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Potato farmers in peril as prices fall

B1



999 service now in English too

P3



Lost signals, lost safety

P5



Taiwan detects 62 Chinese aircraft as US ships transit waters

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Hasina oversaw July protest killings: UN

Human rights office also finds systematic abuse by former ministers, security agency officials, AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina herself had ordered the killing of students and protesters during the July uprising, the United Nations Fact Finding Mission said, citing senior security officials.

“...The prime minister herself told security force officials to kill protesters to quell the protests and specifically demanded ‘arrest the ringleaders of the protests, the troublemakers, kill them and hide their bodies’,” said the report released yesterday, quoting testimonies of officials about a meeting on July 19, 2024.

“This testimony is also consistent with Awami League secretary general and government minister Obaidul Quader telling reporters on July 19 that security forces had been given orders

to ‘shoot on sight’, an instruction manifestly incompatible with international human rights standards,” added the 114-page report.

The evening before, then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal chaired a meeting where he ordered the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to shoot using lethal weapons, found the mission which had interviewed a participant in the meeting.

“On the evening of July 18, the then home minister chaired a meeting of the ‘Core Committee’, attended by the heads of Police, Rab, and Border Guard Bangladesh and intelligence leaders. At the meeting, the minister told the BGB commander, in front of the other senior security sector leaders, to order use of lethal force much more readily,” the report read.

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JULY UPRISING
Proof won’t be shared till trials meet int’l standard
Says UN rights body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

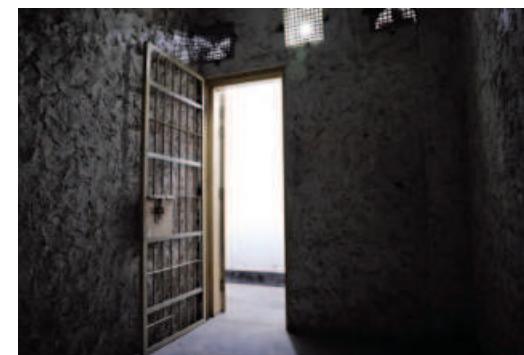
The UN will not share evidence from its investigation with Bangladesh unless trials of perpetrators of the brutal response to the July uprising meet international standards, says a top official at the UN Human Rights Office.

“The report does not identify perpetrators as such, but we have retained a large amount of material that is being archived to the highest standards

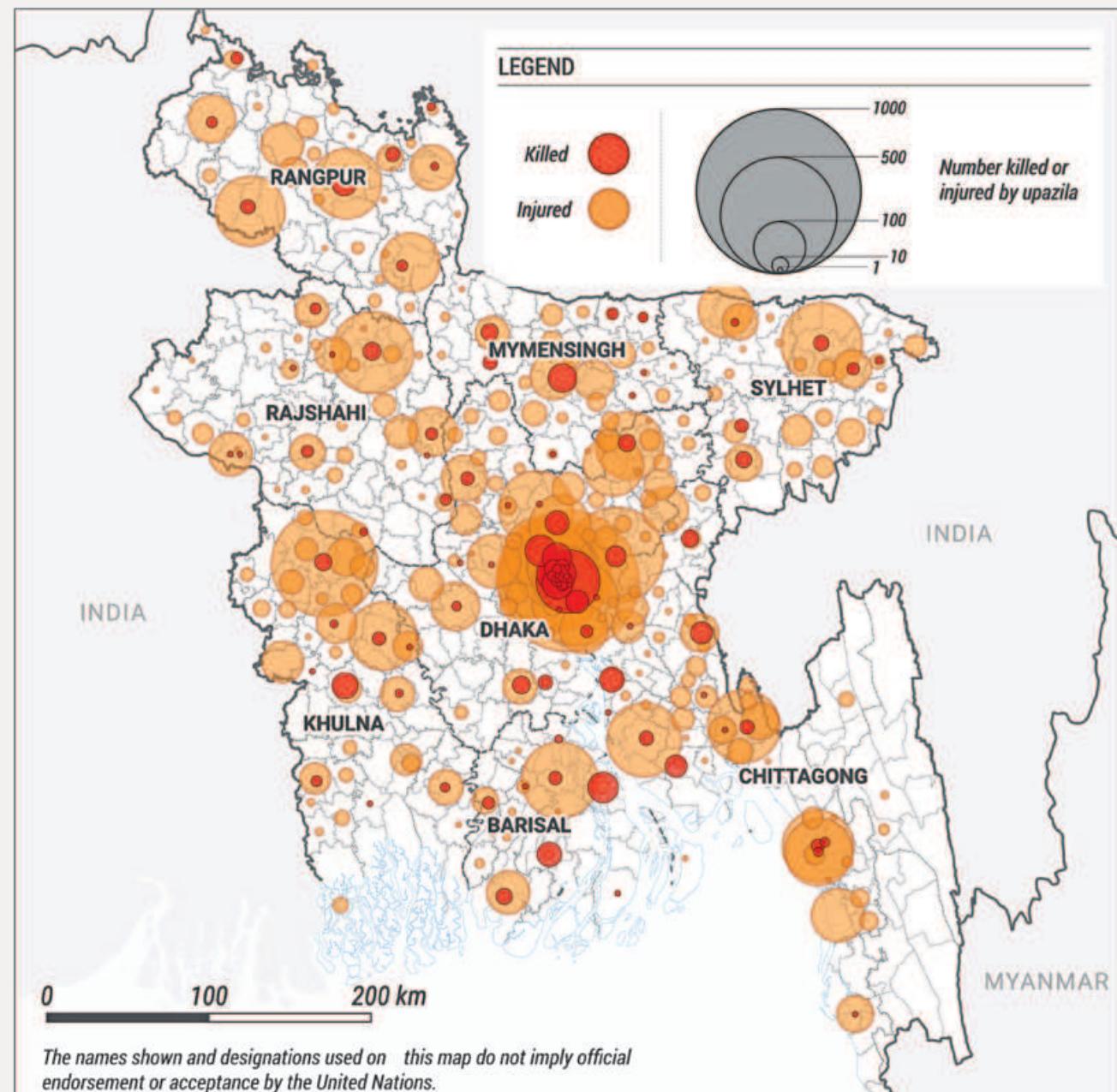
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PHOTOS: PID, CA PRESS WING
Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, surrounded by others, points to a chair that was used to torture captives at the secret detention centre, or “Aynaghar”, in the capital’s Agargaon. The photo was taken yesterday. Bottom left: A detainee carved out the number of days he had been in captivity (1,230 days) on the wall of his cell. Bottom right: One of the cells in which victims were held captive.



MAPPING THE UPRISING DEATHS AND INJURIES (As recorded by the health ministry)



VIOLATIONS AND ABUSES DURING THE PROTEST

- Incited violence by armed Awami League supporters
- Use-of-force violations by Police, Rab, and BGB, including extrajudicial killings
- Army involved in use-of-force violations
- Helicopters used to intimidate and deploy possibly unlawful force
- Medical care and necessary medical documentation denied
- Mass arbitrary arrests, detention without due process, and torture and ill-treatment
- Intimidation and attacks on journalists
- Unjustified internet shutdowns, lacking due process
- Violations and abuses targeting protesting women and girls
- Violations and abuses against children

VIOLATIONS AND ABUSES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE PROTESTS

- Revenge abuses targeting police, members of AL and affiliate groups, and media
- Abuses against indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts
- Attacks on Hindu homes, businesses and places of worship, and related displacement
- Attacks on Ahmadiyya Muslims

UNDERLYING CAUSES OF VIOLATIONS AND SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Use of military rifles and metal pellet-loaded shotguns in public order management

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prohibit use of shotgun pellets or other lethal ammunition to disperse crowds and immediately cease equipping the police with metal pellet ammunition for public order management

2. Outdated laws enabling the use of disproportionate force

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Replace Police Act 1861 and Police Regulations Bengal with human rights-compliant laws
- Order police to cease practices of mass criminal charges and mass arrests

MORE ON PAGE 2

Aynaghar horrors never again

Says Yunus after visiting 3 secret prisons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has said the Awami League government wrought upon the country an “Ayyām al-Jahiliyyah”, an Arabic term that refers to pre-Islamic era barbarism, social injustice, and moral corruption.

The secret detention centres and torture rooms, better known as Aynaghar, are just one aspect of that regime, Prof Yunus told reporters after visiting three secret prisons in the capital yesterday.

“The things that happened here are grotesque,” he told reporters after the visit.

Several survivors, family members of the victims, six advisers, and journalists from Al Jazeera, Netra News, BTV, PID and members of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance accompanied the chief adviser.

He said the horror inflicted on people to

destroy their sense of humanity. “The level of brutality here is beyond belief. The more I hear about it, the more unbelievable it feels. Is this our world, our society? How could we do this?” he asked.

He said the victims themselves told him and the others what they had endured.

“People who committed no crimes were simply abducted from the streets. Witnesses were brought in, some explosives were put in the car, and then they said, ‘You are a terrorist, a militant’.

“I thought there were a few of what they call Aynaghar. But now I hear that there are different versions of Aynaghar across the country. Some say there are 700. Some say 800. The exact number is unknown.”

The torture cells reflect the abominable state of the country during the previous regime, he

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

‘This is where I was held captive’

Survivors share chilling tales, allege removal of evidence; victim families protest exclusion from visit

ZYMA ISLAM and MUNTAKIM SAAD

When images of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus inspecting three secret detention centres emerged in the media yesterday, it did not take long for survivors to recognise the places where they had been held captive.

They had not seen their places of detention since their release (at different times), as these secret centres were off-limits.

Even the commission investigating enforced disappearances had been prohibited from photographing the centers, they alleged in a letter to the chief adviser earlier.

Human recognised the place of his captivity on the ground floor of the Joint Interrogation Cell (JIC) in the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence headquarters in Kachukhet.

“I not only found the cell where I was but also the spot on the wall on which I had carved my initials and the date. It was towards the bottom. They had painted over the wall, but missed that spot.

He was a part of Yunus’s



my cell, I said I would not be able to do it with my eyes open because we were always blindfolded. So, I closed my eyes and found my cell by counting the number of steps I had to take to reach it,” said Humam.

Iqbal Chowdhury, who was inside the JIC between May 7, 2018, and April 25, 2019, recognised two rooms as having possibly been his cells.

One room with high walls, now painted pink, looked to him like his main cell. “The hundreds of writings on these walls have now been painted over.”

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SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BRIEF TIMELINE

June 5	High Court reinstates quota system for public jobs. Student protests begin and gradually intensify
July 14-15	Chhatra League attacks begin incited by senior Awami League officials
July 16	Extrajudicial killing of Abu Sayed by police in Rangpur
July 17	Suppression of major student protest at Dhaka University
July 18	Police, Rab and BGB shoot protesters Orders to security forces to use maximum force and total internet shutdown
July 19	Significant increase in killings compared to July 18
July 20	Curfew and deployment of army. Violent clearance of Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Jatrabari (by police and Rab, supported by army). Mass arbitrary arrest campaign by police and Rab, supported by army.
Early August	Protest suppression reignite
August 4	March on Dhaka. Government plans to violently suppress it. Police and, in one documented case, also the army (Jamuna Future Park) shoot and kill protesters.
Afternoon of August 5	Sheikh Hasina flees. Killings of protesters continue. Revenge violence targeting Awami League supporters, police, media seen as supportive of former government and, in some cases, also members of distinct religious and indigenous groups.

Hasina oversaw killings

FROM PAGE 1

While launching the report at a press conference in Geneva yesterday, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said, "Crimes against humanity have been committed."

Additional criminal investigations are warranted to determine the extent to which they [serious human rights violations] may also amount to crimes against humanity and, torture (as a stand-alone international crime), as well as serious crimes under domestic law," the report said.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] has reasonable grounds to believe that these violations were carried out with the knowledge, coordination, and direction of the political leadership and senior security sector officials, in pursuance of a strategy to suppress the protests and related expressions of dissent."

The serious human rights violations and abuses committed by the security forces and armed Awami League supporters between July 15 and August 5 stemmed from a calculated effort to retain power at all costs, it said.

The mission interviewed 230 witnesses for the purposes of preparing the report. It assessed that as many as 1,400 people could have been killed during the uprising.

The report said Hasina and Asaduzzaman Khan led parallel efforts to coordinate the security and intelligence apparatus.

Both received regular reports on the situation on the ground from multiple sources. According to senior official testimony, reports provided to the prime minister by senior officials on July 21 and in early August specifically conveyed concern about excessive use of force."

The mission in its report elaborated the roles each security force and law enforcement agency as well as the Awami League played.

"From July 19, until the end of the protests, BGB, Rab and police fired lethal ammunition indiscriminately at protesters in Dhaka and elsewhere," it said, adding, "On July 20, the former government imposed a general curfew and deployed the army. The OHCHR documented three instances in which the army deliberately shot military rifles loaded with lethal ammunition at protesters. On July 20, in Mohammadpur and in front of the BTV, and on August 5, in front of the Jamuna Future Park.

