that proposed giving the Meiteis, who live in the prosperous Imphal valley region of the state, the same government benefits as those given to historically disadvantaged Kukis, who live in the more-impooverished hills.

Security forces have manned a buffer zone between the two groups to try to limit the violence. The state has a history of insurgencies and in recent decades many militants fled across the porous border following military crackdowns.

Security officers said Meitei groups have been fighting on the side of the ruling junta in Myanmar's civil war and an estimated 2,000 of their cadres had been camping in Myanmar's Sagaing region, just across the border from Manipur, as of December.

They have fought anti-junta rebels like the People's Defence Force - Kalay (PDF-K) and the Kuki National Army - Burma in Sagaing, Kachin and Chin areas of northern Myanmar, Indian security officers and tribal leaders said.

Pakistan's missile program is 'emerging threat'

Says top US official

REUTERS, Washington

A senior White House official on Thursday said nuclear-armed Pakistan is developing long-range ballistic missile capabilities that eventually could allow it to strike targets well beyond South Asia, making it an "emerging threat" to the United States.

Deputy National Security Adviser Jon Finer's surprise revelation underscored how far the once-close ties between Washington and Islamabad have deteriorated since the 2021 US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. It also raised questions about whether Pakistan has shifted the objectives of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs long intended to counter those of India, with which it has fought three major wars since 1947.

Speaking to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Finer said Pakistan has pursued "increasingly sophisticated missile technology, from long-range ballistic missile systems to equipment, that would enable the testing of significantly larger rocket motors."

If those trends continue, Finer said, "Pakistan will have the capability to strike targets well beyond South Asia, including in the United States." The number of nuclear-armed states with missiles that can reach the US homeland "is very small and they tend to be adversarial," he continued.

Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain laid to rest in San Francisco

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The mortal remains of tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain were laid to rest on Thursday at a cemetery near San Francisco as renowned Indian percussionist A Sivamani and other artists performed on their drums at a little distance away in a tribute to the departed artist.

On behalf of the government and people of India, Consul General K Srikanth Reddy paid tribute by draping the mortal remains of Zakir Hussain with the Indian national flag, offered condolences to his wife Antonia Minnecola and his family members and read out the condolence message of the Indian Prime Minister.

Around 300 persons, including his family, friends, musicians, including Indian percussionist A Sivamani, music lovers and Indian diaspora members, paid their last respects to the table wizard.

Hussain died at a San Francisco hospital on Monday due to complications arising from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, at the age of 73.

Sivamani said: "Rhythm is God, that is you Zakir bhai. I learned a lot in our journey from 1982 till now. Every moment you are here with us in the rhythm. Every time I hit the rhythm, you are there. We love you Zakir Bhai. Have a lovely journey. Please give my pranam to all the masters."



Buet student killed as car hits bike

FROM PAGE 12

licence but refrained from making any further comments.

However, OC Liakat said Mubin could not produce any licence.

Police have seized the car and the motorcycle.

Mohammad's parents and other family members at their home on Green Road were shocked at the news of his death.

His mother Raisa Sultana kept breaking down in tears. "Why has my son gone? I raised him with so much love," she wailed.

According to the case filed by Masud, Mohammad and his two friends were returning from Neela Market after a late night dinner on the weekend.

"They were coming home. Around 3:00am, they were stopped at a

police check post when a speeding car crashed into them. Mohammad died on the spot, while his two friends were injured," reads the complaint.

After daybreak, over 100 Buet students demonstrated in front of Rugganj Police Station, demanding punishment of the driver.

They also held a rally near Buet campus around noon.

WB okays \$1.16b for 3 projects

FROM PAGE 12

It will also help reduce maternal and neonatal mortality by increasing the number of births, both normal delivery and Caesarian section deliveries, in public health facilities.

Alongside the WB financing, the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) is providing a catalytic \$25 million grant to support the government in prioritising interventions such as child nutrition, adolescent health, quality maternal and newborn care, data use, and coordination.

The WB said it approved a \$280 million Chattogram Water Supply Improvement Project to provide safe water through new and rehabilitated piped water connections to over one million people in Chattogram.

The project will establish about

200,000 new household water connections and provide improved sanitation services to about 100,000 people in low-income communities, said the WB.

It is part of a World Bank South Asia regional initiative or program of programs to provide Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services to about 100 million people across the region by 2035.

The WB said the project will also help the Chattogram Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (CWASA) improve operational efficiency and financial sustainability and address issues related to water loss such as high levels of leakage, metering inaccuracies, and illegal connections.

World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan Abdoulaye

Seck said these new financing will bring to the people of Bangladesh essential services such as health and water and sanitation while laying the foundation for clean, climate resilient and sustainable development.

He said Bangladesh is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change and faces the greatest pollution challenges.

"Improving climate resilience in every sector and tackling the pollution scourge has become a critical development priority."

Since Bangladesh's independence, the WB has so far committed more than \$45 billion in International Development Association (IDA) financing in the form of grants, interest-free loans, and concessional credits to help the country address its development priorities.

Tigers end year on a high

FROM PAGE 12

to the series had not been satisfactory with series defeats against Sri Lanka, India and even the USA. Their only series win this year came against Zimbabwe on home soil.

This was a steep drop off for the Tigers in T20Is compared to how they had performed in 2023, where they had won 10 and lost three out of 14 T20Is.

Before the West Indies T20Is, Bangladesh's best result in this format this year was them qualifying for the Super Eights of the ICC T20 World Cup for the first time in 17

years in June, a tournament that was jointly held in the Caribbean and the USA.

But the Tigers perhaps reserved their best for the end of the year, completing a dominating 3-0 sweep over the hosts after not having won a single T20I against the side since December 2018.

Jaker showcasing his abilities as a finisher, Shamim Hossain rising to the occasion after a hiatus and the bowling attack looking clinical in all three matches orchestrated the splendid series win.

Although the Tigers ended 2024

on a high, their performance this year across the formats has been a mixed bag.

This series win has improved Bangladesh's T20 statistics as they finished the year with a win percentage of 50 (12 wins in 24 matches) - which is better than their win percentage in Tests (30) and ODIs (33.33).

A number of players from the new generation stepped up in the recently concluded series and it will be interesting to see whether they can carry this form into the next year or will it remain as a one-off.

Adviser AF Hassan Ariff no more

FROM PAGE 1

Mohammad Nasir Uddin told UNB that Ariff collapsed while having lunch at home yesterday.

He was rushed to Labaid Specialised Hospital where doctors confirmed he had suffered a cardiac arrest. He was pronounced dead at 3:10pm.

Ariff's first namaz-e-janaza was held at Baitul Aman Mosque on Dhanmondi Road 7 after Isha prayers. Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and other dignitaries attended the janaza.

Ariff, a renowned lawyer, will be buried at Mirpur Intellectuals' Graveyard after another namaz-e-janaza on the High Court premises at 11:00am today, according to a statement from the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry.

As the news of his death spread, tributes poured in from across the political spectrum.

In his condolence message, President Mohammed Shahabuddin expressed his deep shock over his death, which the president said was an irreparable loss for Bangladesh.

The president prayed for the eternal peace of the deceased's soul and expressed his deepest condolences to his bereaved family.

Condoling his death, Prof Yunus paid rich tribute to Ariff's decades-long public service.

"I am deeply shocked at his sudden demise. Adviser Hassan Ariff was a top lawyer who played a very significant role in the interim government," said Prof Yunus, who learnt the news of the adviser's demise as soon as he landed in Dhaka from Dubai after attending the D-8 summit in Egypt.

"He will be remembered as a brilliant lawyer and for his legal activism and defending human rights of dissidents, dissenting voices, and the marginalised people of our society," he added.

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed also expressed deep shock at the demise of the adviser and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved

family.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Ariff, a former attorney general, the UNB reported.

In a message, Tarique extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Ariff. "His passing leaves a void, particularly in the current political landscape, where his expertise and wisdom as a legal luminary were invaluable," Tarique said.

"His contributions to the legal profession will continue to inspire colleagues and future generations of lawyers. His thoughts on the rule of law will remain a source of strength and motivation for democratic political movements," the BNP leader added.

Tarique also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the grieving family, admirers, and well-wishers.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir visited the hospital to pay respects to the late adviser.

Describing Ariff as not only a renowned lawyer but also a man who deeply believed in democracy, Fakhrul said, "I believe he was very much needed during this period of democratic transition."

In separate messages, advisers to the interim government, including Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, Finance Adviser Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, also condoled the death of Ariff, reports BSS and UNB.

Ariff was appointed as an adviser to the interim government on August 8. The following day, he was entrusted with overseeing the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD).

On August 27, he took on additional responsibilities as the adviser to the land ministry.

On November 10, he was relieved

of his duty at the LGRD ministry and given the civil aviation and tourism ministry while continuing to oversee the land ministry.

Ariff had a distinguished legal career spanning over five decades. He began his practice at the Calcutta High Court in 1967.

In 1970, he relocated to Dhaka, enrolling in the High Court, and later founded AF Hassan Ariff & Associates, a leading law firm with offices in Dhaka and Chattogram.

He served as Bangladesh's attorney general from October 2001 to April 2005 and as the law adviser of the 2007-08 caretaker government.

An authority in constitutional law, commercial arbitration and public procurement, Ariff was a panellist at the Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre, SAARC Arbitration Council and Shanghai Arbitration Commission. He also held the position of Court Member at the ICC International Court of Arbitration.

He advised numerous government and corporate entities, including the Roads and Highways Department, Bangladesh Bank, and Chittagong Port Authority, along with telecom giants Robi Axiata and Grameenphone.

Beyond his legal practice, he was a resource person for the Bangladesh Bar Council's Continuing Legal Education and Human Rights Training Programme and a prominent member of the International Business Forum of Bangladesh.

In 2010, he led the Election Observer Mission for the Asian Network for Free Elections in Manila, Philippines.

Landslide kills

FROM PAGE 12

pronounced Syed Ullah dead. The injured, Syed Noor, 15, and Enayet Rahman, 10, who were also from the same Rohingya camp, were receiving treatment at a local hospital, said Arif Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station.

Russia fires barrage of missiles at Kyiv
One killed; six diplomatic missions damaged

AFP, Kyiv
Russian missiles targeted the Ukrainian capital Kyiv at sunrise yesterday, killing at least one person and cutting heating to hundreds of residential buildings in cold temperatures.

Moscow said it attacked Ukraine as retaliation for a strike using Western missiles on a chemical plant in Russia earlier in the week. The strikes came as Russia's invasion nears its three-year mark. The air force said it downed all five Iskander missiles Russia launched at the capital, but that debris caused damage in five districts.

Ukraine said six diplomatic missions damaged. The strikes killed a 53-year-old man and wounded 11 people, most suffering from shrapnel wounds. It also cut heating to 630 buildings, as well as a dozen of medical clinics and schools.



People leave the site of a Russian missile strike in central Kyiv, Ukraine yesterday. Russian forces hit military targets in Ukraine with long-range high-precision weapons in response to an attack on Russia's Rostov region this week. PHOTO: REUTERS

Eight dead in Greece migrant boat sinking

AFP, Athens
Greece's coastguard yesterday said at least eight people had drowned during the pursuit of a smuggling speedboat that sank in the Aegean Sea. The coastguard said the speedboat had capsized as it attempted to flee, adding that another 18 people had been rescued.

A coastguard statement said that the boat driver had "lost control" while attempting to evade a Greek patrol vessel. The incident occurred near the island of Rhodes, opposite the Turkish coast on a route frequently used by migrant smugglers. Coastguard vessels and a helicopter were looking for survivors. Greece has seen a 25-percent increase this year in the number of migrants arriving, with a 30 percent increase to Rhodes and the southeast Aegean, according to the migration ministry.

Time to 'eradicate' IS, Kurdish fighters in Syria

Says Turkey's Erdogan; world must 're-evaluate' sanctions to help rebuild Syria: UN

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday it was time to destroy "terrorist" groups that posed a threat to Syria's survival, namely the Islamic State group jihadists and Kurdish fighters.

"Daesh, the PKK and their affiliates -- which threaten the survival of Syria -- must be eradicated," he told journalists while returning from a Cairo summit, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "It's time to neutralise the existing terrorist organisations in Syria."

Meanwhile, two journalists from Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast have been killed, reportedly by a Turkish drone, while covering the fighting between an Ankara-backed militia and US-backed Kurdish fighters in Syria, journalists' groups said yesterday.

Turkey views the Syrian Defence Forces (SDF) as a terror organisation because it is dominated by the YPG, a Kurdish group it says is linked to PKK militants who have fought a decades-long insurgency on Turkish soil.

But the US-backed force led the fight against the Islamic State group jihadists in Syria in 2019, with the SDF seen by the US as a "crucial" to prevent a jihadist resurgence in the area.

Erdogan said his government was taking "preventive measures" against groups that posed a threat to Turkey. "It is impossible for us to accept such a risk," he said, expressing hope Syria's new leaders would not opt to work with them.

"We do not think any power will continue to work with terrorist organisations in the upcoming period," he said.

"The heads of terrorist organisations such as IS and PKK-YPG ... will be crushed in the shortest time possible," he warned. Erdogan also said his top diplomat Hakan Fidan would visit Damascus soon, following in the footsteps of spy chief Ibrahim Kalin who went there just four days after Assad's fall and met with HTS leadership.

Meanwhile, the head of the UN's migration agency said yesterday that the raft of international sanctions on Syria must be reassessed to help the country rebuild following the ousting of Assad.



