



An excavator tears down the Dhanmondi-32 residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman while it is still on fire around 1:30am today. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## ADMIN, JUDICIAL REFORMS

- Dividing the country into 4 administrative provinces
- Reducing the number of ministries to 25 from 43
- Abolishing the zila parishads
- Moving 26 cadre officials to 13 services
- In-service exams for officials for becoming deputy secretaries
- Every upazila to have an assistant superintendent of police

- Establishing permanent HC benches in divisional cities
- Setting up civil, criminal courts in upazilas
- Curbing president's power to pardon
- Limiting mobile court's power to sentence
- Enacting laws to establish independent criminal investigation service
- Preventing filing of false cases

## 'Capital city government' for greater Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Administration Reform Commission has proposed a "Capital City Government" for governing Dhaka city, Narayanganj, Keraniganj, Savar, and Tongi. This government, similar to that of the federal government-controlled New Delhi, will have an elected legislature and local government. The proposal was made considering the population and scope of services in the capital, according to the commission's report submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday. It also proposed introducing a provincial governance system, by turning four older divisions into provinces, to decentralise the service delivery system for the country's large population. "This will reduce the potential for power concentration by a unitary government and alleviate the pressure on Dhaka as well," said the report. However, implementing such a system would require constitutional amendments.

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## Decentralised judiciary at the core

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Judiciary Reform Commission recommends curbing the president's power to pardon convicts and establishing permanent High Court benches at every divisional city. It also proposes establishing civil and criminal courts at upazilas; reducing the mobile court's jurisdiction in sentencing; formulating legislation to establish an independent criminal investigation agency; and preventing filing of false cases with a law. The reforms are proposed in 28 areas. The commission led by Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Mominur Rahman handed over the 380-page report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday. Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told reporters that the judiciary was not fully independent under the previous government. "That's why the Judiciary Reform Commission proposes making the judiciary fully independent," he said.

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## Dhanmondi 32 ripped apart

Protesters torch Sudha Shadan too

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesters last night torched and tore down parts of the Dhanmondi 32 residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, after calls in social media for demolishing what they said was a "pilgrimage site of fascism". An event titled "Bulldozer Procession" was scheduled for 9:00pm, timed to

coincide with an online programme where deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was slated to speak. The virtual event was announced by the now-banned Chhatra League, the student wing of the Awami League. However, hundreds of protesters stormed the building and began taking it apart with shovels and hammers around

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## Houses of AL leaders smashed

STAR REPORT

Protesters demolished homes of Awami League leaders and defaced murals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in different parts of the country last night and early today. Yesterday evening, they demolished the Khulna

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## Protest by Transcom Group Against False, Fabricated, Malicious, Defamatory, and Baseless News Reports

A series of false, fabricated, malicious, defamatory, and baseless news reports are being continuously published about Transcom Group, one of the country's leading industrial conglomerates, by media outlets owned by Bashundhara Group. As part of this, on February 3, Kaler Kantho published a report titled "Simeen Gave Tk 100 Crore Bribe to Hasina," which is false, fabricated, and defamatory. The same false and fabricated news item was also published under different headlines by Bangladesh Pratidin, The Daily Sun, and Bangla News 24. The online editions of these newspapers also published this false news.

Regarding this, Transcom Group states that in the face of the fascist government's conspiracy, Transcom CEO, Simeen Rahman, was outside the country from February 20 to April 3, 2024, which is evident from her passport records. It is incomprehensible how it is possible to be at Gonobhaban while being abroad at the same time. This claim is completely baseless and false. It is necessary to mention that Simeen Rahman has never, in her lifetime, met the head of the fascist government, Sheikh Hasina.

The news report states that Simeen Rahman issued a cheque from her Standard Chartered Bank account. — In reality, Simeen Rahman does not have any account at any branch of Standard Chartered Bank. How is it possible that the media outlets owned by Bashundhara Group, citing the country's well-known state institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), can spread such outright lies?

The report further states that Simeen Rahman's brother, Arshad Waliur Rahman's body was exhumed, autopsied, and later the matter was covered up.

— This is another blatant falsehood. The actual fact is that Arshad Waliur Rahman's body was never exhumed or autopsied. This false, fabricated, and baseless information has been published with extremely malicious intent.

The report also states that after the exchange of bribes, the then-government suppressed the murder case and the share-related case.

— Like other allegations, this too is completely false and baseless. In reality, after an investigation, no truth was found in the murder allegations, and on October 3 of last year (after the fall of the fascist Awami League government), the investigating officer submitted the final report to the court. On October 24 last year, the honourable court accepted the final report and acquitted all the accused in the case. On the other hand, the share-related case is still ongoing.

The report states, "Prothom Alo and The Daily Star group have also made an alliance with the new government. Several of their associates have secured advisory positions in the new government."

— This comment is not only a false and defamatory statement but also a deliberate attempt to tarnish the country's image. Publishing such false news without any concrete evidence to damage the reputation of the current government is part of an anti-national conspiracy.

### The Actual Facts

The founder, chairman, and managing director of Transcom Limited, Latifur Rahman, formalized his company's management and share distribution before his passing by executing a "Deed of Settlement" on June 12, 2020. In addition to Latifur Rahman, all members of his family—his wife Shahnaz Rahman, elder daughter Simeen Rahman, younger daughter Shahzreh Huq, and son Arshad Waliur Rahman—signed the Deed of Settlement in full agreement.

Additionally, as witnesses to this Deed of Settlement, Latifur Rahman's elder grandson Zairaif Ayaat Hossain (son of Simeen Rahman), younger daughter Shahzreh Huq's two sons Zoheb Asrar Huq and Mikhail Imaan Huq, and two senior officials of Transcom Group also signed the document.

After executing the Deed of Settlement, Latifur Rahman signed Form-I17, a share transfer document under the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (RJSC). Through this, he transferred his 23,600 shares in Transcom Limited as follows: 14,160 shares to his elder daughter, Simeen Rahman, 4,720 shares to his younger daughter, Shahzreh Huq, 4,720 shares to his son, Arshad Waliur Rahman. These Form-I17 documents were later submitted to the RJSC. The RJSC updated the company's shareholding records accordingly and issued a Schedule-X listing the updated shareholder structure.

Latifur Rahman passed away on July 1, 2020. Following his demise, the company had been operating smoothly. Subsequently, his two daughters, Simeen Rahman and Shahzreh Huq, along with his son, Arshad Waliur Rahman, declared in their personal income tax returns for the fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 the shares transferred to them from a total of 23,600 shares.

After the fall of the fascist Awami League government, Prothom Alo and The Daily Star published reports exposing various anti-national activities of the previous government and its allies, including S. Alam Group. As a result, these groups and their associates have engaged in a conspiracy to destroy Transcom Group.

Transcom Group urges everyone not to be misled by these false, defamatory, baseless, and malicious reports. It also calls on all media outlets to refrain from publishing false news without proper verification.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> Death Anniversary



Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)  
Death: 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2003

This day in 2003, we lost our beloved & honorable Director **Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)**. We mourn his pre-mature death. With our distressed heart, we pray to Almighty Allah for his eternal peace. May Allah bless him. Ameen.

All Employees

ABUL KHAIR GROUP

In 2003, on this very day, you left us at the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent. Your pre-matured departure has made us and many of your relations overwhelmed with grief. It is straining that you are not in this mundane world with us. But we are feeling your existence by remembering the tender-aged days of your life.

We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul and request all friends, relatives, well-wishers to pray for him from the core of heart.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Bereaved members of the family



## Accept reports of the reform commissions

### Chief adviser urges all

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has called upon all concerned to accept the reports of the reform commissions and come forward to implement those.

“I hope all will unanimously accept and implement those (reports),” he said while speaking at a function at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

Public Administration Reform Commission led by Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury and Judiciary Reform Commission led by Justice Shah Abu Naeem Mominur Rahman handed over their reports to Chief Adviser Prof Yunus at the function.

Members of the commissions were also present.

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Left, Justice Shah Abu Naeem Mominur Rahman, the Judiciary Reform Commission chairman, hands over its report to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, while Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, the Public Administration Reform Commission chief, submits its report to the chief adviser at the state guesthouse Jamuna yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD



## Dhanmondi 32 ripped apart

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8:00pm, an hour before the planned procession. A mural of Mujib was also wrecked, witnesses said.

By around 9:30pm, the building was set on fire. A little before midnight, at least one crane and one excavator reached the spot, and by the time this report was filed around 2:00am today, parts of the building were razed to the ground.

According to some social media posts, the protest was in response to “Hasina’s anti Bangladesh activities from Delhi,” where she fled on August 5.

At the scene, protesters chanted various slogans such as “Fashi Fashi Fashi Chai, Sheikh Hasinar Fashi Chai (Hang, hang, hang – Sheikh Hasina must be hanged!); Sara Banglae Khobor De, Mujibbader Kobor De (Let all of Bangladesh know – let’s bury Mujibism!); Awami League er Pretatta, Bangladeshe Thakbe Na (There will be no place for Awami League’s ghosts in Bangladesh!); Delhi Na Dhaka? Dhaka, Dhaka (Delhi or Dhaka? Dhaka, Dhaka!); and Inquilab Zindabad (Long live revolution!)”

One protester demanded that the AL be banned. “Awami League won’t be allowed to participate in any election in Bangladesh,” he said.

Law enforcers were seen nearby the spot since the beginning. At around 12:40pm, police took position in front of Metro Shopping Mall, yards away from the scene. No firefighters reached the spot as of midnight.

Army personnel went to the spot around 9:30pm, and took position on the main street. Later, they left the area, witnesses said.

“We don’t want to keep the memory of any murderer in Bangladesh. Today, we stand against all the murderers ... We don’t need any security forces here,” one protester told this correspondent.

## Houses of AL leaders smashed

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home of Sheikh Hasina’s cousins Sheikh Helal Uddin and Sheikh Salauddin Jewel when the Dhanmondi 32 residence of Sheikh Mujib was being pulled down in Dhaka.

Around 8:30pm, a large crowd, including students and locals, began demolishing the Sheikh Bari in Khulna’s Moylapota area.

Thousands of people gathered around the house, chanting “Delhi or Dhaka – Dhaka, Dhaka” and “Down with Mujibism”.

At 9:30pm, when a small excavator failed to break the gate, a larger one was brought in. Many people used sticks and sledgehammers to break down the boundary walls. Around 9:00pm, a fire was seen on the roof of the house.

Ahsan Habib, additional deputy commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star, “I have seen the news of the incident on Facebook, but I don’t have further information.”

Sheikh Helal was the former MP of Bagerhat-1 and Sheikh Salahuddin Jewel was the former MP of Khulna 2.

In Kushtia, homes of former lawmaker of Kushtia-3 and Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbulul Alam Hanif and Sadar Khan, president of Kushtia Awami League, were ransacked.

Around 10:00pm, a group of protesters gathered around Hani’s three-storey home on PTI Road with an excavator in tow.

They attempted to break down the structure for about half an hour, but

only managed to smash the gate and its supporting pillars.

Another group charged towards Sadar Khan’s house around 11:00pm.

Protesters in Chattogram yesterday took out a torch procession to demonstrate against Sheikh Hasina’s speech, which was broadcast from Bangladesh Awami League’s social media handles last night.

They later defaced Sheikh Mujib’s murals at Chittagong Medical College and in the city’s Jamal Khan area.

Around 10:00pm, a group of 20-25 people defaced a small mural in front of the old academic building at Chittagong Medical College. Some of them had hammers in their hands, while others carried stones.

The mural contained a portrait of Mujib.

The procession then moved to the Jamal Khan area. The protesters used hammers to deface a mural of Sheikh Mujib that was on a wall there.

Demonstrators damaged another mural of him in front of Sylhet deputy commissioner’s office around 9:30pm. Before that, leaders and activists of Students Against Discrimination held a protest rally, and a sit-in in the Bandar Bazar area around 8:30pm.

Around 1:15am in Rangpur today, the mural of Mujib at Begum Rokeya University was defaced by the protesters.

Witnesses said around 10:00pm, a group of protesters gathered in front of the university’s administrative building, wielding hammers and iron rods.

Ismaili Muslims.

Present in multiple countries, notably in central and southern Asia, Africa and the Middle East, the Ismaili community numbers 12 to 15 million, according to its website.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres described the Aga Khan as “a symbol of peace, tolerance and compassion in our troubled world” following the religious leader’s death.

Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace laureate and education campaigner, said his legacy will “live on through the incredible work he led for education, health and

Coalition (PAC), wrote in his Facebook page around 4:00pm.

An hour before, July Revolutionary Alliance from its Facebook page made the similar calls.

Later in the evening, Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Students Against Discrimination, wrote in his Facebook, “Tonight, Bangladesh will be freed from the grip of fascism.”

Paris-based vlogger Pinaki Bhattacharya also made a similar call in his Facebook page. He urged everyone to head to Dhanmondi 32 and finish it off this time.

Earlier in the day, Hasnat Abdullah warned media outlets against broadcasting Hasina’s speech, saying it would amount to promoting her agenda.

“Even now, we see hesitation in naming the real perpetrators. Some media outlets still refer to her as a former prime minister. Is she just a former leader or is she the Butcher of this Motherland?” Hasnat told a press conference at the office of the Students Against Discrimination in the capital’s Bangla Motor.

Jatiya Nagorik Committee and the Students Against Discrimination arranged the press conference regarding the launch of a public opinion campaign titled “New Bangladesh Through Your Eyes”.

Hasnat said, “She [Hasina] killed 2,000 people to cling to power. Yet, the media does not call her a fascist murderer. If you fail to do so, you are still keeping the pro-Awami media spirit alive.”

“If any media outlet broadcasts Hasina’s speech, it will be assumed that they are still promoting her and have taken a stance against the aspirations of the people.”

Around 11:50pm, they brought in an excavator and completely tore down the mural.

They also took down the nameplates from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall and Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Hall.

In Barishal city, demonstrators brought a bulldozer to the house of Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, former mayor of the city corporation and Sheikh Hasina’s relative. He owns a two-storey home in the city’s Kalibari Road area.

The demolition process was underway when this report was filed at 1:15am.

Protesters vandalised a mural of Bangabandhu near the Circuit House ground in Mymensingh city with hammers and crowbars around 11:30pm yesterday, reports Prothom Alo.

The “Mujib Mural” of Bangabandhu Hall was also vandalised at the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam University in Trishal.

The mural of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Fazilatunnessa Mujib at the Chuadanga deputy commissioner’s office was demolished around 12:15am today, the Bangla daily added.

In Bhairab, Kishoreganj, the protesters vandalised the mural of Mujib at the upazila Awami League office and at the upazila parishad last night.

[Our correspondents in Khulna, Chattogram, Sylhet, Dinajpur, and Barishal contributed to this report.]

development around the world”.

Born in Geneva, the Aga Khan spent his childhood in Kenya and was appointed in Tanzania to succeed his grandfather in 1957.

His father was passed over in the line of succession after a tumultuous marriage to American actor Rita Hayworth.

A billionaire owner of yachts and jets, the Aga Khan was a regular on the racetrack and continued the family tradition of breeding thoroughbreds.

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Asked, a commission member told The Daily Star, “We are aware that this proposal may spark debates and criticisms. However, considering that local government has not been effective in the last 54 years, we believe a provincial system is the best approach to decentralisation.”

A similar initiative was considered during the Ershad regime, but it was never implemented.

The commission recommended the creation of two new administrative divisions – Faridpur and Cumilla – alongside the existing eight.

Led by Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, the commission submitted its report with around 200 recommendations to the chief adviser at the state guesthouse Jamuna. The Judiciary Reform Commission, led by Justice Shah Abu Naeem Mominur Rahman, also handed over its report there.

The Public Administration Reform Commission recommended reducing the number of ministries to 25 from 43, categorising ministries into five clusters, abolishing district councils, eliminating the cadre services, introducing an examination system for promotion to deputy secretary, and implementing a senior executive service.

The commission suggested scrapping the interest-free car loan and car maintenance allowances worth Tk 50,000 for deputy secretaries and higher officials.

“This will remove discrimination and also reduce public expenditure,” it said.

Officers of the ranks of deputy secretary and above currently get a loan of Tk 30 lakh to buy a car and a monthly allowance of Tk 50,000 to hire a driver and pay for the maintenance of the vehicle.

The commission recommended doing away with a legal provision that allows the government to force employees to retire after they have been on the job for 25 years or more.

It also recommended allowing officials to voluntarily retire after 15 years in service, instead of 25 years.

It recommended eliminating the police verification process for passport issuance to make the system more efficient and citizen-friendly.

The commission split its recommendations into short-term (six months), medium-term (one to two years), and long-term plans.

**SHORT-TERM PLAN**

According to the commission report, the number of ministries should be reduced to 25 from 43 and the divisions to 40 from 61. The ministries should be put in

one of the five clusters: Administration; Finance, Industry, and Commerce; Infrastructure and Communication; Agriculture and Environment; Human Resources, and Social Development.

As part of the structural and procedural reform of the civil service, the commission suggested abolishing the existing 26 cadres of officials and replacing them with 13 services.

These are Administrative Service, Judicial Service, Public Security Service, Foreign Service, Accounts Service, Audit Service, Revenue Service, Engineering Service, Education Service, Health Service, Agricultural Service, Information Service, and ICT Service.

The commission suggested the establishment of two more public service commissions – one for education and another for health. The recruitment and promotions of teachers and doctors would be done by these two commissions.

The existing Public Service Commission will deal with recruitment of officers of other services.

The reform commission put forward a guideline for officials’ promotion to secretary and proposed abolishing the existing Superior Selection Board (SSB), which oversees their selection process, and forming a new committee led by a minister.

It proposed a provision under which the government could hire qualified individuals for positions in the upper tier of the bureaucracy.

The commission recommended abolishing the zila parishad, arguing that the chairmen of the parishads have never been directly elected by citizens and that most zila parishads lack strong revenue sources.

It suggested that the mayors of the municipalities be elected by elected members of the municipality instead of direct voting. The commission also recommended abolishing the post of vice chairmen (both male and female) of the upazila parishads.

The commission suggested appointing officials equivalent to the rank of senior assistant secretary as the “secretary” of upazila parishads and relieving the upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) of upazila parishad duties.