The report named agencies that had directly engaged in perpetrating human rights violations – the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), National Security Intelligence (NSI), the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre (NTMC), Detective Branch of police, Special Branch of police, and the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit (CTTC).

"They shared intelligence, including information obtained through surveillance in violation of the right to privacy, to enable the campaign of mass arbitrary arrests that took place in late July," said the report.

It said that in 2022 and 2023, the

OVERVIEW OF DEATHS, INJURIES AND ARRESTS

Based on data compiled and de-duplicated from several sources, including from civil society organisations and the Ministry of Health, OHCHR estimates there were as many as 1400 protest-related deaths, including at least 13 women during 15 July-5 August

The Ministry of Health has recorded 841 deaths related to the protests, however data is likely incomplete as medical staff were often overwhelmed by the influx of dead and injured, among other reasons, such that a number of cases were not properly recorded

At the time of finalisation of this report, there were 13,529 injuries recorded by the health ministry

One hospital in Dhaka treated 736 patients with eye injuries, of which 506 required emergency operations

11,702 arrests by police and Rab

Video and images captured during the protests show Bangladesh Police, BGB, RAB, Ansar/VDP and Army members wielding SKS, Type 56 and BD-08 rifles

These weapons are commonly used only by police, paramilitary and military forces, and not readily available to civilians in Bangladesh

CAUSES OF PROTEST-RELATED KILLINGS (based on examination by Dhaka Medical College Forensic Department of 130 deaths)

66% military rifles 12% shotguns with pellets 2% pistols 20% others

Insights from her inner circle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several senior officials gave crucial information to the UN Fact Finding Mission about Sheikh Hasina's actions during the July uprising.

They told the mission that Hasina on the night of July 10 authorised the director general of the DGFI to carry out secret negotiations with the student leaders.

After July 16, she designated civilian senior officials to negotiate with the students, namely her law minister, education minister, and state minister for information, in addition to the efforts of the DGFI, the officials told the mission.

The mission's report quoted a senior official as saying that the then prime minister felt that if they deployed their "heavy units then only the Jihadists will remain on the streets and other protesters would go home."

It learnt from officials that Hasina and several senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office regularly conferred in person and over the phone with senior security officials to directly supervise and direct their operations.

The UN team inspected call logs of the officials to confirm this.

The officials said Hasina received daily reports on protests from security officials and the three intelligence services – DGFI, NSI, and SB of Police – directly reported to her.

"On August 4, the then prime minister chaired a meeting of the

police, with the authorisation of the home ministry, ordered more than three million metal shot cartridges. This was over double the number of rubber bullets ordered during the same period.

The report said it was a strong indication of the high level of reliance on, and widespread use of, lethal metal shots by the police. Police officers in the field had broad discretion to decide when to deploy metal shots and when to use rubber bullets.

Abu Sayed, a student in Rangpur, was killed by lethal metal pellets resulting from at least two shots from a distance of approximately 14 metres, the mission found.

It said at least 40 metal pellets were found on the right side of his chest and 50 on the left, including in areas around the heart and lungs, and in the abdomen, causing internal bleeding.

The mission called him a victim of a deliberate extrajudicial killing by the police.

"In Bangladesh, shotguns are standard issue weapons in public order management. Police officers bearing them are deployed with ammunition cartridges containing up to two hundred 2.3mm metal pellets and with other cartridges filled with less lethal ammunition consisting of six to eight larger rubber bullets."

It said that in 2022 and 2023, the

National Security Council in which the chiefs of the army, Border Guard Bangladesh [BGB], police, intelligence agencies, and the Ministers of Home Affairs, Education and Foreign Affairs, among others, participated. They discussed reimposing a curfew and enforcing it to prevent the March on Dhaka," said the report quoting officials.

"A second meeting was held in the late evening of August 4 at the prime minister's residence... A plan was agreed on, and according to it, the army and BGB would deploy alongside police to block protesters from accessing central Dhaka, if necessary, by force," it added.

The plan was that the army and BGB were to block access routes into central Dhaka by deploying armoured vehicles and troops, while the police was to "control mobs," senior officials who were at the meetings told the mission.

The mission obtained copies of two WhatsApp messages the former director general of the Special Security Forces sent to the director general of the BGB at 00:55am on August 5, 2024.

The first message appeared to be from the protest leaders informing marchers about which routes to take to central Dhaka. The second message contained a video advising marchers how to circumvent the defence lines of the security forces.

The team spoke to an official who had personally called Hasina on August 5 to inform her that things were not going as planned.

At protesters. Witnesses and images also confirm the police shooting from the rooftop of Uttara Police Station.

"Hundreds of protesters suffered gunshot wounds, and several were shot dead. One nearby hospital recorded 91 injured patients and six deaths on that day, out of which five were students. Medical and ballistics information analysed by OHCHR confirmed that victims were shot with lethal ammunition commonly used by the police and Rab," it said.

One of those who died there was Mir Muddho, who suffered a fatal shot to the head.

The report details an incident in Savar. "Protesters, some carrying sticks, sought to block an important intersection on the Dhaka-Aricha highway. Police supported by the BGB were deployed in advance, presumably to prevent the road from being blocked. Awami League supporters armed with machetes, sticks, and shotguns lined up in front of the police.

"One of the local party leaders was armed with a pistol-calibre submachine gun that would ordinarily only be available to state forces."

At the press conference in Geneva, Rory Mungoven, chief of the Asia-Pacific Region of OCHCR, said, "Militarisation of policing is a massive problem in Bangladesh.... Politicisation of policing is one of the significant findings."

UN for swift probe into rights violations from August 5 to 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UN has recommended prompt and independent investigations into human rights violations that took place from August 5 to 15 last year after the fall of Sheikh Hasina.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) made the recommendation in its fact-finding report titled "Human Rights Violations and Abuses related to the Protests of July and August 2024 in Bangladesh".

Sources had continued to report revenge violence, the UN said, adding that although incidents after August 15 fall outside the temporal scope of the report, the OHCHR nevertheless strongly recommends prompt and independent investigations into all reported incidents of this kind.

If left unaddressed, these incidents pose major risks to the country's social fabric, democratic culture and cohesion going forward, according to

the report.

Violent mobs stormed and burned down numerous police stations after Hasina fled to India. According to Bangladesh Police, 450 out of the country's 639 police stations were destroyed or damaged during attacks.

In many cases, the police officers fled or were allowed to leave by their superiors. In others, some officers were lynched or otherwise killed.

From August 5, enraged crowds also attacked Awami League officials and offices. In some cases, supporters of the BNP and the Jamaat-e-Islami were involved, according to witness testimony provided to OHCHR.

Violent crowds also vandalised, looted, or burned down official residences, homes and businesses belonging to Awami League leaders, government officials, or their close family members.

The report said that some Hindus, Ahmadiyya Muslims, and indigenous people from the Chittagong Hill

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UNDERLYING CAUSES OF VIOLATIONS AND SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM PAGE 1

Implement Torture and Custodial Death (Prohibition Act); Reform police investigation techniques, orders, doctrines and training to reduce reliance on coerced confessions

3. Militarisation of policing

RECOMMENDATIONS

Disband Rapid Action Battalion. Confining functions of Border Guards Bangladesh and Directorate General of Forces Intelligence. Demilitarise control of Ansar/VDP

Only most exceptional deployment of Army to internal security, under civilian control

4. Politicisation of the security sector

RECOMMENDATIONS

National police commission for fair, transparent and merit-based recruitment, promotions, transfer and removal process

Independent commission to investigate police violations. Similar independent accountability and justice mechanisms for Armed Forces and BGB

5. Institutionalised impunity and a politically pliant justice sector

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fair and effective criminal justice for serious violations and revenge violence

Wider victim-centred process to prevent recurrence, enhance social cohesion and national healing, including truth-seeking, reparation, memorialisation, vetting of security sector

Establish independent public prosecution service and witness protection programme

Ensure independence of judiciary through genuinely independent mechanism for recruitment of judges, protection against intimidation, adequate remuneration and guaranteed tenure

Address due process and fair trial concerns related to the International Crimes Tribunal

Introduce a moratorium on the death penalty

6. Stifling of civil space and repressive legal framework

RECOMMENDATIONS

Repeal overly broad criminal provisions used to stifle critical media reporting and dissent

End unlawful surveillance and abolish the National Telecommunications Monitoring Centre

Amend Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulation Act to clearly regulate surveillance

Regulate Internet shutdowns: clear criteria, transparency, judicial oversight, proportionality

Refrain from political party bans undermining democracy and disenfranchising part of electorate. Protect journalists, political party activists, minority leaders and rights defenders

Ensure safe and enabling environment for free and genuine elections, including by special pre-election measures to ensure a level playing field for all political parties and candidates

Amend the Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Act 2016 to ensure it is consistent with the right to freedom of association and other international human rights

Bring National Human Rights Commission into compliance with international standards

7. Structural discrimination and grievances about economic governance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Laws and regulations for substantive equality of men and women in political and public life

Take urgent measures to freeze, seize and repatriate ill-gotten gains, including through cooperation with foreign jurisdiction. Enforce anti-corruption and anti-cartel legislation. Enhance the independence and efficacy of the Anti-Corruption Commission

Enhance protection of workers, including through amendments to the Labour Act, make tax system more equitable and promote economic diversification

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* শর্ত প্রয়োজন

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Π

Scuffle, sit-in and strike

Another day of protests in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka witnessed three different protests in different parts of the city yesterday, with different demands.

At the Central Shaheed Minar, sacked BDR personnel staged a sit-in demanding their reinstatement.

The dismissed Bangladesh Rifles (now Border Guard Bangladesh) members, accused and imprisoned in cases related to the 2009 Pillkhana massacre, and their family members demonstrated under the banner of "Justice for BDR".

After the sit-in, they attempted to march towards the Secretariat but were dispersed by police near Shikha Bhaban around 1:10pm. Police used a water cannon on the protesters to disperse them.

Failing to move towards the Secretariat, the protesters then blocked the road in front of the Directorate General of Food.

Around 2:00pm, Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, arrived at the protest site and assured them a meeting with Law Adviser Asif Nazrul this week.

Later, six of the sacked BDR personnel, alongside two coordinators, went to meet the home adviser but couldn't meet him.

"We'll try to place our demands to the home adviser again on Monday," said Moniruzzaman, one of the sacked personnel.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, COLLECTED



Sacked BDR personnel remove police barricades on the capital's Abdul Goni Road and start moving towards the Secretariat yesterday, demanding reinstatement. Later, they gathered near the Shikha Bhaban to realise their demand. Meanwhile, candidates facing the cancellation of their appointments as assistant teachers in government primary schools continued their sit-in at Shahbagh.



999 services now in English too

New initiative aims to assist foreigners, English-speaking individuals

MUNTAKIM SAAD

The National Emergency Helpline 999 has introduced English-language services for the first time, aiming to assist English-speaking people, particularly foreigners working in or visiting the country.

The initiative took effect yesterday.

The helpline, operated by the Bangladesh Police, has been a crucial resource for citizens in distress since its launch in 2017. It provides round-the-clock emergency assistance, including police, fire, and medical services.

However, until now, the service was exclusively available in Bangla.

Mohammad Tabarak Ullah, additional deputy inspector general of police and chief of the national emergency helpline, told The Daily Star



At present, the 999 helpline has 100 workstations and can handle 120 calls simultaneously.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

REFORMATION OF JUDICIARY

Commission for law to protect victim, witness

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Judiciary Reform Commission has proposed a law to protect victims and witnesses, including their families and properties.

It recommended covering travel and meal expenses for witnesses attending court.

In its 351-page final report, submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on February 5, the commission emphasised the need for a witness protection cell under the police, citing the lack of safeguards in the judicial system.

While existing laws, such as the Evidence Act, 1972, and the Human Trafficking Prevention and Suppression Act, 2012, provide limited protection, no dedicated legislation exists. The Law Commission has recommended a Witness Protection Act, but it has yet to be enacted.

The commission noted that witness payments, previously provided through district magistrates, have stopped since the judiciary's separation. It also highlighted the absence of victim protection, compensation, and



RECOMMENDATIONS

Cover travel, food expenses for witnesses

Witness protection cell under police

Funding for witness arrival, departure costs

Amendment to Article 116 for judicial independence

Permanent HC benches in divisional cities

Curbing presidential power to pardon convicts

Mobile courts to impose only financial penalties

Code of conduct to prevent judicial corruption

Uploading judges' property details every 3 years

financial support, urging reforms similar to those in the US, UK, Germany, and Australia.

The report reiterated key judicial reform proposals, including amending Article 116 of the constitution to transfer control of lower court judges from the president to the Supreme Court and establishing SC secretariat.