INDIA PARLIAMENT Rahul faces police probe over scuffle

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's Rahul Gandhi is under police investigation over a scuffle between opposition members of parliament and those from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, which injured two lawmakers, police said yesterday.

Police were responding to a BJP complaint accusing Gandhi, the opposition leader, of pushing and shoving BJP lawmakers and causing injuries to two of them on Thursday as they protested outside parliament house against opposition parties.

Gandhi, the Congress party leader, already has multiple cases filed against him. He was briefly disqualified from parliament last year after a court sentenced him to two years' imprisonment in a defamation case.

The Supreme Court suspended the conviction and he was reinstated as a lawmaker.

On Thursday, television channels showed one of the injured lawmakers being taken from the spot in a wheelchair, with a woman pressing a cloth above his left eyebrow, which she lifted briefly to reveal a bleeding wound.

Trump-backed spending deal fails in House
US shutdown approaches

REUTERS, Washington

A spending bill backed by Donald Trump failed in the US House of Representatives on Thursday as dozens of Republicans defied the president-elect, leaving Congress with no clear plan to avert a fast-approaching government shutdown that could disrupt Christmas travel.

The vote laid bare fault lines in Trump's Republican Party that could surface again next year when they control the White House.

Trump had pressured lawmakers to tie up loose ends before he takes office on January 20, but members of the party's right flank refused to support a package that would increase spending and clear the way for a plan that would add trillions more to the federal government's \$36 trillion in debt.

"I am absolutely sickened by a party that campaigns on fiscal responsibility and has the temerity to go to the American people and say you think this is fiscally responsible," said Republican Representative Chip Roy, one of 38 Republicans who voted against the bill.

The package failed by a vote of 174-235 just hours after it was hastily assembled by Republican leaders seeking to comply with Trump's demands.

Biden cancels \$4.28bn more in student debt

AFP, Washington



US President Joe Biden said yesterday he was canceling student loans for an additional 55,000 Americans, which would amount to wiping out \$4.28 billion in debt in his final month in office.

The mass cancellation of debt is for "teachers, nurses, service members, law enforcement officials, and other public service workers who have dedicated their lives to giving back to their communities," he said in a statement issued by the White House yesterday.

With this new crop of beneficiaries, it would mean "nearly 5 million people" have been approved for debt relief during Biden's administration.

"From Day One of my administration, I promised to make sure that higher education is a ticket to the middle class, not a barrier to opportunity," the president said.

The Democratic president had instated a landmark forgiveness program in 2022 to cancel hundreds of billions in student debt -- which would have made certain borrowers eligible to receive \$20,000 in cancellations, while the vast majority were eligible for \$10,000.

But the conservative-dominated Supreme Court overruled the program in 2023.

গনপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়,
কাপ্তাই, রাঙ্গামাটি পার্বত্য জেলা।
email-kaptai@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd
স্মারক নং-উঃস্বঃকমঃ/কাপ্তাই/রাঙ্গা/দরপত্র/২৪-২৫/৫৯৩ তারিখ ১-১৯/১২/২০২৪ইং
পূনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
রাঙ্গামাটি পার্বত্য জেলাধীন উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স, কাপ্তাই, রাঙ্গামাটি পার্বত্য জেলার ২০২৪-২০২৫ইং অর্থ বছরের জন্য যথাযথ (ক) রোগীদের "পথ্য সরবরাহ" (খ) "মনিহারি ও বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ" এবং (গ) "লিঙ্গেন দৌতকরণ" - এর নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/স্বিকার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/লজী ব্যবসায়ী-এর নিকট হতে শর্তসাপেক্ষে নিবির্ভার সিডিউলের মাধ্যমে সীলগালায়ুক্ত বামে গ্রুপ ওয়ারী পূনঃ দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।



Pak province aims to collect weapons to stem clashes

Tribesmen say they would not give up their arms

REUTERS, Peshawar

Provincial authorities in northwestern Pakistan said yesterday they planned to collect heavy weapons to stop sectarian clashes that have killed hundreds, but tribesmen in the historically lawless region said they would not give up their arms.

Kurram, a tribal district of around 600,000 near the border with Afghanistan where federal and provincial authorities have traditionally exerted limited control, has been a flashpoint for sectarian tensions for decades.

Fresh clashes between Sunni and Shia Muslims erupted last month, triggering a humanitarian crisis with reports of starvation, lack of medicine and oxygen shortages following the blocking of the main highway connecting Kurram's main city of Parachinar to the provincial capital Peshawar.

Mohammad Ali Saif, spokesman for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government, said authorities had decided to dismantle private bunkers - observation posts used in the fighting by both sides - and collect heavy weapons from tribesmen in Kurram to stop the violence.

However, local tribesmen have refused to surrender their weapons, citing concerns about their safety.

"Our weapons are for self defence, not against the state," said Jalal Hussain Bangash, a local tribal leader.

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
Progoti Foundation for Education and Development
Permanent Sanad Holder
Admission, Spring 2025
Prestigious Position in QS World Ranking
Fully-Owned Beautiful Campus Teaching Assistantships
Annual Scholarships of 12 Crore Taka Group Insurance for Students
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
BBA, BSS in Economics, BA in English, BSS in Sociology, BSS in Population and Public Health Sciences, BSS in Information Studies, LLB (Hons)
B.Sc.in Computer Science and Engineering, Data Science and Analytics, Information and Communications Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Civil Engineering, Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Mathematics, B Pharm
Application Deadline: 15 January 2025 Admission Test: 18 January 2025
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
MBA, EMBA, MDS, MSS in Economics, MA in English, MA in TESOL, LLM
M Pharm, MS in CSE, Master of Science in Data Science and Analytics, Master of Population, Reproductive Health, Gender and Development (MPRHGD), Postgraduate Diploma in Population, Public Health and Disaster Management (PPDM), Postgraduate Diploma in Entrepreneurship Development (PGDED)
Application Deadline: 17 January 2025 MBA Admission Test: 18 January 2025
For Online Admission Forms and Payment Facilities- http://admission.ewubd.edu see www.ewubd.edu or Contact EWU Admission Office
EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
Aftabnagar, Dhaka-1212
Phone: 09666775577, Ext. 234
Mobile: 01755587224, 01851933094

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Take effective steps to curb crimes

Rising incidents of violence, murder, and mugging raise alarm

We are concerned about the deteriorating state of law and order in the country, including in Dhaka. Media reports indicate a noticeable rise in incidents of violence, murder, mugging, and robbery as law enforcement agencies struggle to ensure security despite increased vigilance. Muggings and killings, in particular, have become quite common, with bodies of victims reportedly being found in lakes, rivers and open fields. The perception of security forces playing a reactive role—as evidenced by instances where crime or violence was anticipated—is only heightening the sense of insecurity among citizens.

A quick search online would reveal a wide spectrum of crimes: from the dramatic bank heist attempt in Keraniganj to the strangling to death of a nine-year-old in Satkhira, from the brazen muggings and equally brazen lynching of suspected muggers to the gruesome discoveries of buried bodies in different areas. On December 18, four people were killed and 50 others injured during a violent clash between two factions of Tablighi Jamaat in Tongi, Dhaka. On December 12, two students involved with the anti-discrimination student movement were hacked to death. These incidents show how opportunistic criminals and anarchists are exploiting the fluid security situation to commit crimes and disrupt public order.

Adding to this crisis is the proliferation of stolen arms and ammunition, with police sources indicating that many firearms looted from police stations following the mass uprising have not yet been recovered. Reportedly, criminals including escaped prisoners, youth gangs and extremists are using these weapons to commit crimes. While joint security drives are going on to reclaim these weapons, progress has not been swift or satisfactory. In any case, as police data suggests, whatever the reason behind the surge in criminal activities, efforts by the authorities are proving ineffective to contain this wave of lawlessness. For example, according to an estimate, 583 people were killed in September, 399 in October, and 337 in November. In contrast, during the same months last year, the numbers of murders were lower—238, 258, and 227, respectively.

One of the reasons behind police struggles to contain rising crime in Dhaka, and likely in other areas, is that the replacement of many police officers after the uprising has created an intelligence gap about criminal trends and offenders, resulting in poor response by those newly assigned to police stations. Moreover, there still seems to be a reluctance among many officers to file cases instead of GDs, apparently because more cases would mean a heavier workload. Clearly, we cannot tackle crimes head-on without our police being fully equipped and motivated. The assurance by the home affairs adviser—that patrol has been increased, including during the wee hours when there are greater risks of mugging and robbery—may not work if the many security loopholes that now exist are not addressed simultaneously.

What we need is a comprehensive strategy that includes improving detection of potential criminal and violent developments, enhancing police-community cooperation, and properly utilising security forces to neutralise threats. Since the rising trends of crime and violence have been noted across the country, the whole security apparatus must be engaged so that public concerns about security can be effectively addressed.

Ensure rights, dignity of domestic workers

State must take effective steps to address their plight

We are concerned about the continued deprivation of rights faced by domestic workers, with their profession remaining excluded from the labour law. While there does exist the Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015, it has largely gone unimplemented so far, resulting in widespread violations of their rights by employers. A recent event held at The Daily Star Centre brought out some harrowing stories of domestic workers that underscore the urgent need for intervention.

Reportedly, domestic workers endure daily humiliations and exploitations. They often work without set hours, suffer physical abuse for even minor mistakes, and are threatened with job loss if they fall ill. Worse yet, they are often denied holidays during major festivals. One domestic worker shared how she was denied clean drinking water and prohibited from sitting on the sofa she cleaned, while another spoke of being forced to continue working while pregnant. These stories reflect the widespread suffering of thousands of domestic workers in households across the country.

The situation is even worse for child domestic workers, who are particularly vulnerable to abuse by employers. Over the years, numerous reports have emerged detailing physical and sexual abuse of these children. A study by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies and Dnet found that domestic workers face various forms of abuse: four percent experience sexual abuse, 21 percent physical abuse, 67 percent mental abuse, and 61 percent verbal abuse. Alarming, 95 percent of these workers do not report any incidents of abuse, while nearly 99 percent are unaware of any protective policies.

We, therefore, urge the government to properly address the plight of the domestic workers, especially children. Experts have emphasised the need to include these professionals under the country's labour law, ensuring legal recognition and protection of their rights. Additionally, creating a register for domestic workers could help monitor and improve their working conditions. The Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy—which seeks to secure fair wages, reasonable working hours, and the right to health and education—must also be rigorously enforced. Finally, the media can play a significant role in highlighting the abuse faced by domestic workers and running campaigns to protect their rights.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Marie and Pierre Curie discover radium

On this day in 1898, having recently discovered polonium, future Nobel Prize winners Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radioactive chemical element radium, a silvery white metal that would be used to treat cancer.

THE SPIRIT OF 1971 Reflections on liberation, aspirations, and modern challenges



Anu Muhammad is former professor of economics from Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

During the period when Bangladesh was still a part of Pakistan, the resistance of its people began against ethnic discrimination, regional disparities, economic inequality, oppression, military rule, and ultimately the denial of elections and the perpetration of genocide. The Liberation War was not merely a military conflict, but a culmination of years of exploitation and injustice imposed upon the people of the then East Pakistan.

The Pakistani forces systematically targeted intellectuals who had played an active role in fostering cultural and ideological consciousness against discrimination and oppression. This brutal attack began on the night of March 25, 1971, and continued throughout the year. Intellectuals including teachers, journalists, writers, and artists were killed across the country. On December 14, 1971, during a curfew, this carnage reached its peak when many prominent intellectuals were brutally killed in several places. Local collaborators, known as Razakars, played a pivotal role in assisting the Pakistani military, particularly in targeting and killing intellectuals.

The systematic elimination of Bangladesh's brightest minds was an attempt to cripple the intellectual foundation of our nation. However, the Liberation War saw massive participation from all sectors of society—workers, peasants, and ordinary citizens, excluding only a few collaborators/war criminals. The price was steep: millions were martyred; countless women and men were tortured and injured; and an entire nation lived through the trauma of pain, fear, and loss.

The essence of the Liberation War was to create a Bangladesh free from discrimination and oppression. It was an aspiration for a country unlike Pakistan—authoritarian, communal, and centred on the wealth of a select few. The dream was to build a nation where equality, justice, and opportunity would be accessible to

all citizens, regardless of their social identity or economic standing.

In the 53 years of independence, Bangladesh has experienced numerous governments, each with its promises and pitfalls. The post-liberation government under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, though initially extraordinarily popular, eventually shifted towards authoritarian rule. The establishment of Rakkhi Bahini



As Bangladesh moves forward, it is essential to keep the dreams of the Liberation War alive.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

and a one-party system brought disillusionment. Soon afterwards, military regimes took hold of the country for nearly 15 years, pushing Bangladesh further away from the original aspirations of the Liberation War.

However, people did not give up. Through struggles, sacrifices, and an unwavering determination, they fought to restore democracy, culminating in the fall of the military rule in 1990. Yet, even after the restoration of elected governments in 1991, the hopes that emerged out of the Liberation War often remained unfulfilled. The alternating rules by BNP, Awami League, and their coalitions failed to bring significant changes in governance,

with corruption and authoritarian practices persisting.

While Bangladesh has achieved noticeable economic growth since independence—with expanding GDP, improved infrastructure, and higher literacy rates—the promises of equality and justice remain elusive. Inequality has multiplied over the decades. The commercialisation and privatisation of essential services like healthcare and education have put them out of the reach of ordinary citizens. A single illness can push a family into poverty, while the cost of education continues to financially cripple many households.