It suggested renaming Deputy Commissioner (DC) to District Magistrate and District Commissioner, and UNOs to Sub-District Commissioner (SDC).

The commission recommended giving the District Magistrate the authority to accept complaints in criminal cases, subject to consultation with the Supreme Court, setting up magistrate courts at the upazila level, and appointing an ASP in every upazila.

## Decentralised judiciary at the core

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The reform commission proposes amending the constitution so that the most senior judge of the Appellate Division gets to be the chief justice; forming a nine-member commission led by the chief justice for appointment of Supreme Court judges; fixing the number of the Appellate Division judges at seven; raising the judges’ retirement age to 70, up from 67; setting the minimum age for judges at 48; and increasing the number of judges in the higher and lower courts. Currently, the Appellate Division has five judges including the chief justice while the High Court division has 94. Seven of the HC judges have been kept away from judicial proceedings since demonstrations on the SC premises on October 20 last year.

There are around 2,100 lower court judges across the country, SC sources said.

The number of cases pending with the courts across the country is at 44.43 lakh.

The interim government on January 21 this year issued an ordinance for recruitment of judges in the SC through a seven-member Supreme Judicial Appointment Council led by the chief justice.

The council will look into the candidates’ educational qualifications, professional skills, experience, publications, training;

criminal record; special knowledge and skills in a particular area of law; overall knowledge, wisdom, honesty, reputation, and other matters, says the ordinance.

The reform commission proposes establishing a six-member board led by the attorney general to regulate the absolute power of the president; and amending the criminal laws to enhance judicial magistrates’ powers.

The commission suggests giving power to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), which comprises of the chief justice and two senior most judges of the Appellate Division, to voluntarily investigate judges facing allegations; establishing an SC secretariat for full independence and separation of the judiciary; and forming a permanent and independent attorney service to appoint impartial prosecutors.

It also proposes that mobile courts run by the judicial magistrates can only slap financial penalties, not prison sentences.

The commission recommends formulation of a code of conduct to prevent corruption by judges of all courts.

Every three years, the property details of the SC and lower court judges and employees should be uploaded to the internet.

It also proposes appointing a retired, honest, and efficient district judge for a period of two to three years

It proposed transferring of the Land Registration Office to land ministry from the law ministry.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) could be divided into three separate entities – Income Tax Department, Customs and Excise Department, VAT Department, the report said.

A proposal has also been made to merge the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), the Economic Zones Authority, and the Export Promotion Bureau into a single organisation to streamline their operations.

To ensure greater accountability in public service delivery, the commission proposed forming “District Citizen Committees” and “Upazila Citizen Committees” that would be modelled after parliamentary standing committees.

These committees will review government services and hold meetings every four months to provide necessary recommendations to relevant authorities.

**MID-TERM PLAN**

The commission recommended forming a “Superior Executive Service” to allow officials from various services to be promoted to deputy secretary and thus be in the policy-making level.

Under this system, 50 percent of promotions to deputy secretary will be reserved for administrative service officials, while the remaining 50 percent will be open to officials from other services through exams.

Candidates failing the exam twice will no longer be eligible for promotion, said the commission.

Meanwhile, writer, researcher and former secretary AKM Abdul Awal Majumdar came down heavily on the recommendations.

“If these recommendations are implemented, the civil service will fall into such a pit that it may no longer be possible to pull it out,” he told The Daily Star.

“The mistakes of 1972 have kept us in a hole to this day. This mistake will plunge us into an abyss. Nowhere in the world do we see a system like the one being proposed.”

**LONG-TERM PLAN**

The commission suggested integrating the National Climate Change Strategy into government policy frameworks.

It recommended discouraging the introduction of honours programmes in private colleges and emphasised the need for monitoring private madrasas and enhancing their efficiency through investments.

It suggested recruiting adequate number of teachers.

In the districts where a large number of criminal appeals, criminal revisions, civil appeals and civil revisions are pending.

Besides, witnesses should be allowed to testify through the internet.

It recommends more budget allocations for the financial independence of the judiciary.

To instill moral values in the society to reduce crimes, arrangements should be made to impart moral education at different levels of society, schools, colleges and religious institutions.

Tanim Hussain Shawon, a member of the reform commission, told The Daily Star that the commission held 29 meetings among themselves and 37 meetings with stakeholders before making the recommendations.

Around 15,000 people, including commoners, lawyers, judges and others gave their views on reforms to the commission so far, he added.

The eight-member Judiciary Reform Commission was formed on October 3 last year.

Members of the commission include retired HC judges Justice Emdadul Haque and Justice Farid Ahmed Shibli; former registrar general of the SC Syed Aminul Islam; former district and sessions judge Masdar Hossain; Dhaka University Associate Professor Kazi Mahfuzaul Haque Supan; and a student representative.



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## Interim govt a continuation of AL regime

**Prof Anu Muhammad criticises refusal to cancel controversial power deals**

UNB, Dhaka

The interim government appears to be a continuation of the previous Awami League administration as it refuses to cancel controversial deals signed under the Speedy Increase of Power and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act 2010, said Prof Anu Muhammad yesterday.

The leader of the National Committee to Protect Oil Gas, Mineral Resources and Power-Port was speaking at a seminar at DRU on coal-fired power plants.

He said the government upheld past agreements despite repealing the Special Act. "This shows the government stance remains unchanged," he said.

He also criticised the recent long-term LNG import contract with a US company, signed without any tender, questioning how such a deal could be justified.

Though the government claims it is a non-binding agreement, he warned that lobbyists would push for its implementation.

The seminar, titled "Coal-fired Power Plants -- What is the Experience?" was organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA).

Presenting on the state and future of

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## Migration drops by 27pc

Political, economic instability to blame, reveals Ami Probashi's 2024 report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh experienced a significant decline in overseas migration last year, primarily due to changes in the political and economic landscape.

The total number of migrant workers dropped to 10,09,146 in 2024, marking a 27.4 percent decrease from 13,90,811 in 2023, according to the Annual Report 2024 by Ami Probashi, a digital platform supporting migrant workers.

The report was launched yesterday at an event held at a city hotel.

The decline was attributed to political and subsequent economic instabilities in July 2024, which likely contributed to the slowdown in migration.

Uncertainty over job security and future opportunities also discouraged many potential workers from seeking employment abroad.

A notable decline in migration numbers was observed between May and September 2024, with 54,725 migrants going abroad in June, 71,080 in July, 52,818 in August, and 64,157 in September.

However, the numbers surged to 104,811 in October, maintaining a steady rate from October to December.

Meanwhile, despite the overall decline, female participation in Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training (BMET) registration nearly doubled compared to the previous year.

Female registration increased from 2.78 percent in 2023 to 4.79 percent in 2024.

"For females, Jordan seems to be a very popular destination for work, as over 13,000 female migrants travelled to the country last year, particularly for

employment in the garment sector," said M Tanvir Siddique, group head of innovation at Bangla Trac Group.

Saudi Arabia remained the top destination for Bangladeshi migrants, accounting for 62.17 percent of the total migration, with approximately 627,000 workers departing for the kingdom.

This continued preference is driven by a high demand for both skilled and unskilled labour, particularly in infrastructure development.

In contrast, Malaysia, the second-

Bangladeshi women in pursuing employment overseas. With the right training and support, we can ensure a stronger, more skilled workforce abroad," said Tarique E Haque, founder and managing director of Ami Probashi.

Last year, 798,276 individuals registered with BMET, an increase from 660,088 in 2023. While men continue to dominate the overseas labour force, the rise in female participation highlights a growing acceptance of women in skilled and semi-skilled professions abroad.



► Saudi Arabia remains top destination

► Migration to Malaysia declines due to stricter policies

► Jordan emerges as key destination for female RMG workers

► Female BMET registrations nearly doubles

largest destination, saw a decline in migration numbers, with only 93,000 workers moving there in 2024. The drop is attributed to changes in Malaysia's foreign labour policies.

Additionally, General Training Enrolment, a key indicator of skilled workforce preparation, fell sharply, decreasing from 236,270 enrolments in 2023 to 112,166 in 2024, pointing to shifting trends in job preparedness and overseas employment demand.

"The rise in female BMET registration shows a growing confidence of

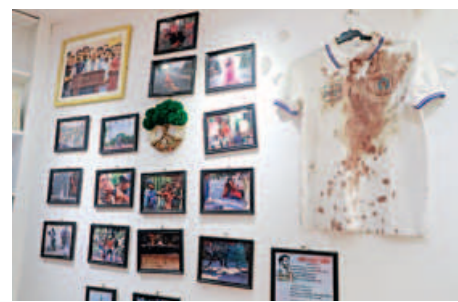
The report also highlights a changing preference among female workers, with more women enrolling in tech-related training courses such as computer operation, graphics design, and AutoCAD drafting, rather than traditional domestic work.

Over 700 female workers migrated as skilled professionals last year.

The report shows that Dhaka division sent the highest number of migrants abroad last year, totalling 2.64 lakh, followed by Chattogram with 2.31 lakh,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Echoes of July: a book fair painted in revolution



DIPAN NANDY

This year's Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has been adorned with the colours of revolution. The fair is decorated in red, black, and white -- the colors symbolising rebellion, mourning, and hope. The visual landscape of the fair encapsulates the memories of the July uprising.

A special arch has been erected at the main gate of Bangla Academy for the book fair. On one side, there is an image of Mir Mughdo holding bottles of water, while the other features an image of Abu Sayed standing resolutely.

At the top, the central theme of the book fair has been inscribed -- "July Gono-Obhutthan: Natun Bangladesh Binirman".

Several students were seen taking pictures at this arch yesterday afternoon. Some stood still, gazing at it in contemplation.

One such student, Mohiuddin Ahmed said, "Those times [July Movement] were terrible. A man has been martyred for a movement against an autocratic government. I'm taking pictures as a tribute to them."

Md Alam echoed the same.

Posters showing iconic moments from the uprising were also featured, showing -- Golam Nafiz hanging off the side of a rickshaw with a flag tied to his head; the memorable day when students

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A student covers his face with his schoolbag while running past a pile of burning trash in Mohammadpur recently. The fire contributes to air pollution and harms both the environment and human health. The photo was taken near the Physical Institute Field.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## DETAILED AREA PLAN

### Investigate past modifications

**Demand speakers at a citizen dialogue**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning experts have urged the interim government to investigate past modifications to the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) and urban planning policies, alleging influence by vested interests.

They called for a white paper on the matter at a citizen dialogue yesterday.

The dialogue, titled "Public Interest, Liveability, and Environmental Concerns in the Revision of Detailed Area Plan (DAP) and Building Construction Rules," was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) at the BIP Conference Hall.

"Authorities responsible for revising Dhaka's DAP and building regulations, including RAJUK and the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, should be scrutinised. Also, officials found serving vested groups must face legal action," said speakers.

Experts emphasised that urban planning must reflect socio-economic realities, cultural aspects, and community needs. Public participation should be ensured in drafting laws, regulations, and development policies.

They demanded the identification and prosecution of corrupt officials, housing developers, industrialists, politicians, bureaucrats, and professionals involved in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

### It's flawed and discriminatory

**Says REHAB, issues 15-day ultimatum for amendment**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) has given the government a 15-day ultimatum to amend the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) 2022 and building regulations.

"Landowners in Dhaka and other major cities have been outraged since the discriminatory and flawed DAP was published," said REHAB President Md Wahiduzzaman at a press conference held at the CIRDAP auditorium in the capital yesterday.

"We have engaged in continuous discussions with government authorities, submitted proposals, and received assurances of revisions. Yet, no effective measures have been taken," he said.

The DAP (2022-2035) aims to improve the quality of life in Dhaka by promoting sustainable growth and structured land use.

However, REHAB alleged that the government disregarded the Dhaka Metropolitan Building Construction Rules-2008 and unfairly repealed the Master Plan-2010 by removing the floor area ratio (FAR).

The new DAP introduces a differentiated FAR based on an area's character, road conditions, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

**The Daily Star**  
**STELLAR WOMEN SEASON 2**

**CALL FOR REGISTRATIONS / NOMINATIONS**

The Stellar Women initiative aims to recognise twelve (12) extraordinary women throughout the year (From September '24 to August '25) for playing a remarkable role in their distinguished fields. Their work must have made positive contributions towards the development of society & the nation.

Inviting nominations/ registrations in the following categories:

<b>Architect</b> (Residential & Commercial) (28 <sup>th</sup> February '25)	<b>Art &amp; Culture</b> (31 <sup>st</sup> March '25)	<b>Engineering</b> (Construction, Structure, Water Resource & MEP) (30 <sup>th</sup> April '24)
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

SCAN HERE TO VISIT

For Queries  
☎01322890097  
Register/ Nominate via:  
[www.btistellarwomen.thedailystar.net](http://www.btistellarwomen.thedailystar.net)

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 & **The Daily Star**

TELEVISION PARTNER

**Spark Your Inner Power!**



## Mohammad Badrul Ahsan's death anniv today

STAR REPORT

Today is the fifth death anniversary of Mohammad Badrul Ahsan, a longtime weekly columnist for The Daily Star, and also the publisher and editor of the now-defunct weekly magazine First News, said a press release.

He also had a long career with Standard Chartered Bank, serving in both Dhaka and Dubai.

A passionate writer, he left banking career to launch First News in 2010, the country's first and only news magazine.

Mohammad Badrul Ahsan, the inimitable weekly author of "Cross Talk" in The Daily Star, began writing his column in 2000.

He also authored several books, including "Grameen Bank and Muhammad Yunus, in Search of a Nation", and "Tales from the Heart", published by Mowla Brothers. His other works, such as "A Good Man in the Woods and Other Essays", "Crosstalk Essays", and "The Parallax View", were published by The University Press Limited.



## Forced to resign

FROM PAGE 5  
those involved and take immediate action based on video evidence. "Humiliating a teacher like this is a severe violation of human rights. Any allegations should be addressed through legal means, not coercion,"

said Jalal Uddin Laskar, the association's publicity secretary. Habiganj District Magistrate Dr Md Faridur Rahman assured a thorough investigation and directed the Madhabpur upazila nirbahi officer to conduct an urgent inquiry.

## Echoes of July

FROM PAGE 3  
and citizens gathered at the Shaheed Minar; and the iconic salute of a rickshaw puller.

Inside the fair there are two stalls -- one by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and another by the July Revolution Council.

Rakibul Hasan Raj, one of the stall managers, said the proceeds from books sold at the stall would be used to support the families of martyrs and those injured.

Nahid Islam, information adviser and a coordinator of the Anti-

Discrimination Student Movement, visited the stall yesterday.

Meanwhile, yesterday, a book launching event was held in the Shamsur Rahman Seminar Hall of Bangla Academy for "Songbadpatre July Obbhutthan". The book, published by Adarsha, has been edited by Ahammad Foyez, journalist and senior assistant press secretary to the chief adviser.

The event's chief guest was Nahid Islam, while the special guest was Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to the CA.

## Migration drops

FROM PAGE 3  
Khulna with 72,000, and Rajshahi with 66,000.

Experts at the event suggested that enhanced training programmes, gender-inclusive policies, and better foreign labour agreements could help revitalise the migration sector and boost skilled labour exports, ensuring

sustainable remittance inflows in the coming years.

At the event, M Tanvir Siddique of Bangla Trac Group presented how the platform provides comprehensive support to migrant workers, including BMET registration, certificate collection, connections with recruiting agencies, and job searches.

## Investigate past modifications

FROM PAGE 3

urban planning. They will also submit a memorandum to the Chief Adviser in this regard.

In his keynote paper, BIP President Adil Mohammed Khan highlighted that despite constitutional reforms after the July uprising, no significant changes have been made to ensure sustainable urban development.

He alleged that vested groups have spread misinformation to discourage property owners from constructing new buildings.

He cited an online survey by a leading national daily, which found that 70 percent of respondents supported DAP's density and building height regulations.

Former BIP President Fazle Reza Sumon described DAP as a comprehensive urban development framework ensuring proper land use and public services, condemning efforts to portray it as a political tool.

A WHO report shows that 35 percent of Dhaka residents suffer from Vitamin D deficiency, highlighting the lack of

open spaces and natural light in urban planning.

Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) representative Engineer Abu Sadeq warned that past governments have manipulated building regulations for political gain and urged vigilance against DAP's potential repeal.

Amirul Rajiv, coordinator of the Tree Protection Movement, criticised the 15-member DAP review committee for lacking planners, environmentalists, and civil society representatives.

## HC acquits all 47

FROM PAGE 5

sentences) and appeals filed by the convicted accused against the lower court's judgement in the case, said Maksud Ullah, a defence lawyer.

He said the HC acquitted the accused as the allegations brought against them were not proved.

There was no eyewitness in the case, he said, adding that those who gave statements as witnesses were people from Awami League.

On September 23,1994, Hasina was travelling from

Khulna to Nilphamari's Saidpur by train and addressed several rallies at different railway stations on the way.

According to the case statement, as the train reached Paksey station in Ishwardi, it came under an attack. Crude bombs were hurled and shots were fired.

Following the attack, Nazrul Islam, Railway Police filed a case. On July 3, 2019, a Pabna court delivered the verdict of the case. The nine who were handed death penalty were also fined Tk 5 lakh each.

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the District Primary Education Office Distric: Thakurgaon www.dpe.thakurgaon.gov.bd

Memo No. dpeo/thak/2025/233

Date: 05-02-2025

#### e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Description of Goods	Package No.	e-Tender ID No.	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01	Furniture supply for 52 Nos. Class Room and 06 Nos. Teachers room of selected 12 Nos. of Govt.primary school at different location of Thakurgaon District.	e-Tender NBIDGSPS-1/G1.0515	1065740	23-02-2025 17:00	24-02-2025 15:00	24-02-2025 15:00
02	Furniture supply for 50 Nos. Class room and 0 Nos. Teacher Room of selected 12 Nos. of Govt.primary school at different location of Thakurgaon District.	e-Tender NBIDGSPS-1/G1.0514	1065045	23-02-2025 17:00	24-02-2025 15:00	24-02-2025 15:00

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches.