It also suggested decentralising the judiciary by setting up permanent High Court benches in divisional cities and courts at the upazila level. The commission proposed curbing the president's power to pardon convicts, limiting mobile courts to imposing only financial penalties, and forming an independent criminal investigation agency.

The commission recommended the formulation of a code of conduct to prevent corruption among judges. Other significant proposals include appointing the most senior Appellate Division judge as the chief justice, fixing the number of SC judges at seven, raising the retirement age of judges to 70, and requiring judges to disclose their property details online every three years to ensure transparency.

'Coffin procession' demands ban on AL



PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement and Jatiya Nagorik Committee last night demanded that the interim government impose a ban on Awami League.

They made the call while attending the namaz-e-janaza of Abul Kashem at Central Shaheed Minar.

Kashem died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 3:00pm yesterday, following an attack on students and protesters in Gazipur on February 7.

"Even six months after the July uprising, revolutionaries of the movement are being killed at the hands of Awami League. It's a collective failure of anti-fascist political parties and forces," said Hasnat Abdullah, convener of the movement.

"With Kashem's body before us, we take an oath to ban Awami League," he added.

Addressing the interim government, he said, "How much more time will you take to ban Awami League? Ban Awami League through legal procedures within the shortest possible time."

Akther Hossain, member secretary of Jatiya Nagorik Committee, said a UN report explicitly

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Secret note' sparks controversy in court Security tightened as AL leaders face trial for July uprising cases

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

When former state minister for disaster management and relief Dr Enamur Rahman was being taken to a Dhaka court yesterday, he handed over a "secret note" to a man.

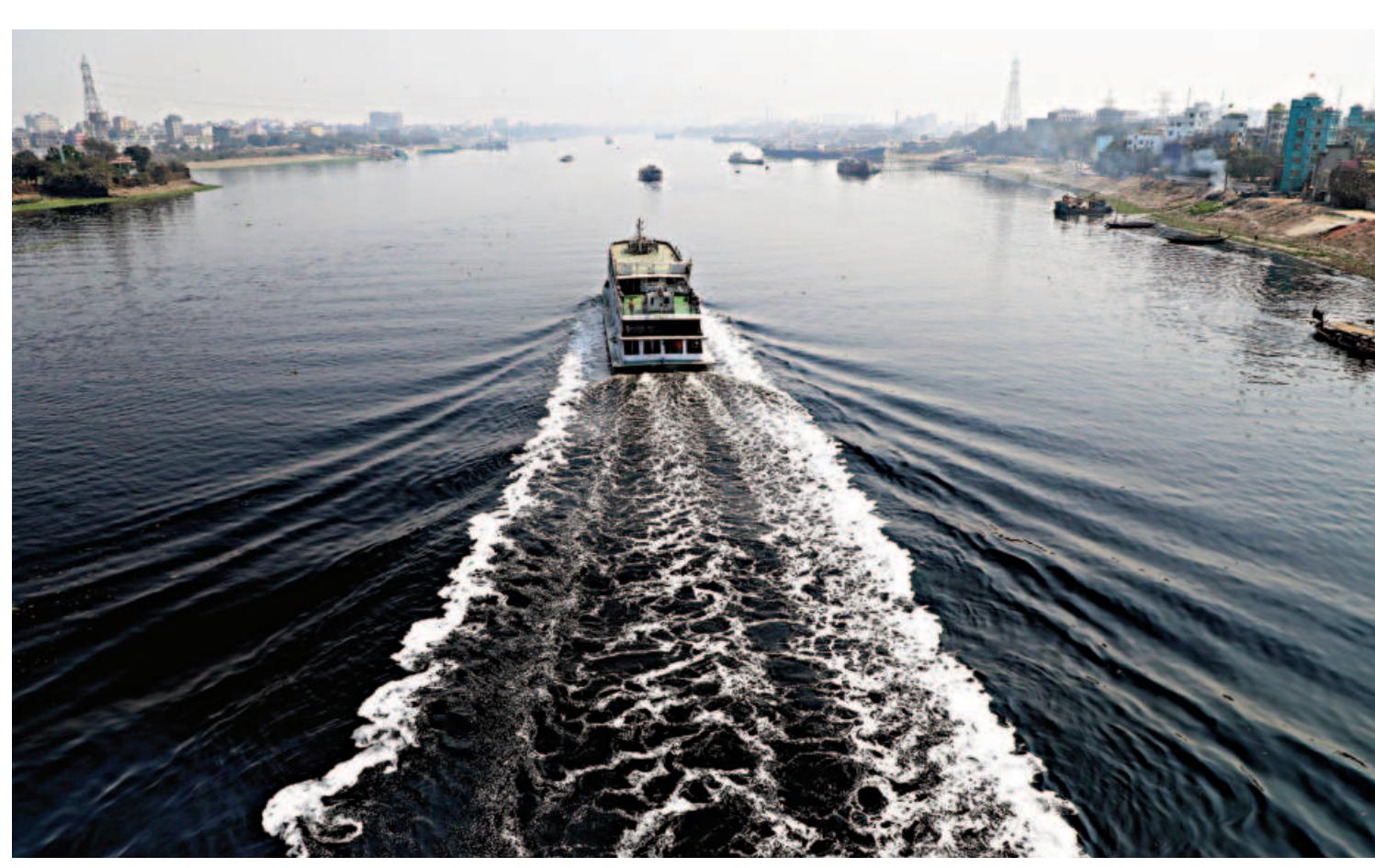
State lawyers said the accused cannot hand over written messages to anyone without the court's permission.

Previously, former social welfare minister Dipu Moni and former state minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak had also given such notes to their lawyers on the court premises, according to media reports.

Since then, police have been maintaining tight security while producing former Awami League ministers, lawmakers, and their associates before the court in connection with the cases related to the July uprising.

A video clip obtained by The Daily Star shows Enamur taking out a paper from his pocket and handing it to an individual while being presented

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A RIVER RUNS BLACK. A vessel plying through the black waters of the Buriganga yesterday. The trail of foam it leaves behind is a sign of pollutants that slowly poisoned the river for decades. Due to continuous dumping of waste materials from factories and households, Buriganga, once the lifeline of Dhaka, has now become one of the most polluted rivers. The photo was taken from the Postogola Bridge.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'DEVIL HUNT' Another 591 held across country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 591 more people were arrested across the country in 24 hours till yesterday afternoon as part of the ongoing "Operation Devil Hunt".

Besides, 1,095 others, accused or wanted in previous cases, were also arrested during the same period, according to the Police Headquarters.

During the drive, four firearms including a Chinese rifle (looted from police), one magazine, three rounds of bullets, 17 cartridges, 20 crude bombs, six knives and other sharp weapons were also recovered on the operation's fourth day.

Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday reiterated that the nationwide operation carried out by joint forces will continue as long as "devils" exist.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

A video clip shows Enamur Rahman taking out a paper from his pocket and handing it to an individual while being presented

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Mohammad
Azaz new
administrator
of DNCC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad
Azaz,
chairman
of the River
and Delta
Research
Centre,
has been appointed as the
administrator of Dhaka
North City Corporation.

He has been appointed
as a full-time administrator
for a one-year term. A
notification was issued in
this regard yesterday, signed
by Mahbuba Irene, deputy
secretary to the LGD.

Another 591

FROM PAGE 3
The government launched the operation on Saturday to restore law and order following Friday night's attack on "students and people" in Gazipur.

On Tuesday, 1,775 people were arrested, including 607 as part of the operation. On Monday, 1,521 individuals were arrested, with 343 apprehended as part of the operation. On Sunday, 1,308 arrests were reported, but the PHQ did not provide a breakdown of the arrests.

Analysing reports from some districts, this newspaper found that the arrestees are mostly members of the Awami League and its associate bodies. Many are accused in cases filed after the fall of the Hasina-led government on August 5.

Lost signals, lost safety

FROM PAGE 5

Matsyajibi Samity, stressed the urgency of a robust communication system, stating that for nearly five lakh fishermen and their families, radio is a vital source of information.

With mobile networks failing at sea, a strong radio communication system is essential. "The authorities should either increase Barishal Betar's frequency or establish a relay station in Kuakata," he added.

Apu Saha, fisheries officer of Kalapara upazila, said mobile networks cover up to 55 kilometres offshore from Kuakata, but this coverage diminishes in bad weather.

Most fishing boats do not have radios, and some rely on mobile apps for Dhaka and Chattogram radio stations. However, they cannot receive broadcasts from the Barishal centre.

Bangladesh Betar's Barishal station was inaugurated on 12 June

Without a relay station or stronger transmission power, it is impossible to reach the estimated 125,000 deep-sea fishermen who rely on radio for survival, he added.

He said they have also notified the issue to the higher authorities.

"Hopefully, they will try to come up with a solution soon by setting up a relay station in Kuakata or increasing the frequency," he added.

Scuffle, sit-in and strike

FROM PAGE 3

The protest ended around 4:00pm.

Meanwhile, candidates facing the cancellation of their appointments as assistant teachers in government primary schools continued their sit-in at Shahbagh, demanding reinstatement.

Around 150 protesters gathered in front of the National Museum at 1:30pm.

Since Monday, they have been demonstrating, disrupting traffic for hours.

On Monday, police used batons, water cannons, and sound grenades to disperse the protesters. However, the demonstrators remained on the road.

The protesters claimed that their appointments had been revoked "unfairly."

"A total of 6,531 candidates were included in the final merit list but haven't received appointments. We urge authorities to resolve this immediately," they said in a statement.

Besides, doctors at

the National Institute of Neurosciences (NINS) in Dhaka observed a three-hour work stoppage from 11:45am to 3:00pm, protesting an alleged attack on doctors.

They demanded the resignation of Director Prof Quazi Deen Mohammad and joint director Prof Md Badrul Alam.

While emergency and ICU services remained operational, outdoor services were disrupted, causing patient suffering.

Doctors claimed at least 10 people, including three physicians, were injured in an attack by third and fourth-class employees and outsourced staff of NINS.

Asked about the work abstention, Joint Director Md Badrul Alam said, "A misunderstanding arose over the transfer of a doctor. There was a brief argument between the two sides."

He claimed there was no work stoppage by the doctors and the issue had been resolved.

999 services now in English too

FROM PAGE 3

that foreign officials in Bangladesh -- including those working with the UN, INGOs, foreign missions, and various development partners -- will now be able to seek emergency help more conveniently.

"Currently, we are rolling out the English service with a limited number of workstations to assess the response. Based on the feedback, we will expand the service," he said.

"The service provided

will be similar to the Bangla-language service. A 999 agent will communicate with the caller in English, relay the details to the service provider in Bangla, and then update the caller in English to ensure clear communication," he said.

He cited a recent case in which an Italian citizen was robbed on her way to a hostel from the airport. Although police recovered her valuables and arrested the culprits, she was unable to seek help from 999 at

the time as the service was not available in English.

Currently, the 999 helpline has 100 workstations and can handle 120 calls simultaneously. "We have approval to establish another 100 workstations in Purbachal," he said.

He said similar services are popular in Singapore, Malaysia, and the UAE.

Three inspectors -- Soyebr Rahaman, Shahadat Hossain, Selim, and Istiak Ansari -- conducted a one-month training session to prepare 20 officers to handle calls in English.

Coffin

FROM PAGE 3

states crimes against humanity were committed on the streets in July under the orders of "killer Hasina".

"Awami League, which committed a genocide, has no right to do politics in Bangladesh," said Akhter.

Following the namaz-e-janaza, a coffin procession with the demand to ban AL was brought out from Shaheed Minar that ended near Shahbagh intersection.

BR conducts

FROM PAGE 5

dedicated railway bridge of the country will be inaugurated formally on March 18, Al Fattah Md Masudur Rahman, additional director general (infrastructure) of BR, told

The Daily Star.

Masudur, also project director of bridge, said they have started using one of the two lines of bridge for the trial operation.

He said the president of JICA, the financer of the over Tk 17,000 crore project, will take part in the bridge inauguration programme.

The 4.8km double line dual gauge bridge over Jamuna River will boost rail connectivity between Dhaka and northwestern regions.

'Secret note' sparks

FROM PAGE 3

at the Chief Judicial Magistrate's (CJM) Court in Dhaka amid police security.

"Around 9:30am, Enamur and three others were brought to the court under police escort for hearing in several cases filed with Savar and Ashulia police stations," said a court staffer.

They demanded the resignation of Director Prof Quazi Deen Mohammad and joint director Prof Md Badrul Alam.

While emergency and

ICU services remained

operational, outdoor

services were disrupted,

causing patient suffering.

Doctors claimed at least 10 people, including three physicians, were injured in an attack by third and fourth-class employees and outsourced staff of NINS.

chairman Nazrul Islam Mazumder was brought to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka for a hearing yesterday morning.