At the same time, Bangladesh's natural resources—rivers, hills, forests, and land—have faced alarming levels of pollution and exploitation. The so-called development has often come at the cost of the environment, with

League and Jubo League affiliated with the ousted Awami League party—have aided oppressive regimes, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and misrule.

Yet, resistance remains a defining feature of Bangladesh's history. Just as the youth of 1971 rose against the injustices of Pakistan, the recent July uprising reflects a renewed aspiration for a just and discrimination-free Bangladesh. The youth, just like in 1971 and in the 1980s, once again took the lead in resisting oppression in 2024, standing against indiscriminate killings and injustice. Their actions remind us of the unfinished goals of the Liberation War and the need to revive its true spirit.

The July uprising is not, therefore, an isolated event—it is a continuation of the Liberation War's aspirations. It reflects the collective will of the people to reclaim the dream of a Bangladesh that is free from discrimination and oppression. The values of 1971—equality, justice, and freedom—must once again serve as guiding principles for the nation. The 2024 uprising showed that the people of Bangladesh never give up or accept defeat. It also opened up the possibility of moving forward after the fall of an autocratic ruler.

We must remember the sacrifices made during the Liberation War and recognise that the journey towards a just and equitable Bangladesh is far from over. While some progress has been made, the spirit of 1971 demands more. It calls for an end to inequality, exploitation, and environmental destruction. It urges us to resist authoritarianism and uphold the ideals for which millions gave their lives.

As Bangladesh moves forward, it is essential to keep the dreams of the Liberation War alive—to strive for a nation that is truly free, just, secular, environment-friendly, democratic, and inclusive. The spirit of 1971 lives on, and it is up to the present generation to ensure that its promises are fulfilled. We do not want to see any more profit-making projects at the cost of the environment and people's livelihoods. We do not want to see any autocratic, patriarchal rule with discrimination based on religion, gender, ethnic identity or class. We do not want to see the rise of oligarchy at the cost of public rights. We do not want to see any domination by imperial or sub-imperial power. We want to live with freedom, dignity, diversity, and a clean environment.

A tested approach that can help us fight dengue



ABM Uddin is analyst for the Senate Democratic Office at the Florida Legislature. He specialises in policies and politics around healthcare, ethics, and elections.

ABMUDDIN

Despite years of battling dengue, Bangladesh still finds itself dealing with the crisis as lives continue to be cut tragically short. The Dengue Dynamic Dashboard for Bangladesh managed by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) shows that, as of December 19, at least 557 people have died due to dengue in 2024, with a total of 99,805 cases recorded this year. This outbreak is the second deadliest in the country's history, following the 1,705 deaths and 321,179 cases recorded in 2023, making the case fatality rate (CFR) this year (0.52 percent), almost as high as last year's CFR (0.49 percent). It reveals not just a public health crisis but a failure to adapt quickly to a changing reality.

Despite effective measures, Bangladesh still faces major roadblocks in fighting dengue. For example, the effectiveness of mosquito control initiatives in Bangladesh has been inconsistent, contributing to the proliferation of Aedes mosquitoes. A monsoon survey conducted by the DGHS in 2023 revealed that the Aedes mosquito population in Dhaka's two city corporations nearly tripled over four years. This significant rise indicates lapses in sustained vector control measures. A comprehensive study revealed that while Dhaka city accounted for over half of the cases in 2019, by 2023, there was a nationwide

surge with cases peaking earlier in the year.

However, through innovation, data-driven solutions, and smarter resource allocation, Bangladesh can turn the tide in this fight. The Integrated Aedes Management (IAM) approach, tested and approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) and successfully implemented in many countries, could be effective in controlling Aedes. IAM is a concrete data-driven and evidence-based initiative, implementing which involves a combination of vector control methods tailored to local contexts. This strategy includes four components: environmental management, biological control, chemical interventions, and community engagement and education. It aligns with the WHO's Integrated Vector Management (IVM) strategy, which advocates combining interventions to reduce reliance on any single method.

The environmental management of IAM focuses on the elimination of mosquito breeding sites, reducing favourable habitats. Regularly removing stagnant water from containers, flowerpots, discarded tires, and rooftops and enforcing strict construction site regulations is a very effective approach to the environmental management

of mosquitoes. Singapore conducts a "10-minute mozzie wipeout" campaign to eliminate breeding grounds weekly. The US Environmental Protection Agency emphasises that targeting mosquito larvae in their breeding habitats is an effective and cost-efficient control method.

The biological control uses natural methods to suppress mosquito populations. The Wolbachia Bacteria Intervention strategy used in the biological measures introduces Wolbachia-infected Aedes mosquitoes to prevent virus replication. The technique has proven successful in reducing dengue cases by 77 percent in Indonesia's Yogyakarta City. In Brazil, the programme has curtailed dengue cases in the Aburra Valley region to a 20-year low.

The larvivoracious fish technique uses fish like guppy fish that feed on mosquito larvae in ponds, canals or stagnant water sources. It will be a very cost-effective control for Bangladesh's rural and urban areas with large water reservoirs. India implements such programmes and has seen positive results. A study in India reported a 70-90 percent reduction in mosquito larvae populations through the introduction of guppy fish. Bangladesh has also used similar methods before.

Another very effective biological control is the Sterile Insect Technique method, which releases sterilised male mosquitoes to prevent reproduction. Successfully piloted in China, the method has reduced the Aedes population by up to 96 percent.

The chemical control targets adult mosquitoes and larvae effectively using insecticides. The Targeted Fogging strategy conducts early morning or evening fogging where

Aedes mosquito density is high, identified through Geographic Information System-based surveillance. The method avoids indiscriminate spraying, which, of course, causes insecticide resistance. So, the technique achieves more sustainable results in mosquito population management.

The larvicide approach uses eco-friendly larvicides in breeding areas. It addresses resistance by alternating classes of insecticides. Studies in Dhaka found that 50 percent of mosquitoes are resistant to pyrethroids, emphasising the need for chemical rotation.

The last of the IAM framework is the community engagement and education approach, which empowers communities to participate actively in mosquito control. Part of it is behaviour change campaigns that focus on public education on preventing breeding sites, wearing protective clothing, and using repellents.

As another example, school-based programmes can educate students to be "mosquito warriors" by spreading awareness. Successful community-based models in Sri Lanka reduced dengue emergency admission by 60 percent. We must expand these programmes to reach more communities.

IAM offers sustainable, data-driven solutions to address Aedes mosquito density in Bangladesh. By combining environmental, biological, chemical, and community-based interventions, IAM ensures an adaptable approach to tackling dengue. For the framework to be successful, government commitment, technological integration, and community ownership are crucial.

Citizens, too, must step up to ensure our food security



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

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

My personal experience of living in both capitalist and socialist countries occasionally surfaces in my Marxist theory classes. In the former, I found the price of a gallon of milk teasingly close to that of a litre. To tempt consumers further, there were often “buy one, get one free” offers. Therefore, I would visit the supermarket for a litre of milk, only to return home with two gallons, each with a short expiration date. The challenge was to consume the extra purchase: the response ranged from preparing impromptu milk-based dishes, inviting guests, or discarding most of the excess milk. The surplus makes you buy more and more, changing both your culinary and social behaviours. Instead of being remorseful for the waste, you boast about the innovative ways you used the milk. In contrast, in a socialist country, the milk box size varied from 250 grams to one litre. If you need more for a party, buy several boxes according to your need. In the process, you

become a responsible consumer. Looking at some stats related to dairy cows, I discovered that the US is ranked seventh in terms of the population of cows, but it tops the list in terms of milk production. On the same list of cow populations, we are ranked 15th, but we don't even appear in the top

The liberalisation of trade has changed the agricultural heart of our nation. We are fast becoming over-reliant on exports, seeking quick cash from industries like tourism and real estate. The new money class is privatising land for private resorts. Tourism is changing the ecosystem of our paddy fields and fisheries.

provided for rice production have yielded near self-sufficiency in Boro and Aman breeds. However, this does not apply to other products. Researchers have held the use of soil for rice responsible for the degradation of soil quality and zinc deficiency. The report makes some beneficial suggestions on food

security. As a non-expert, what concerns me is the sudden disappearance of a particular product from the market due to the potential price hike in the coming days. For instance, the cartel behind the market hoards onions and potatoes before Ramadan, believing that their profits will increase when our eating habits change during the month of self-control. After a day-long fast, we will long for

land for private resorts. Tourism is changing the ecosystem of our paddy fields and fisheries. Meanwhile, the lure of foreign investment in special economic zones (SEZs) has led to land consolidation for cash crops and industrial goods meant for affluent countries. The result? Food shortages and skyrocketing prices have left citizens vulnerable to crisis and unrest. The unchecked prioritisation of misguided development projects and

We need to plan meals wisely and store foods properly to minimise waste. This way, we can reduce pressure on our food supply, even if just a little bit. Land conversion for tourism complexes and luxury villas is both unreasonable and irresponsible. Citizens with access to land—even small plots—can grow kitchen vegetables like chillies, tomatoes, and leafy greens. Rooftops and balconies can transform into urban gardens with minimal efforts. Our rivers and wetlands are a treasure trove of resources waiting to be revitalised. Supporting local fisheries and livestock farms can reduce our dependency on imported proteins. People can champion sustainable practices and encourage others to buy locally produced fish, dairy, and meat. Corruption in agricultural programmes often sidelines the most vulnerable farmers. We can demand greater transparency and accountability by joining community monitoring initiatives. Every voice counts in ensuring that resources reach the right hands. National pride isn't just about cultural celebrations; it's about uplifting our farmers. Buy directly from local markets and support small-scale growers. Every purchase strengthens our agricultural backbone and helps build a resilient food system. Citizens must advocate for policies that prioritise agriculture over nonessential development. Let's push for infrastructure that benefits farmers, such as irrigation systems and storage facilities. We need to incorporate agricultural knowledge and sustainable practices into school curricula. Teach children to grow their own vegetables and respect the work of farmers. A well-informed generation is our best bet for long-term food security. Bangladesh's journey toward food security is a test of national character. By prioritising agriculture, revitalising traditional practices, and embracing local solutions, we can break free from the humiliation of being dependent. Let's stop sacrificing our fertile lands for fleeting gains and start building a future rooted in resilience and self-reliance. Together, we can ensure a food-secure Bangladesh worthy of its people and its legacy. Let's start planting the seeds of change today.

economic liberalisation has endangered our most basic needs while benefiting the privileged few. We need to let go of the idea that the government must do everything. Food security isn't just a government responsibility; it's a collective effort. We can make a difference by changing ourselves and our food choices. For instance, by diversifying our diets and embracing locally grown, seasonal foods, we can reduce our dependency on imports and support local farmers. By prioritising health over excess, we can contribute to food sustainability and reduce import dependency.



Food shortages and skyrocketing prices have left citizens vulnerable to crisis and unrest. FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

fried items that require onions, potatoes and aubergines. Inabilities to control the market led many of our political leaders to propose alternative recipes, much to the chagrin of daily users. The import of potatoes from our neighbour, with whom we are engaged in a war of words, sprinkles salt dust over our wound of not being self-sufficient in food, even 53 years after independence. The liberalisation of trade has changed the agricultural heart of our nation. We are fast becoming over-reliant on exports, seeking quick cash from industries like tourism and real estate. The new money class is privatising

economic liberalisation has endangered our most basic needs while benefiting the privileged few. We need to let go of the idea that the government must do everything. Food security isn't just a government responsibility; it's a collective effort. We can make a difference by changing ourselves and our food choices. For instance, by diversifying our diets and embracing locally grown, seasonal foods, we can reduce our dependency on imports and support local farmers. By prioritising health over excess, we can contribute to food sustainability and reduce import dependency.

After Ramanujan's death, Hardy was asked in an interview what his greatest

A mathematical genius with an aura of mysticism



Dr Quamrul Haider
is professor emeritus at Fordham
University in New York, US.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

For many people, mathematics is a word that evokes feelings of awe. They remember the subject from their school days as a world difficult to get into, the finer points of which they never understood. They also remember that there were always a few students in class who with no apparent difficulty understood maths. They were the brightest students in class that's the halo that mathematicians wear around their heads. This winter solstice marks the 137th birth anniversary of one such extraordinarily bright student who possessed an uncanny ability to see beyond the apparent and transcended the boundaries of traditional knowledge in the realm of mathematics. He was Srinivasa Ramanujan, one of the world's all-time great mathematicians. Born into modest circumstances in Erode, Tamil Nadu, India on December 22, 1887, under signs in the heavens that portend great events, his horoscope, cast by his mother, predicted that he would be a wunderkind beset by great suffering. Ramanujan received almost no formal training in mathematics. Yet, he was so consumed by it that he was unable to focus on any other subject in college and thus, could not complete his degree. When he was in his mid-teens, a friend introduced him to the book *Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure and Applied Mathematics*. This two-volume encyclopaedic tome played an instrumental role in awakening this mathematical prodigy and set the tone for his career. Since then, Ramanujan committed all of his time to mathematics, proceeding to record his theorems without proofs in his notebooks. As he continued to make deep discoveries of his own, he wrote to the erudite men and women of mathematics for recognition. But they ignored him because his claims seemed too incredible to be the product of someone with no formal background in mathematics. In 1913, while working as a clerk in

the accounts department of the Port Trust Office in Madras, Ramanujan dispatched a letter containing more than 100 theorems to Godfrey Hardy, a famous number theorist at Cambridge University and a Trinity College don. Initially intrigued by the “outlandishly original” theorems, Hardy eventually saw a genius in Ramanujan and invited him



SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920)

to Cambridge University in April 1914. Once in Cambridge, Ramanujan produced hundreds of new equations, identities and theorems, mostly without proofs, dazzling his peers who were baffled as to the source of his exceptional abilities. Being a great exponent of exactness and proofs, Hardy was unhappy with just conjectures and wanted Ramanujan to back up his work

with rigorous proofs. But Ramanujan treated proofs as mostly redundant and relied instead on intuition. Unable to convince him that proofs were the currency of mathematics, a frustrated Hardy finally concluded that Ramanujan was otherworldly, a savant who erupted into something never seen before. John Littlewood, another brilliant

Mathematicians around the world marvel at Ramanujan's contributions to mathematics, although the meaning of much of his work is still a mystery. They continue to strive to reach his extraordinary intellect as his insights manifest repeatedly in disparate corners of the world of mathematics.