Further information and guidelines are available to the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Md. Mofazzal Hossain  
District Primary Education Officer  
Thakurgaon

### Janata Bank PLC. Procurement Department Head Office, 48 Motijheel C/A, 4th floor, Dhaka-1000. Phone : 223387402, 223385718 web: [www.jb.com.bd](http://www.jb.com.bd)

Ref No: JBPLC/PD/DGM/CBS-1/Paper/10k/reams/25

Date: 04.02.2025

#### International e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Tender Notice for procurement of 10000(Ten Thousand) reams CBS-1-Standard 95 GSM Sensitized Security Cheque Paper.

Serial No.	Tender ID	Description of Works	Online (e-GP System) Tender Publication date & Time	Tender Document Last Selling Date and Time	Tender Document Closing and Opening date and time
1.	1071408	<p>01. <b>Specification:</b> CBS-1-Standard 95 GSM Sensitized Security Cheque Paper un-lithoed white with invisible Fluorescent Pigment Particles (Security Dots) all over the paper in 4 (four) colour which is visible under U V Lamp with the Bank's approved design two-tone dandy roll Watermark in Square box within which English Script JB present Logo in TV screen as per size mentioned. The size of the square box will be 1.75" (inch) and the size of the English Script JB in TV screen will be 1.25"(inch) and the distance from one Watermark to another will be 1" (inch) all over the Security Paper Staggered.</p> <p>02. <b>Paper Size :</b> 18.7" X 21.9" (475mm X 556.25 mm).</p> <p>03. <b>Paper Furnish :</b> 100% Chemical Wood Pulp.</p> <p>04. <b>Basis Weight/Grammage:</b> 85 ISO 536 :1995, 95.0 g/m<sup>2</sup> (±5%).</p> <p>05. <b>Thickness:</b> 85 EN 20534-1993, Minimum 305 Micrometers, Maximum 130 Micrometers</p> <p>06. <b>Bendtsen Roughness :</b> 85 4420:1990 (1995) (ISO 8791-2), Both surfaces : Maximum 150 ml/min</p> <p>07. <b>Stiffness:</b> 85 3748 : 1992 (ISO 2493) MD: MIN 7.9mN, CD: MIN 3.1mN</p> <p>08. <b>Air Resistance (Gurley):</b> 85 6538-3: 1987 (1995)(ISO 5636/5), Min: 27 s/100 ml</p> <p>09. <b>Air Permeance (Bendtsen):</b> 85 6538-2: 1992 (ISO 5636/3), Max: 450 ml/min</p> <p>10. <b>Internal Tearing Resistance:</b> 85 EN 21974 : 1994, Both directions, Min. 705 mN</p> <p>11. <b>Folding Endurance:</b> Not applicable to CBS-1</p> <p>12. <b>Reflectance :</b> The reflectance of the paper should be consistently high, ideally around 78-80%.</p> <p>13. <b>UV dull:</b> CBS-1 paper must be UV dull. Paper shall exhibit little or no fluorescence when illuminated by UV light.</p> <p>14. <b>Spots &amp; Fiber Contamination:</b> CBS-1 paper should be completely free from extraneous visible fiber and UV spot and fiber contamination.</p> <p>15. <b>Security Pigments:</b> Would be visible under UV Lamp.</p> <p>16. <b>Watermark :</b> The Paper would contain FOUNDRINER Watermark as supplied design.</p> <p>17. <b>Chemical Sensitivity :</b> The Paper must be sensitized to ACIDS, BLEACH, ALKALIS, OXIDIZER and POLAR ORGANIC SOLVENTS.</p> <p>18. <b>Grain Direction :</b> Short Grain (Le along with short side of the paper).</p>	05.02.2025	19.03.2025 15:00	20.03.2025 14:00
2.		Eligibility of Tenderer: The supplier/authorised Local Agents/Representatives on behalf of their foreign Principal/Manufacturers having Experience of importing of CBS-1 Security Cheque Paper at any Schedule Bank/Govt./Semi-govt./Autonomous/Financial institutions in Bangladesh. If the foreign principal has experience in supplying 5000(Five thousand) reems sensitized security cheque paper/similar kind of security paper (i.e currency note, non-judicial stamp etc.) in Bangladesh then the experience of the local agent may be consider.			

This is an Online Tender, Where only e-Tender will be accepted in national e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted (Sample of 18.7" x 21.9" size Security Cheque Paper & other necessary information such as the period within which the shipment will be made and Country of Origin in tenderer letter head pad to be submitted in the Tender Box). To submit e-tender, Registration in the national e-GP system Portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fee for downloading the e-tender document from national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP Help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

GD-366

(Khan Mahmud Kamal)  
Deputy General Manager

## Employment Opportunity

**Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited (KAFCO)** is an international joint venture leading Ammonia & Urea Fertilizer manufacturing company in Bangladesh. The plant is located at Rangadia, Anowara, Chattogram with its Corporate Office at Dhaka.KAFCO is inviting applications from eligible candidates against the below mentioned Non-Management positions for the Plant Site at Chattogram.

#### Job Requirements & Experience

##### Machine Man

- Education - Minimum Class Eight;
- Having minimum 10 years' hands on experience as a Machine Man to operate Lathe, Milling, Shaper, Surface Grinder machine etc. in any recognized Workshop, Fertilizer, Refinery, Chemical or similar industry;
- Ability to read mechanical drawing & perform jobs accordingly;
- Knowledge on work safety;
- Candidates shall have to demonstrate their skills practically in workshop setup;

##### Valve Fitter

- Education - Minimum Class Eight;
- Having minimum 10 years' hands on experience to work as a Valve Fitter in maintenance of different types of process valves in any Fertilizer, Refinery, Chemical or similar industry;
- Ability to read mechanical drawing and perform jobs accordingly;
- Knowledge on work safety;
- Candidates shall have to demonstrate their skills practically in workshop setup;

##### Auto Electric Technician

- Education - Minimum Class Eight;
- Having minimum 10 years' hands on experience in trouble shooting and take corrective action for vehicles & heavy equipment likes Crane, Forklift, Wheel loader etc. as an Auto Electric Technician in any renowned Workshop, Fertilizer, Refinery, Chemical or similar industry;
- Having driving license;
- Knowledge on work safety;
- Candidates shall have to demonstrate their skills practically in workshop setup;

##### Fabricator/Pipe Fitter

- Education - Minimum Class Eight;
- Having minimum 10 years' hands on experience to work as a Fabricator/Pipe Fitter in maintenance in any Fertilizer, Refinery, Chemical or similar industry;
- Ability to read mechanical drawing and perform jobs accordingly;
- Knowledge on work safety;
- Candidates shall have to demonstrate their skills practically in workshop setup;

##### Refractory Mason

- Education - Minimum Class Eight;
- Having minimum 10 years' hands on experience to work as a Refractory Mason in maintenance in any Power Plant, Ceramic, Fertilizer, Refinery, Chemical or similar industry;
- Ability to read mechanical drawing and perform jobs accordingly;
- Knowledge on work safety;
- Candidates shall have to demonstrate their skills practically in workshop setup;

#### Additional Requirements for all posts

- For all posts Maximum 40 years of age as on 31st January 2025.
- Sound health for industrial environment. The offer for job shall be subject to physically fit after medical examination by Company Medical Officer.
- Can work under pressure, self motivated, oriented with company goals.
- Shall have to work directly in field and workshop with own hand.
- Job Location - KAFCO Plant, Rangadia, Anowara, Chattogram.

#### Application Procedure

- Name of the post should be mentioned clearly on the envelope and on the CV.
- Candidate should send their CV, attested copies of all Academic Certificates & Mark Sheets and Experience Certificates, Copy of NID and a recent passport size photograph (These are mandatory document) to **HR Department, KAFCO, IDB Bhaban (13<sup>th</sup> Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka 1207** at the latest by 20th February 2025.
- KAFCO reserves right to cancel the recruitment process at any stage.
- Candidates will be disqualified at any stage of recruitment process for submitting fake/forged document/statement.
- Short listed candidates will be called for interview.
- Recruitment Process for earlier advertisement has been cancelled.

## Interim govt

FROM PAGE 3

coal-fired power plants, Prof Nazrul Islam highlighted their potential long-term impacts.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof MM Akash warned that the government's plan to increase gas prices to Tk 72 per unit for consumers using additional gas would negatively impact industries.

M o h a m m e d Mukteruzzaman, principal specialist at the Center

for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), said his study on the Rampal coal-fired power plant found that the plant's management had not fully complied with regulations, despite efforts to do so.

Sabur Rana, a resident of Rampal, said the plant's impact is already evident, with declining fish production in nearby rivers and increasing health issues due to emissions.

## 2nd session of first

FROM PAGE 5

session commenced on February 3.

The second phase of the Biswa Ijtema, for followers of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, is scheduled to take place from February 14-16.

A home ministry notification on Tuesday imposed two conditions upon the faction -- they will not be allowed to arrange Ijtema or participate in any Tabligh activities at the Tongi ground from next year.

The Saad followers have expressed concerns over the order.

Maulana Abu Sayem, coordinator of the Saad followers' media team, told The Daily Star that they received a notification on February 5, stating that they will not be allowed to hold the Ijtema at the current venue in Tongi from next year.

PRAYER  
TIMING

FEBRUARY 6

Faaz

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN

5:30

12:45

4:15

5:52

7:15

JAMAAT

6:05

1:15

4:30

5:56

7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

### IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

#### COMPANY MATTER NO. 136 OF 2025.

#### IN THE MATTER OF:

*Doe Empex Ltd.*, represented by its share Holder Director, Shamim Akter Hossain son of Abdul Majid Mollick and Mother: Sufia Begu, having its registered Office at Plot No. B-34,C-35, BSCIC Industrial Area, Gomra, Moulavibazar, Sylhet and Present Address at Akram Tower (8<sup>th</sup> floor),15/5, Bijoy Nagar, Dhaka-1000. ....Petitioner.

.....VERSUS.....

The Registrar,Joint Stock Companies and Firms, TCB Bhaban (6<sup>th</sup> Floor), 1,Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215 and another. ....Respondent.

Notice is hereby given for all concerned that an application under Section 81(1) and 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was moved before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh, High Court Division, Dhaka for and on behalf of the Petitioner for confirmation of the "Annual General Meeting" for the year of 2021, 2022 and 2023 for condoning the delay for holding the said meeting upon Preliminary hearing on **28.01.2025** Hon'ble Mr. Justice **Ahmed Sohail** was pleased to admit the same. If any one is interested to oppose the said application, he may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through authorized advocate on or before the aforesaid date fixed for appearance.

Copy of the application will be available to the undersigned on payment of necessary charges.

Humayun Kabir Sikder,  
Advocate,  
Bangladesh Supreme Court,  
Room No.6045 (5<sup>th</sup> floor),  
Suharwardi Bhaban,  
Shahbag, Dhaka.  
Cell:01716-185126.





Rowers race towards the finish line in a thrilling boat competition held as part of the Youth Festival 2024. Teams from various places in and around Khulna participated, while thousands of spectators gathered to witness the event. The photo was taken on the Rupsha River in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Forced to resign, school principal suffers stroke

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Moulvibazar

Shanwar Mohammad Rezaul Karim, principal of Shahjahanpur High School in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila, suffered a stroke on Tuesday while allegedly being forced to resign.

According to reports, a group of youths entered his office that morning, accusing him of embezzling funds from 2020 to 2024.

As they pressured him to sign a resignation letter, he lost consciousness and collapsed. A video of the incident has since gone viral on social media.

He was rushed to a hospital and remains under treatment, said family.

Following the incident, the Upazila Secondary Teachers and Employees Association held a meeting yesterday, demanding authorities identify

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Strike halts fuel supply in Rajshahi, Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Fuel lifting and distribution from the depots in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions have come to a complete halt as fuel pump owners and workers went on a strike yesterday morning.

The Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers, Distributors, Agents, and Petrol Pump Owners' Association's Rajshahi unit called the strike starting from 8:00am yesterday, protesting an eviction drive conducted by the Roads and Highways Department without prior notice.

In a statement, the association's president Md Mizanur Rahman Ratan and general secretary Md Abdul Jalil condemned the RHD's eviction drive as "unjust and unreasonable", and urged fuel pump owners in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions to suspend operations.

Abdul Jalil also alleged that the RHD in Bogura excavated drainage channels in front of Hamim Filling Station and Anika Filling Station in Adamdighi, causing damage to the pumps.

The strike led to disruption of vehicular movement across 16 districts, including eight under the Rangpur division.

Motorcyclists, in particular, struggled as petrol and octane became largely unavailable, with many stations

remaining shut down completely since morning.

Arman Hossain, a motorcyclist in Dinajpur, said, "I have been searching for petrol since morning, but every pump is closed in Dinajpur. This is a major problem for daily commuters like me. If I don't get fuel soon, I will have to leave my bike and rely on public transport."

Similarly, in Rangpur, Bhupen Roy, a fuel-run three-wheeler driver, said, "Many of us depend on daily earnings from our vehicles. If the pumps remain shut, how will we survive?"

He urged authorities to resolve the issue immediately.

According to reports, RHD in Naogaon conducted an eviction drive on both sides of 59km Naogaon-Joypurhat road between February 2 and 4 without any prior notice, causing widespread concern and dissatisfaction among the fuel pump owners.

Contacted, Md Hamidul Haque, executive engineer of RHD in Naogaon, however, said the eviction drive was carried out by RHD in Bogura.

Authorities from both the Naogaon and Bogura RHD claimed that the eviction was part of a regular drive and was conducted in accordance with a prior public notice published in newspapers.

## ATTACK ON HASINA'S TRAIN

# HC acquits all 47 accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday scrapped the trial court judgement and acquitted all the 47 accused in the case filed over the attack on a train carrying the then opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina, in Ishwardi 30 years ago.

The trial court had earlier sentenced nine people to death, 25 to life imprisonment, and 13 accused to 10 years' jail sentence in the case.

The HC also asked the jail authorities to immediately release the accused from prison.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam and Justice Md Hamidur Rahman delivered the verdict after holding hearing on the death references (trial court documents for confirmation of death

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

## BISWA IJTEMA

# 2nd session of first phase ends with Akheri Munajat

STAR REPORT

The second session of the first phase of Biswa Ijtema concluded yesterday through "Akheri Munajat" seeking blessings for peace and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah.

The final prayer was conducted by Maulana Zubair Ahmed, the top leader of Shura-e-Nezam, Bangladesh.

The prayer began at 12:10pm and ended around 12:25pm.

Around 3,050 devotees from 76 countries participated in the first phase of the six-day Ijtema.

Its first session ended on February 2 and the second

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## ICT CASE ACCUSED

# Requested Interpol to issue red notices

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many individuals facing arrest warrants from the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) are outside Bangladesh, prompting authorities to seek Interpol's assistance in issuing red notices, said Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

He made the remarks after visiting the River Police Headquarters in Dhaka.

"The tribunal has issued arrest warrants, and we are apprehending those within the country. However, many key accused are abroad," he said.

"Warrants have been issued; we are making efforts to bring them back... as we have an extradition treaty with our neighbouring country," he said.

Inspector General of Police Baharul Alam, present during the visit, said, "We have requested Interpol to issue red notices for some suspects in ICT cases. The process is ongoing, and once issued, the host country's police will be morally obligated to act."

On frequent road blockades disrupting public life, the home adviser expressed frustration, urging protesters to use proper channels.

"The media should highlight these disruptions. When authorities take action, accusations arise that police are reverting to past practices," he said.

Jahangir Alam noted that law enforcement is undergoing reforms for a more humane approach. "Police are more accountable than they were 15 years ago. Training programs are being revised to improve citizen interactions, though systemic changes take time," he said.

During his visit, he acknowledged the River Police's manpower shortages and lack of necessary vessels despite its formation in 2013.

"Bangladesh is a riverine country, making the River Police's role crucial. However, resource constraints limit their effectiveness," he said, stressing the need for stronger measures against rising crimes on waterways.



## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Shariatpur

☎ -০২-৪৭৮৮১৫৩১৪

E-mail: [eesar@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:eesar@rhd.gov.bd)

স্মারক নং: ৩৫.০১.৮৬৬৯.৪৬৮.০৭.০০২.২৪-০২৩

তারিখ: ০৫-০২-২০২৫

## Corrigendum

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the below works.

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work/package description	Last selling date & time	Opening date & time	Remarks
1056506	e-GP-01/EE/SRD/2024-2025 Development WP-01	Re-Construction & New Construction of Flexible Pavement at 23rd (P) to 31st (P) km (Ch. 22+045 to 30+590m), 03 Nos. Bus-Bay, 02 Nos. Inter Section and Construction of 17 Nos. R.C.C Box Culvert at Gap No-23/1, 23/2, 23/3, 24/1, 24/2, 25/1, 25/2, 26/1, 27/1, 27/2, 27/3, 28/1, 28/2, 28/3, 29/1, 29/2 & 31/1 Extension of 07 Nos. R.C.C Box Culvert at Gap No-25/1, 26/1, 27/1, 28/1, 28/2, 28/3 & 30/1 & Earthwork with Protective work of Shariatpur-(Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur Ferry Ghat Road (R-860) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year 2023-2024. (WP-01)	26-02-2025 16:00am	27-02-2025 12:00pm	e-GP Only online tender
1056619	e-GP-02/EE/SRD/2024-2025 Development WP-02	Re-Construction & New Construction of Flexible Pavement at 31st (P) to 40th (P) km (Ch. 30+590 to 39+215m), 03 Nos. Bus-Bay and Construction of 14 Nos R.C.C Box Culvert at Gap No-31/1, 32/1, 33/1, 35/1, 35/2, 36/1, 37/1, 37/2, 38/1, 38/2, 38/3, 38/4, 38/5 & 39/1 Earthwork with Protective work of Shariatpur-(Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur Ferry Ghat Road (R-860) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year 2023-2024. (WP-02).	26-02-2025 16:00am	27-02-2025 12:30pm	e-GP Only online tender
1056693	e-GP 03/EE/SRD/2024-2025 Development WP-03	New Construction & Side Widening of Flexible Pavement From Ch. 39+215Km to 47+220Km, 02 Nos. Bus-Bay and Construction of 03 Nos. R.C.C Box Culvert at Gap No-40/1, 41/1, 42/1 & 04 Nos. R.C.C Box Culvert Extension and 01 No. 44.02m PC Girder Bridge with others incidental work and Protective work of Shariatpur-(Monohar Bazar)-Ibrahimpur Ferry Ghat Road (R-860) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year 2023-2024. (WP-03).	26-02-2025 16:00am	27-02-2025 13:00pm	e-GP Only online tender

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

85.01.25

Sheikh Nabil Hossain

ID No. 602255

Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD

Road Division, Shariatpur

GD-370

## GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RHD

NAOGAON ROAD DIVISION, NAOGAON.