"If I had not been by Sheikh Hasina's side at that time... My elder brother was an MP for five years. That elder brother was killed in a crossfire. I would have faced the same fate. Please cancel my remand and allow me to be interrogated at the jail gate," he said at the time.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate MA Azharul Islam conducted the hearing on a 10-day remand

prayer, which was sought

to interrogate Mazumder in connection with a case filed over the death of Emon Hossain Gazi in Dhaka's Jatrabari area on August 5.

The magistrate granted a five-day remand for Mazumder.

SHAMBHU LOSES TEMPER

Former AL lawmaker

Dhirendra Debnath

Shambhu lost his temper

while being taken to the

CJM Court for a case hearing

yesterday, as a journalist on the court premises was taking his pictures.

"Take as many photos as you want. You have nothing else to do! Isn't one photo enough? What's the point of taking so many?" he said, addressing journalists.

Staff shortage

FROM PAGE 5

give signals to trains, but closed stations do not, requiring loco masters to reduce speed to minimise the risk of accidents.

Mujibur Rahman, another loco master, echoed the same concern.

The shortage of manpower has also forced railway to operate many stations with retired station masters on a contractual basis, while most of the operational stations are running with half the required workforce.

Tarek Imran, deputy chief operating superintendent of railway's Eastern Zone, said the manpower crisis is worsening day by day and they are regularly reaching out to higher authorities to recruit more staff and resume operations at the closed stations. Md Sabuktigin, general manager of railway's Eastern Zone, said they have sent multiple letters to higher authorities urging them to address the crisis, but the issue remains unresolved.

PRAYER

TIMING

FEBRUARY 13

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-25	12-45	4-30	5-57	7-15
JAMAAT 6-00	1-15	4-45	6-01	7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Bangladesh Cricket Board

Date: 13th February, 2025

Notification

Dhaka Third Division Qualifying Cricket League (2024-2025)

No.-BCB/CCDM/2024-25/871

Dhaka Third Division Qualifying Cricket League (2024-2025) will be held in March 2025. According to the decision of the Bangladesh Cricket Board, the Teams / Clubs located in Dhaka Metropolitan Area only (Excluding corporate, office, and cricket academy teams) will be able to collect the prescribed application Form and terms & conditions from the office of CCDM, BCB by paying Taka 1,000/- (One Thousand) on 19, 20 and 22nd February, 2025 (between 10 AM to 6 PM).

The interested clubs / teams need to submit the prescribed application form and necessary papers on official letterhead of the club along with the Pay Order of Taka 1,00,000/- (One Lac) in favor of "Bangladesh Cricket Board" (Entry Fee, Non-refundable) on 23 and 24th February, 2025 (between 10 AM to 6 PM) at the Office of CCDM, BCB (Sher-E-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216). Please note that no application will be accepted after the due date.

It must be mentioned that no team/club outside the Dhaka Metropolitan Area can participate in this league. All interested clubs/teams must comply with the terms & conditions prescribed by BCB.

Member Secretary
Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM)
Bangladesh Cricket Board, Dhaka

Invitation for Tender for Hiring of Transport Services (Scheduled and Unscheduled)

1 Name Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
2 Procuring Entity	icddr,b
3 Invitation for Tender	Services
4 Invitation Ref No	icddr,b/SCM/GoB/OTM/Pkg#PS-06&07/2024-25
5 Date	13-02-2025
KEY INFORMATION	
6 Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)
FUNDING INFORMATION	
7 Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget and Government of Bangladesh and Other Donors
8 Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
9 Tender Package No.	Pkg# PS-06 & 07/2024-25
10 Tender Package Name	Pkg-06: Hiring of Transport Services- Staff Bus (Scheduled) Pkg-07: Hiring of Transport Services- Microbus, Sedan Car, etc. (Un-Scheduled)
Date	Time
11 Tender Publication Date	13-02-2025
12 Last Date of Selling Tender Document	12-03-2025
13 Tender Closing Date and Time	11:00 AM (Pkg-06) 11:00 AM (Pkg-07)
14 Tender Opening Date and Time	11:30 AM (Pkg-06) 12:00 PM (Pkg-07)
15 Name & Address of the office(s)	Address: Finance Office, Main Building, Level-4, icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. Interested bidder is requested to deposit the price for each package Tender Document i.e. BDT 5,000/- to the Account Name: "icddr,b", Account No. 020000244298, Agrani Bank PLC, icddr,b Branch and submit original Customer Copy to Finance Office while collecting the Tender Document within the stipulated time. Please bring NID card and business card while collecting tender documents and participating in the pre-bid meeting and use IPH (North) gate to enter at icddr,b premises.

NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

- Receiving Tender Document	Supply Chain Management Office, Chiller Building (Ground Floor), icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
- Opening Tender Document	Supply Chain Management Office, Chiller Building (1st Floor), icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

16 Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	FMS Meeting Room, Chiller Building (3rd Floor), icddr,b, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
Date	Time

February 24, 2025 1

RAILWAY EASTERN ZONE

Staff shortage forces 54 station closures

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Abu Taleb, 48, a schoolteacher from Chattogram's Hathazari upazila, used to commute to and from his workplace in the port city by train. However, for the past five years, he has been compelled to travel by bus after the rail station near his residence was closed down.

He said train journeys are safer and cheaper than buses, but the closure of Sarkar Hat rail station left him with no other option.

Sarkar Hat station on the Chattogram-Nazirhat rail section was shut down in 2020 due to a manpower shortage. Previously, two passenger trains used to run regularly on this route.

Like Sarkar Hat, at least 54 out of 243 stations in railway's Eastern Zone have been closed over the past two decades due to a shortage of staff, mainly station masters and pointsmen, according to official data.

The sanctioned workforce for the Eastern Zone is 22,358, but only 11,522 staff members are currently employed.

Tofayel Ahmed, who regularly commutes on the Chandpur-Chattogram route for business, said he has been facing delays and increased expenses since the Chitosh Road station near his residence

was shut down in 2021, forcing him to travel to a more distant station to board the train.

Nizam Uddin, a resident of Patiya upazila, has also been experiencing difficulties since the closure of Dhalghat station in 2022.

The closure of these stations has not only caused hardship for commuters but has also led to delays in train journeys.



According to station masters and loco masters, the normal train speed on the Laksam-Chandpur section is 65 kilometres per hour. However, trains have to slow down to 16 kilometres per hour when passing through closed stations due to safety precautions.

Jamal Uddin, a loco master, said operational stations have a system to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



HERALDING SPRING. The vibrant blossoms of the Palash tree, nestled beside the playground at Barishal University, spread their enchanting beauty along the roadside. Their golden petals sway in the gentle breeze, turning the ordinary path into a picturesque haven of charm and grace. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

BDR CARNAGE

Families seek justice, oppose 'early release' of convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Families of army officers killed in the 2009 Pillkhan massacre yesterday demanded that those sentenced to life imprisonment or death in connection with the killings must not be released "prematurely" in the name of justice.

At a press conference held around 11:00am at the RAOA Club in Mohakhali, they reiterated their call for February 25 to be declared "National Shaheed Sena Day".

The families launched a charitable organisation, "Shaheed Sena Officers' Association," at the press conference, aiming to preserve the legacy of the fallen officers and ensure justice for their deaths.

Nehreen Ferdousi, wife of deceased Colonel Mojibul Hoque, said, "February is a month of immense grief for us. We count the days, waiting for it to end."

On February 1, a delegation of the families met with the army chief at Army Headquarters. They were assured that the army would formally urge the government to declare February 25 as National Shaheed Sena Day.

They also demanded a proper investigation into the unnatural deaths of several BDR personnel in prison, claiming that the masterminds behind the Pillkhan massacre are still at large.

LOST SIGNALS, LOST SAFETY

Poor radio transmission puts fishers at risk in deep sea



SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

Siddique Majhi, a 55-year-old fisherman from Kuakata, has spent three decades fishing in the deep sea but has never been able to tune into Bangladesh Betar's Barishal station.

He said they sometimes manage to access broadcasts from Dhaka and Chattogram stations, but these often get disconnected.

Like him, thousands of deep-sea fishermen in the Barishal division remain vulnerable to disasters due to the weak radio frequency of Bangladesh Betar's Barishal station.

During emergencies, these fishermen fail to receive crucial weather updates, increasing the risk of accidents at sea.

Most fishermen lack dedicated radios and rely on mobile phones to listen to broadcasts.

However, mobile connectivity is lost about three hours after departure, around 50 to 60 kilometres from the shore, leaving them completely cut

off from weather updates, said Hasan Majhi, a fisherman from Bholo Sadar.

Bholo's fishermen often travel as far as Chattogram and Sandwip, where they are beyond the reach of mobile networks and miss crucial storm warnings.

Mohammad Azharul Islam,

the country's coastal region, spanning 14 districts across Barishal, Chattogram, and Khulna divisions, has 29,671 deep sea fishing boats.

Among them, Barishal alone has 12,259 boats. With each boat carrying around ten crew members on average,



project director of the Sustainable Coastal and Marine Fisheries Project, said the government installed GSM technology in 10,000 fishing boats nationwide in 2019, including 6,000 boats in six districts of Barishal division.

"However, most of these systems are no longer operational, leaving fishermen exposed to the dangers of the sea," he added.

The Barishal divisional fisheries office reports that

approximately 125,000 fishermen from Barishal venture into the sea annually. Without proper disaster alerts, the risk of accidents remains high.

"Fish are becoming harder to find, forcing boats to venture farther into the deep sea – sometimes up to 150 kilometres from the shore – thus increasing our exposure to rough weather," said Kuakata fisherman Nuru Majhi.

Israel Pandit, president of Barishal Bibhagiyo Khudra

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

JAMUNA BRIDGE BR conducts test runs for train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Bangladesh Railway yesterday started operating passengers train through the newly built Jamuna Railway Bridge on trial basis, a month before its formal inauguration.

A Dhaka-bound Silk City Express from Rajshahi crossed the bridge between 11:2am and 11:30am before reaching the east bank, said Md Moniruzzaman, station master of Jamuna Bridge West Rail Station.

With this, train operation on the old rail tracks of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge has been suspended, he said.

The longest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Freeze 437.85 crore shares of S Alam's chairman

Court orders ACC

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered Anti-Corruption Commission to freeze 437.85 crore shares of 42 companies belonging to S Alam Group Chairman Mohammad Saiful Alam and his family in connection with allegations of laundering US \$1 billion to Singapore and several other countries.

The value of these shares stands at Tk 5,109,67,96,260.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court in Dhaka passed the order after an ACC official submitted an application in this regard.

In the application, he said they found 437.85 crore shares of 42 companies owned by S Alam and his family members while investigating the allegations brought against them.

"S Alam and family members were trying to transfer those shares worth Tk 5,109,67,96,260 elsewhere. If they do so, inquiry into the allegations brought against them might be hampered. So, an order is needed to prevent them from transferring those shares," he said.

SWAPNAPURI PARK Another 48 animals rescued



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The Wildlife Crime Control Unit of the Forest Department, Dhaka on Tuesday rescued 48 more illegally confined wild animals in the second phase of drive at Swapnapuri Park in Nawabganj upazila of Dinajpur.

They also shut down the mini zoo there.

The recovered animals include five bears, five barking deer, 11 monkeys, 17 sambar deer, five great hornbills, two porcupines, and one otter.

On January 26, the authorities rescued 74 wild animals from the park.

Elephant found dead in Cox's Bazar



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Officials of the Forest Department recovered a dead elephant in Cox's Bazar's Chakaria upazila yesterday.

The carcass was found around 7:00am in a tobacco plantation near the hills in Ghunia area of Fasiakhali union. Locals said the elephant died from electrocution due to electric trap set up to protect the tobacco fields.

Asked, Mehrab Uddin, range officer of Fasiakhali Range, said the cause of the elephant's death would be confirmed after an autopsy. The male elephant was aged between 40 and 42 years.

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Project Director Establishment of 100 Technical School and College(TSC) In Upazilla (2 nd Revised) Directorate of Technical Education Agargaon, Dhaka 1207. Web: www.techedu.gov.bd				
Memo No: 57.03.0000.070.007.203.025-67 Date: 12 Feb, 2025				
e-GP Tender Notice				
e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods details bellows in the table.				

Sl. No.	Tender Ref.	Tender ID No. (From e-GP Portal)	Tender Description	Publication Date and Time	Opening Date and Time
01.	57.03.0000.070.007.203.25-37	1013494	Farm-1, Supply & Installation of Equipment for Farm Machinery Lab For 13 TSC	13-Feb-2025 09:00:00	17-Mar-2025 12:00:00
02.	57.03.0000.070.007.203.25-40	1071746	Fish-1, Supply & Installation of Equipment for Fish Culture & Breeding Lab For 7 TSC	13-Feb-2025 09:00:00	17-Mar-2025 12:00:00
03.	57.03.0000.070.007.203.25-39	1071748	Poultry-1, Supply & installation of Equipment for Poultry rearing & Farming Lab For 5 TSC	13-Feb-2025 09:00:00	17-Mar-2025 12:00:00
04.	57.03.0000.070.007.203.25-33	1071838	IT-3, Supply & installation of Equipment for IT & IOT Lab For 11 TSC	13-Feb-2025 09:00:00	17-Mar-2025 12:00:00

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 in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required
The fees for downloading the e-GP tender documents from the national e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to specified date & time mentioned in the e-GP system.
Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders.