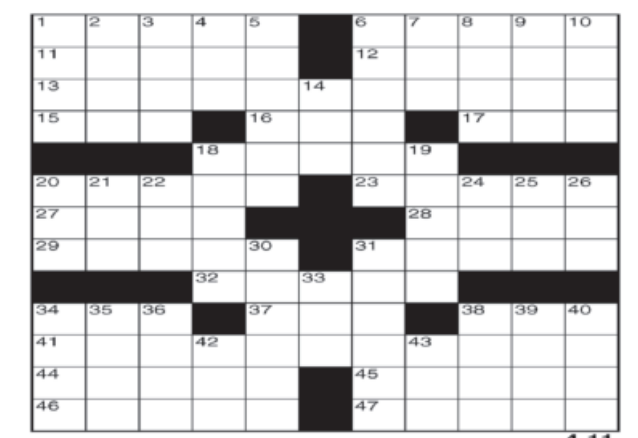
Trinity don who worked closely with Hardy and Ramanujan, opined that Ramanujan ruled out conventional reasoning because his work had an aura of mysticism. Indeed, Littlewood was correct. As a devout Brahmin, Ramanujan perceived a mystic connection between mathematics and his religion. He believed his mathematical formulas came to him as visions provided by Goddess Namagiri. To him, an equation holds no meaning unless it expresses a thought of God. This way of conceptualising mathematics was anathema to Hardy's code, an atheist with a hostile attitude towards religion. This made the two an odd couple with conflicting views of religion but consonant views of mathematics. An amusing anecdote that came to symbolise Ramanujan's genius concerns the number 1729. Hardy once came to visit Ramanujan in a cab numbered 1729, a number he claimed to be totally uninteresting. Ramanujan immediately stated that it was actually a very interesting number. It's the smallest number representable in two different ways as a sum of two cubes: $13 + 123$ and $93 + 103$. Such numbers are now referred to as “taxicab numbers.” Ill health had been an issue with Ramanujan since his birth. In the spring of 1917, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Despite being in and out of sanatorium for the rest of his stay in Cambridge, he continued to make enormously important contributions in the areas of number theory, analysis, and algebraic combinatorics. By early 1919, Ramanujan seemed to

have recovered sufficiently and returned to India. A year later, on April 26, 1920, at the young age of 32, he died of tuberculosis. Even on his deathbed, he documented a series of theorems that he claimed had been revealed to him during a dream. After Ramanujan's death, Hardy was asked in an interview what his greatest

contribution to mathematics was. He replied without hesitation that it was the discovery of Ramanujan. He even characterised their collaboration as “the one romantic incident in my life.” During his short life span, Ramanujan spawned thousands of identities, conjectures, equations, and theorems. His deep intuitive understanding of numbers and their representation as infinite series created identities that were previously unknown to the world of mathematics. Besides his published work, he left behind a priceless treasure: his three notebooks and a few scraps of paper covering around 3,900 equations. Mathematicians around the world marvel at Ramanujan's contributions to mathematics, although the meaning of much of his work is still a mystery. They continue to strive to reach his extraordinary intellect as his insights manifest repeatedly in disparate corners of the world of mathematics. As noted by Freeman Dyson, a renowned theoretical physicist at Princeton University, Ramanujan “discovered so much, and yet left so much more in his garden for other people to discover.” The Vajrayana form of Buddhism, adherents say, provides a quicker path to enlightenment and early freedom from the wheel of incarnations. If this is really true, then Srinivasa Ramanujan, a self-taught Indian mathematical wizard, who revolutionised the field of real analysis, number theory, game theory, continued fraction, infinite series, and many more, is an example of this potent form of Buddhism.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Tokyo's nation
6 Houston player
11 Find darling
12 "Over There!" writer
13 Bette Davis film
15 CPR expert
16 Star pitcher
17 Writer Stout
18 Skilled
20 City square
23 Western resort lake
27 Compass point
28 Solitary
29 Church areas
31 Star in Orion
32 Winter quaff
34 Atlas page
37 Unruly group
38 London weather
41 Bette Davis film
44 Shoplifted
45 Work byproduct
46 Castle part
47 Bridge costs
- DOWN**
1 Green stone
2 First person
3 Cruise stop
4 Bible vessel
5 Utah neighbor
6 Agree to
7 Lush
8 Role for Chris Hemsworth
9 Quite uncommon
10 Cameo stone
14 Bar rocks
18 Ancient Mexican
19 Shire of "Rocky"
20 Stew sphere
21 Trip around a track
22 Cart puller
24 Sty resident
25 Low bill
26 Sushi choice
30 Grave
31 Hearty
33 Pigeon sound
34 Schooner pole
35 Singing voice
36 Work the fields
38 Sense
39 Egg outline
40 Understands
42 Bar order
43 Binary base



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
dsopinion@gmail.com.

Challenges women face when trying to play in public spaces

Access to public spaces is a fundamental right, yet for young girls, it remains a privilege. Playing outside with your friends and neighbours is a core and essential part of childhood that creates a way to form stronger bonds with your peers.

MAHPARA FAATIN

Having grown up in an apartment building in Dhaka, I was never allowed to join my male peers to go outside and play. For me – as well as most other girls – we had to be creative and redefine what a “playground” meant. Sometimes, the corridor connecting all our apartments became our cricket field. At other times, the dining table doubled as a table tennis court and the paper ball was a necessary substitute to avoid breaking any of our mothers’ cherished glassware. On rare occasions, we would sneak upstairs to the rooftop to play badminton – constantly worrying about losing the cork to the ceaseless traffic ten stories below.

Even in this day and age, it appears to me that we keep regressing regarding issues centred around women. Our mothers often boast about how even a couple of decades back, they could spend all their evenings playing freely under the open sky. Why then were we denied that same freedom?

Maliha Muskan, a grade 11 student at Ideal School & College, Motijheel, says, “My mother would allow me to go play on the streets, based on the condition that I played where she could see me from the balcony of our home. Her focus would always be on what I was wearing. As a result, I had to constantly ask myself if I was covered up enough to be allowed downstairs.”

Evidently, another concern guardians often have is the unwelcoming and unsettling stares from strangers when women play in sportswear. Public spaces should be designed to be inclusive, yet they often fail to welcome women.

15 year-old student Nafisa* states, “I was playing badminton early one winter morning at the Dhanmondi Lake Park. Both my older sister and I were covered from head to toe. We had to change courts at least four times because a couple of strangers kept on closely watching us play, snickering and exchanging glances at each other.”

For women, safety is a prerequisite for participation but even then, it is rarely if ever ensured.

A lot of women try to tackle this issue by playing in groups, that include their male friends, hoping it wards off unwanted attention. But that approach invites a whole new set of issues. Noushin Siddique, a student at Mastermind English Medium School



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

recalls, “Playing with my male cousins was as good as not playing at all. They would never pass me the ball. As a child, I don’t remember a single time where I wasn’t assigned the *dudhbhaat* (inactive player) label.”

As it turns out, men often underestimate and even look down upon the athletic capabilities of their female counterparts regardless of how hard they work to prove themselves. In addition, the notion that men have to be present to act as a shield of protection for their female peers itself is defeating. After all, instances of women being assaulted or harassed by trusted

individuals are not unheard of.

Moreover, the patriarchal society sees no issue with adult men playing football in public spaces but sees middle-aged women playing sports in public as blasphemous. Even at family or corporate picnics, when all the men are assigned to play football matches, the ladies must make do with musical chairs. For many women, public spaces are not just areas for physical activity, they are battlegrounds for visibility, respect, and equality. Additionally, a lot of academic institutions don’t have proper playgrounds or allow students the free time to go outside and play.

Recent developments have seen some secure playgrounds pop up, but they remain accessible only to a few.

Access to public spaces is a fundamental right, yet for young girls, it remains a privilege. Playing outside with your friends and neighbours is a core and essential part of childhood that creates a way to form stronger bonds with your peers. It keeps you active and is perhaps the only way to help children discover their innate passion for a sport. Ensuring that girls are able to access and utilise public recreational areas without any hurdles is, therefore, very important. We must

make the existing public spaces more secure and implement measures for greater inclusivity. All that, however, will be dictated by addressing and changing the impositions that are perpetuated by patriarchy. Only then can we ensure that women’s enthusiasm to play is not met with exclusion.

As Maliha points out, “It’s not just about me. It’s about every little girl who dreams of playing freely, without fear or judgement.”

*Names have been changed upon request.

Mahpara is freezing. Send her warm wishes at mahparafaatin@gmail.com

DOOMSCROLLING AND ITS IMPACT ON OUR MENTAL HEALTH

Doomscrolling can overwhelm your mind, leaving you mentally exhausted and emotionally drained.

It can heighten feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and distress, which, in turn, may disrupt your sleep, diminish your appetite, sap your motivation, and take away the joy of activities you typically enjoy.

A study, published in the Health Communication journal, found that 16.5 percent of respondents from a survey of 1,100 people showed signs of “severely problematic” news consumption, leading to greater levels of stress, anxiety and poor health.

An August 2024 study published in Computers in Human Behavior Reports suggests that doomscrolling evokes greater levels of existential anxiety.

According to Nuffield Health’s 2024 “Healthier Nation Index,” the rising use of social media and the habit of doomscrolling may negatively impact the mental health and productivity of Gen-Z workers.

Doomscrolling done right

While doomscrolling may come at a price, which is often our own mental well-being, it’s not nearly as expensive as ignorance.

ANICA BUSHRA RAHMAAN

With social media becoming a much-needed addition to our daily lives, the term, “doomscrolling” – the practice of spending excessive time consuming negative information or content that makes one feel sad, anxious, or angry through social media – has gained popularity. This is concerning, mostly due to the negative implications of doomscrolling which include mental fatigue, reduced sleep, and an overall degradation of your well-being.

However, with so much going on across the world – from wars to a general sense of feeling unsafe when stepping outside our houses – can we really afford to not stay updated with what’s happening around us? Even if staying up-to-date with these occurrences takes a toll on our mental health, can we turn a blind eye to it when the world is burning? What’s our minor inconvenience, in a bubble of privilege, to the suffering of Palestine, Syria, Congo, and so many other places and people?

When thought about through the state of the world, doomscrolling becomes a necessary alternative. However, we can take steps to make the process less overwhelming while being responsible in our quest to be educated.

Knowing when to pay attention and when to ignore

It is important to recognise which things are worth your attention and which are not when doomscrolling. Some individuals will continue to instigate chaos simply to remain a part of the conversation while others are content in their cocoon of delusion devoid of accountability.

While we cannot fully prevent it, we can, at least, curtail it by refusing to engage with their content. It will definitely be a difficult feat because unsolicited opinions are available in abundance.

Ignoring the comment sections

Social media comment sections are frequently a grey area. Of course, we are curious to know the perspective of others. The occasional comments echoing compassion and open-mindedness are validating. They instil a renewed faith in humanity, even when it is the bare minimum.

However, in several cases, comments only divulge the indulgence of ignorant people.

The sheer hatred and wilful unconsciousness

take up residence in our minds. Surrounded by consistent despair, our mind continues to cling to the whispers of the same tune.

Turning to print media for your daily dose of information

While no one can understate the notable role of social media and, in turn, doomscrolling, we cannot deny that social media, fraught with misinformation, distractions, and often surface-level information, is not without problems. Print media, thereby, can fill in the blanks, through its nuanced and verified information. Even when it was predicted to become obsolete, print media has stood the test of time due to its validity and well-presented thorough content.

Moreover, acquiring information through this channel enables users to grasp the full picture of a particular story. Through this, instead of resorting to instantaneous panic, they can actually gauge the extent of their reaction. In order to hold onto our sanity, media literacy is essential.

This isn’t to say that print media can serve as an alternative to doomscrolling, but rather a complement. Besides, given its nature, print media offers limited information at a time, unlike social media or online forums where you’re constantly bombarded with new information every hour, a lot of which is often unverified and panic-inducing.

In the modern era, life is a constant battle between clinging to a shred of

hope for the world we live in and trying to be a well-informed, functional person. Therefore, partake in doomscrolling if you must, but do so responsibly.