☎ +88-02588881693, E-mail: [rhdnaogaon@gmail.com](mailto:rhdnaogaon@gmail.com)/[eenao@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:eenao@rhd.gov.bd)

Memo No. NRD. 35.01.6400.449.07.001.25-358

Dated: 04-02-2025

## e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders is invited in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the below works.

Tender Name & ID No.	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time	Remarks
1069776, 35/eGP/PMP-BC/NRD/2024-2025	Construction of 22.68 (1X21.34)m Long R.C.C Girder Bridge at 45th(p) km(p) (Ch: 44+650) of Manda-Baghmara-Atrai Road (Z-6856) under Naogaon Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	03-03-2025 at 17:00 PM	04-03-2025 at 12:00 PM	Only online tender.

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches up to above Mentioned date & time.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd))

(Md. Rashedul Haque)

ID No. 602322

Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Naogaon.

GD-361

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)

Plot # E-5/A, Agargaon Administrative Area,  
Sher-E- Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.

Web: [www.btrc.gov.bd](http://www.btrc.gov.bd)

### Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)

For the Selection of Consulting / Audit Firm

For Conducting Operator's Procedure and Systems Audit of Teletalk Bangladesh Limited

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
1.	Ministry/Division		Posts and Telecommunications Division, Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology	
2.	Agency		Autonomous Bodies and Other Institutions	
3.	Name of Procuring Entity		Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)	
4.	Procuring Entity Code		Not applicable	
5.	Procuring Entity District		Dhaka	
6.	Expression of Interest for Selection of		Consulting/ Audit Firm (Lump - sum)	
7.	EOI Ref. No.		14.32.0000.400.01.006.24.180	
8.	Date		02/02/2025	
KEY INFORMATION				
9.	Procurement Method		Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10.	Budget and Source of funds		Revenue Budget (Own Funds)	
11.	Development Partner (if applicable)		Not applicable	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
12.	Project/Programme Code (if applicable)		Not applicable	
13.	Project/Programme Name (if applicable)		Not applicable	
14.	EOI Closing Date and time		23/02/2025 (12.00 P.M) Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT+6)	
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT				
15.	Brief Description of the Assignment		Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (hereinafter referred to as the 'Commission' or 'BTRC') intends to appoint a Consulting/an Audit Firm for conducting Operator's Procedure and Systems Audit of Teletalk Bangladesh Limited. The scope includes performing the auditing tasks in the following categories:  1) Regulatory and Legal Matters 2) Technical Matters 3) Financial Matters 4) Any Other Matters  The details of the scope of work are mentioned in the <u>Terms of References (TOR)</u> .	
16.	Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity Required		The lead firm (Audit Firm) must be a competent ICAB member with sufficient and high-scale auditing experience. Additionally, the lead firm and/or any of its Joint Venture, Consortium or Association (JVCA) partners must have sufficient technical and information system auditing experience in multinational telecom/IT firms. The lead firm is encouraged to associate with foreign audit firm(s) with sufficient information system (technical) audit experience in multinational environment. The details of the experience, resource and delivery required are mentioned in the TOR. Detailed TOR and other relevant information are available at WEB LINK.	
17.	Other Details (if applicable)		The formation, operation and obligation of JVCA shall be governed by the Rule-54 of Public Procurement Rules-2008 of Bangladesh.	
18.	Association with foreign firms is		Encouraged	
	Ref. No.	Phasing of Services	Location	Indicative Start Date (Month/Year)
19.	-	Not applicable	Dhaka	06/2025
20.	Name of the Official Inviting EOI		M. A. Taleb Hossain	
21.	Designation of the Official Inviting EOI		Director, Administration Division, BTRC	
22.	Address of the Official Inviting EOI		Plot # E-5/A, Agargaon Administration Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.	
23.	Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI		Tel: ++8802222217116 Email: diradmin@btrc.gov.bd/taleb.hossain@btrc.gov.bd	
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all EOIs.				

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all EOIs.

(M. A. Taleb Hossain)  
Director

Administration Division, BTRC

Phone: - +880222217116

e-mail: [diradmin@btrc.gov.bd](mailto:diradmin@btrc.gov.bd)

GD-363



## First Mro-language film set to premiere at Matribhasha Chalachitra Utsab

The first Mro-language film, *Klo-bong Mla (Girikusum)*, will be screened at the *Matribhasha Chalachitra Utsab 2025* on February 23 in Dhaka. Directed by Pradip Ghosh, the 18 minute film portrays the struggles within familial bonds of the Mro community family. Produced by Dr Mong Usha Thoyai, a prominent advocate for indigenous representation in cinema, the film is a significant cultural milestone. Based on a Mro folk tale, the script was written by renowned Mro-language author Younguang Mro, who also played a key role in ensuring the film's authenticity. Shot in Bandarban, the film involved 15 members of the Mro community, marking their acting debut.



## A busy Valentine's for KEYA PAYEL

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Having gained popularity through several renowned television dramas, Keya Payel is now knee-deep in work, shooting for Valentine's Day and Eid projects.

At the time of speaking, Keya was filming an Eid drama directed by Rafat Majumder Rinku. She will star opposite Farhan Ahmed Jovan in the drama. "I am incredibly busy shooting for projects. However, I relish the opportunity to work consistently."

She continued, "Who isn't excited to see special Eid dramas? I am too, and that is why I am taking this work very seriously."

Speaking more on production surrounding special occasions, the young actress stated, "From the very beginning, I've given priority to special dramas, because the production quality is usually very high on those, added to the larger audience."

Payel is also busy filming for *Baji*, which will air on Valentine's Day. Filmed in Kishoreganj, it tells a story set in a small town with a 'large' canvas narrative. The rising star further mentioned that she shot for this drama for seven days.

Another drama, *Prothom Prothom Prem*, will air on the same day. This drama was filmed at Rajshahi University campus, and on the banks of the Padma River. She stars opposite Tawsif Mahbub in this project.

"The night lights of Rajshahi city are incredibly beautiful. I really enjoyed shooting there," said an excited Keya Payel, for whom Tawsif is an exemplary actor.

## Marvel unveils 'The Fantastic Four: First Steps' teaser



Marvel Entertainment has released the official teaser of *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*, offering a glimpse of the superhero team's debut in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

The teaser opens inside the Baxter Building, featuring Pedro Pascal as Mister Fantastic and Vanessa Kirby as Susan Storm. It introduces key characters, including Joseph Quinn as the Human Torch and Ebon Moss-Bachrach as the Thing, alongside supporting cast members Ralph Ineson, Julia Garner, and John Malkovich. A glimpse of the villain, Galactus, especially has fans excited.

The film is scheduled for release on July 25. Netizens have persistently praised the character designs and comic accuracy of Marvel's upcoming film.

## Together We Can stages 'Humane Dog Squad' to promote animal empathy

Theatre group Together We Can recently staged their silent performance, *Humane Dog Squad*, at Rangpur Shilpakala Academy during the Rangpur Padatik Theatre Festival. Previously performed in Dhaka, the act promotes empathy towards animals through artistic expression.

Actress and activist Quazi Nawshaba Ahmed, founder of Together We Can, shared the event's success on social media, expressing gratitude for Rangpur's support. She reaffirmed the group's mission to spread awareness of animal



welfare across the country.

With a longstanding commitment to humane treatment of animals, Together We Can aims to reach a

wider audience with more performances, encouraging society to reflect on its relationship with animals and fostering a culture of compassion.

## Juliette Binoche elected president of 2025 Cannes jury

French actor Juliette Binoche has been appointed president of the International Jury for the 78th Cannes Film Festival, set for May 13 to 24, 2025. Binoche, who won the Best Actress Award at Cannes in 2010, succeeds *Barbie* director Greta Gerwig. Reflecting on her Cannes journey, she expressed gratitude for the role, calling it both a privilege and a responsibility.

Binoche's acclaimed career includes collaborations with directors like Michael Haneke, David Cronenberg, and Krzysztof Kieslowski. Notably, she has won Best Actress at Cannes, Venice, and Berlin film festivals, a rare achievement. Recently, she starred as Coco Chanel in Apple TV's *The New Look* and took on a lead role in *The Return*.



# NEWS

## Language Movement in Rangpur

FROM PAGE 12  
On March 11, 1948, following a central programme, students in Rangpur organised a strike, held a rally, boycotted classes, and marched in a procession.

Students from district-level schools also joined the procession and gathered at the Rangpur Public Library grounds for a meeting.

On March 24, when Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Urdu as the state language, students from Carmichael College staged protests similar to those in Dhaka.

The college principal Debendra Prasad Ghosh played a crucial role in the movement in support of the students' demands for Bangla to be the official language. However, under pressure from the administration, he voluntarily resigned from his position and moved to India.

Syed Shahabuddin, a non-Bangalee, then became the new principal. From the very start, he took a tough stance against the movement.

Student leader Nurul Islam was even expelled from the college for his involvement in the protests.

According to Ahmad Rafiq's "Bhasha Andolon Teknaf Theke Tentulia", in 1951, under the leadership of Mili Chowdhury, a student procession marched to the Rangpur District Court to demand that Bangla be the state language.

At one point, Mili stepped out of the procession, went up to the court bench, took a pen from the district

judge, and asked, "Why are you writing in English?" She then immediately broke the pen and returned to the procession.

At that time, Rangpur's intelligence officers suggested the district judge file a case. He, however, chose to advise the police against using harsh measures on the students. He recommended waiting for the situation to calm down.



Rangpur Central Shaheed Minar

Among those conspiring to undermine the Language Movement in Rangpur were leaders of the pro-Pakistan Muslim League – Masur Rahman Jadu Mia, Bodiruddin, and Mohammad Waris. They organised a public meeting, but when East Pakistan Chief Minister Nurul Amin and Muslim League leader Shah Aziz attempted to speak, they were forced to leave due to protests from the crowd.

Protests also erupted on the streets of Rangpur during the 1952 Language Movement. At the beginning of February, an all party struggle committee was formed with

Abul Hossain as the convener. Other members included Monikrishna Sena, Jitendranath Dutta, Shankar Basu, Shibend Mukhopadhyay, Darajuddin Mondal, and Moyeruddin, among others.

As soon as the news of police shooting and killing students on February 21 reached Rangpur, students and the public organised a protest march.

Slogans such as "We want justice for student killings; we want Bangla as the state language" were chanted.

In his book "Bhasha Andolon Teknaf Theke Tentulia", Ahmad Rafiq writes that at this time, three students were injured in East Pakistan Rifles baton charge and police arrested several student leaders and a professor from Carmichael College.

The language movement spread beyond the city to the remote areas of Rangpur as well. Members of the local Communist Party and its affiliate organisations played a key role in spreading the movement across the district.

On March 8, in an effort to assist protesting students, police arrested Jamir Uddin, a teacher of the Bangla department, and Golam Azam, a professor of the political science department of Police College.

At the same time, police issued a warrant for the arrest of Kalim Uddin Mondal from the philosophy department. However, he was able to evade arrest as he was at his village at the time.

## New political party by end of this month

FROM PAGE 12  
posses five key questions to the public, including: Which three actions do you think would change the country? What personal issues do you expect the new party to address? What do you expect from the new party? What should the party be named? What should its symbol be?

"We are not just launching a party – we are launching a movement where every citizen, from a garment worker to a university professor, has a say in shaping the policies that affect their lives," said Nasiruddin.

Nasiruddin, convener of Nagorik Committee, said they aim to reach more than 1 lakh people offline from all walks of life, including rickshaw pullers, shopkeepers, labourers, house helps, teachers, and sweepers, to gather

their inputs on the new party's future direction.

In response to a journalist's query, he said the government has no involvement in forming this political party.

He alleged that some political parties might be afraid of the formation of their new party and are attempting to mislead the people.

"We don't want to engage in such irrational arguments. The concepts of a 'King's Party' or a government-backed party come from those who may have experience with such practices."

Responding to a question, Hasnat stated, "After August 5, Sheikh Hasina and the Chhatra League are no longer relevant. If they were, they wouldn't have had to flee on August 5."

Addressing the media, he said,

"Even now, we see hesitation in naming the real perpetrators. Some media still refer to her as a former prime minister, but is she just a former leader, or is she the 'butcher of this motherland'?"

He said, "She killed 2,000 people to cling on to power. Yet, the media does not call her a fascist killer. If you fail to do so, you are still upholding the same pro-Awami media structure."

"If any media outlet broadcasts Hasina's speech, it will be assumed that they are still facilitating her agenda and have taken a stance against the aspirations of the people."

Akhtar Hossain, member secretary of Nagorik Committee, Samantha Sharmin, its spokesperson, and other key members of the two platforms were present at the briefing.

## Govt aiming

FROM PAGE 12  
yesterday after an inter-ministerial meeting.

Zero load shedding does not mean there will be uninterrupted power supply over the country, he said.

"We will not cut power in Ramadan due to the fuel shortage."

But there may be power cuts due to other technical issues in transmission or distribution points.

After Ramadan, there may be load shedding of up to 1,400MW, he said.

According to the PDB's plan, gas supply to power plants will increase to 1,200 million cubic feet a day (mmcf) during summer.

With that amount of gas, the PDB will be able to produce up to 6,200MW of electricity against the capacity of 11,677MW of the gas-fired power plant.

LNG imports will be ramped up in the summer months: at least four cargoes will be brought in a month, up from the usual 2-3 cargoes, he said.

"We don't want to reduce power supply to irrigation but we want to reduce the 'cooling load', which is about one-third the total power demand."

The air coolers consume about 6,000MW of total power generation during summer.

"We can't tell people not to turn on their air conditioners. But we can ask them not to keep their AC temperature at 18 degrees but at 25-26 degrees. We will engage Imams of mosques, business leaders and shop owners in this regard."

## Accept reports

FROM PAGE 2  
Addressing the occasion Prof Yunus said, "We have many bitter experiences of harassment, humiliation and insult. We have experience of forgetting about our demands and rights."

He said it is a matter of hope that the reform reports submitted would pave the way of making the people free and get back their rights.

The chief adviser said the reports of the reform commissions would be shared with citizens, political parties and civil society members so that they all can reach a consensus to this end.

The reports are the remarkable documents in the history of Bangladesh, he said expressing gratitude to the chairmen of the commissions and all members for the efforts to prepare the report.

The chief adviser observed that the reports of the commission will contribute to the whole world, not only to Bangladesh.

Addressing the nation on September 11, 2024, the chief adviser announced the formation of six commissions.

If the cooling load can be reduced, the power demand would be reduced by another 2,000MW to 3,000MW, he said.

Recently, the PDB asked for \$4 billion from the finance division to keep the power supply stable during summer and the finance division has assured of providing the amount, Kabir said.

"They are overburdened too – all the ministries sought money from them. But we discussed it with them and the higher-ups of banks as well. We can arrange the money so that the power producers do not shut the power supply."

The finance division will be prioritising funds to fertiliser, food, power and energy sectors accordingly.

If the load shedding worsens, the meeting discussed that a few steps could be taken such as instructing the use of irrigation pumps between 11:00pm and 9:00am, bringing forward the closing time of shopping centres, reducing the use of excessive lighting and motivating people to rein in on excessive power usage.

The power purchase agreement of the Matarbari coal-fired power plant will be finalised, he said.

The price of electricity may be Tk 8.40 per unit, much cheaper than the existing power plants like Payra, Rampal and Adani.

"We will set the benchmark pricing for gas-fired power plants too and then start renegotiating [with others] to bring down the tariffs. We don't want to take any arbitrary decisions."

## Former army officers

FROM PAGE 12  
The name of the party is yet to be decided, but will be unveiled by March. The party-in-process had an initial meeting in Tower 71 near ECB Chattar in Dhaka on February 2.

The concept note they have prepared says they aim to place some honest, educated, and patriotic people in parliament. The candidates will be selected from the grassroots.

"We are aiming to get 30 or 40 seats in the next election," said Kamal, who has business in South Sudan and Uganda.

He added that they will not include any controversial or corrupt person in the party, nor would they take any donations from any questionable sources.

"If needed, we will collect funds from ourselves.... Our ideology is Bangladeshi nationalism," he said.

According to the concept note, the party will seek to end dynastic and oligarchy-governed politics.

It will also seek to promote a diplomatic policy that will establish and protect friendly relations with true allies; and promote a uniform education system for all, and make Bangla the mandatory medium.

Its short-term goal is to get as many seats as it can, but in 10 years it wants to lead the government, the concept note says.

## BCS recruitment should be done

FROM PAGE 12  
and Environment.

The six exams will be evaluated on a scale of 0-100.

There will be six more optional papers from the disciplines of arts, social sciences, applied sciences, commerce, and law.

No more than two papers can be selected from a discipline.

Currently, the candidates for general cadres take 900 mark written tests on six subjects.

The ones applying for both a general cadre and a specialised cadre take 1,100 mark tests.

The reform commission suggests updating the examinations so that the candidates' problem-solving skills can be assessed.

Candidates scoring less than 60 in a 100 mark exam will be disqualified.

For the sake of transparency, the results will be published with a detailed breakdown.

A candidate who fails the exams three times will not be allowed to take the examinations again.



DELHI ASSEMBLY POLLS  
Nearly 60pc  
voter turnout  
recorded

Exit polls show BJP ahead  
of AAP in terms of total  
number of seats

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Nearly 60 percent turnout was recorded yesterday in the high-stakes assembly elections in Delhi, where the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by Arvind Kejriwal is eyeing a third straight term in power in a triangular contest against the main challengers, BJP and Congress.

An estimated 1.56 million people were eligible to exercise their franchise to decide fate of 699 candidates spread across 70 constituencies. The counting of votes is scheduled for Saturday.

Two separate exit polls showed BJP ahead of AAP in terms of the total number of seats. While ABP-Matrive exit poll projects BJP to get 39-45 seats against AAP's tally of 32 to 37, the JVC exit poll gives 39-45 seats to BJP and 22-31 to AAP.