Dr. Abu Kashem Mohammad Jahangir Hossain
Project Director (Deputy Secretary)
Email: 100ts.pd@gmail.com

BANGLADESH AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Bangladesh Railway yesterday started operating passengers train through the newly built Jamuna Railway Bridge on trial basis, a month before its formal inauguration.

A Dhaka-bound Silk City Express from Rajshahi crossed the bridge between 11:2am and 11:30am before reaching the east bank, said Md Moniruzzaman, station master of Jamuna Bridge West Rail Station.

With this, train operation on the old rail tracks of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge has been suspended, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনসিটিউট Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute সংগ্রহ ও ভাস্তুর শাখা গাজীপুর-১৭০১।				
Memo No: 12.21.0000.007.01.198.24.3205 Date: 09 February 2025				
e-GP: Tender Notice No. 26 (2024-2025)				
e-Tender is invited in the e-GP system Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below :				

Sl. No.	Package No.	Tender ID & Ref No	Description of goods	Tender Documents Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing date & Time	Tender Opening date & Time
02.	PN-GD-05	1073068 & IRN : 198	Laboratory Equipment 13 (Thirteen) Items.	23.02.2025 11:15	23.02.2025 12:00	23.02.2025 12:00

The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender.
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, Registration in the National e-GP system portal is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
Budget Type: Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh (BARI Component).

GD-406
(Md. Younus Ali)
(BARI-0663)
Deputy Director (In-Charge)
On behalf of Director General

Aynagar horrors never again

FROM PAGE 1
said. "People have been deprived of their bare minimum human rights."

He added that he heard there were over 1,700 victims. "But there are victims who are still unknown. Some say the total number could be 3,000," he said.

"People have disappeared, they have vanished. No one knows where they are. A daughter was with us today. She said it had been nine years since her mother had been taken away. She was there when her mother was picked up. It's heartbreaking."

"The hardest truth here is: the perpetrators are our children, our brothers and our family members. If we cannot bring our society out of this, if our children do things that humans cannot do, then our society will not survive."

He added that one of the victims described the cell as smaller than a chicken coop. "It is our crime that we let this happen."

The individuals responsible for these must be held accountable.

Yunus then said the evidence would

be kept sealed and secured so that it can be used in legal proceedings and future trials.

"We want to build a new Bangladesh, a new environment... We must ensure that this never happens again in the future. This is one of the worst crimes ever committed in the world."

Advisers Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain identified the cells in which they were kept after being picked up by men in plainclothes during the mass uprising.

Nahid was kept at a joint interrogation cell operated by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) inside a detention centre of Rab-2 while Asif was kept at the Taskforce Intelligence Centre in the Rab headquarters.

Nahid said one side of the room had something resembling a sink. It was used as a toilet.

After August 5, the day Sheikh Hasina fled the country, some of the walls had been demolished and some repainted, he added.

Asif recognised the cell from its walls and mentioned that there was an exhaust fan at the top of the wall.

He told journalists that he was kept incommunicado in the cell for four days. Even when he had to go to the toilet, his captors would blindfold him and then take him out of the cell.

The visitors included former Brig Gen Abdullah Aman Azmi, son of late Jamaat leader Ghulam Azam. He was kept in a secret prison for eight years.

Mir Ahmad Bin Quasem, the younger son of executed Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali, and Humman Quader Chowdhury, son of executed BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, were also among the visitors. Ahmad had been in a secret cell for eight years and Humman for seven months.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam later said locations of the secret cells would be identified.

Asked why only a select few journalists could accompany Prof Yunus, Shafiqul said the rooms were extremely narrow and in some cases, pathways were created by "breaking bricks". The entire process was logically challenging.

He expressed regret for not being able to invite more journalists.

courts.

"We have to make sure that universal jurisdiction can work for people who are outside the country," said Turk, adding that the perpetrators of serious human rights violations cannot be let scot free and must be brought to account.

He called these investigations complex. "When cases are difficult to prosecute it is better to refer to the international jurisdictions," he said.

Mungoven pointed out that criminal investigations will face many challenges, and one is that the system has not changed. "Many people who were appointed by the last regime continue to operate in the government. This continues to obstruct reform."

"When you have a police force that is not yet reformed, tasked with investigating the crimes of the police, there is a conflict of interest."

Volker Turk, the UN high commissioner for human rights, underscored the need for investigations, trial and justice and the possibility of trying these crimes in international

'This is where I was held captive'

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in 2022, Iqbal had given an interview anonymously to The Daily Star. "My room had an iron bed, and I was given four blankets to make a mattress. A light bulb shone at all times, and an exhaust fan whirred at the corner of the door," he had said.

The other room is a small cell with rugged white walls that Iqbal yesterday recognised as the room where he was interrogated. "I was kept inside that room for three weeks at a stretch."

Former Bangladesh ambassador to Vietnam M Maroof Zaman, an enforced disappearance victim who was kept in an Aynagar for over 15 months, told The Daily Star that after seeing the photos, he could identify the three rooms and toilet where he was detained in DGFI custody.

"In one of the rooms, a CCTV camera was still visible, but they had removed four fans [that were previously there]. They broke the wall beside the toilet and repainted the rooms.

"There were hundreds of names written on the wall, but they were erased. They tried to destroy all the evidence."

Expressing frustrations, Zaman further said, "The student leaders who were kept there for a few days visited the site. We were held there for years, yet we weren't invited."

Mikel Chakma, who had been held captive since April 2019 and released after the fall of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, also recognised his cell.

He posted the photos of two cells and wrote his reaction on Facebook, he said.

saying he was kept inside one of the cells with the rugged white walls and iron gates for nearly two years and later moved to an adjacent cell.

"These rooms were monitored 24 hours with a CCTV camera, as seen on the left side of the photo," he captioned one of the photographs he posted.

The other cell he identified was the same high walled one recognised by Iqbal. Mikel said he was kept there for a year.

"After this cell, there is one more, and then there is a toilet and a cell in which we would get haircuts."

Another survivor, who preferred anonymity, saw the photos and recognised the cells of the Taskforce Intelligence Centre inside the Rab headquarters in Uttara. "The cell I was kept in had a metal slab with spikes on it on the floor. Those spikes have now been removed."

He added that shackles were attached to the walls to hang and torture victims.

However, the broader community of victims, survivors and their families were not included in the visit.

Sanjida Islam Tulee, coordinator of Mayer Daak, a platform representing families of enforced disappearance victims, staged a protest in front of its Shaheenbagh office, saying that victims continue to be deprived of justice.

"It was our demand that all Aynaghs be opened to the victims and their families. But we're still being stonewalled. Those who have perpetrated the crimes, are still being protected."

Ukraine detains top intel official allegedly aiding Russia

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine said yesterday that it had detained a high ranking official within its own security services who was allegedly working for Russia.

Kyiv claims to have detained hundreds of people -- including officials and security officers -- for allegedly aiding or collaborating with Russia since it invaded in 2022.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said that agency head Vasyl Maluk had personally carried out the arrest and that President Volodymyr Zelensky was informed of the operation, codenamed "rat".

"The chief of staff of the SBU Anti-Terrorist Centre was working for the enemy," the SBU said in a statement posted on social media.

The SBU said it had documented 14 cases of illegal activity by the suspect and opened a trial on high treason charges that carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The "extremely complex" and "multi-stage" operation revealed how the suspect collected and transmitted information to Russia, the SBU said.

EC seeks record Tk 2,794cr for next nat'l polls

FROM PAGE 12

1.82 lakh police and Rab officers, 2,355 Coast Guard and 47,000 BGB personnel -- were deployed in the last election.

Besides, another several lakh people served as presiding and other polling officials.

If the budget remains unchanged, this would be the most expensive election in the country.

EC's budget may increase significantly due to the rise of different election materials and each year, the law enforcement agencies press for increasing their allowances, EC officials said.

The EC has sought another Tk 3,127 crore for various other local government elections as well as other expenses.

Lalon festival called off

FROM PAGE 12

Mahmudullah, and Qawmi Ulama Parishad President Solaiman Kasemi, along with 10 to 15 others attended the meeting. Lalon Sangha was represented by its president, Associate Professor Farhad Hossain Tarafdar, and Sabuj Mia.

"Islamic party leaders at the meeting said that Lalon's ideology is impermissible, 'kufr or shirk'. They refused to allow it to spread in Madhupur," Sabuj wrote. "We clarified that our event was for entertainment, not for spreading any ideology and that the controversial songs would not be performed. But they insisted that only a 'normal concert' without Lalon would be acceptable."

Later that night, Multi Anwar Hossain informed a senior BNP leader that no function would be allowed.

"To prevent any deterioration of law and order, we decided to cancel the event," Sabuj added.

Asked, Hefazat's Mahmudullah told The Daily Star they opposed "promoting Lalon's ideology, which conflicts with Islam."

Madhupur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Zubair Hossain confirmed he was invited but said organisers informed him of the cancellation on Tuesday night without further details.

Proof won't be shared

FROM PAGE 1
so it can be used," Rory Mungoven, chief of the Asia-Pacific region at the UN rights office, said at a press conference in Geneva yesterday.

On cooperating with Bangladesh's judicial processes, he added, "The issue of the death penalty is a problem for us -- as a UN policy, we are constrained from cooperating with trials that may lead to the death penalty."

He stressed that the process must be credible, fair, and adhere to international standards.

"We hope this will lead to a reconsideration of the death penalty in Bangladesh because it perpetuates a cycle of revenge," Mungoven said.

He also said that the death penalty would pose a barrier to the extradition of perpetrators hiding in other countries.

Ex-Ctg police commissioner

FROM PAGE 12
CMP Commissioner Hasib Aziz told The Daily Star, "He [Saiful] was arrested in Dhaka based on a specific allegation in connection with a murder case."

Following the hearing, Saiful, wearing a black mask and white helmet, was taken aboard a black microbus under tight security.

As a Bangladesh Civil Services officer from the 20th batch, Saiful previously served as the deputy inspector general of Metro Rail (MIRT) Police in Dhaka.

He is accused of involvement in the murder of Hridoy Chandra Tarua, a

ACC finds proof

FROM PAGE 12
headquarters on Kemal Attaturk Avenue in the capital's Banani, Didar headed out to Gulshan.

A group of miscreants followed him from the Nagad's headquarters, intercepted his car when it got to Banani road number 12 and launched an attack with hammers. The miscreants also physically assaulted Didar, he told The Daily Star.

The attack severely injured the

third-year history student at CU. Hridoy was shot in the back during a protest at Chattogram's Bahadarpur on July 18 and died from his injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital five days later.

Meanwhile, a DB team from Dhaka detained SP Tanvir Salehin Emon from Sardah Police Academy around 10:30am. However, the reason for his detention remains undisclosed.

Emon joined the police force in 2010 as part of the 28th BCS cadre. Before his post at Sardah, he served as deputy commissioner at DMP.

His father Md Iqbal was a freedom fighter and former general secretary

of the Karimganj upazila Awami League in Kishoreganj.

Rajon Kumar Saha, former assistant commissioner of DMP (Badda zone), was also arrested yesterday for his alleged involvement in the capital's Rampura during the July uprising.

Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim, a prosecutor at the International Crimes Tribunal, confirmed the arrest but did not disclose further details.

On February 8, five police officers, including DIG Molla Nazrul Islam, were arrested in various locations in the country.

20 disposed of the GD as Didar did not appear before the court as asked, so permission was not given to investigate the GD.

Bangladesh Bank Spokesman Arif Hossain Khan confirmed yesterday's attack and said Didar, also a central bank director, has been advised to file a case.

Khan assured that the matter would be handled through legal procedures.

driver and damaged the vehicle.

Earlier on September 5 last year, Didar filed a general diary (GD) against Tanvir Ahmed Mishuk, the former managing director and chief executive officer of Nagad, at Banani Police Station citing concerns for his safety.

Didar said he felt threatened after Mishuk sent him an intimidating text message the previous day.

However, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Nazmin Akter on October

are made, the tribunal will take legal action," he said.

Following a prosecution appeal, the tribunal also extended by two months the deadline for submitting the investigation report in a case filed against 11 people, including Maj Gen (relied) Ziaul Ahsan, over enforced disappearances. The tribunal set April 20 as the new submission date. The prosecution was scheduled to submit its report yesterday.

"Since the case involves allegations of enforced disappearances across the country from 2009 to 2024, we appealed for more time to complete the investigation. The tribunal granted our request," the prosecution said.

The prosecutor replied that he understood what the judge meant. "I shall convey this message to the authorities concerned."