Anica Bushra Rahmaan is a student of Economics at Brac University. Reach her at anicarahmaan@gmail.com



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



“As a captain, I never told them that they have to give it their all. All I said was that they [West Indies] are a better side and on their day they can destroy any team at their home ground. What I told them was that we will go and enjoy the cricket and whatever the result is we will take it with a smiling face and we will try to fulfill our responsibilities.”

Stand-in captain
LITON DAS



ABDULLAH AL MEHEDI

Years of dedication and hard work has reaped the fruits of performance for Jaker Ali in the just-concluded West Indies tour where the wicketkeeper-batter impressed with the willow in all three formats, playing a key role in Bangladesh completing a 3-0 sweep over the hosts in the T20I series yesterday.

After making a run-a-ball 27 in the first T20I and a 20-ball 21 in the following match, yesterday Jaker showed his T20 capabilities, hitting a career-best 72 not out off 41 balls as Bangladesh's score climbed to 189 for 7.

Jaker is often criticised as a limited player who can only hit big shots through the leg side. But yesterday, his leg-side penchant did not prove to be a handicap as he continuously shuffled a long way across the stumps and went deep into the crease in the final stretch of the innings and took the Caribbean

Jaker makes his mark in West Indies

bowlers to the cleaners.

He used this stance to great effect in the final over against Alzarri Joseph, which yielded 25 runs.

Jaker hit the third ball, a slower one pitched way outside the off-stump, for a six through the leg side. He followed it up with another maximum over the covers and ended the innings with an exact copy of the first six with this time

in the 15th over.

Very eager to run two, Jaker took off for a double but his partner Shamim Hossain did not share his enthusiasm, as a result both batters were at the striker's end when the bowler dislodged the bails at the other end.

Fuming, Jaker left the field, only to be called back after replays showed that he placed his bat inside the crease

and delivered for the Tigers by hitting five enormous sixes and two fours in the last five overs.

“Fortunately, I scored runs after that [two run outs] and I'm happy. It's all about the mindset and I know the Caribbean boys will come hard, whatever the format. I have played the World Cup here and even though I did not do well, things have been going well for me in this format.”

He ended as the top scorer of the T20I series with 120 runs. In the preceding ODIs, his batting down the order was one of the few positive signs for the Tigers during a bleak series where they lost 3-0.

Jaker's 91-run knock in the second innings of the Jamaica Test, where he grinded at the middle before showcasing his six-hitting capabilities, laid the foundation for Bangladesh's series-levelling win.

Skipper Liton Das heaped praises on Jaker for his contributions throughout the tour. “I have to give a special mention to Jaker. From Tests to T20Is, in all three formats, he held onto his consistency. It's a big achievement for a player,” Liton said.

Jaker Ali's unbeaten 72 off 41 balls in the third T20I in St Vincent was the highest score for a Bangladeshi batter against the West Indies in T20Is held in the Caribbean. The previous highest score belonged to Shakib Al Hasan, who made 68 not out off 52 balls in Dominica on July 3, 2022.

the ball going even further.

“It has been quite a wonderful series for me. Today [yesterday] the wicket was good compared to the last two games. I was looking to take my time and I knew if I take it deep, I could score runs,” Jaker said at the post-match ceremony.

Things, however, had not been easy when he was involved in two run-outs

before Shamim.

Just one ball later, Jaker went for a quick single and even though Mahedi responded quickly, a sharp throw from Rovman Powell saw him short of his ground.

Jaker absorbed the pressure of the two run-outs which threatened to divert the momentum of the innings

Liton ready to captain on long-term basis if asked

During the West Indies Test series, Liton Das could be heard on stump mic telling captain Mehedi Hasan Miraz when to bowl. His guidance was well appreciated within the team and in the T20I series, under Liton's leadership, Bangladesh won with great adventure and pride in the T20Is. “As far as captaincy is concerned, if the BCB asks me to lead then I am ready to do it and there is no reason to disagree with it and I am enjoying it,” Liton said at the press conference after Bangladesh's 80-run win yesterday in St. Vincent.

READ THE FULL STORY ON THE DAILY STAR WEBSITE



U-19 women set up final against India

SPORTS REPORTER

Fahomida Choya's all-round brilliance helped Bangladesh secure a nine-wicket win over their Nepali counterparts in their last Super 4 match of the ACC U-19 Women's Asia Cup in Malaysia yesterday, setting up a final clash on Sunday against India.

In a curtailed 11 overs per side contest, Choya finished with 1-14 as Bangladesh restricted Nepal to 54-8 after electing to field first.

Choya then scored an unbeaten 32-ball 26, featuring three fours, while Mosammat Eva made 18 runs as Bangladesh reached the finishing line with seven balls to spare at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur to finish second in Super 4 with six points.

In the day's first Super 4 game, India clinched a four-wicket win over Sri Lanka to reach the final of the inaugural edition of the meet.

Riding on skipper Manudi Nanayakkara's 30-ball 33, Sri Lanka posted 98-9 in 20 overs after being asked to bat first. Gongadi Trisha (32) and G Kamalini (28) played decent knocks to help India chase down the target with 31 balls to spare.

Bangladesh and India had previously met during their opening Super 4 fixture, with India handing an eight-wicket defeat to Bangladesh in that contest.

Hamza hopes to blaze a trail

STAR SPORTS DESK

Leicester City midfielder Hamza Choudhury has hoped that his decision to switch allegiance from England to Bangladesh will open up avenues for Bangladeshi players to play in European leagues.

The 27-year-old on Thursday announced on his social media handles that he wants to represent Bangladesh at the international stage after getting the final clearance from FIFA's players' status committee.

In an interview with The Athletic, the defensive midfielder opened up about the reason for his switch, his connection with Bangladesh and the country's football fans.

“It's something that's been in the works for a couple of years,” said Hamza, who has represented England in seven matches at the under-21 level.

“I represented England in the youth team, but as my career progressed, it came to fruition that is not an option for me.

“It's something I've definitely always had in the back of my mind, that I'd like to represent Bangladesh — and the people of Bangladesh more importantly....I also feel like it's something that I wanted to do to have some more exposure for Bangladesh on the footballing stage,” the Leicester City FC Academy product said.

While there are many Bangladeshi-origin footballers playing in various leagues across continents, Hamza will become the most high-profile player to don the red and green jersey. He will also be the latest foreign-based player to represent Bangladesh — a path first travelled by current captain Jamal Bhuiyan 11 years ago — with hopefully many more to follow suit in the coming days.

Bangladesh Football Federation president Tabith Awal, in a press briefing at his Gulshan residence on Friday morning, said that they have



contacted other talented diaspora players to follow the same route.

“We believe Bangladesh has immense talent, both within the country and among the diaspora. I am confident Hamza will inspire others to don the Bangladesh jersey,” Awal told reporters.

Hamza, too, was speaking along the same lines during the interview with The Athletic.

“I know they (Bangladeshis) are absolutely crazy about football. I hope I can open up channels for more Bangladeshis to play in the top five leagues or in Europe, or just have a way of getting themselves into the bigger leagues and giving them some more exposure.

“Hopefully, in time, I can put into place some sort of structure in the

younger age groups and the younger local teams to be able to do that,” the footballer, born to a Bangladeshi mother and Grenadian father, said.

With Hamza's debut for the Red and Greens expected to come as soon as on March 25 next year when Bangladesh play their first Asian Cup Qualifiers match against India in Kolkata, the Leicestershire-born footballer was confident that his Bangladeshi heritage and culture will help him ease into the Bangladesh dressing room.

“I'm sure that they've got a really good dressing room that hopefully welcomes me with open arms,” Hamza said. “I am sure they speak English, but I also speak enough Bangladeshi to communicate. I'm looking forward to learning their traditions and their culture.”

Kings' kryptonite Maruful helps end Abahani's drought

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani finally conquered Bashundhara Kings in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) after 10 failed attempts, edging the defending champions 1-0 in Cumilla yesterday.

The result was also a testament to coach Maruful Haque's tactical ingenuity, who outwitted his Romanian counterpart, Valeriu Tita.

Since their rise to prominence in top-flight football in 2018, Kings have established themselves as a near-unbeatable force. However, they have often found themselves undone by Maruful, the country's sole UEFA A-licensed coach. Over Kings, Maruful had previously led teams to three victories — both in the BPL and Federation Cup — during his tenure at Chittagong Abahani in 2019 and 2020.

In recent years, Maruful's impact on the professional league had waned, with an underwhelming 2022 season at Sheikh Jamal DC and a 2023 campaign spent as a technical adviser for Chittagong Abahani. Now back in a head coaching role with six-time champions Abahani, he has proven his value once again — despite the club's decision to field no foreign players this season — steering the Sky Blues to a crucial win which refuelled their title aspirations.

With three wins from four matches, Abahani climbed to second place with nine points, just three behind leaders Mohammedan Sporting Club. Meanwhile, Kings slipped to joint third with six points from as many matches.

“Our plan was to invite Bashundhara Kings into our territory; then we would attack quickly on the



break,” Maruful told The Daily Star over the phone after the game.

“The early lead was not unexpected; rather, it was part of a quick attack,” Maruful said, adding that he has been working separately with the players, position-wise, putting extra emphasis on the attacking players.

“We could have struck three to four more goals. The boys opened the opponents nicely, but unfortunately, they could not take those home. Bashundhara Kings, however, could not open our backline.”

At Shaheed Dharendra Nath Datta Stadium, the game's standout performer was goalkeeper Mitul Marma, whose stellar display earned him the player-of-the-match award. Mitul thwarted several attempts from Kings, including a penalty stop in the 52nd minute against Brazilian forward Miguel Ferreira. Earlier, in the 36th minute, Mitul had frustrated Ferreira with another fine save.

Kings' best opportunity to level the score came in the 33rd minute, when Brazilian Jonathan Fernandes found himself in a promising position, only to send his shot wide of the advancing Mitul.

In the day's other match, Mohammedan extended their perfect start to the season with a 3-1 victory over Bangladesh Police FC. Emmanuel Tony, Emmanuel Sunday, and Souleymane Diabate found the target for the Black and Whites, while Al Amin scored a consolation goal for Police.



(From L-R) Rabeya Khan, Nigar Sultana Joty, Sobhana Mostary and Fahima Khatun — captains of the four participating teams — stand alongside the Women's Bangladesh Cricket League trophy at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday, ahead of the competition which kicks off today. This will be the first-ever three-day women's first-class cricket tournament in the country after the same tournament was first held in two-day format last year.

PHOTO:BCB

THE NATION'S LARGEST ROD MANUFACTURER

WITH MORE CAPACITY, WE ARE MORE READY TO BUILD TOMORROW'S BANGLADESH

BSRM building a safer nation

Terminal 3, Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport

Proud Construction Partner

SHAH CEMENT

Buet student killed as car hits bike

3 including car driver arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Buet student was killed and two of his classmates were injured when a car hit them and their stationary motorcycle early yesterday at a police check post on Purbachal Expressway, better known as 300-foot road.

Police said the car was being driven recklessly by a 20-year-old man.

Mohtassim Masud, aged 22, was a 2nd-year student of computer science. He lived with his parents on the capital's Green Road.

Police said he died at the scene near Neela Market in Rugganj, Narayanganj.

Mehedi Hasan Khan, 22, and Amit Saha, 22, also students of computer science at Buet, were admitted to hospitals with serious injuries.

Police arrested the driver of the car Mubin Al Mamun, 20, and two passengers Mirajul Karim, 22, and Asif Chowdhury, 19, said Liakat Ali, officer-in-charge of Rugganj Police Station.

Mubin is a resident of Mirpur DOHS, Mirajul of Piberbagh, and Asif Chowdhury of Uttara Sector 13, he added.

Mohtassim's father Masud Mia filed a case under the Road Transport Act at Rugganj Police Station.

Quoting witnesses, Mehedi Islam, senior assistant superintendent of police in Narayanganj, said the car was being driven recklessly.

After an examination of the suspects at Narayanganj General Hospital, Civil Surgeon Moshir Rahman said Mubin, who was driving the vehicle, had consumed alcohol and marijuana, Mirajul had alcohol, and Asif was clean.

An empty bottle of liquor and a can of beer were found inside the car, said OC Liakat.

A court sent the arrestees to jail after scheduling a hearing on Sunday.

On the court premises, Mubin's father Brig Gen (ret'd) Abdullah Al Mamun said his son had a valid driver's

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Mohtassim



Led by captain Liton Das, Bangladesh players celebrate with the trophy following their 3-0 series win against West Indies with an 80-run victory in the third and final T20I at Kingstown in St Vincent yesterday.

PHOTO: CWT

Tigers end year on a high

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A career-best 72 not out off 41 balls from Jaker Ali catapulted Bangladesh to a commanding 80-run win over West Indies in the third and final T20I in St Vincent yesterday, a victory that confirmed the Tiger's maiden 3-0 clean-sweep over the Caribbean side in the shortest format.

After suffering a 3-0 bashing in the preceding ODI series, hardly anyone expected the Tigers to turn things around in the T20Is with a relatively inexperienced side with some players missing out due to injuries and seniors like Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah having recently retired from the format.

Apart from that, their performance in the shortest format this year leading up

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

WB okays \$1.16b for 3 projects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank yesterday approved three loan programmes totalling \$1.16 billion to help Bangladesh improve health services, boost water and sanitation services and achieve greener and climate-resilient development.

Of the amount, \$500 million is under the Second Bangladesh Green and Climate Resilient Development Credit to support reforms and help transition to green and climate-resilient development, the global lender said in a statement.