USAID places  
global staff  
on leave

AFP, Washington

The US government's giant humanitarian agency USAID on Tuesday announced it was placing its staff in the United States and around the world on administrative leave as it moved to recall employees from overseas postings.

The agency said in a statement on its website – which reappeared Tuesday after going dark over the weekend – that the staff leave will begin shortly before midnight on February 7. The administrative leave will hit “all USAID direct hire personnel... with the exception of designated personnel responsible for mission-critical functions, core leadership and specially designated programs.”



Ukrainian firefighters attempt to extinguish a fire in a building following a Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine, yesterday. The Kremlin yesterday dismissed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky saying he was ready for direct talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin as “empty words”.

PHOTO: AFP

UN has to ‘get its act  
together’: Trump

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump criticised the United Nations on Tuesday as “not being well run,” although he said it has potential, while he stopped US engagement with the UN Human Rights Council, extended a halt to funding for the Palestinian relief agency UNRWA and ordered a review of the UN cultural agency Unesco.

“It’s got great potential and based on the potential we’ll continue to go along with it, but they got to get their act together,” Trump told reporters. “It’s not being well run, to be honest and they’re not doing the job.”

“A lot of these conflicts that we’re working

on should be settled, or at least we should have some help in settling them. We never seem to get help. That should be the primary purpose of the United Nations,” Trump said.

The UN pushed back against Trump’s remarks. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres “has worked tirelessly to implement many reforms ... to increase efficiency and innovation,” UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

“US support for the United Nations has saved countless lives and advanced global security,” Dujarric said. “The Secretary-General looks forward to continuing his productive relationship with President Trump ... in today’s turbulent world.”



GOVT DEVICES

Australia bans  
DeepSeek AI  
programme

AFP, Sydney

Australia has banned DeepSeek from all government devices on the advice of security agencies, a top official said yesterday, citing privacy and malware risks posed by China’s breakout AI program.

“This is an action the government has taken on the advice of security agencies.... We don’t want to expose government systems to these applications,” said government cyber security envoy Andrew Charlton.

M23, Rwanda troops  
launch fresh east DR  
Congo offensive

AFP, Bukavu

The M23 and Rwandan forces yesterday launched a new offensive in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, seizing a mining town in South Kivu province, as they resumed their advance towards the regional capital Bukavu.

Just days after capturing the strategic city of Goma in neighbouring North Kivu, the M23 armed group had declared a unilateral humanitarian “ceasefire” to take effect from Tuesday.

The anti-government group announced at the same time it also had “no intention of taking control of Bukavu or other localities”.

But intense clashes broke out at dawn on Wednesday between the M23 with its Rwandan allies and Congolese armed forces, security and humanitarian sources told AFP.

The M23 fighters and Rwandan forces seized the mining town of Nyabibwe.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার				
সংগ্রহ বিভাগ, খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর				
খাদ্য ভবন, ১৬, আবদুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা				
বৈদেশিক উৎস থেকে আমদানিকৃত/আমদানিভিত্য ৫০,০০০ (±৫%) (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) মে, টন নন-বাসমতি সিদ্ধ চাল ক্রয়ের স্থানীয় (জাতীয়) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (প্যাকেজ-০১/২০২৪-২৫)				
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়		
২	এজেন্সী	খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর		
৩	সম্ভাব্যক সত্তার নাম	পরিচালক, (সংগ্রহ)		
৪	সম্ভাব্যক সত্তার কোড	প্রযোজ্য নয়।		
৫	সম্ভাব্যক সত্তার জেলা	ঢাকা।		
৬	যে পণ্যের জন্য দরপত্র	বৈদেশিক উৎস থেকে আমদানিকৃত/আমদানিভিত্য ৫০,০০০ (±৫%) (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) মে, টন নন-বাসমতি সিদ্ধ চাল ক্রয়ের স্থানীয় (জাতীয়) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি।		
৭	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং	১৩.০১.০০০০.০৯১.৪৭.১৮.২০২৫.১১৭		
৮	তারিখ	০৫-০২-২০২৫ইং		
৯	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (জাতীয়)		
১০	বাজেট ও তহবিল সূত্র	রাজস্ব বাজেট, বাংলাদেশ সরকার।		
১১	দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	০১/২০২৪-২৫		
১২	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম	বৈদেশিক উৎস থেকে আমদানিকৃত/আমদানিভিত্য ৫০,০০০ (±৫%) (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) মে, টন নন-বাসমতি সিদ্ধ চাল ক্রয়ের স্থানীয় (জাতীয়) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি।		
১৩	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৬/০২/২০২৫		
১৪	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ	১৯/০২/২০২৫		
১৫	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	২০/০২/২০২৫		বেলা ১:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৬	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২০/০২/২০২৫		বেলা ২:০০ ঘটিকা।
১৭	দরপত্রের মেয়াদকাল	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ হইতে ৬০ (ষাট) দিন দরপত্রের মেয়াদ বলবৎ থাকিবে।		
১৮	দরপত্র বিক্রয়কারী দপ্তরের নাম	(১) পরিচালক, সংগ্রহের দপ্তর, কক্ষ নং-৫০১, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, ১৬, আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা।		
১৯	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী দপ্তরের নাম	(১) পরিচালক, সংগ্রহের দপ্তর, কক্ষ নং-৫০১, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, ১৬, আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা। (২) মুদ্র-সচিব (সং), খাদ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ের অফিস, কক্ষ নং-১১৪ (২য় তলা), বিজিৎ নং-৪, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা/সচিবালয় গেট।		
২০	দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকারী দপ্তরের নাম	পরিচালক, সংগ্রহ এর কক্ষ, কক্ষ নং-৫০১, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, খাদ্য ভবন, খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, ১৬, আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা।		
২১	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	চাল আমদানিকারক; দরপত্র সিডিউলের শর্তাবলী অনুযায়ী।		
২২	পণ্যের সর্বাধিক বর্ণনা	পণ্যের নাম ঃ বৈদেশিক উৎস থেকে আমদানিকৃত নন-বাসমতি সিদ্ধ চাল, পণ্যের বিনির্দেশঃ		
		Quality parameters	Specification	Margin of tolerance with claim for deviation beyond specification
		Moisture (maximum)	13.5%	14.0%
		Broken grain (Maximum)	5.0%	6.0%
		Foreign matter (Maximum)	0.3%	0.5%
		Dead, damaged & discoloured grains	3% in total	4.0%
		Radio-Activity (maximum)	50 Bq/Kg of 137Cs/134Cs	50 Bq/Kg of 137Cs/134Cs
				above 50 Bq/Kg of 137Cs/134Cs
২৩	আদ্যুৎপেক্ষ সেবার বিবরণ ঃ	পণ্য সরবরাহের সময় দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পরবর্তী তারিখের আমদানি সকেট (Import Document) কাসমপ্লিশন দাখিল করতে হবে। দরদাতাকে নিজ ব্যবস্থাপনায় ও দায়িত্বে ক্রয় কেন্দ্রে পণ্য সৌধিগে দিতে হবে।		
২৪	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	৫,০০০/- টাকা প্রতি সেট। দরদাতা প্যাকেজের অন্তর্গত এক বা একাধিক লটের জন্য দর দিতে পারবেন। কার্ভান রশিদ মূলে বিক্রয়যোগ্য।		
২৫	সি-টেন্ডার মিটিংয়ের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	তারিখ ঃ ১৩/০২/২০২৫ইং, সময় ঃ সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকায় স্থান ঃ অতিরিক্ত পরিচালক, সংগ্রহ এর কক্ষ, কক্ষ নং-৫১৭, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, খাদ্য ভবন, খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, ১৬, আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা।		
২৬	লট নং	কেন্দ্রের নাম	জেলার নাম	চালের পরিমাণ (মেট্রিক টন)
১	১	তেজগাঁও সিএসডি	ঢাকা	১০০০০ (±৫%)
২	২	সাহাবাদ সিএসডি	বগুড়া	১০০০০ (±৫%)
৩	৩	নারায়ণগঞ্জ সিএসডি	নারায়ণগঞ্জ	৫০০০ (±৫%)
৪	৪	ময়মনসিংহ সিএসডি	ময়মনসিংহ	৫০০০ (±৫%)
৫	৫	চাঁদপুর সিএসডি	চাঁদপুর	৫০০০ (±৫%)
৬	৬	মুন্সিগঞ্জ সিএসডি	পাবনা	৫০০০ (±৫%)
৭	৭	খুলনা সিএসডি	খুলনা	৫০০০ (±৫%)
৮	৮	মহেশখোলা সিএসডি	খুলনা	৫০০০ (±৫%)
		মোট		৫০০০০ (±৫%)
সম্ভাব্যক সত্তার প্রতিনিধির বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ঃ				
২৭	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	মোঃ সনিরুজ্জামান		
২৮	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	পরিচালক (সংগ্রহ)		
২৯	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	পরিচালক (সংগ্রহ), খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, কক্ষ নং- ৫০১, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, ১৬, আব্দুল গণি রোড, ঢাকা।		
৩০	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার সাথে যোগাযোগের তথ্যাবলী	ফোন ৮৮-০২-৪১০৫০১৭৮ ৮৮-০২-৪১০৫০১৭৭		
৩১	সম্ভাব্যক সত্তা যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করিবার ক্ষমতা সরেফল করেন।	ফ্যাক্স dproc@dgfood.gov.bd www.dgfood.gov.bd		
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পরিচালক, সংগ্রহ বিভাগ খাদ্য অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা ফোন-০২-৪১০৫০১৭৮				

Hasina must be brought

FROM PAGE 12

If justice is not done, the murderers and abductors will be further emboldened, he said.

Rahman has raised concerns over whether the continued emphasis on reforms is being used as a pretext to delay the establishment of a democratically elected government that reflects the people's will.

“We notice that some people are prolonging all kinds of processes by harping on reforms. Today, we have to see whether this is a conspiracy. If this process is prolonged on the plea of reforms, the country's problems will multiply.”

The people's government must be established to address various existing problems like commodity price spiral, unemployment, poor education system and poor law and order situation – in line with the public's expectation.

“The sooner we can establish a people's government, the sooner we will be able to lead Bangladesh on the path to prosperity. Our movement will continue until that democracy is established,” he said.

Over at another event in Dhaka, BNP senior leader Salahuddin Ahmed said the Awami League can no longer participate in politics under its existing name as the people of Bangladesh have rejected its “fascist” rule through the mass uprising in July last year, reports UNB.

“We want to make it clear that the people of Bangladesh have rejected the fascist politics of the Awami League through the uprising of students and the masses, driving them out of the country – we are now raising the demand that the Awami League can no longer do politics in Bangladesh in the name of Awami League.”

Salahuddin's comments came yesterday at an event styled “National Unity and Current Reality” organised by Anchalik Sampadak Parishad at the Jatiya Press Club.

The judicial process should

determine whether the AL should be allowed to engage in politics in Bangladesh or not.

“On the one hand, you want to ban the Awami League. Yet, on the other hand, you won't prosecute them, and further, you use the police to obstruct their political programmes. These are contradictions – and it is not right.”

The BNP supports the government's decision not to allow the AL to carry out political activities on the streets.

“But how long will you stop them on the streets using the police? You say you don't want the Awami League in the election and that the party should not be allowed to do politics, but what steps are you taking? Are you taking any legal action against them? No.”

Under Article 47 of the Constitution, the government can prosecute the AL as a political organisation and initiate legal proceedings against it for mass killings and crimes against humanity, Salahuddin said.

Accordingly, the country's people and the BNP demanded an amendment to the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) Act.

“This government had taken steps to amend the ordinance and law, but suddenly, at a meeting of the advisory council, it was decided that this cannot be done. Why?”

The government can promulgate an ordinance if necessary for the trial of the AL.

Some suggest that the ICT may give an observation regarding the AL's politics during the trial proceedings against the party leaders.

“That would be a very weak observation. Even then, you will have to issue an administrative order and make laws based on that observation. But you can take that step now through an ordinance.”

The BNP leader said he unsure whether the judicial reform commission formed by the government will make any recommendations in this regard.

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তর

প্রোগ্রাম অন এগ্রিকালচারাল এ্যান্ড রুরাল ট্রান্সফরমেশন ফর নিউট্রিশন,  
এন্ট্রিপ্রিনিউরশিপ এ্যান্ড রেজিলিয়েন্স ইন বাংলাদেশ (পার্টনার-ডিএম অংগ)  
দ্বীপনগর, গাবতলী, মিরপুর, ঢাকা।

সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা আগ্রহী কৃষি উদ্যোক্তাদের জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, কৃষি মন্ত্রণালয়ের আওতাধীন কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়নাধীন পার্টনার (ডিএম অংগ) প্রোগ্রামের আওতায় ২০,০০০ জন (১২,০০০ নারী এবং ৮,০০০ তরুণ) তরুণ এবং নারী উদ্যোক্তা উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্যে কমপক্ষে ৩০টি কৃষিপণ্য প্রক্রিয়াজাতকারী এবং অন্যান্য সেবা প্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানে দেশের ৬৪টি জেলার নির্বাচিত ২০৮টি উপজেলার কৃষি ব্যবসায়ের আগ্রহী সম্ভাব্য উদ্যোক্তাদের সরকারি অর্থায়নে সম্পূর্ণ বিনামূল্যে ১২ দিনব্যাপি অন-দ্যা-জব (হাতে কলমে) প্রশিক্ষণ ২০২৪-২৫ অর্থবছর হতে শুরু হয়েছে যা জুন, ২০২৮ পর্যন্ত চলমান থাকবে। উদ্যোক্তা বাছাই গাইডলাইন ২০২৪ অনুসরণপূর্বক সকল জেলা কৃষি বিপণন কার্যালয়ে খাদ্য প্রক্রিয়াকরণ, খাদ্য বহির্ভূত পণ্য প্রক্রিয়াকরণ (পটজাত পণ্য), দুগ্ধজাত পণ্য প্রক্রিয়াকরণ, মাশরুম, মসলা জাতীয় পণ্য প্রক্রিয়াকরণ এবং কৃষি উপকরণ (নাসারী, ভার্মি কম্পোস্ট, সার, বাজ, কীটনাশক), কৃষি যন্ত্রপাতি মেকানিজম এবং কৃষি যন্ত্রপাতি ব্যবসায় আগ্রহী তরুণ এবং নারী উদ্যোক্তার আবেদন গ্রহণ-বাছাই প্রক্রিয়া চলমান রয়েছে। আগ্রহী উদ্যোক্তাগণকে অবশ্যই ন্যূনতম ৫ম শ্রেণি পাস হতে হবে এবং বয়সসীমা তরুণ যুবকের ক্ষেত্রে ১৮-৩৫ বছর এবং নারীদের ক্ষেত্রে ১৮-৫০ বছর হতে হবে। অন-দ্যা-জব প্রশিক্ষণে আগ্রহী সম্ভাব্য তরুণ এবং নারী উদ্যোক্তাগণ শুধুমাত্র কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তরের জেলা কার্যালয় থেকে আবেদন ফর্ম বিনামূল্যে সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। আবেদন ফর্ম এবং প্রশিক্ষণে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন ফি পরিশোধ করতে হবে না। আবেদন ফর্ম অথবা প্রশিক্ষণে অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার আর্থিক লেনদেন না করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

(ড. মুহাম্মদ আবদুল্লাহ আল-ফারুক)  
(উপসচিব)

এজেন্সি প্রোগ্রাম ডিরেক্টর  
পার্টনার (ডিএম অংগ) প্রোগ্রাম  
কৃষি বিপণন অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা।



## Reform dialogue must deliver consensus

### Talks with political parties scheduled in mid-February

It's reassuring to know that the interim government is moving ahead as per the timeline set for the reform drive, with talks with political parties slated to begin in mid-February. According to Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, the date of the first meeting will be fixed in consultation with the parties and stakeholders of the July uprising. Six reform commissions have already submitted their reports, while the remaining ones are expected to submit theirs by this month. Dialogue on their recommendations forms the second—and perhaps most crucial—phase of the drive, as it will determine not just the reforms that can eventually be pursued but also the consensus necessary for their continuation post-elections.

A timely and proper completion of this process has grown in significance of late. This is partly due to the unfortunate debate that has surfaced around “elections versus reforms”—exposing growing distrust between political parties like the BNP and student movement leaders—and partly due to continued public suffering caused by the suspended stage in which the nation finds itself, pending reforms in key sectors. Expediting consensus-building on the reform proposals is, therefore, paramount. However, this will be anything but easy, as evidenced by recent comments and gestures by key stakeholders.

The BNP, for example, has announced a plan to launch “a movement” aimed at “correcting some government mistakes” and “clearing the way” for an elected political government. Earlier, its secretary general suggested that if the interim government loses its neutrality in conducting elections, it should be replaced by a “neutral government”—a comment that drew fierce reactions from student representatives in the government. Such confrontational exchanges weaken the government's position as a mediator in the reform drive. They also raise questions about whether the stakeholders can see eye to eye on the more radical reform proposals surrounding the constitution, electoral structure, judiciary, and public administration.

This is where Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, also head of the National Consensus Commission, must play a critical role. At the heart of the reform discussions will be the challenge of reconciling differing priorities. He and other commission members must therefore show extreme foresight and patience to navigate the political minefield and convince stakeholders to move beyond entrenched positions. They must also ensure that the process does not lose legitimacy or stall under pressure, which would result in further political instability, setting back both the reform agenda and the prospect of a smooth democratic transition. Given the stakes, the participating parties must also approach the upcoming dialogue with a spirit of compromise.

The fact is, while the next election is crucial in restoring people's right to vote, it is the one after that—or the one next—that will be the true test of the current reform process. After all, so many people did not die in the uprising just for a temporary democratic transition. As well as free elections, it is equally important that all other impending reforms are faithfully implemented in the long run. For that, consensus is vital, so all stakeholders must put their differences aside and engage in the dialogue with sincerity.