When asked about the court proceedings, Prosecutor Tamim told reporters that the tribunal is an independent institution and does not welcome any remarks regarding its trial proceedings or activities.

"The tribunal said the trial will be impartial and transparent. I have been instructed by the tribunal to caution those making such remarks and in future if any such comments

are made, the tribunal will take legal action," he said.

Following a prosecution appeal, the tribunal also extended by two months the deadline for submitting the investigation report in a case filed against 11 people, including Maj Gen (relied) Ziaul Ahsan, over enforced disappearances. The tribunal set April 20 as the new submission date. The prosecution was scheduled to submit its report yesterday.

"Since the case involves allegations of enforced disappearances across the country from 2009 to 2024, we appealed for more time to complete the investigation. The tribunal granted our request," the prosecution said.

Of the accused, only Ziaul Ahsan was produced before the tribunal during the hearing.

The court also issued arrest warrants for two accused in connection with crimes against humanity in the Rampura area during the July uprising.

ICT Prosecutor Tamim confirmed the arrest but did not disclose the time and location of the arrest.

Later in the day, Rajan was produced before the tribunal that sent him to jail.

humanity in the Rampura area during the July uprising.

Besides, Jashim Uddin Sarkar, brother of Shahidul Islam who was killed in a "crossfire" incident involving police's Detective Branch personnel in Rajshahi on April 13, 2015, yesterday lodged a complaint with the ICT's prosecution wing against 13 people, mostly law enforcers.

In another development, police

received reports of violent mobs forcing Hindu headmasters and teachers to resign. In one instance, local BNP leaders were among the perpetrators, according to the victim's testimony.

According to National Security Intelligence information provided to the OHCHR via the interim government, 37 violent attacks

targeting minorities took place between August 5 and 15. Most incidents involved vandalism, looting, or arson.

The OHCHR, however, was not in a position to independently verify these incidents, the report said.

It also documented revenge attacks against media outlets perceived as being biased toward the Awami League.

The report said many journalists have been accused of murder and other violent crimes. Several prominent journalists viewed as supportive of the Awami League have been arrested in connection with such cases, raising concerns that the charges were "overly broad".

Since August 5, many journalists and civil society observers have reported an atmosphere of intimidation, with media outlets exercising caution in reporting anything perceived as favourable to the Awami League or critical of its political opposition, said the report.</

INTERNATIONAL

\$53b needed to rebuild Gaza: UN

AFP, United Nations

More than \$53 billion will be required to rebuild Gaza and end the "humanitarian catastrophe" that has gripped the war-torn territory, including \$20 billion in the first three years alone, the United Nations said Tuesday.

The global body said in a report that a "political and security framework" must also be put in place so that recovery and rebuilding can begin, and a groundwork can be laid for a political process to quickly end the Israeli occupation "and establish a viable two State solution."

Much of Gaza -- including schools, hospitals and other civic infrastructure -- has been reduced to rubble by a withering Israeli military offensive.

The interim assessment offers an early indication of the enormous scale of recovery and reconstruction needs in the Gaza Strip, "UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in the document, cautioning that it was not a full assessment.

The report estimates the recovery and reconstruction needs in the short, medium and long term across the Gaza Strip at \$53.142 billion. Of these, the near term needs in the first three years are estimated to be around \$20.568 billion," he added.

In a resolution adopted in December calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, the UN General Assembly had asked Guterres to provide an assessment of the territory's needs within two months.

The report assessed that with "over 60 percent of homes" destroyed in Gaza and the housing sector requires around \$15.2 billion. The commerce and industry sector will need an estimated \$6.9 billion, as will the health sector, according to the report.

Reviving the agricultural industry will take around \$4.2 billion, transport will require \$2.9 billion, water and sanitation an estimated \$2.7 billion and education \$2.6 billion.

The report also noted the particularly high costs of \$1.9 billion anticipated for the environmental sector "as a result of the massive debris laced with unexploded ordnance and the high cost associated with removal of debris."

The United Nations has estimated that the war has generated more than 50 million tonnes of debris, including human remains, unexploded ordnance, asbestos and other hazardous substances.



Migrants argue with Panamanian National Border Service members as they attempt to cross the border between Panama and Costa Rica at Paso Cana on Tuesday while trying to return to Venezuela. Dozens of Venezuelan migrants crossed the border from Costa Rica into Panama in a small caravan, having given up their journey to the United States.

PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine talks to start 'immediately'

Says Trump after holding phone conversation with Putin

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone yesterday and agreed to immediately start talks to end the Ukraine war, in an extraordinary thaw in relations that could leave Kyiv out in the cold.

Trump described the call as "lengthy and highly productive" in a post on Truth Social, saying that the two leaders had even agreed to visit each other's nations to address the deep tensions since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin separately said the call lasted nearly one-and-a-half hours and that Putin and Trump had agreed that the "time has come to work together," with a long-term solution for the Ukraine war in reach.

I just had a lengthy and highly productive phone call with President Vladimir Putin of Russia," Trump said, adding that they had discussed Ukraine, the Middle East, artificial intelligence and other subjects.

He said they agreed that "we want to stop the millions of deaths taking place in the War with Russia/Ukraine" -- with Trump using an unconfirmed figure for the toll in the Ukraine conflict.

"We agreed to work together, very closely, including visiting each other's nations to address the deep tensions since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin separately said the call lasted nearly one-and-a-half hours and that Putin and Trump had agreed that the "time has come to work together," with a long-term solution for the Ukraine war in reach.

But in a sign that Ukraine could see its fate decided by Washington and Moscow, Trump said that "we will begin

by calling President Zelensky, of Ukraine, to inform him of the conversation."

The Ukrainian presidency later confirmed that Zelensky had a phone call with Trump.

The Kremlin's statement was more measured, saying that Putin "agreed with Trump that a long-term settlement could be reached through peace negotiations."

Putin stressed any settlement would need to "address the root causes of the conflict," Peskov said, without elaborating.

Trump said he had asked US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, National Security Advisor Michael Waltz and his Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff "to lead the negotiations which, I feel strongly, will be successful."



Volunteers assist residents through swift floodwaters in Makassar, Indonesia yesterday. Hundreds of houses in four sub-districts have been flooded since Monday due to heavy rain and high-intensity sea waves.

PHOTO: AFP

DEFYING TRUMP'S ORDER

White House bars AP reporter

AFP, Washington

The Associated Press (AP) said Tuesday that its White House reporter was barred from an event with President Donald Trump over the top US news agency's refusal to follow his order renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

"We were informed by the White House that if AP did not align its editorial standards with President Donald Trump's executive order renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America, AP would be barred from accessing an event in the Oval Office," AP Executive Editor Julie Pace said.

"This afternoon AP's reporter was blocked from attending an executive order signing," Pace said.

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Invitation for e-Tender

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

Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Description	Tender Publish Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1074059	JBPLC/IT-Proc-16/OTM/Tape Cartridge/2025	Procurement of Tape cartridge for CDC of Janata Bank PLC, following Open Tendering Method (OTM).	12/02/2025 14:00 PM	03/03/2025 12:00 PM

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. Ready stock will be preferable and goods must be delivered after 05 days from contract sign.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal and e-GP Help Desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-
(Mohammad Shakawat Hossain)
Deputy General Manager

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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Economic Relations Division

Ministry of Finance
Admin-3 Section
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.erd.gov.bd

Memo No: 09.00.0000.074.26.004.25/82

Date: 12/02/2025

Tender Notice (e-GP)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of goods and services mentioned in the table below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Description of Goods/ work	Tender Document Selling Start	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1.	1074541	Procurement of Microbus for ERD	12.02.2025 at 12.00	27.02.2025 at 10.00	27.02.2025 at 12.00	27.02.2025 at 12.00

1. 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.
2. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
3. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.
4. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

12/02/2025

(Umme Hasina)
Deputy Secretary
Phone: 48114354

বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
Bangladesh Power Dev. Board

Directorate of Purchase
WAPDA Building (9th Floor), Motijheel
C/A, Dhaka
Phone No. 22338081
E-mail: dir_purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

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SL No.	Tender ID No.	Packa ge No.	Reference No.	Description of goods/works	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time	Openin g date and time
01	1074687	GRL-21 (FY:24-25)	27.11.0000.304. 25.11.225 Date: 12/02/2025	Supply of 33/11KV Power Transformer 10/13.33 MVA (Tongi Store)	17-Mar 2025 13:00	17-Mar 2025 14:00	17-Mar 2025 14:00

This is 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 branches.

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

For more details please contact to the PE's Support Desk (01768595879).

Md. Nannu Miah
ID No. 1-01304
Director
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৭৯২(৩)/১২/০২/২৫

GD- 423

GD- 420

Manager Admin

Modi heads to US to dodge tariff battle

AGENCIES

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is heading to Washington for high stakes talks in an attempt to avoid a trade war with Donald Trump.

India is considering tariff cuts in at least a dozen sectors in the hope of dodging US tariffs that would pile more pressure on its already slowing economy, reports The Guardian online.

Modi and Trump are set to meet today in Washington.

For nearly three decades, US presidents from both parties have prioritised building ties with India, seeing a natural partner against a rising China. But Trump has also raged against India over trade, in the past calling the world's fifth-largest economy the "biggest tariff abuser."

Trump himself has weaponized tariffs against friends and foes since returning to office last month. Ahead of Modi's visit, the Indian government slashed duties on high-end motorcycles -- a boost to Harley-Davidson, the iconic American company whose struggles in motorbike-loving India have captured Trump's attention.

124 journos killed in 2024: CPJ

AFP, Washington

Last year was the deadliest for journalists in recent history, with at least 124 reporters killed -- and Israel responsible for nearly 70 percent of that total, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported Wednesday.

The uptick in killings, which marks a 22 percent increase over 2023, reflects "surging levels of international conflict, political unrest and criminality worldwide," the CPJ said.

It was the deadliest year for reporters and media workers since CPJ began keeping records more than three decades ago, with journalists murdered across 18 different countries, it said.

A total of 85 journalists died in the Israeli-Hamas war, "all at the hands of the Israeli military," the CPJ said, adding that 82 of them were Palestinians.

Sudan and Pakistan recorded the second highest number of journalists and media workers killed, with six each.

In Mexico, five were killed, with CPJ reporting it had found "persistent flaws" in Mexico's mechanisms for protecting journalists.

We're not on track in curbing corruption

Latest TI corruption index shows how deeply embedded it is

It comes as no surprise that Bangladesh has once again performed poorly in Transparency International's (TI) latest ranking. But that doesn't make it any less painful, or alarming, for the global anti-graft body's corruption index—based on perceptions though it may be—paints a real picture of governance failures with deleterious effects for citizens. According to the 2024 index released on Tuesday, Bangladesh ranks 151st among 180 countries or territories, scoring just 23 out of 100—its lowest in 13 years. Seen from the bottom, it ranks 14th, making it the second lowest in South Asia and the fifth lowest in the Asia-Pacific region. This confirms that corruption remains as pervasive as ever, underscoring both the failure of the ousted Awami League regime and the inability of the interim government to break the cycle.

As the executive director of TI Bangladesh has noted, the data period for CPI 2024 coincided with the peak of kleptocratic authoritarianism in Bangladesh, during which corruption was not just tolerated but actively promoted and protected through political and governance mechanisms. Public sector corruption, particularly in public contracting and project implementation, worsened as state institutions responsible for tackling graft—such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), law enforcement, and the judiciary—were politicised and rendered ineffective. Restrictions on free media, civic space, and dissent may have further contributed to Bangladesh's poor ranking.

Unfortunately, corruption has persisted even after the fall of the Awami League government midway through the CPI data period, with reports of continued extortion, abuse of power, and turf wars over lucrative corruption networks. Despite initial promises, the interim government has failed to take decisive action to dismantle these networks or reform the entrenched culture of corruption and mismanagement within the civil service. This is further underscored by a recent survey by the Public Administration Reform Commission that reveals widespread public dissatisfaction: 80 percent of respondents, for example, believe the administration is not public-friendly, 66 percent say civil servants behave like "rulers," 42 percent think obtaining services is impossible without paying bribes, and 46 percent report facing harassment when seeking services.

The question is, why is a non-political government failing to turn this situation around? While crucial reform measures currently remain under discussion, one persistent obstacle to better performance has been the turmoil and non-cooperation within the bureaucracy, with reports of officials resisting reform efforts. This must be addressed with an iron hand. The recommendations from TIB also warrant serious consideration, particularly making the ACC truly independent and empowered to hold high-level individuals accountable and depoliticise state institutions to ensure professional integrity. Without such reforms, Bangladesh will remain trapped in the same vicious cycle of corruption and misgovernance.