"The financing supports policy reforms to improve public planning and financing and implementation for green and climate-resilient interventions at local and national levels and promote

clean and resource-efficient production and services in key sectors," it said.

As a prerequisite to the credit, the Planning Commission has adopted the Multi-Year Public Investment Program Guidelines for key sectors, integrated with the Medium-Term Budget Framework, according to the statement.

The financing also supports policies to reduce air pollution, improve environmental enforcement, expand access to carbon markets, enhance sustainable water and sanitation services, improve the efficiency of the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100, and advance a climate-resilient and sustainable environment, it added.

The fund also aims to support sustainable public procurement

incorporating environmental and social considerations, said the multilateral agency, adding that the loan will further help improve the energy efficiency of buildings and appliances and incentivise the construction sector to become greener.

The WB executive board approved a \$379 million Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector Development Program-for-Results to improve access to quality health and nutrition services and build resilient health systems in Sylhet and Chattogram divisions.

The programme will help Bangladesh provide quality health, nutrition, and population services to about 5.1 million people, said the WB.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Landslide kills Rohingya boy

2 other children hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya child was killed and two other children were injured in a landslide in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The deceased, 10-year-old Syed Ullah, was a resident of Shabullah Kata Rohingya camp, said police.

According to local Rohingyas, a large mass of earth collapsed onto the three children while they were playing at the foot of a hill at Camp-15 around noon.

Locals and firefighters went to the scene and rescued them. The three were taken to a nearby hospital where doctors

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



A Palestinian man carries a wounded boy to Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City after an Israeli strike hits a school in the area. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

OCCUPIED WEST BANK

Israeli settlers set fire to a mosque

Say Palestinian residents; mediators push on with Gaza truce talks amid fresh strikes

REUTERS

Israeli settlers set fire to a mosque in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian residents said yesterday, and video showed "Revenge", "Death to Arabs" and other slogans had been spray-painted in Hebrew on the building's facade.

Black burn marks were visible at the entrance to the Muslim holy site in the northern West Bank village of Marda. The fire was put out before it could spread much further.

Israeli police said they were collecting testimonies and evidence at the scene.

Nasfat al Khufash, head of the Marda village council, said: "On Friday [yesterday], Marda awoke to a systematic terror attack by a group of settlers who set fire to Bir al-Walideen mosque."

"These attacks by settler groups are continuous and systematic," he said. The Israeli police and Shin Bet security services said in a joint statement: "We see this incident as extremely serious and will act resolutely to bring the perpetrators to justice for rigorous trial."

The Palestinian Authority foreign ministry assailed the attack as the latest in a series of violations and crimes by Israeli settlers and appealed to the United Nations Security Council for help protecting Palestinians.

Meanwhile, US and Arab mediators were working around the clock to prepare a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas, sources close to the talks have told Reuters, as strikes continued in Gaza Strip.

China building largest artificial island airport



CNN ONLINE

China is adding yet another superlative to its aviation roster: the world's largest airport on a man-made island.

Currently under construction off the country's northeast coast, the Dalian Jinzhou Bay International Airport will eventually cover a 20-square-kilometre island with four runways and a 900,000-square-metre passenger terminal, according to an airport statement.

Its operators aim to handle 80 million passengers per year across 540,000 flights, with the first phase due to open in 2035.

"The country's largest offshore airport is rising slowly from the sea level like the sunrise in the east," reads a post by Dalian Jinzhou Bay International on Chinese social media platform WeChat.

TEACHETHAT WHICH HE KNOWS
INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY BANGLADESH

RANKED JOINT #1
private university in Bangladesh
in Times Higher Education
Interdisciplinary Science
Rankings 2025

UNDERGRADUATE
ADMISSION GOING ON
SPRING 2025
APPLICATION DEADLINE
09 JANUARY, 2025 | 03:00 PM

ADMISSION TEST
11 JANUARY, 2025 | 10:30 AM
Admission tests will be held simultaneously in
Dhaka (IUB Campus), Chattogram,
Rangpur, Khulna and Mymensingh

Classes commence on: Saturday, January 25, 2025

- Tuition fee waiver up to 100% based on different criteria
- IUB will provide insurance on tuition fees
- Need based hostel facility for meritorious female students from outside Dhaka
- Interest free instalment payments available

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

BBA in

- Accounting
- Finance
- General Management
- Human Resource Management (HRM)
- Marketing
- Management Information System (MIS)
- International Business (IB)

B.Sc. in

- Computer Engineering (CEN)
- Computer Science (CSC)
- Computer Science & Engineering (CSE)
- Electrical & Electronic Engineering (EEE)
- Electronic & Telecommunication Engineering (ETE)
- Mathematics
- Physics

B.Sc. in

- Economics

BSS in

- Media & Communication
- Anthropology
- Sociology
- Global Studies and Governance (GSG)

B.Sc. in

- Environmental Science and Management
- Microbiology
- Biochemistry & Biotechnology

BA in

- English Literature
- English Language Teaching (ELT)

Contact
admission@iub.edu.bd
01780185006, 09612939393 (EXT. 1354-57)

Apply Online:
www.iub.ac.bd



MADHUR CANTEEN

The story of an eatery and Bangladesh

The canteen's significance was underscored during Operation Searchlight on March 25, 1971, when it became one of the first targets of the Pakistani military.

MD ABBAS

If one says Madhur Canteen and Bangladesh's history is inextricably interlinked, will it be an exaggeration?

The eatery has etched its place in Bangladesh's national politics due to its association with various political movements that originated from Dhaka University.

Since 1921, the year Dhaka University was founded, and particularly from 1948 onwards, many national movements had their origins in Madhur Canteen, as noted in Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari by Professor Muntassir Mamoon.

The canteen, named after Madhusudan Dey, lovingly called Modhu da, played a key role in shaping Bangladesh's history. Over the decades, the canteen has witnessed countless historic events.

It was the starting point for significant events such as the Language Movements of 1948 and 1952, the 1949 protests by fourth-class university employees, the student revolt against the university's "black laws" (kala kanon), and the 1969 mass uprising. During these times, it served as a hub for student leaders and activists, the architects of these historic movements.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



History of MADHUR CANTEEN

The canteen was founded in 1921 by Aditya Chandra Dey, Madhuda's father, who received permission from the university authorities to open a food business on the university grounds when Dhaka University was established.

At that time, the present-day Medical College was part of the Dhaka University campus. When the police barracks near Palashi were vacated, Aditya purchased two thatched houses from the British police for Tk 20-30.

One house was used as a shop, while the other served as his residence.

In 1934-35, when Madhuda was around 14-15 years old, he began helping his father in the canteen.

The canteen later moved to its current location after the arts faculty was shifted to its present location near the Nilkhet area.

The canteen's location used to serve as the Durbar Hall of the Dhaka Nawabs. In addition to being used for formal and informal meetings, the hall was a skating rink and ballroom for the Nawabs' enjoyment.

Construction of the building began in 1873 and continued over several years. In 1906, a conference sponsored by Nawab Bahadur Sir Khwaja Salimullah of Dhaka was held in the building, which led to the formation of the All-India Muslim League.

After the death of Madhusudan, his son Arun Kumar Dey took over the responsibility of running the canteen.



The canteen's significance was underscored during Operation Searchlight on March 25, 1971, when it became one of the first targets of the Pakistani military.

After the Liberation War, the canteen played a vital role as the "melting pot" of all ideologies. It is in this canteen that student leaders, who later became national ones, of different ideologies met and greeted each other, paving a common ground for political harmony.

This harmony later came in handy during the anti-dictatorship movement against late president HM Ershad.

The canteen's role in all protests and movements since the restoration of democracy in the 90s – from anti-government protests to Gonojagaran Mancha – remained as important as ever.

In 2013, the first protest rally against a court verdict that sentenced war criminal Abdul Quader Mollah to life imprisonment (instead of the capital punishment) came out of this canteen, according to Gonojagaran Mancha activists.

Indeed, the cafeteria has been a popular starting point for processions. In the July mass uprising against the Sheikh Hasina-led regime, several press conferences were held at Madhur Canteen.

However, it is not just a political venue. It is a cultural melting pot too. Renowned writers, cultural icons, political leaders, and social activists have frequented it.

Eminent scholar Professor Ahmed Sharif, known for his free-thought movement, described it as the birthplace of national ideas and aspirations.

"For nearly half a century, all forms of youthful thought, consciousness, resolve, and struggle in our national life have emerged – and continue to emerge – here at Madhur Canteen.

"Initiatives, enterprises, and movements have taken shape. Everything began here. For this reason, Madhur Canteen deserves recognition ... as a centre for the nation's political, cultural, and literary thoughts, ideas, and aspirations. It is sure to hold a significant, permanent place in our national history as the birthplace of many movements," he was quoted in the book Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari.

The book also included several recollections of Madhur Canteen by other notable individuals.

The famous poet Buddhadeb Basu, a student of DU when the canteen was run by Aditya Chandra Dey, the father of Madhusudan Dey, also reminisced about the canteen.

"At one end of the university compound was a tin-roofed building. Inside, beside worn-out tables, there were long, bar stools. This is where we would quench our hunger and thirst, as there wasn't another tea shop in the entire area. Aditya's menu was very limited; on most days, he couldn't offer anything with the tea except for the sweets he made by hand. But that didn't matter to us.

"We would call out one order after another to Aditya. 'Put it on the tab' was all we used to hear," the book quoted him.

"I left Dhaka without fully paying off

Mujibur Rahman and Tajuddin Ahmad also frequented the canteen.

Eating on credit became a tradition at Madhur Canteen. Students would accumulate debts, but Madhusudan Dey, affectionately known as Madhuda, never pressured them for payment, said students and people who knew him.

Many repaid their debts after establishing themselves in life, and Madhuda even supported needy students financially.

Mujahudul Islam Selim, a former student of Dhaka University and former president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said that

met Madhusudan on March 25, 1971.

"The following day, Madhuda was killed by the Pakistani military. I could never have imagined that ... We didn't speak much on that day, but sometimes, when I close my eyes, I can still hear Madhuda saying, 'Selim Shaheb kemon achen [How are you doing Mr Selim]!,' he recalled.

Raisul Zilani, a current student at DU, said that the Canteen is one of the best places for adda as it feels special considering its rich history.

Arun Kumar Dey, Madhusudan's son, took over the responsibility of running the canteen after the Liberation War.

Recalling the massacre of his family, Arun said his father and other family members were killed in front of him.

"I was in the fifth grade then. In 1972, I took charge of the canteen," Arun said.

On March 26, 1971, the Pakistani military stormed Madhusudan's house in the early hours and killed his wife, son, and daughter-in-law. Madhusudan was injured, arrested, and taken to the Jagannath Hall playground, where he was executed along with many students.

Recalling the days after the Liberation War, Arun shared, "Many people came to me to settle their dues. While paying, they would say, 'I had some dues to Modhuda, but I couldn't pay them at the time.'"

Some even came from abroad to clear their dues, he said.

"I can still recall my father discussing political issues with student leaders. My father had a wonderful relationship with them, and I have continued to maintain that connection with the current students," he said.

In 1995, Toufiq Hosen Khan, a student of fine arts, created a sculpture of Madhusudan Dey, which still stands in front of Madhur Canteen today.

The renowned poet Shamsur Rahman also wrote a long poem titled 'Madhusmriti,' which is engraved near Madhusudan's sculpture.