## Simplify the process of compensation

### Why are July victims, martyrs' families being made to suffer?

It is disheartening that many individuals injured in the July uprising—and the families of those martyred—are still waiting for their promised compensation that remains entangled in bureaucratic red tape. With Tk 5 lakh set for martyrs' families and Tk 1 lakh for the wounded, the one-time financial assistance should have been easier to access, yet the process of getting compensation continues to throw up challenges.

It begins with securing a seal from a BCS doctor or hospital director on the application form, which must be accompanied by hospital tickets or discharge certificates bearing an MBBS doctor's seal. Additionally, applicants must provide photographs of their injuries as well as a bKash number linked to their national ID for payment. These documents must then be entered into the Management Information System of a government hospital, upazila health complex, or the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). Thereafter, the civil surgeon and deputy commissioner's office must verify the patient's permanent address before the documents can be submitted to the July Shaheed Smrity Foundation via post, email, WhatsApp, or in person.

However, inefficiencies in government offices and hospitals—coupled with bureaucratic hurdles—have turned this process into an exhausting ordeal. Reportedly, families are often forced to make multiple trips across cities, spending large sums of money. For those living outside Dhaka, the situation gets even worse, with many reporting that they had to visit the July foundation seven or eight times due to missing documents or the unavailability of officials. Numerous additional complications have also been reported, making the compensation claim process not just difficult but also deeply humiliating.

Officials say that the strict procedures are necessary to prevent fraud and other irregularities. But the inefficiency of the system is undeniable, and they cannot shirk responsibility for it. It is unacceptable that after enduring immense suffering during the uprising, victims and their families must now face further hardship simply to receive the support they deserve.

Under these circumstances, we must reiterate our call for the authorities to simplify and expedite the compensation process. If the current workforce engaged in this process is inadequate, it must be expanded immediately. The authorities must also investigate why deserving recipients are facing such difficulties and take immediate corrective measures.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Accession of Elizabeth II

On this day in 1952, Elizabeth II ascended the throne of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, following the death of her father, King George VI. She became the longest-reigning monarch in British history in 2015.



# Is the pendulum swinging too fast between left, centre and right?



**Zillur Rahman**  
is executive director at the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) and a television talk show host. His X handle is @zillur.

ZILLUR RAHMAN

One of the biggest accomplishments for Bangladesh after the July uprising was the victory of the women's national football team at SAFF Women's Championship. Bangladesh has been the defending champion at the SAFF championship since 2022. Therefore, one can imagine the irony when international news emerged of religious fundamentalists protesting and vandalising venues to cancel women's football matches in the country, deeming them “un-Islamic.” This kind of cruel juxtaposition serves as a microcosm of the broader culture war in Bangladesh.

Perhaps the biggest mistake one can make when analysing Bangladeshi culture is to assume that it is homogenous across the country. But the fact is it is a diverse nation. From region to region, there is profound variation in language, food, festivities, lifestyle, and values. Even in Dhaka, there is often a world of difference between those who travel by expressways and those who rely on local buses.

Before the fall of the Awami League regime, three cohesive elements in the culture were common among the majority of Bangladesh's disparate groups: the political identity of Bangladeshi nationalism, cultural values of Islam, and a general disdain for the mafia-style fascism that defined Bangladeshi politics—made worse by more than a decade of Awami League's kleptocratic rule. With the fall of a tyrant and the perception that the unifying cause has been accomplished, our differences have once again surfaced, inviting debate and reconciliation—something impossible under autocratic rule.

Only in a democracy can people with diverse value systems band together and find representation for their voices and cultures. However, democracy is not a perfect system, and one of its greatest flaws is what scholars term the “tyranny of the majority.”

To rule based on numbers rather than rightness or excellence is the essence of the tyranny of the majority, a concept explored by influential 19th century scholars such as John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville. In simpler terms, democracy, if unchecked, can lead to the oppression of minorities by the majority, prioritising sheer numbers over truth, justice or merit. For this reason, in a proper democracy, counter-majoritarian institutions must exist to limit the majority's ability to



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

repress minorities and stifle political competition. That is why democratic constitutions include a bill of rights and supermajority clauses, designed to counterbalance the tyranny of the majority. Needless to say, such institutions in Bangladesh are not functioning as intended.

Now, the mass uprising that led to the previous regime's ouster in August has opened the floodgates of a culture war. This is not necessarily a bad thing. All civilisations and societies undergo internal cultural conflicts. In modern terms, ideological groupings within the culture war tend to align along variations of the left-right political spectrum. Political scientists define the left wing as being characterised

the religious right wing has carried a permanent stain. However, this has now shifted as the cultural left carries its own albatross around the neck in the form of the ousted Awami League. Right-wing populists have begun branding the entire left wing as enablers of fascism. Rhetorical attacks on progressive institutions—accusing them of supporting Awami League authoritarianism and being pro-India—are now central to the right-wing strategy for power.

Furthermore, the right wing has cultivated various institutions with distinct identities over time. Whether through charity foundations or political entities, these organisations represent different facets of the

# Renewed US-China trade war is about tech supremacy too



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

SAYEED AHMED

The year was 1993. Chinese cargo ship Yinhe, sailing across the Indian Ocean, found its GPS equipment jammed, which depended on the US global satellite navigation system. Soon enough, US Navy ships appeared and wanted to search the vessel. Why? Because Washington suspected it was carrying chemical weapon materials for Iran. After a humiliating three-week standoff with food and water running out, the ship was searched, but no such cargo was found. Deeply humiliated, Beijing resolved that it must have its homegrown technology so such an incident would never be repeated. The outcome is BeiDou—better, bigger, and more advanced than any other satellite navigation system available today.

A similar spirit drives China's ambitions in the satellite broadband race, as ventures like Qianfan (also known as Thousand Sails or G60 Starlink), Guowang, and Geespace (developed by the automotive giant Geely) challenge the dominance of SpaceX's Starlink.

Launched in 2019, Starlink began with the ambitious goal of providing high-speed, low-latency internet coverage to even the most remote corners of the globe. It has steadily grown into a formidable network, with nearly 7,000 satellites already in orbit, and plans to deploy thousands more. It has proven to be of strategic value by providing crucial internet services in the Ukraine war. When terrestrial internet infrastructure was disrupted, Starlink terminals enabled Ukrainian

forces to maintain communication, coordinate operations, and gather intelligence. This has highlighted the potential of satellite broadband networks to provide resilient communication channels in conflict zones, a capability that China undoubtedly recognises and seeks to achieve.

China's determination to become a major player in this field is evident. Qianfan, for instance, aims to create a constellation of 13,000 satellites, while Guowang has similar aspirations with its “national-level satellite internet constellation” plan. Geespace focuses on providing services to both the Chinese domestic market and international clients, with a constellation designed to support autonomous driving and other data-intensive applications. These ventures could provide high-speed internet access to underserved and remote areas of China and the world, bridging the digital divide and fostering economic growth. They could also be crucial to China's military and strategic ambitions, providing secure and reliable communications for its armed forces and intelligence agencies. This competition also encompasses the development of satellite jamming technology. Both players are investing in capabilities to disrupt each other's satellite networks while protecting their own.

Despite their ambitions and resources, Chinese ventures face significant technological hurdles. Developing and deploying a

massive satellite constellation requires advanced technology in areas like satellite manufacturing, launch capabilities, and network management. The United States Space Command (USSC) reported that Qianfan scattered hundreds of space debris while launching 18 satellites in August last year.

The escalating trade war between

**The US's restriction on tech exports to China, specifically designed to hinder the latter's progress in the space race, has continued since Trump's first presidency, followed by Biden's and then Trump's. The crucial role of artificial intelligence adds another layer of complexity to this race, and companies like DeepSeek, at the forefront of AI innovation in China, are poised to become key players.**

Washington and Beijing has made this technological competition more complex. The US's restriction on tech exports to China, specifically designed to hinder the latter's progress in the space race, has continued since Trump's first presidency, followed by Biden's and then Trump's. The crucial role of artificial intelligence adds another layer of complexity to this race, and companies like DeepSeek, at the forefront of AI innovation in China, are poised to become key players. It also raises question about the effectiveness of US's tech sanctions

right wing. Now, they have gained prominence, elevated by their support for the student-led mass uprising and by the severe lack of political representation from the left. There is no inherent issue with a culture war as long as the playing field is level. But is that really the case? The playing field has never been level in Bangladesh. It certainly was not level before, as the right wing was brutally suppressed through state-sponsored violence, extrajudicial killings, and enforced disappearances.

The state is still reeling from the uprising, and the police and civil administration have yet to fully regain control. Various extreme right-wing groups are exploiting the situation to advance their own agendas—whether through religiously motivated attacks on Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the vandalism of *mazars* (shrines), or the recent attack on the venue of a women's football match. It is now evident that within the right wing, there exist violent elements willing to resort to undemocratic means to achieve their goals. The question remains: are the rising stars of Bangladesh's new right wing aware that within their ranks lie elements of misogyny, racism, and bigotry that no text can justify? Will the democrats ever manage to rally and recover to defend their own values?

Going forward, there needs to be a broad understanding among the people of Bangladesh that one's values and beliefs do not necessarily make them bad. There will always be differences of opinion among people, and such differences need to be resolved in a democratic manner under the purview of the law. Neither the left nor the right of the country's political identity spectrum should be considered evil, or as the “enemy of the people”—as some populists are trying to peddle. That is not to say that people cannot make mistakes. Historically, people have made grave mistakes—mistakes that have cost lives and livelihoods. But if we are to accomplish truly inclusive democracy, then we need to own up to our mistakes first. Both the right and left need to surgically cut out the evil parts in themselves before coming to the discussion table. Only then can there be proper debate and reconciliation.

on China: are they spurring China's innovations? Their sophisticated AI algorithms can analyse vast amounts of satellite imagery, enabling enhanced navigation, environmental monitoring, and even national security applications.

Innovative Chinese researchers and companies possess several advantages in the satellite broadband race, including robust government support and substantial financial and policy backing for their ventures. Additionally, China benefits from lower labour and manufacturing costs than the US, providing a significant economic edge. The country also boasts the world's largest internet market, offering a vast potential customer base. Furthermore, China's satellite broadband ambitions align with its military and strategic goals, enabling secure communication for its armed forces and intelligence agencies.

However, China must also overcome several crucial technological barriers, such as designing and manufacturing fast and efficient two-nanometre semiconductors, which Taiwan's TSMC already produces with Washington's active support (in comparison, China's SMIC is making five-nanometre chips for Huawei.) Washington's export controls on sensitive technology could hinder Beijing's progress. Still, such situations often stimulate innovations, as the development of DeepSeek without NVIDIA's most advanced chips has shown (it has recently been questioned, though.)

The implications of this competition are far-reaching. It's not just a commercial contest between companies; it's a strategic rivalry between two superpowers vying for technological supremacy. The outcome will shape the future of communication, global commerce and access to information, and redefine the balance of power in the 21st century.



# ‘Israel killed 75 of my relatives in a single strike’

**Ibrahim Saleem Kishko, a Palestinian student at Dhaka Medical College, carries with him not just the dreams of healing others, but also the weight of witnessing repeated cycles of violence in his homeland. In a conversation with Mahiya Tabassum of The Daily Star, Ibrahim offers a window into the reality of life in Gaza—a reality marked by both unimaginable loss and unwavering hope.**

**How has the recent war impacted you and your family?**

The shock of October 7 is still fresh in my mind. I was in Bangladesh; I was scrolling through social media when news of the bombings broke. Everything happened with devastating speed. Though I've witnessed many conflicts before, the scale of this one was unprecedented. The first few days were a blur of anxiety and mania; I couldn't eat or sleep, consumed by fear for my family back home—my parents, two sisters, and three brothers.

By October 30, my immediate family managed to evacuate, but fate had other plans for many of my relatives who remained in the city. That day, Israeli forces bombed our area, killing 75 of my relatives in a single strike. The death toll in my family has now exceeded 100. Among them was my uncle, who inspired me to pursue medicine.

When I speak of these losses, I know they might seem like mere numbers to others. But each number represents a person who helped raise me, someone I saw every day growing up. The thought of returning home to nothing but rubble is overwhelming and heart-wrenching. I haven't yet confronted this reality in person, and I'm unsure how I'll cope when I do.

Our family home was among the first casualties, reduced to ashes in the initial bombings in October 2023. Now, like most Gazans, we have no house to return to. The true extent of our losses—both material and emotional—will only become apparent after this genocide ends. During the conflict, people function on survival instincts only. It's only in the aftermath, when they try to return home, that the full weight of the trauma begins to surface.

**Were your loved ones displaced during the war?**

Our home was in Gaza City. When the Israeli military began their bombing, my family and relatives were forced to scatter, seeking safety wherever they could find it. The strikes were indiscriminate—no area was spared. Initially, my family fled to Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip,

where a stranger opened their home to us. This act of kindness exemplifies the unity we Palestinians have among us. However, safety proved elusive. As Khan Younis came under attack, they fled to Rafah. When Rafah too became a target, they had to return to Khan Younis. In total, they were forced to relocate six or seven times since October 2023.

**How did you cope with the uncertainty and fear during the height of the conflict?**

Having lived through previous conflicts, I knew what to expect: the power cuts, the internet blackouts. But knowing what was coming didn't make it easier. My biggest worry was about being able to contact my family. During those initial days, words would fail to describe the emotional turmoil I experienced. I was trying to study for my exams, but concentration was impossible. Sleep and appetite vanished. My mind was constantly with my family in Gaza, wondering about their fate, what would happen to them. For two to three months, I had no contact with them at all. Even after that, communication was sporadic, dependent on brief windows when they could access the internet or phone networks.

**How did they manage to access basic necessities like food, water, shelter or medical care during the time of displacement?**

At first, Gaza had some food reserves. But as Israel tightened its blockade and restricted aid, the situation became desperate. People began rationing their meals—first to twice daily, then once, and eventually going days without solid food. Parents would go hungry so their children could eat something. It was especially heartbreaking because young children couldn't understand why there was no food—they would just cry from hunger. The situation in northern Gaza was particularly severe, where no supplies were allowed in at all. People started dying from malnutrition and starvation.

**How did the international humanitarian efforts reach your**

**community during the conflict?**

The humanitarian response was severely restricted. Israel's allowance of aid was both inadequate and inconsistent. To understand the scale of deprivation, consider this: normally, Gaza would receive 60-70 aid trucks daily. Under the blockade, they limited the number of trucks and even then, many of these were bombed before reaching their destinations. We were receiving perhaps one-tenth of what Gaza actually needed. Money became

you go to bed not knowing if you'll wake up the next morning. This isn't just my experience; it's the reality for every family in Gaza.

For instance, my mother and sisters would prepare themselves for bed each night by ensuring they were properly covered, just in case they didn't survive the night. The thought process was, "If we die in a bombing and are pulled from the rubble, at least we'll be covered." Can you imagine living this way? Trying to sleep while drones and warplanes

**the war?**

The initial international response showed promise. Media coverage was extensive, and there seemed to be genuine concern about Gaza's situation from both Arab nations and the US. However, this narrative soon shifted, particularly in Western media, where Israel's actions were justified even as they continued to kill Palestinians. They managed to portray themselves as "victims" while being the aggressors.

As time passed, the world's attention waned. Israel actively targeted anyone attempting to document their atrocities in Gaza. While global citizens initially showed interest in helping, many gradually became desensitised to our suffering. The massacre became normalised. This indifference was deeply painful for me.

There's an unbridgeable gap between witnessing or experiencing a war and hearing about it. If you haven't experienced a war, you can never understand the true gravity of it. No amount of description can convey the feeling of losing a sibling or watching your community be destroyed. What's been shown in the media represents less than five percent of the actual suffering in Gaza. I've lived through many conflicts, but this one has been unprecedented in both scale and intensity. Nothing in Gaza's history compares to it.

**What does the recent ceasefire mean for you and your community?**

The ceasefire brings a glimmer of hope that the bloodshed might finally stop. Despite everything we've endured, this possibility brings joy. As a Gazan, it means I might be able to return home. It's a step towards bringing some peace into the lives of Palestinians, and we hope it marks the end of our displacement and oppression.

The impact on my family was immediate: when the ceasefire was announced, I saw them smile for the first time in one and a half years. They were finally able to eat a proper meal. The resilience of our people is remarkable. Despite the massive destruction, where every Gazan

lost their home, people are already returning and beginning the process of rebuilding. They're cleaning bombed-out buildings, trying to make even a single room habitable. This is what freedom means to us: the ability to rebuild our lives, to survive under any conditions. We're hopeful the city's reconstruction will progress quickly.

**Do you feel the ceasefire addresses the root causes of the conflict?**

The ceasefire alone won't achieve Palestinian liberation—it will require much more effort. However, it's crucial as a first step to stop the bloodshed. I remain sceptical of Israel's commitment, given their history. Over the past 80 years, negotiations between Israel and Palestine have consistently resulted in Israel imposing their conditions without honouring their commitments. Based on this pattern, I find it difficult to trust their promises.

**Despite everything, what gives you hope and strength to keep going?**

As Palestinians, resilience is in our nature. We adapt to whatever circumstances we face. Yes, there is change, pain, and suffering, but the people of Gaza always find a way to rebuild their lives. We've endured genocide and generations of oppression, yet we persist.

Our faith sustains us through these challenges. We draw strength from knowing we're fighting for justice. When you're on the right side of history, fighting for a just cause, you never truly lose—you either die with dignity or achieve victory. We refuse to let anyone strip us of our dignity. Look at how differently Gazans and Israelis react to the ceasefire; we celebrate with joy despite our massive losses, while they mourn. This contrast speaks volumes about who stands on the right side of history. When you're fighting for justice, even in the face of devastating odds, you find your hope and confidence to move forward.

**This is an abridged version of the interview. For the full interview, please visit our website.**

## Breathing in the apocalypse

### Dhaka's descent into the smog age



**H. M. Nazmul Alam**  
is lecturer at the Department of English and Modern Languages of International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT). He can be reached at nazmulalam.rijoim@gmail.com.

**H. M. NAZMUL ALAM**

Once upon a time, in a city that might resemble Dhaka (but we'll never tell), the air was so thick with dust and smoke that birds forgot how to fly. Instead, they wheezed their way from branch to branch like asthmatic opera singers. Here, the citizens, armed with little more than apathy and makeshift masks, engaged in a strange dance of denial while their beloved metropolises ascended to the throne of "World's Unhealthiest Air"—an accolade, no doubt, worthy of being inscribed on smog-covered billboards.