Reforms must in the education sector

But decisions taken under pressure will be harmful in the long run

At a time when our education sector urgently requires substantial reforms to ensure quality and eliminate existing bottlenecks and disparities, it is disheartening that the interim government has not yet taken any major initiatives in this regard. Despite expectations that the government, which assumed power following a student-led mass uprising, would at least begin the reform process, we have yet to witness any pre-planned efforts on its part. Over the past six months, it formed six major commissions to advance reforms in various sectors, and they have already submitted their reports to the chief adviser. However, a crucial sector like education has remained removed from this process. Instead, we have seen the authorities take numerous decisions under pressure from various groups, including students, which does not bode well for the future of the sector.

While the government formed an advisory committee to reform primary and non-formal education, no steps have been taken to establish an education reform commission, which educationists believe is crucial for overhauling the sector. Soon after assuming office on August 8 last year, the government faced agitation from HSC examinees demanding the cancellation of their hitherto suspended exams. They even entered the Secretariat to put pressure on officials. Unfortunately, the government gave in to their demands without considering the consequences. Educationists argue that granting automatic passes without full exams will have long-term negative effects on students' academic and professional futures, complicating their university admissions and job prospects. A more prudent approach would have been to extend their exam preparation time, which the government didn't take.

Some other major decisions also taken under pressure include dissolving the school textbook revision coordination committee, removing "Adibashi" graffiti from textbook covers, separating seven colleges from Dhaka University with a pledge to form a separate university for them, establishing a second campus for Jagannath University under army supervision, nationalising registered independent Ebtedayee madrasas, etc. While some of these decisions may seem logical, they were largely driven by mob demands rather than careful policymaking.

There is no doubt that critical reforms are needed across the education sector—from primary to higher education—but these must follow due process, with input from experts and other stakeholders. Any hasty decision made under pressure risks causing long-term harm. Therefore, we urge the government to prioritise education sector reforms with a focus on improving quality, rather than making reactive decisions under pressure.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

France detonates atomic bomb

On this day in 1960, France detonated its first atomic bomb in the Sahara Desert.

EDITORIAL

Economic diplomacy in the time of geopolitical turbulence



Dr Zaidi Sattar
is chairman of Policy Research Institute of
Bangladesh (PRI).

ZAIDI SATTAR

With an increasingly transforming global landscape of trade and investment, Bangladesh will need strategic outward-oriented policies to cope with the challenges and opportunities emerging as it prepares to graduate from its LDC status to a developing country. Navigating the complexities of global trade, investment, and bilateral and multilateral negotiations will require a strategic and well-coordinated approach to economic diplomacy—a convergence of trade and foreign policy. The question is not whether Bangladesh needs economic diplomacy but how effectively it can leverage it to sustain exports and growth, create jobs, and secure its future in an increasingly fragmented world economy. Economic diplomacy, therefore, becomes a critical need of the hour in the evolving global geopolitics (the confluence of geopolitics and geo-economics in the global arena) of the current decade.

Turbulence in the global trade order
Geopolitics is reshaping the global economy. Countries, particularly in the Western alliance and the Russian bloc, are reevaluating their trading patterns based on economic and national security concerns. Policymakers in the East and West are increasingly focused on building economic resilience. Homeland economics, strategic autonomy, and supply chain diversification are taking precedence over trade openness.

For the past 80 years, globalisation has unlocked vast latent potential for value creation in the world economy, boosting growth, increasing incomes, and reducing poverty. Bangladesh was able to reap positive gains by leveraging globalisation. Reversing globalisation would almost certainly reverse these global gains, increase poverty, and result in a costly transition. Bangladesh will have to adopt effective economic diplomacy to minimise the impacts of deglobalisation forces while seizing any opportunities that arise.

Bangladesh's policymakers must rise to the emerging challenges stemming from seismic shifts in global trade patterns. Geopolitical tensions, protectionist policies, and supply chain realignments—such as the "China Plus One" strategy—are redefining international commerce. Trump's on again, off again tariffs are already underway, adding fuel to the

securing trade deals—it is about creating a business environment that attracts investment, fosters innovation, and enhances competitiveness. Bangladesh's current investment climate, marred by regulatory hurdles and inefficiencies in banking and customs, must be reformed to signal to foreign investors that the country is open for business. Greater trade openness and an outward-looking trade regime are essential to attract FDI.

The Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) must work in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to align trade and foreign policy objectives. Diplomatic missions abroad should be more actively involved in economic

macroeconomic stability (both internal and external), creating jobs, and reducing poverty within the shortest period. The immediate and mid-term goals and milestones include coping with the challenges of LDC graduation in November 2026, alongside the prospect of losing preferential access to major markets. Next is the goal of crossing the middle-income country threshold in the early 2030s. Achieving these goals while navigating the evolving global economic landscape will require skilful economic diplomacy integrated into its trade and investment promotion strategies.

In the domestic sphere, there is a critical need to establish coherence between inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial policy pursuits. Thus, it is essential for the government to seek alignment between its trade policy, foreign policy, and other policy objectives, such as human rights, sustainable development, and greater equity, to reassure its international partners.

Bangladesh's stance in economic diplomacy

Now more than ever, Bangladesh must maintain strong diplomatic and

when negotiating with more developed economies or large regional groups that support open trade. Another key principle is that gaining market access through negotiations (e.g. FTAs) involves reciprocity—market access received in exchange for market access and other cooperation offered. However, the terms of exchange need not be equal if the negotiating parties are at different levels of development. This is where economic diplomacy begins.

Economic diplomacy framework for Bangladesh

The ideal framework for economic diplomacy should seek to strike a strategic balance between trade openness to drive exports and growth while providing time-bound and performance-based protection to domestic manufacturing industries. Going forward, as a developing economy, Bangladesh should continue on a path of export-led growth for at least the next decade. In adhering to this framework, some guiding principles will be important.

First, in the current context of the evolving post-Bretton Woods trade order, Bangladesh must position itself



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

promotion, facilitating investment dialogues, and showcasing Bangladesh as a stable and attractive destination for business.

Moreover, tariff rationalisation is an urgent necessity. Bangladesh's protective tariff regime, designed to shield domestic industries, often discourages investment and stifles competition. A well-calibrated policy that balances protection with trade openness will be essential to fostering sustainable industrial

economic relations with its trading partners, regardless of the blocs or alliances they belong to. Bangladesh's leading export destinations are the EU, the UK, and North America (US and Canada), followed by Japan and others in the East Asia and Pacific region. Its leading import sources are China and India, followed by Japan, Singapore, the US, and others. Geopolitical tensions exist among these countries and regions.

For a small economy like Bangladesh, the ideal stance in the global marketplace is "friendship with all, malice towards none." Given the evolving geopolitics, this requires articulating a strategic economic diplomacy approach with regional and global trading partners. The course taken by Vietnam since its WTO accession in 2007 could serve as a model, but Bangladesh must develop its own framework for economic diplomacy tailored to its development goals and economic potential.

With LDC graduation looming and preferential market access for exports likely to shrink, Bangladesh must position its trade policy to harness past

Bangladesh's policymakers must rise to the emerging challenges stemming from seismic shifts in global trade patterns. Geopolitical tensions, protectionist policies, and supply chain realignments—such as the "China Plus One" strategy—are redefining international commerce. Trump's on again, off again tariffs are already underway, adding fuel to the fire.

gains from the global economy. Despite rising protectionism in some developed markets, trade openness must remain an integral component of Bangladesh's trade stance over the coming decade, simply because its domestic market is no match to the scale economies provided by the global market of over \$100 trillion.

In this context, economic statecraft comes into play. For Bangladesh, this means offering options based on mutual interests and benefits, with an expectation of differential treatment

as a friendly, trade-oriented economy vying for wider market access to regional groups and long-established trading partners, keeping rising tensions across regional and power blocs only in the rearview mirror.

Second, export orientation in trade and import substitute industrialisation domestically must be based on principles of comparative advantage, given Bangladesh's resource endowments. However, the source of comparative advantage could shift over time as the skill intensity of goods and services production evolves over time. To maintain its dynamic competitive advantage, Bangladesh must engage in upskilling its labour force as traded products become increasingly skill-intensive.

Third, domestic interests need to be appropriately safeguarded without turning trade and investment policies too inward-oriented. Tariff rationalisation has been a longstanding reform priority that could be intertwined with negotiating options for free trade agreements, whether bilateral or regional.

Fourth, Bangladesh has been lagging behind in many critical areas of economic reform, not least in trade policy. The interim government is strongly committed to reforms in several areas of national importance, including economic reforms in banking, finance, taxes and subsidies, and international trade and investment. A reformist government sends a strong positive message to potential foreign investors who look for investment opportunities on a global scale.

Finally, Bangladesh has been playing a notable role in supporting climate action—a global public good. It has also been an important player in defending and promoting the interests of LDCs in international fora while demonstrating its strong commitment to the rules-based international order under the WTO framework. Going forward, these elements must remain key drivers of its economic diplomacy framework.

Bangladesh's trade-oriented future development hinges on its ability to engage in strategic and forward-thinking economic diplomacy on the global stage. Even as the world moves towards an era of protectionism and regionalism, Bangladesh must not remain a passive participant. It must proactively shape its trade and investment policies, ensuring that its transition from an LDC to a developing economy is marked not by uncertainty but by opportunity. The time for decisive action is now.

fire. Bangladesh, once a beneficiary of globalisation, must now proactively adapt to these changes. Trade restrictions have more than tripled since 2019, according to the World Trade Organization (WTO), making it imperative for Bangladesh to forge resilient trade relationships while preserving its hard-earned export advantages.

One of the most immediate concerns is the loss of preferential trade benefits post-LDC graduation. While developed markets, such as the EU and the UK, have provided tariff-free access to Bangladeshi exports, these privileges will soon be phased out. This underscores the urgency of securing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs) with key trading partners, including Japan, Singapore, India, Malaysia, and other non-traditional trading partners. Unfortunately, Bangladesh's progress in these negotiations has been slow, often hindered by high tariff barriers, protectionist lobbies, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. Economic diplomacy must take centre stage to expedite these agreements and ensure a smooth transition into a new global trade regime.

Economic diplomacy for a developing economy

In pursuit of economic diplomacy, the first task at hand for Bangladesh is to articulate the economic goals of this developing nation—achieving rapid and inclusive growth by ensuring

growth while ensuring market access in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Multilateralism and Bangladesh's global standing

For decades, Bangladesh has been a strong proponent of multilateralism, benefiting from WTO agreements and regional trade initiatives. However, with major economies increasingly prioritising bilateral and regional agreements, Bangladesh must adopt a more pragmatic approach. While advocating for a rule-based international order, it must also engage in strategic bilateral and regional negotiations to secure market access and investment flows.

Additionally, Bangladesh's growing leadership in global climate action presents an opportunity to enhance its diplomatic influence. As a climate-vulnerable nation, it has a vested interest in global sustainability efforts.

Integrating environmental diplomacy into economic negotiations can not only secure green financing but also position Bangladesh as a key player in global sustainability dialogues.

Strengthening trade and investment policy
Economic diplomacy is not just about

EKUSHEY BOI MELA

At the crossroads of freedom and censorship

Mahiya Tabassum
is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

MAHIYA TABASSUM

The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has long been more than a seasonal book fair—it is a living barometer of Bangladesh's cultural and political soul. For me, February has always been a month steeped in nostalgia. The gentle breeze, shiny leaves, the familiar scent of fresh ink, and the memories of childhood treks with my father and sisters bloomed like krishnachura flowers—of my father's hand guiding small fingers across book spines, of careful calculations to fit one more story within a modest budget, and of the pure joy of walking home with arms full of literary treasures. Yet, as the years have passed, what was once a modest, intimate celebration of literature has become a sprawling arena where commerce, censorship, and ideological conflict intertwine.

What began in 1972 as Chittaranjan Saha's humble tribute to the 1952 Language Movement—a single stall on the Bangla Academy premises—has, over the decades, evolved into a month-long celebration of Bengali literature, culture, and identity. However, the evolution of Boi Mela presents a striking paradox. While it has grown exponentially in scale and grandeur, something essential seems to have disappeared. In its earliest days, the book fair was more of a tribute to the ideals of free expression and self-determination. The fair that once fit comfortably within the Bangla Academy premises now sprawls across Suhrawardy Udyana, yet the intimate connection between readers and literature appears to have diminished. The emergence of "book selfies" and trending book reviews on social media hints at a shift from deep engagement with literature to performative reading—a metaphor, perhaps, for broader cultural shifts in Bangladeshi society. Back then, publishers treated literature as a calling rather than a mere commodity. That aura of unencumbered intellectualism, however, has gradually eroded. Today, the

fair is a juxtaposition of cherished literary traditions and the harsh realities of political interference.

A series of unsettling incidents over recent years has cast a long shadow over the fair's foundational principles. In 2023, the banning of Adarsha Publishing House from participating due to a book deemed to contain "political obscenity" was not an isolated case. The stated objections—ranging from disparaging remarks about Bengali nationalism and revered historical figures to "attacks" on the previous government—highlight a worrying trend: the imposition of subjective criteria to police what can be publicly discussed or celebrated.