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

FICTION

The plebeians IN THE TWILIGHT

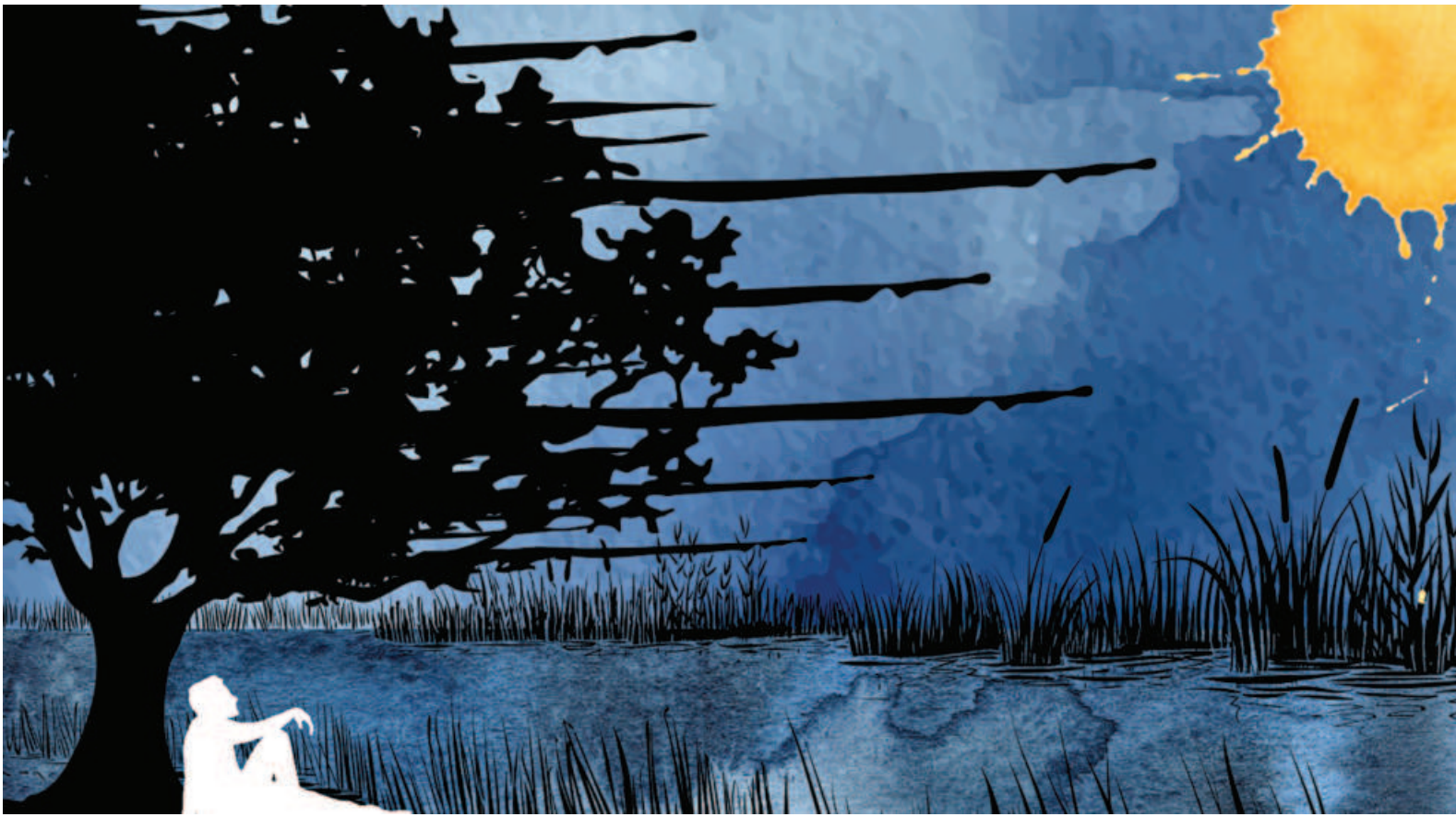


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

SHAWKAT ALI

It was the shade of the ashwath that vanquished all one's weariness from the fiery heat of Choitro. Or else it was not possible for fatigue to be eliminated so quickly. Even until a couple of hours ago, Shyamango's sight had been hazy. The objects he saw assumed weird, broken, and swaying forms. Time and again on the arduous road it had seemed that waves were ascending ahead of him, and then they seemed to descend into the fathomless. Even the steps he took were out of control. He was lurching ahead like an intoxicated drunkard. Sometimes to the left, and sometimes to the right.

It was a really weird situation. When he remembered it now it seemed like a joke. Of course, it had seemed like a

joke to him even then. It was natural to think it was a joke. Because you first saw a wild pigeon on a branch of a row of trees with drooping canopies. The very next moment, the small bird became a bounding simian—it too vanished in a moment and turned into a withered tree branch. You rubbed your eyes and then saw that there was nothing. No row of trees, no wild pigeon, no monkey—no withered branch either. How strange—there was nothing in front actually. Only vast fields of kush grass stretching for krosch after krosch. There was no village on the horizon, nor were there anything like woods in sight; the expanse of the terrain simply stretched on and on, the skyline lost in greyness.

Shyamango was lying in the shade of the ashwath with his eyes shut and remembering his experience. He

realised that even death had not been an impossibility. He was indeed fortunate that a band of travellers had spotted him from afar just in time. He remembered nothing of when he fell on the ground, when the band of travellers rushed towards him, and how they nursed him back to consciousness.

The middle-aged man came up to him and asked, "I hope you are feeling well now?"

Shyamango hadn't been able to find the words to express his gratitude for so long. Now he said, "You people saved my life—I don't know how I can express my gratitude..."

"Forget that, none of that now—just rest." The middle-aged traveller said, with a tone of deep affection.

The leaves of the ashwath rustled in the Choitro breeze. Shyamango's eyes

shut again as he listened to the sound. It occurred to him that the middle-aged traveller was worrying about him unnecessarily. He was completely well now. He thought to stand up, but the very next moment he thought, where's the need to trouble the middle-aged man, what's the harm in resting some more? Let the man return from the riverbank in the meanwhile.

The middle-aged traveller came up to him again and sat down. He asked, "Do you want to accompany us?"

Shyamango could not figure out what he ought to do. A little while back, another companion of the middle-aged man had asked him the same question. He hadn't been able to say anything then either. The group was heading southwards by boat, towards Baanpur—while he had to go to Rajatpat, on the bank of the Aatreya. He considered accompanying them for some of the way. He would have to be on the road all by himself after that. He was candid with the middle-aged man. He said, "You know my destination, you tell me what I ought to do—you are an elder, please advise me."

Perhaps the middle-aged man would say something. But the man

later, when you return home, you'll find it very difficult. That's also a matter of concern."

That was true. If he really had to go southwards with the flow of the Punarbhaba river, then he would have to get off the boat midway and travel a great distance by foot. And that route was completely forested.

Before Shyamango could decide whether or not he should go, the band of travellers had left the shade of the ashwath. Resting against a youth's shoulder, Shyamango walked slowly to the riverbank. There was a tree there as well, a banyan. Shyamango sat down beneath it and looked all around; there wasn't merely a single shady tree but several of them. He surmised that the residents of the Punarbhaba bank were decent folk. He liked the place. The resting place was lovely.

A white cow was grazing on the other bank—a dark-skinned girl was running after two baby goats. The river current was very gentle. The boats at the bank were afloat yet still. It didn't seem that a waterway was flowing beneath them.

Without any further delay, the travellers boarded the boat. It was

Shyamango could not figure out what he ought to do. A little while back, another companion of the middle-aged man had asked him the same question. He hadn't been able to say anything then either.

who had been dispatched to the riverbank came running just then. He informed them that a boat was leaving very soon for their destination.

Those who were stretched out beneath the ashwath jumped up and began getting ready for the journey. The middle-aged man too was a bit fidgety. Nonetheless, he asked, "Will you come along with us?"

Shyamango could not respond this time either.

Finally, the middle-aged man himself declared, "I don't feel like leaving you alone like this and going away. And if I take you along, then

difficult to say why they were anxious. Because it didn't seem that the boat would leave very soon.

This is an excerpt from the translation of the Bangla novel, *Prodoshe Prakrito Jon* (originally published 1984), by author Shawkat Ali.

Translated by V. Ramaswamy

V. Ramaswamy, along with Shahroza Nahrin, translated *Life and Political Reality: Two Novellas* by Shahidul Zahir.

ESSAY

Spectacularised rape

NADINE SHAANTA MURSHID

In the psyche and schema of the average transnational Bangladeshi, rape is visible and legitimate only when it takes spectacular forms—violent, brutal, deadly. I argue that this is a nationalist rendering of rape that is retained in Bangladesh and its diaspora to maintain the image of the valiant and brave Bangladeshi male freedom fighter who fought Pakistan to liberate his nation, his motherland, and indeed, his mother, cementing the role of men as protectors of women's honor. Meanwhile, it maintains the honour of the Birangona, keeping her sacrifice alive in the memory of Bangladeshis. In doing so, the problem of "manush ki bolbe", because what is there to say when one experiences such violent rape, is resolved to produce another: rape is visible only when it mimics the rape of the Birangonas. Structures of feeling make spectacular rape victims/survivors deserving of humanity, although justice is frequently elusive, while the humanity of those whose rape is quiet, is thinned, as they remain under the purview of the social norm-enforcing refrain of "manush ki bolbe". And in other instances, when rape co-occurs with other forms of violence, rape is erased altogether to surface more palatable, nonsexual forms of violence.

To illustrate what the spectacularisation of rape looks like, and the effect it has on producing an understanding of rape, I provide some examples.

In a 2023 stage production of Nilima Ibrahim's *Ami Birangona Bolchi* by Syed Jamil Ahmed, the relentless hardship and adversity that the Birangonas experienced in 1971 and beyond were enacted on stage. This modern stage production with seven narratives centered the anguish, pain, and importantly, resilience of the Birangonas. However, that resilience was marked by the brutality of their experiences as each of the women articulated the enduring shame that was imposed on them as victims/survivors of wartime rape. An audience member that I spoke with termed the trauma on display as *too loud*. Another used the word 'hahakar', or despair, to describe what she witnessed. Indeed, rape, presented as all-encompassing and traumatic, reproduced the spectacularised version of rape that we are already familiar with, a version that is increasingly difficult to consume and triggering for a populace with a range of trauma history. Still, such a representation of rape, I argue, makes rape in interpersonal relationships difficult to spot, muddying the difference between rape and sex.

In the 2011 film *Guerilla*, by Nasiruddin Yousuf, we meet Bilqis Banu, who embodies multiple roles of "wife, mother, insurgent, combatant, and ultimately martyr" after her husband disappears when he joins the Liberation War (Chowdhury, 2022). In this rare representation of a female warrior, we find an alternative perspective in which the woman is not reduced



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

to the oppressor's brutality. But that perspective is lost, much like her life, when the threat of rape emerges, to which she responds with murder-suicide. The audience is left with the idea that it is more dignified to take your own life than be raped, for to be sexually violated means to be reduced to the violence endured. Indeed, it is only sexual oppression that has the totalising power to reduce women to their experience of oppression.

In 2024, a Bangladeshi heavy-metal band, Cryptic Fate, popular among middle-class youth, released an album to pay homage

to Bangladesh's Liberation War. The album, titled *Noy Mash*, a clever play on the nine-month war evocative of a mother that bears a child for nine months, consists of nine songs in which the band travels back in time to inspire Bangalis to rise and fight against oppression so that the nation can be birthed. The Birangona does not feature at all. The only feminised subject is the mother, interchangeable with the motherland, whose freedom is at stake. However, her only acknowledged suffering is in the form of anxiety in waiting for her warrior son to return home. "Kedona

ma", one of the songs cajoles before going into the chorus, "Jachhi judhho joy korte", perhaps to claim a victory narrative to subvert the ubiquitous victimhood narrative that surrounds Bangladesh's Liberation War.

In the public consciousness, I argue, rape is either made absent by such representations, which makes it appear unimportant and marginal to the grand war narrative, or it turns women into traumatised bodies, mutilated, or dead, to be pitied by others. No one knows that better than a woman who has experienced rape. And that is why

women, such as my interlocutors, use silence to protect themselves, as does the state. While women's use of silence can be seen as agentic, the state's cannot. For instance, the military regimes of Zia and Ershad between 1975 and 1990 went silent on the topic of the Birangonas, ostensibly to protect and affirm a masculinist reading of history that focused on the role of male freedom fighters, warriors, many of whom had become members of the Bangladesh Army and/or the government. In doing so, the state sidelined and marginalised both the role that women played during the Liberation War and the effect of that war on women. It is that oppression of silence that would produce the activism of the 1990s while making rape taboo even in discourse about wartime violence, keeping alive a pursuit for "shothik itishash", or correct history, amid textbook politics and state-sponsored silencing tactics that make Bangladesh's history a site of contestation (Mohaiemen 2020).

This is an excerpt from "Chapter 5: Birangona—The Blueprint for How Rape Is Viewed" from *Intimacies of Violence: Reading Transnational Middle-Class Women in Bangladeshi America* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

Nadine Shaanta Murshid is associate professor at the School of Social Work, University at Buffalo, and the author of *Intimacies of Violence*.



Unpacking '840' TISHA AND MARZUK get dangerously candid

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

'840' stars Nasir Uddin Khan, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Bijori Barkatullah, Marzuk Russell, Shahriar Nazim Joy, Zayed Khan, Nader Chowdhury, and Zakia Bari Mamo, amongst others. While the performances are commendable, the film does harbour some technical constraints, understandable since it was supposed to release as a web series.

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's political satire *840* is, for the most part, an ambitious and risky project—one that would certainly never see the light of release if the previous Awami-backed government were in power. As the current adviser of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the internationally renowned director battles pressure and criticism from many fronts, with a film with an eerily undeniable relevance to the July Uprising.

Dropping by The Daily Star's *36 Days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts* exhibition, Nusrat Imrose Tisha, the co-producer of *840*, and Marzuk Russell, the iconic poet-turned-actor who helmed an important role in the film, talked about their uphill battle to release the film. "Look, I don't want to talk about the negativity that some have spewed regarding me, Farooki, or the film," insisted Tisha. "We just tried to portray what was really going on in the country, and apart from one small scene, we finished

shooting everything by 2023."

Tisha, who posted on social media on behalf of the students when violence erupted in July, has no qualms about being unfairly judged on the network. "I was in Australia when the violence erupted. I got to know that there were law enforcement forces stationed outside my house. I never want to bring these up in interviews, because the sacrifices that our people made are much greater than anyone can even decipher," she said.

840 stars Nasir Uddin Khan, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Bijori Barkatullah, Marzuk Russell, Shahriar Nazim Joy, Zayed Khan, Nader Chowdhury, and Zakia Bari Mamo, amongst others. While the performances are commendable, the film does harbour some technical constraints, understandable since it was supposed to release as a web series. The transition to a feature film needed a bit more time to cook. "We did rush the release a little bit, because we felt that it

was the right time to release it. I personally think that we could have used a bit more time to market it, but the response from the audience tells me that we made the right decision."

The film also tends to err dangerously on the side of caution, which is unforeseen from the director who made *Made In Bangladesh*. Pragmatic dialogues soon find their way to becoming coarse, but are convincing when put in the context of a ruthless empire built by a network of criminals.