In this dystopian drama, the Air Quality Index (AQI) routinely surpasses 200 and frequently ventures into the hazardous 300+ range. Need proof? Let's look at February 2025, Dhaka's own "Season of Smog" (a phrase Dickens might have coined, had he lived here). On February 4, Dhaka topped the list of the world's most polluted cities with an AQI score of 251 by 8:31am. Iraq's Baghdad, Kyrgyzstan's Bishkek and Democratic Republic of the Congo's Kinshasa occupied the second, third, and fourth spots on the list, respectively. This comes after February 3, when Dhaka claimed the top spot with an AQI score of 243. Even on February 2, the city managed the first place with an AQI of 374.

If TS Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" were rewritten for

Dhaka, it might open this way: "Let us go then, you and I, where the smog hangs heavy in the sky." But unlike Eliot's wistful melancholy, Dhaka's fog—a sinister blend of PM2.5, PM10, and shattered dreams—doesn't bother with poetry. It claws at throats, coats lungs, and leaves a metallic taste of despair.

Take, for instance, the city's infamous brick kilns. They're the Darth Vaders in Dhaka's air saga—breathing heavy, lethal fumes into the atmosphere. Despite years of governmental "mandates" (a word here meaning "polite suggestions ignored by all"), these kilns continue to operate with all the stealth of a marching band. Then again, if the kilns are the main villains, Dhaka's vehicles are the bumbling sidekicks. Picture a scene straight out of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, with the city streets overrun by decrepit buses belching black plumes of despair and rickshaws navigating a post-apocalyptic maze of honking chaos. Unlike the sleek, chrome vehicles of *Mad Max*, these are rusting tin cans that seem to run on pure spite.

Dhaka boasts over 1.6 million registered vehicles, many of which operate without proper emission control. Studies show vehicular emissions have major contribution in the city's total air pollution. Singapore, a city once plagued by

vehicular chaos, solved its problem with strict emissions standards and congestion pricing. Dhaka, on the other hand, seems to operate on the principle of "Let's see how much worse it can get." Why ban old buses when you can keep them as mobile history exhibits?

Then there's the construction industry, Dhaka's answer to a live-action reenactment of *The Great Gatsby*. Just as Jay Gatsby's extravagant parties masked his inner emptiness, Dhaka's relentless construction boom masks an underlying neglect of urban planning. The result? A city that grows taller but breathes shallower. Policies are drafted, but enforcement is a ghost that haunts bureaucratic corridors, much like Banquo's ghost in *Macbeth*. Consider the recurring promises to plant trees, introduce electric vehicles, or modernise industries. These vows are like Frodo's journey in *The Lord of the Rings*—long, arduous, and seemingly destined never to reach their destination. Only, instead of battling orcs, the government battles... well, themselves.

If the government is Hamlet, the citizens are the townsfolk of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. When faced with existential threats, their response is often, "It's just a bit of bad air. I've had worse." Armed with the latest TikTok filters but no actual air filters, they navigate the streets as if oblivion were a fashion statement. Even as AQI scores climb higher than the number of Dhaka's unfinished megaprojects, many remain resigned. Perhaps they've embraced Scarlett O'Hara's mantra: "I'll think about it tomorrow." But tomorrow, as we all know, never comes.

The numbers paint a grim

picture. According to the fifth edition of the State of Global Air report, air pollution was responsible for over 236,000 deaths in Bangladesh in 2021 alone. Respiratory diseases, heart conditions, and strokes are on the rise, with children and the elderly bearing the brunt. Bangladesh recorded over 19,000 deaths of children under five due to air pollution-related conditions in 2021, UNICEF reports.

What if Dhaka's air pollution crisis could inspire its own cinematic universe? Imagine a Marvel-style team-up: the Enforcers (government inspectors), the Innovators (green tech companies), and the Avengers (citizens armed with petitions and asthma inhalers). Together, they fight the ultimate villain: "the Smogster."

In the final act, Dhaka's citizens storm the streets, demanding change. Industries comply, vehicles

are upgraded, and construction sites become paragons of cleanliness. The city's skyline emerges, not as a hazy silhouette, but as a beacon of hope.

Of course, this is just a fantasy, but so was the idea of humans walking on the Moon. If Neil Armstrong could take one giant leap for mankind, surely Dhaka can take one small step towards breathable air. Let's just hope it doesn't require a spacesuit.



**Dhaka South City Corporation**  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Zone-1 (Nagar Bhaban)

**Memo No.:** egp/dscc/zone-01/14/2024-2025  
**Date:** 04/02/2025

**e-Tender Notice**

This is online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tender is invited in e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Zone-1, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

Sl. No	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of works	Publishing Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1.	1071807 WR21/Z_1/Religious_Eid_ul-Fitre/2024-25	Construction of Pandal with triaryl & awning along with other ancillary works at National Eidgah Maidan for the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitre/2025.	04/02/2025 21:00	19/02/2025 13:51	19/02/2025 17:00



**(Saiful Islam Joy)**  
Executive Engineer  
Zone-1  
Dhaka South City Corporation  
Telephone No. : 02-223388454.  
E-mail: xenzon1dscc@gmail.com

ডিএসসি/পিআরডি/২২৭/২০২৪-২০২৫



BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# REDISCOVERING READING

## How ‘Fragments of Riversong’ helped me heal

Review of the 10th anniversary edition of ‘Fragments of a Riversong’ (Nymphaea, 2024) by Farah Ghuznavi



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

It was in this context that I first read *Fragments of Riversong* (originally published by Daily Star Books, 2013). It was the first book I read after losing my father and as such holds a special place in my heart.

SARAH SHEHABUDDIN

Harvard killed my love for reading. When my advisor took me out for a celebratory dinner an hour after my doctoral defense in July 2012, I struggled to read the menu. My brain had apparently gone on strike. A month later, when I moved to Bangladesh to begin my dream job at the Asian University for Women, I still found it difficult to focus on reading anything other than what I needed for teaching. I wistfully thought of the piles of books I would carry home from the library to read as a teenager. Although I occasionally savoured books such as Maria Chaudhuri’s haunting memoir *Beloved Strangers* (Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2014) and Zia Haider Rahman’s perplexingly

brilliant *In the Light of What We Know* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), the number of books I began reading and gave up on kept growing. Had I lost my love for reading?

On April 15, 2015, my father suddenly passed away and I found myself in what seemed to be an unanticipated script for my life. My friend Seuty Sabur remarked that people often imagine grief as days and days of crying in bed, but in reality, finding the time and space to grieve is often next to impossible with the countless responsibilities—predictable and unpredictable—that compete for attention when we lose a loved one. Mentally and physically exhausted, I struggled to manage my grief and an ever-growing to-do list that came with a steep learning curve.

It was in this context that I first read *Fragments of Riversong* (originally published by Daily Star Books, 2013). It was the first book I read after losing my father and as such holds a special place in my heart. After months of struggling to focus on anything, I found myself drawn into story after story. Reading the book cover to cover gave me a much-needed sense of relief and accomplishment. For the first time in a while, I had managed to do something I wanted to do, rather than something I had to do. Last month, I was delighted to hear that Nymphaea Publication had brought out a special 10th anniversary edition of *Fragments of Riversong*.

In addition to a glowing foreword by Madhulika Liddle, the anniversary edition offers a total of 26 stories. This

includes 14 stories that were not in the original edition—two short stories and 12 “fiction bites” in a dopamine-packed flash-fiction section. One of the flash fiction pieces is a soul-soothing tribute to the author’s parents who passed away. Telling a story in under 550 words is no easy feat, and each of the flash fiction pieces manages to make you think about it long after the few minutes it takes to read it. The seven pages of praise for Ghuznavi’s writing by a diverse set of acclaimed writers are a testament to her skill and reach, and a wonderful means to highlight her significant contribution to literature.

Thankfully for me, Ghuznavi’s writing is accessible to readers who are not anywhere near the top of their reading game due to burn-out, grief, stress, or any other reason. In recent years, I have found that many friends and students struggle to find the motivation, time, and patience to read. *Fragments of Riversong* is a rewarding gateway book for those who want to discover or find their way back to the joys of reading. Amidst all the stress my addled brain has dealt with over the past few years, the (often deceptive) simplicity of Ghuznavi’s prose makes her stories enjoyable to read—with nuanced plots and messages that stay with the reader. She seems to do her best to make it as easy as possible for readers to immerse themselves in her stories without getting lost or frustrated. Stories such as “Losing Bindu” and “Escaping the Mirror” are a testament to the author’s ability to navigate even sensitive and emotionally challenging themes with enviable poise.

*Fragments of Riversong* offers readers the opportunity to meet a wide array of refreshingly unconventional characters. In addition to many inspiring girls and women, there are what we might call “aspirational” characters, for example, non-toxic brothers who strive to actually understand and support their sisters. Ghuznavi’s characters are so well developed and believable that you want to find out what they did next. Through her diverse cast of characters, she provides tremendous insight into the rich tapestry of people, interests,

and socio-political dynamics that constitute Bangladesh.

The compassion the author shows for her readers and characters infuses many of her stories as a theme. My favorite story is “Waiting”, in which a relatively simple act majestically disrupts a scene that plays out countless times across a world riddled with inequality—a scene many readers will be familiar with. It invites us to consider what would happen if, even once in a while, we defied the conditioning and calculations that stop us from helping others as much as we easily could. What struck me in some of the other stories such as “Getting There”, however, is the recognition that compassion is not always “natural.” Many of the characters choose to act with compassion and assume unexpected responsibilities only after battling their reservations and anxieties. If anything, that makes their compassion all the more meaningful.

My doctoral advisor once told me “life is what it is,” and all we can do is try our best to manage the challenges that come our way, including the unexpected ones. This is one of the strongest undercurrents in Farah Ghuznavi’s work. Her stories offer readers much-needed solidarity in a world in which life often goes off-script and we struggle to figure out how to balance our aspirations and sense of self with reality.

The anniversary edition of *Fragments of Riversong* is beautifully designed and makes for—as I can vouch from the dozen copies I gleefully bought for the purpose—an ideal gift, especially for those interested in understanding Bangladesh in all its complexity. It is available from Baatighar, Bookworm, and Rokomari. During the Ekushey Boi Mela, Nymphaea’s stall will offer the book at a discount of 25% off the cover price of BDT 660.

**Dr Sarah Shehabuddin holds a Ph.D. in Government from Harvard University. She has taught at Harvard, BRAC University, and the Asian University for Women.**

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# Murakami and the limits of an artist’s imagination

Review of Haruki Murakami’s ‘The City and Its Uncertain Walls’ (Harvill Secker, 2024) by Haruki Murakami

The new world itself seems exemplary of the isolation Murakami is intent to represent. It is self-protective, the townspeople are avoidant of harm, shielded by a large wall, and mutually uninterested in the personalities which populate their small polity.

THEODORE GRIFFIN

Haruki Murakami’s *The City and Its Uncertain Walls*, its English translation published last November, plunges the reader into a kind of metaphysical vertigo that never reaches a concluding synthesis.

It’s never particularly inspiring for literary types to tackle the unromantic issue of creation’s upper limits. Where exactly do they lie, and are all writers doomed to merely rehash a finite number of original sources of inspiration? Haruki Murakami, the much acclaimed Japanese novelist, sought to address this in the afterword of his most recent novel. A self-declared possessor of a “limited pallet of motifs”, the writer appears calmly resigned to the notion that he is destined to spin but a “limited number of stories”. Accordingly, this newest release is a reconstitution of an earlier short story Murakami had published in a Japanese literary magazine in the 1980s. The novel’s reflective tone is manifold, therefore; it is a pensive study on isolation, dreams, and young love, as well as the creative adventure of the Japanese literary titan.

The eponymous short story also served as a well of inspiration of the earlier novel, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (first published in 1985). It shares with *The City* a simple yet immersive structure. There are two worlds, separated by some form of spiritual, metaphysical barrier. The discovery of one imparts a sense of faded solidity to the other, as newer, more complex dimensions are spun into the tale. For the curious reader, it demands a kind of synthesis. As Murakami unveils yet more disjunctions from the banal,

there builds an expectative crescendo. What does all this mean? Upon which event will these two worlds be reconciled? Frustratingly, *The City and Its Uncertain Walls* provides no such release. Rather, the tale fades out into a kind of washed-out and ungratifying opaqueness.

That is not to say that the story doesn’t have its moments of startling beauty. The isolation of its protagonist, who begins the novel as a 17-year-old boy in love with a 16-year-old girl from a nearby town, permeates the novel as a kind of estrangement. It’s an estrangement from the people around him, who appear as distant, half-understood faces, but also his material reality, which the author bends and reconstructs with little protest or surprise from his characters. Murakami relates a worldview, or rather a faith in his representation of the world, through gentle gestures of description, rather than with the vulgarities of an essayist. When the 17-year-old narrator’s girlfriend disappears, he is plunged into a kind of nihilism. Living through dreams and books and making little effort to engage with his immediate world, he discovers that the girl was a mere shadow of a truer individual contained in a mysterious town placed within a second realm. After a lonely and semi-engaged life in the real world, the narrator finds himself in this strange other world, face to face with the second identity of the young girl.

The new world itself seems exemplary of the isolation Murakami is intent to represent. It is self-protective, the townspeople are avoidant of harm, shielded by a large wall, and mutually uninterested in the personalities which populate



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

their small polity. Through the unusual mechanics of this alternative town, its creatures and unique physics, Murakami imparts a sense of profundity which goes unaccounted for. While one could speculate about the meaning of the story’s furniture, it’s likely this is a dead end; it is most probably creation for creation’s sake, with a whiff of insinuation that lends the tale a sense of depth.

The two worlds are softly blended into one after the narrator quits his job in Tokyo to work as a head librarian in a small rural town in the Japanese countryside. Here, he encounters a babble of unique characters who provide a little insight into the strange occurrences, abating his lonely existence. Murakami’s

depiction of the previous librarian spins further little universes which the reader can enjoy, appearing often as small odes to eccentricity. The other townspeople, existing blinkered by incuriosity, are often those which seem the weirdest. In this respect, *The City* is a charming work.

The symbolism Murakami evokes often points towards a kind of allegorical significance. It’s unclear, without wanting to delve into a discussion on the purpose of art, whether *The City and Its Uncertain Walls* is incomplete without one. As a piece of page-turning and enjoyable literature, the book certainly delivers. Its lack of pretension, while this has brought Murakami the scathing ire of snobbish-minded critics over the

years, makes it a comfortable and convincing read. The author’s soft-spoken charm conceals his gifts as a giant of contemporary literature.

Scattered with references to high-culture, literature, both Japanese and Western, and jazz—Murakami’s great passion—the novel spells out much of the interior of the ageing writer’s mind. It is a pleasant, though often melancholy, world to inhabit. For those new to Murakami’s books, or well-seasoned devotees (he has many the world over) there is much to be gleaned from his newest novel.

**Theodore Griffin, a student of philosophy, languages, and politics, splits his time between France and Scotland.**



CHAMPIONS TROPHY

CORNER

Cummins ‘hugely unlikely’ for Australia

Australia captain Pat Cummins is “hugely unlikely” for the Champions Trophy because of injury while fellow paceman Josh Hazlewood is also a doubt, coach Andrew McDonald said Wednesday. Cummins skipped the ongoing Test tour of Sri Lanka for the birth of his second child but also has an ankle problem. The Champions Trophy in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates begins on February 19.

Saikat and 11 others to officiate

After officiating in the ICC ODI World Cup in 2023 and the T20 World Cup in 2024, Bangladeshi umpire Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid Saikat will be officiating in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy. The International Cricket Council has confirmed the match officials. A team of 12 umpires will take charge of the proceedings in the 8-team tournament to be played in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi in Pakistan and Dubai in the UAE.

Root ‘crucial’ for England: Buttler

England captain Jos Buttler on Wednesday said Joe Root will play a “crucial role” in India on his ODI return and as they build up to the Champions Trophy this month. The visitors went down 4-1 in the preceding T20 series and now face India in three ODI matches starting with Thursday’s opener in Nagpur.

*\*\*Read full stories on The Daily Star’s website*



Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto sitting adjacent to Fortune Barishal head coach Mizanur Rahman Babul, who hinted yesterday that Shanto is unlikely play a part in the Bangladesh Premier League final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Friday. An out-of-form Shanto played five matches for the defending champions in the initial phase of the tournament before being dropped from the playing eleven.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh set to get Mushtaq boost in Champions Trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

Spin-bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed is set to rejoin Bangladesh ahead of the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled to be held in Pakistan and the UAE from February 19.

A spin wizard during his playing days for Pakistan, Mushtaq had previously worked with the Tigers during last year’s T20 series against Zimbabwe, the T20 World Cup, Test series against Pakistan and South Africa, and away ODI series against Afghanistan, is expected to join the side during their short preparatory camp at home from February 8.

Both Mushtaq and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday. However, a BCB official said they are currently exploring the possibility of offering the 54-year-old a long-term contract, as the position of permanent spin-bowling coach has remained vacant since Rangana Herath’s departure in early 2024.

“His contract for 2025 is still under discussion,” BCB’s cricket operations in-charge Shahriar Nafees said.

Meanwhile, Nafees also confirmed that BCB’s lead analyst, Nasir Ahmed Nasu will be providing his service in the Champions Trophy. He added that all logistical preparations for the tournament have been completed.

“We are now just waiting for the team to fly out for the tournament on the night of the 13th [February 14],” he concluded.

Bangladesh, who are in Group A of the eight-team marquee event, will begin their campaign against India in Dubai on February 20, before facing New Zealand and Pakistan in their remaining matches on February 24 and 27, respectively, in Rawalpindi.



Shanto’s BPL form concerns Tigers more

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Fortune Barishal would not want to stop now, having already made it into the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) final, to be played in Mirpur on Friday. However, even if they trip in the final hurdle, Barishal would still have a lot to take away from the tournament.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said of Najmul Hossain Shanto, the all-format Bangladesh skipper who has found it hard to make an impact in the competition.