"Of course, there's nothing I could want more than to speak my mind, but we do have to remember that the film is for mass consumption," said Marzuk Russell. "That being said, we did take many liberties while choosing to use some of the words in our film. For example, the word 'motherboard' was not made by us—it was made by the people on social media! We simply surrogated this and removed a much direr word from the

conversation." Tisha, who was in shambles laughing at this point, restrained herself and said, "We should not forget that we too have some limitations as well, and we tried our best to work within that."

Given the long list of memorable characters that *840* has presented to the audience, does it need a sequel? "We marketed the film as a spiritual successor to *420* and not a sequel—I think many misunderstood that," said Tisha. "However, given the response that our audience has shown, I can't put a sequel out of the realm of possibility. I guess we all have to stay tuned!"

"Before we sign off, I would love to thank The Daily Star," Marzuk surprised our interview team with his statement. "When boss (Farooki) released *Bachelor*, most wannabe critics and newspapers were out to get us, blaming us for 'destroying the soulful language' of Bangla films. It was only in The Daily Star that we found constructive criticism and fair coverage. For that, I thank you."

Out and About in Dhaka



Christmas Groove
December 24 | 5pm-7pm
EMK Centre, Gulshan



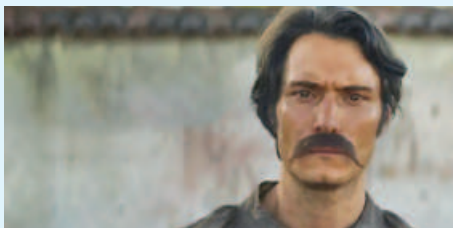
Saturday Night Fever Comedy Show
December 28 | 7pm-8:30pm
Naveed's Comedy Club, Baridhara



Monday Open Mic
December 30 | 7:30pm
Attention Network, Dhaka Trade Centre

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
One Hundred Years of Solitude: Part 1



Disney+
What If...?



Prime Video
Juror #2



HBO Max
Creature Commandos



Chorki
Dui Shaw



1-MINUTE REVIEW

CARRY-ON

Netflix's riveting airport thriller

Netflix has recently delivered an unexpected gift with this surprisingly engaging airport thriller, amidst the usual sweet sentimentality and festive clichés. Helmed by Jaume Collet-Serra, *Carry-On* unfolds its tense narrative on a bustling Christmas Eve at LAX airport.

TSA officer Ethan Kopek (Taron Egerton) takes his airport job mainly to win over his now-girlfriend Nora (Sofia Carson). With a baby on the way and limited options, he feels the pressure to turn his life around. Motivated by impending fatherhood, he confronts his grumpy boss (played by Dean Norris) to request a chance at a more serious role: operating the airport's x-ray machines.

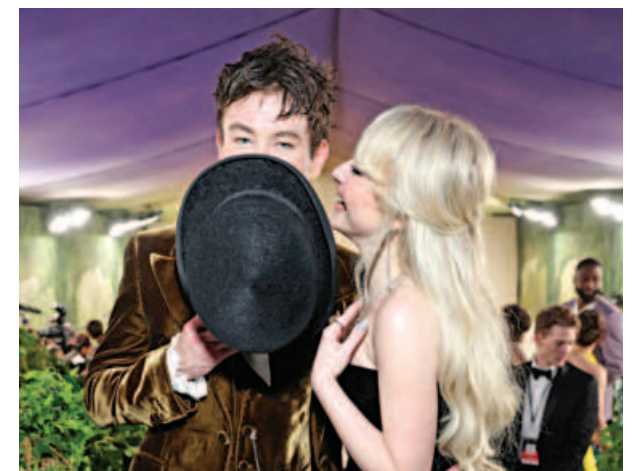
Unfortunately for Ethan, his ambition coincides with the arrival of a mysterious traveller (Jason



Bateman) carrying a bag that must bypass security scrutiny. Communicating with Ethan through an earpiece, he lays out in chilling detail the consequences Nora will face if anyone interferes

with the bag's journey.

What follows is a gripping battle of wits, as Ethan tries to disrupt the traveller's scheme but finds himself outmanoeuvred at every step, making for a stellar watch.



Showbiz Whispers

SABRINA AND BARRY

Whispers have it, Sabrina Carpenter might be singing solo both on and off the stage. Recent Hollywood reports suggest Sabrina and Barry Keoghan have "decided to take a break" from their romance.

Insiders suggest the split was mutual as "they had a little bit of a break a few months ago but this break was very recent."

The insider adds that the twosome's friends don't believe "they're getting back together."

While both parties have kept things under wraps, Sabrina's bop might just be the most emotionally charged brunch anthem yet.



vevo WHAT'S PLAYING

Mr Brightside

Mr Brightside by The Killers is an electrifying anthem that transcends generational boundaries, capturing the raw emotion of heartbreak with unparalleled intensity. This musical masterpiece combines a razor-sharp guitar riff with Brandon Flowers' visceral lyrics about jealousy and betrayal, such as "Now they're going to bed, and my stomach is sick," striking a deeply personal yet widely relatable chord.

The track's genius lies in its simplicity—a single verse and chorus repeated with increasing emotional urgency, creating an irresistible sing-along experience that has dominated dance floors for two decades.

Mr Brightside's ability to transform pain into an explosive, cathartic celebration makes it more than just a song—rather, a timeless classic that continues to resonate with listeners across generations.

STYLE STATEMENT TABU

The stunning Tabu made an appearance as Sister Francesca in the second-to-last episode of *Dune Prophecy*. Known for her timeless elegance, she effortlessly exudes confidence and charm in every look she dons.

In a recent photoshoot, she dazzled in a sleek black dress that highlighted her curves. Complementing the outfit, she wore elegant golden earrings and opted for glossy nude lips and subtle nude makeup. Her natural wavy hair added a touch of classic sophistication, perfectly capturing her essence as a true diva.



Dhanmondi's DINING DELIGHTS

From just another neighbourhood to a destination for foodies

There are about 25,000 restaurants in Dhaka, with hundreds of them having sprouted over the past decade to cater to the demand for hygienic food among city dwellers.

SUKANTA HALDER and LUTHEFA ARA TINA

In the 1990s, Dhanmondi was just another quiet neighborhood in Dhaka, with the occasional tinny tinkle of rickshaws on Satmasjid Road. If you craved something to renew your taste buds, Bailey Road, Gulshan, or Banani were the places to go.

Shamima Seema, now 36, laughs at this memory.

"Remember a local restaurant in Dhanmondi named Macdonald? Not the original one and no Big Macs – just spring rolls lying beside the fried fish they used to serve!"

Another option in Dhanmondi at the time was Jing Ling, a local Chinese eatery in a largely flavourless dining scene.

But everything started changing in the 2000s.

Rifles Square, now known as Shimanto Square, opened and became one of the most popular hubs for shoppers. Besides, new schools and private universities popped up, and Dhanmondi Lake became a popular leisure spot for loud, boisterous youngsters.

They needed everything within easy reach and Bailey Road was no longer good enough.

"I remember it well," Seema recalls of her school days when restaurants like Karai Gost, Baburchi and Xinxian began to appear. "The food was great,

Association (BROA).

Apart from this, there are about 100 other restaurants, the association also observed. In all, 7,000 to 8,000 people are employed in this zone, it added.

There are about 25,000 restaurants in Dhaka, with hundreds of them having sprouted over the past decade to cater to the demand for hygienic food among city dwellers.

On a broader scale, there are 4.81 lakh restaurants across the country employing about 30 lakh people, according to the BROA.

About two crore people are either directly or indirectly linked to industry, as per BROA data.

Rawshan Trisha, who works at a private organisation, said this area has mostly budget-friendly restaurants and small food carts, which are convenient spots to pass time with colleagues and friends.

This is the reason she frequents Satmasjid Road, she added.

Abul Ahsan Anowar, owner of The Pan Pacific Lounge, a multi cuisine buffet restaurant, said he started his business on Satmasjid Road in 2000.

He then opened another restaurant in 2022 in the same area and added a third in 2024.

Anowar said the stretch of road from Jhigatola to Dhanmondi 27 is now completely a food zone. Since the business is growing day by day, he increased investment.

"There are all kinds of restaurants

of offices, schools, colleges, malls and other shops. This brings more customers to restaurants.

The area is surrounded by mostly budget friendly restaurants as young people tend to choose such places to pass time, he said.

"Young people and couples are mostly seen in our restaurant," he said, adding that the response of customers started getting dropping after a fire broke out in a restaurant complex on Bailey Road.

from this building have already left last month because of losses," he added.

Khan said the turnout of young customers was increasing again so they hoped to escape the slow growth soon.

Regarding safety issues, he said "We arrange workshops on food and fire safety and customer service. All our staff are quite experienced, so safety is easy to ensure for us."

Hridoy Paul, manager of Takeout, said the restaurant opened in 2014 and has a staff of 12 staff. The popularity of

line with European standards, they have to invest about one crore. And to open a restaurant with a capacity of 200 to 250 people, they have to invest Tk 1.5 to Tk 2 crore, he said.

Many young people are now becoming entrepreneurs, and they are coming into the restaurant business. It is a business with huge potential, he added.

Anowar also said that Satmasjid Road is becoming more and more bustling as the days go by.

"Business was bad for several months after the Bailey Road incident. But now almost all the restaurants, including ours, are operating their business by following 100 percent fire safety and the guests are also very happy," he also said.

The members of the BROA pay tax according to the rules, he said, adding that the association always tells members to operate according to the rules.

To start a business, 14 certificates must be collected from 14 departments. It would be very good if it was a one-stop service, he added.

Imran Hassan, secretary general of the BROA, said Dhanmondi zone has customers of all classes, including the elite, middle class and lower middle class.

"There was a restaurant called Sticky Finger in Dhanmondi. It's closed now like many others that could not survive the competition," he said.

However, since 2010, there has been a significant growth of the restaurant business on Satmasjid Road, he added.

Dhanmondi has several schools, colleges and universities, including Daffodil International University, Stamford University Bangladesh, State University of Bangladesh, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh. This is another reason for the growth of the business, he said.

At one time, campus of the United International University was also on Satmasjid Road, he said.

When two or four restaurants start doing good business in a zone, it is normal for many more to start business in that zone. This is what has happened in Satmasjid Road, he added.

Zakaria, chairman of the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, said none of the restaurant hubs in Dhaka are monitored separately.

Mohammed Alim Akhter Khan, director general of the Directorate of National Consumers' Right Protection, said regular drives are conducted so that the interests of consumers are not harmed.

Raids have also been conducted on Satmasjid Road at different times in the past. If anyone complains, an operation is conducted, he said.

After the raid, restaurants found guilty are fined and checked through follow-ups, he added.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

At least 44 people, including 26 women and three children, were killed and 22 critically injured in a fire that broke out at the seven-storey Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall on Bailey Road in Dhaka in February this year.

The tragedy made customers worry about safety issues in congested space, he mentioned.

"However, we have taken many steps to meet safety standards by ensuring emergency exits and giving our staff fire training," he added.

Ahmed said the business was not going as smoothly as before. High inflation and political uncertainty have had a negative impact on the business.

And inflation has shown barely any signs of letting up.

In October this year, inflation hit a three-month high of 10.87 percent, driven by soaring food prices, particularly for rice and vegetables, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Munna Khan, cashier of the Park N Smirk restaurant, said the restaurant opened in 2016 and currently has a staff of five.

"Our restaurant owner owns a floor in this Kearsy Crescent Tower, so he decided to use it to open a restaurant as this area is known for restaurants," he said.

"Recently our business is more middling than before. At least 3 restaurants

this area was a key reason for opening a branch here, he said.

Currently the response of customers is not as positive as before and the profit margin is low, he claimed.

The current economic situation, price hike of daily essentials, and burgeoning competition in this field are reasons for the slow growth of business, he added.

"We arrange two monthly workshops for our staff to let them train regarding fire safety and food and customer services," he added.

Abul Ahsan Anowar, also president of the BROA of Dhaka South, said if someone wants to open a coffee shop in the area, they have to invest Tk 30 to Tk 40 lakh.

If they want to open a coffee shop in



but the prices would drain the wallet all at once," By college, everyone knew about Lailati, Al Baik and Dhaba."

In 2002, Boomers Café arrived, marking a new era of vibrant café culture, and adding another layer to Satmasjid Road's continued transformation from just another neighborhood to a must-visit destination for foodies.

Satmasjid Road in Dhanmondi, lined with budget-friendly restaurants that welcome customers for regular hangouts, has become a hub for eateries in the last two decades.

Many entrepreneurs have opened their ventures here, generating employment. Apart from this, many who started businesses without adhering fully to the laws have been forced to adopt stringent safety standards, making the area a trustworthy stomping ground for customers.

From Satmasjid Road to Dhanmondi 27, there are more than 245 listed restaurants, according to the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners'

on Satmasjid Road. You will find any kind of food you want to taste," he said.

Anowar said there are very few venues offering entertainment in Dhanmondi. So, people can either go to restaurants and sit idly while also eating or roam around the Dhanmondi lake while enjoying the scenic beauty.

There are several universities, colleges and schools nearby, which contributed to the growth of the restaurant business, he added.

However, Anowar added that persistent inflation, which has hovered above nine percent since March last year, as well as the sudden political changeover, had some negative impacts on the business, he said.

Nasim Ahmed, manager of Crush Station, said their restaurant opened around 2017 and currently employs 13 people, mostly students.

As for why he chose the location to open their first branch, the manager said this area has been popular among people of Dhanmondi for so long because it is home to a number