Shanto has featured in just five of the 13 games this season. And, with his last opportunity coming on January 16 in a game against Dhaka Capitals, chances of Shanto appearing in the all-important final look slim.

“When you break the combination, there is a chance of losing and the momentum goes away,” Barishal head coach Mizanur Rahman Babul told reporters yesterday.

However, Barishal’s fear of losing momentum is now becoming Bangladesh’s issue before a major tournament – the Champions Trophy, set to begin later this month.

Shanto’s five BPL appearances this season saw him manage just 56 runs, with 41 of those coming in a game against Rangpur Riders, at an average of just over 11. However, arguments have been laid out that the BPL and the Champions Trophy

are completely different formats.

“The two [competitions] are in different formats, one is T20 and another is a fifty-over tournament and the pattern is different. Sometimes cricketers go through a lean patch. Maybe, he [Shanto] faced some problems coming in this format. The type of cricketer Shanto is, he can make a comeback anytime. I am hoping that in the upcoming

Shanto was in the team and we played him at the beginning. Maybe he hasn’t scored runs. There are many cricketers on our side who have not played any matches. We have to see the team first and what combinations to play against which side,

Barishal head coach Mizanur Rahman Babul.

Champions Trophy, he will lead Bangladesh, and, as a batter, he will lead from the front,” Mizanur added.

Even though the matter has been downplayed by Barishal’s coach, considering Bangladesh’s chances in Champions Trophy, Shanto getting his mojo back holds the utmost importance as the leader needs to be in and among the runs in order to be able to lead from the front.

When it comes to regaining

confidence, Shanto will now have to bide his time and get his rhythm back when the Champions Trophy begins. With the Tigers set to open their campaign against India on February 20 in Dubai, it will be a steep task for Shanto to find his feet early in the tournament.

It was Barishal captain Tamim Iqbal, who said that it was unfortunate that Shanto could not be given more opportunities.

“I must say it’s unfortunate because I could not give him the chances that he deserved, and if you see my team, it is difficult to get the combination right,” Tamim told reporters on January 29.

Yesterday, Barishal coach Babul also echoed similar sentiments.

“Shanto was in the team and we played him at the beginning. Maybe he hasn’t scored runs. There are many cricketers on our side who have not played any matches. We have to see the team first and what combinations to play against which side,” Babul told reporters.

Shanto was picked from the draft despite Barishal already having Tamim, a left-handed opener in the side, alongside other regular T20 openers like Dawid Malan and Kyle Mayers.

Shanto had no say on which team pick him from the draft, but the way things have panned out for him in this BPL, the matter has turned into a major concern to the national team’s Champions Trophy prospects.

‘Either they stay or I stay’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women’s team head coach Peter Butler has sent out a clear warning yesterday to the 18 protesting women’s team players, saying there is no scope for negotiation regarding discipline in the team.

In a conversation with the media at the Bangladesh Football Federation House on Wednesday, Butler, who on Tuesday explained his side to the special committee – formed to resolve the row between the English coach and the players – cautioned that he would not compromise.

“There has been no negotiation. I have made it very clear to the [higher-ups] that there is no [scope of] negotiation. As far as I am concerned, it’s about a choice. Either they stay or I stay. Simple as that,” he said.

Eighteen players, most of them seniors, have been boycotting the national team training camp since the arrival of Butler on Tuesday last week.

The special committee held discussions with all the protesting players before sitting with the coach and is set to submit its findings to the BFF today.

On Thursday last week, the players threatened to quit if the BFF decided on keeping Butler at the helm. They put forth that the coach allegedly had misbehaved with them, created divisions in the team, and “questioned the players’ personal lives – the major reasons behind their dissent. The rift between Butler and the players first surfaced in last year’s triumphant SAFF Women’s Championship



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Bangladesh women’s football team coach Peter Butler on resolving the ongoing conflict with the players.

run during which the coach dropped several senior players from the playing eleven in a few matches.

“There are no facts, no truths... They are playing the victim card, which is nonsense. It should be stopped. It has to stop. They have got no facts, they speak complete illicit ill truths, and I will not coach certain individuals while I’m here.

“I haven’t given names. I’ve said there are a certain number of players who have refused to come to training – they are ringleaders,” the 58-year-old coach said.

“And if it’s a choice between them being here and me being here, so be it. I’m a big boy. I’ve got broad shoulders. I’m from the UK. You gotta remember, I’m from the football culture where if they performed and did things which they had been doing here, they would be upstairs, having their bags packed, they’d be frogmarched down the stairs and kicked out into the streets.

“I know this nonsense about we have won this SAFF tournament, but you know, how many girls have played overseas? They have not, because they don’t have discipline. And this is a reflection of where we are in the present time,” the former West Ham United player remarked.

‘I will try to create a performance-driven environment’

Experienced coach Mamun Ur Rashid has been appointed head coach of the Bangladesh national hockey team for April’s AHF Cup in Indonesia. A former national player (1989–2001), he previously coached the U-21 team four times and led the senior side in World Hockey League Round 2 in 2015. The 52-year-old spoke to The Daily Star’s Anisur Rahman about upcoming challenges and the activities of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF). Excerpts of the conversation are below:

**The Daily Star (DS):** You have been appointed as the national head coach through an interview, which probably happened for the first time for the local coaches. How do you see the process by the BHF ad-hoc committee?

**Mamun Ur Rashid (MR):** Past experience saw that the federation had before favoured certain coaches, and no one knew who was going to be the coach of the national team. To be honest, I liked the process, where the federation also has the desire to work with the coach. As coaches, we could never present the details of our plans regarding the team and opponents, but this time it happened during the interview.

**DS:** How challenging will it be for you on the back of no domestic competitions?

**MR:** Our senior players are talented, but we never gave them a platform in an organised manner so that they could perform well. I will be trying to bring transparency, with no grouping or misunderstanding among the players,

because I saw before that the coaches took the sides of some players openly, which created discrimination among the players. I want to make a balanced environment so that everyone can play from their hearts. I will try to create a performance-driven environment.

**DS:** Bangladesh usually become champions in the AHF Cup, but they dwell in sixth or seventh place in the Asia Cup and Asian Games. What are the reasons behind this contrasting standing?

**MR:** The main reason is that the players are not given the proper preparation or training after the AHF Cup. We feel complacent after becoming AHF Cup champions, but we could think differently – that we will fight in the Asia Cup for better results instead of focusing solely on the AHF Cup.

I think we should start the preparation camp after the AHF Cup

and send the players overseas to play more matches because the players won’t progress or develop through camp-based training alone.

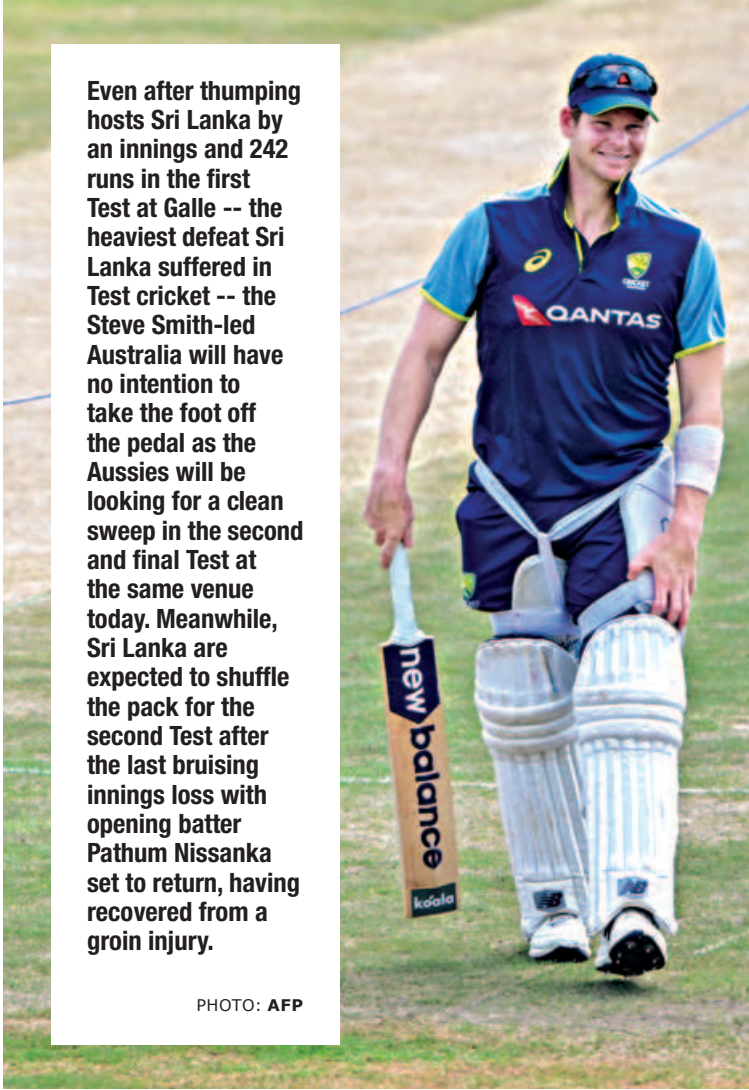
**DS:** Is there any importance in having domestic competitions to develop the players?

**MR:** It has been a bad option to try to develop the players solely through training camps. If the premier league and franchise-based league continue, the players will benefit financially and develop a greater interest in hockey.

**DS:** Experienced player Rasel Mahmud Jimmy was kept out of the Cooper test to be held on February 20. What’s your take on that?

**MR:** I don’t want to make any comments on it because I was instructed yesterday [Tuesday] not to speak to the media about the matter.

**DS:** How do you evaluate the activities



Even after thumping hosts Sri Lanka by an innings and 242 runs in the first Test at Galle -- the heaviest defeat Sri Lanka suffered in Test cricket -- the Steve Smith-led Australia will have no intention to take the foot off the pedal as the Aussies will be looking for a clean sweep in the second and final Test at the same venue today. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka are expected to shuffle the pack for the second Test after the last bruising innings loss with opening batter Pathum Nissanka set to return, having recovered from a groin injury.

PHOTO: AFP



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# Hasina must be brought to justice at any cost

Says Tarique Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the “fugitive dictator” must be brought to justice at any cost for the extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances over the past 17 years and the casualties during the July uprising.

“Today, after the sacrifices of thousands of people, we managed to free Bangladesh from tyranny,” he said, without taking any names.

Thousands of people were victims of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, while tens of thousands of people were injured and thousands were crippled.

“The dictator must be held accountable for this as per the laws of this land. The fugitive dictator must be brought to justice at any cost.”

Tarique’s comment came at a programme arranged at Saber Pilot High School field of Songazi in Feni to hand over a new house on his behalf to the family of Sonagazi Upazila’s slain Jubo Dal leader Mohammad Masud, who was shot dead in crossfire on June 25, 2016. He joined the event virtually from London, where he has been based since 2008.

“We must be united in our demand for one thing: the fugitive dictator must be brought to justice as per the laws of this land. The dictator cannot be spared.”

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5



Dredgers, survey, support, and utility vessels rusting away on the Shitalakkhya near Hajiganj Ferry Ghat in Narayanganj. Some of them are about to sink and some have been beached. Several teens were seen hanging around on the vessels. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



## AMAR EKUSHEY-6

This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the 1952 Language Movement. Drawing on research based on various published books, this 21-part series tells the story of the historic struggle for our mother tongue.

## Language Movement in Rangpur

AHMAD ISTIAK

The flames of the Language Movement spread across Rangpur since 1948.

According to “Bhasha Andolon Kosh-Volume I” by M Abdul Aleem, the movement in the district had its roots at Carmichael College.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

# BCS recruitment should be done in 18 months

Reform body proposes completing preliminary, written tests in a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BCS recruitment process should be completed within 18 months, recommends the Public Administration Reform Commission.

These 18 months will cover the time span between call for applications and final recruitment.

In its report submitted to the chief adviser yesterday, the reform commission also recommended that the Bangladesh Civil Service preliminary and written tests be done in 12 months.

The other processes, including the recruitment, should take another six months.

The circular or call for applications should be published by the second week of January and the successful candidates should join the work July 1 the following year.

Currently, the procedures take almost four years.

Terming the current process excessively lengthy, the report says the recruitment needs to be simplified.

After the publication of the circular in January, the preliminary tests should be held in the first week of April, the results published in the first week of May, the written tests in the second half of June, the results of those published in December, the viva-voce in January and February, and the final results in the third week of April.

After health screening and police certification, a gazette for appointment should be published in June, which will allow the candidates to join work on July 1. Their foundation training will be held in the first week of August, according to the proposal.

The written tests will be on six compulsory subjects: Bangla essay; English essay; English Composition and Precise; Bangladesh Constitution, History, Culture and Tradition; International and Current Affairs, General Science and Technology; and Social Science, Geography

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



## The Aga Khan, leader of the Ismaili Muslims, passes away

AFP, Paris

The Aga Khan, Imam of the Ismaili Muslims and head of a major development aid foundation, died Tuesday in Lisbon at the age of 88, his foundation announced.

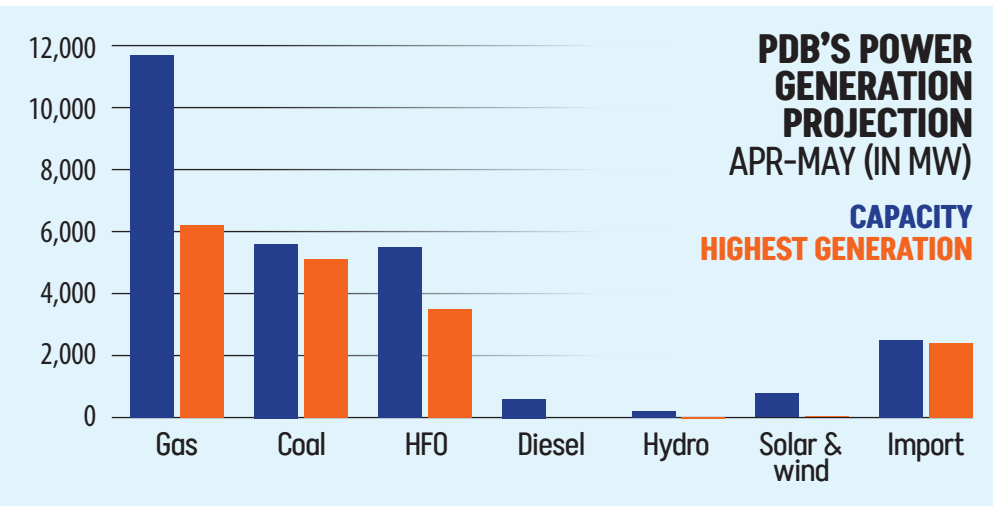
He was the founder and president of the Aga Khan Development Network, which employs 96,000 people and finances development programmes particularly in Asia and Africa.

“His Highness Prince Karim Al-Hussaini, Aga Khan IV, 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims and direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

# Govt aiming for record power generation this summer

Zero load shedding during Ramadan: energy adviser



ASIFUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) has projected the highest electricity demand during the summer months would be 18,000 megawatts (MW), while the highest production target is 17,260MW.

That means the country may face at least 740MW of load shedding. In 2024, the highest demand was projected at 17,800MW while the highest generation was 16,477MW.

However, the government said they are aiming for zero load shedding during Ramadan, when the highest power demand is projected at 15,700MW.

“We are trying for zero load shedding during Ramadan and load shedding with a small amount in the summer monsoon,” said Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, adviser to the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources, at a briefing at Bidyut Bhaban

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Former army officers move to float new political party

ZYMA ISLAM

Some former army officials are planning to bring forth a political party in March under the coordination of Brig Gen (ret'd) Md Shamim Kamal.

A good number of retired army officers, including lieutenant generals, major generals and brigadier generals, as well as some former BNP MPs, and also independent lawmakers who contested the 2024 election have already come together to this end, Shamim told The Daily Star.

“In our recruitment process, we are targeting individuals who would be able to lead a constituency,” said Kamal, son of Mojbibur Rahman, a seven-time Jatiya Party MP from Lalmonirhat-2.

The move, he claimed, has the support of the private university students, many of whom feel they have been sidelined post-August 5 despite having played a major role in the July uprising.

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## 3 journos attacked by ‘BNP men’ at SC premises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three journalists were injured in an attack allegedly by BNP activists at the Supreme Court premises yesterday.

Javed Akhtar (ATN News), AKM Rafiqul Islam Hasan Javed (NTV), and Azizul Islam Pannu (Deepto TV) were covering the verdict in a case related to the 1994 train attack on deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina in Pabna’s Ishwardi. A large number of BNP leaders and activists, including BNP Chairperson’s Adviser Habibur Rahman Habib, were also present.

An argument between a young man and the journalists escalated into a scuffle, leading BNP activists to physically assault them. Witnesses saw the journalists being punched and kicked before BNP leaders Kayser Kamal and Shamsur Rahman

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Chittagong Kings’ Arafat Sunny runs for joy as Aliss Al Islam watches his shot reach the boundary off the last ball of the innings to clinch a thrilling two-wicket victory against Khulna Tigers in the second qualifier of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, setting up a final clash against defending champions Fortune Barishal.

PHOTO: STAR

# New political party by end of this month

Say leaders of student, civic platforms at launch of a campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students Against Discrimination and Jatiya Nagorik Committee yesterday launched a nationwide campaign to gather public opinion about their new political party, likely to be floated by the end of this month.

At a press conference, Nasiruddin Patwary and Hasnat Abdullah, conveners of the civic and student platforms, announced the initiative at the central office of the student platform at the capital’s Banglamotor.

“The current political parties and system have failed to fulfill the people’s aspirations; they failed to understand the sentiments of the younger generation. An initiative has been taken to form a political party taking all anti-fascist forces onboard to reflect the aspirations of the people created through the July uprising,” said Hasnat.

He added that although the Awami fascism fell on August 5, fascist elements remain within the existing state structure, and the final victory is yet to be achieved.

The convener of Students Against Discrimination said the public opinion survey aims to ensure that the party is not dominated by any specific individual, group, class, region, or ideology.

The two platforms will conduct this survey in every district. They are using paper-based forms for those without internet access, while digital forms are available via WhatsApp and social media.

Once completed, the results will be publicly shared, said Hasnat.

Under the slogan “Your Vision for a New Bangladesh,” the campaign

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