Critics and stalwarts of free thought, including veteran intellectuals and publishers, have long decried such measures. The murder of Avijit Roy in 2015, an event that still haunts the community of free thinkers, marked a brutal escalation in the suppression of dissenting voices. Even if the fair's management now claims that the formation of a task force to vet "obscenity" will not impede free speech, the very act of designating certain texts as unacceptable undercuts the fair's original promise of intellectual liberation.

My own journey through the years of the fair mirrors these transformations. I recall a time when every book purchased felt like an act of rebellion against an oppressive norm—a small but profound assertion of freedom. The excitement of wandering through rows of stalls, absorbing the lively banter of literary enthusiasts, and even engaging in the playful "book selfie" phenomenon, which today seems to celebrate image over substance, now coexists with an undercurrent of disquiet.

A few years ago, a surreal encounter with a figure reminiscent of the legendary Humayun Ahmed served as a poignant reminder of the fair's once-hallowed status. That day, after a striking conversation with the look-alike,

I came back home with one realisation: "Nothing lasts. The period of hunger swallows everything but stories. Stories remain." I was reminded that despite the encroaching pressures—both commercial and political—the core value of storytelling endures. Yet, this moment of beauty was tempered by the reality that even long-held traditions, such as the art of gifting books, have been reshaped by market forces and the digital age.

these two prominent figures—something we haven't seen in the last 15 years at least, but it's definitely a familiar scene. Same letter, different envelope.

Yet, beneath this vibrant facade, tensions remain palpable. The recent shutdown of the stall "Sabyasachi," featuring controversial exiled writer Taslima Nasrin's books—sparked by an altercation between the publisher and a mob and subsequent police intervention—

mob violence, saying the government would handle such issues with an iron hand "from now on." Does this imply that the culprits causing this violence would be excused this time? Instead of "scolding them" on social media and downplaying the gravity of the issue, the interim government should act more responsibly and promptly.

Moreover, the evolving landscape of the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela is, in many ways, a microcosm of the wider socio-political struggle in Bangladesh. On one hand, it continues to be a cherished meeting point for readers, writers, and activists—a place where books are not merely commodities but vessels of ideas and memory. On the other hand, the fair has increasingly become a flashpoint for ideological battles. The coexistence of politically charged publications, NGO-sponsored literature, and commercial bestsellers speaks to a deeper tension: the conflict between an ideal of unbridled intellectual exploration and the pragmatic demands of a market—and a state—ready to impose its own narrative.

Scholars and seasoned participants alike lament that regulations intended to curb so-called "obscenity" often end up stifling the very debates that are essential to intellectual growth. When censorship becomes a tool for political manoeuvring, it not only narrows the spectrum of permissible thought but also alienates the very audience that once found refuge in the fair's embrace.

The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela stands as a rock, reflecting the resilience of literature in the face of shifting political winds. Its evolution—from a modest gathering that celebrated the triumph of language to a sprawling fair riddled with commercial excess and political strife—mirrors the complexities of a nation grappling with its identity. While the fair's physical transformations and modern amenities speak to progress, the recurring incidents of censorship, political interference, and ideological purging reveal a society still in the throes of reconciling its democratic ideals with the realities of power.

For those of us who have loved and lived through the various incarnations of this fair, the enduring hope is that, amidst the cacophony of modern pressures, the true spirit of literature—its capacity to challenge, to comfort, and to inspire—will ultimately prevail. After all, stories remain, enduring the tides of time and tyranny alike.



Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, what was once a modest, intimate celebration of literature, has become a sprawling arena where commerce, censorship, and ideological conflict intertwine.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Fast forward to 2025, and the evolution is as stark as it is multifaceted. On one level, the fair has embraced an innovative, almost architectural, reimagining. Stalls now boast distinct, thematic designs that transform the venue into a living gallery of creative expression. Programmes celebrating historical milestones like the July mass uprising have infused the fair with a renewed sense of purpose—a nod to the democratic struggles that gave rise to our cultural identity. And you possibly cannot ignore the giant stall set up by Eti publishers, with colourful book covers, featuring BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, on its walls. The stall, as implied already, contains books written by and about

exemplifies the ongoing friction between free literary expression and reactionary forces. Given the current state of law and order in the country, shouldn't the authorities have tighter security at the Boi Mela premises? During my visit, this was the first thing that concerned me. The metal detectors at the entry points are as good as a knife in a gunfight. Now, protests by student groups and impassioned condemnations by figures like Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus have only deepened the conversation about what it means to preserve freedom of expression in a space so vital to our collective cultural memory. To make it more concerning and ironic, Mahfuj Alam, adviser to the interim government, issued a strong warning against any sort of

LETTERS FROM THE UK

Dr Geof Wood
is a development anthropologist and author of several books and numerous journal articles, with a regional focus on South Asia. He is also emeritus professor of international development at the University of Bath, UK.

GEOF WOOD

I think I have made a mistake. In my previous "letter from London" I referred to my reading of Will Hutton's book *This Time No Mistakes, How to Remake Britain* which is a timely and brilliant 371-page note to the incoming Labour government. As I do with impressive books, I have bought and shared copies of this book with others (which is how I came across it from my friend in York, Linda, a retired higher secondary economics teacher). So, what is my mistake? I bought a copy for my brother, my *boro bhai*, a retired academic civil engineer for his recent 82nd birthday. He is part way through it and inundating me with text messages on a near daily basis. Like any good engineer, he has an endlessly curious mind, and likes to pick things apart. He likes to wrestle a problem to the ground. And he is a progressive social democrat.

Now, I am not an economist by discipline, though I did head an economics department at Bath for five years since we had international development in the department's title. And I have worked closely with economists over the years, since being surrounded by them in the early days of the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University when the non-economists were a tiny minority. And, I was tutored by a Cambridge economist, Philippa Lesley Cook, as a first year undergraduate at Sussex University, where she had re-located. Every Saturday morning, she destroyed my weekly essay before re-constructing me for the following week's tryst. So, I have learned to survive in the company of economists, and there are a few in Bangladesh who might just attest to that claim.

So, what is my mistake with my trusted elder brother? I have long felt that the majority of people across the world are fundamentally disempowered given that the prevailing political discourse always seems to come back to economics. It is everywhere, all around us, whether about inflation, interest rates, taxation and budgets, exchange rates and so on. And yet, what proportion of the electorate comprehends such economics? Expert commentators in the media are at ease when discussing the relationship between the above variables and others. They assume we know the underlying theory that connects demand, supply, inflation and unemployment. They assume we know about the impact of tariffs on exporting and importing countries, and who pays or receives those tariffs. They assume we understand trade theory. They assume we understand the impact of marginal tax rates on revenue receipts. They assume we understand what the ratios ought to be between GDP, tax take and sustainable national debt. The list goes on. I am sure most MAGA supporters of Trump in the US and Brexit voters in the UK have no clue about such issues. In the UK, buyers' remorse about Brexit is high.

In addition to seeking to educate my brother up to my amateur level and having Linda from York explain the paragraph above to me, I am also in touch with a retired economics professor, who was senior to me and who "facilitated" me into heading his department. David wrote an impressive book on altruism years back, and still writes about Malthus and Ricardo for fun (he is 88). So, when desperate, I also have the ear of a high-end theorist who can do regressions, but chooses not to! So here I am, sandwiched between these clever people as well as among many many in Bangladesh.

Thus equipped, what is my mistake? My brother, never satisfied with brush offs, will not settle for the secondary discourse of accepted assumptions between economic variables. He wants to know why? And he is asking me, all the time through numerous text messages and phone calls including what page he has reached. Well, reader, I am doing my best, additionally supported by Google and Wikipedia. I have become an auto-didact about economics again.

But here's the serious point. Do we have to be economists to be citizens? If so, how are we to be empowered with enough economics to understand political choices and not be ruled by the technique of a tiny elite of professional economists, or the antics of those who think they know how an economy works, like the new incumbent in the White House? For years, when I was the head of economics and international development at Bath University, I asked my colleagues, including David, how this empowerment could be done. They could start by holding regular explanatory seminars for other staff across the university. They could create a regular national broadcasting slot (in our case, the BBC) in which some semi- "economate" individuals ask folks like Linda in York or David to deal with the week's main economic conundrums in plain language. As a kind of development anthropologist, I am often criticised for using complex language! Maybe guilty as charged, but have you listened to economists and THEIR jargon? They don't want us to understand. They just want to talk amongst themselves and retain their monopoly over this area of knowledge—rather like the monopolies of lawyers and their incomprehensible legal speak.

So, I see my brother as the everyman in this aspect of empowerment. We need common sense interlocutors to re-establish a wider sense of participation and citizenship in what has become an elitist and exclusionary discourse about the fundamental political choice questions that affect us all. And if this resembles a fantasy in a so-called educated country like the UK, then how does this problem map onto the plethora of other societies across the world? What chance do ordinary people have of controlling oligarchic power, not just of the demagogues and tech bros, but of the language through which political discourse is constructed and framed? We are a long way from empowerment.

And yet again, Bangladesh may be showing the way a little. I have engaged with and worked with many of its economists in academia, think tanks and the government itself. It seems to me that they are less obsessed with seeing every passing data-set, however dubious, as an opportunity for data mining in pursuit of another "academic" paper deploying regression

analysis. Instead, many colleagues in Bangladesh are more willing and indeed able to talk in plainer language whether on TV talk shows, or in public seminars and the press. In a sense, these Renaissance performers are able to transcend the formal markers of their discipline and offer themselves

as political economists—debating in more inclusive ways the issues of the moment whether poverty, trade policy or the fragility of the country's macroeconomy in ways in which at least me and my brother can understand. The recent sequence of BIDS annual conferences held in early

December every year has been a good example. I have closely witnessed the last four of them and have not felt excluded. So, let's have more everymen, like my brother, and everywomen, like my friend Linda from York, whose successful career has been built on empowering sixth formers.

Economics for all?

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

EDCL invites Two Envelope System International Tender for Supply of Pharmaceutical Raw Material on C&F C Basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Items	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP/RM/SEM/55/2024-2025 dated 12/02/2025	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (specification as per tender schedule): 01. Methyl Hydroxy Benzoate BP 02. Ceftriaxone Sodium for Injection (Sterile) USP 03. Cetirizine HCl BP 04. Clopidogrel Hydrogen Sulfate BP 05. Fexofenadine HCl USP	Tk. 5,150.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 42.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 16/03/2025 At 11.00 AM Opening : 16/03/2025 at 11.15 AM
02.	IMP/RM/SEM/56/2024-2025 dated 12/02/2025	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (specification as per tender schedule): 01. Phenoxymethyl Penicillin Potassium BP 02. Sorbitol Solution (70%) BP 03. Enteric Coating Material (Pink) used with organic solvent (Opadry-OY-91 S54902 Pink or equivalent) Ph. Gr. 04. Film Coating Material colour Pink (Moisture protective) used with organic solvent (WINCOAT WT-MP-01158 (Pink) or equivalent) Ph. Gr. 05. Orange Oil BP 06. Essence of Orange Sweet Ph. Gr.	Tk. 2,000.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 16.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 18/03/2025 At 11.00 AM Opening : 18/03/2025 at 11.15 AM
03.	IMP/RM/SEM/57/2024-2025 dated 12/02/2025	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (specification as per tender schedule): 01. Paracetamol BP	Tk. 3850.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 32.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 19/03/2025 At 11.00 AM Opening : 19/03/2025 at 11.15 AM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender. The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Co.Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

N.B: This Information is also available at our Website : www.edcl.gov.bd

(8" X 4)

General Manager
Procurement (CC).
For: Managing Director

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE, Store Division
Cherhat, Khalishpur, Khulna
Phone # 02477702159
E-mail: khulna_store@yahoo.com

Invitation for Tender (Goods)

Tender Notice 04/2024-25

Date: 12/02/2025

Memo No. 46.03.4700.028.07.001.19-473

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Office of the Executive Engineer, Store Division, Khulna.

Tender ID No.	Tender package	Description of goods	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
1075060	APP/K/D/R2/2024-25	Supplying of Motorized Valve (MV) for Mobile Water Treatment Plant	02-March-2025 Time: 16:00	03-March-2025 Time: 11:00	03-March-2025 Time: 11:00

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.

GD-418

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Md. Khairel Hasan
Executive Engineer
DPHE, Store Division, Khulna

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Jhalakathi
E-mail: eejha@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.4240.432.04.001.20-256(3)

Dated: 12/02/2025

Invitation for e-Tenders (OTM)

Sl. No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Tender security	Last selling date & time	Closing/ opening date & time
01	08/e GP/PMP- Roads /JRD/2024-2025 Periodic Maintenance Program for DBS Wearing Course Work at Ch.0+000(Khejurtola) to Ch. 9+5000 (Taltola More) km of Bakerkati-Nalchity Road (Z-8047) & DBS Wearing Course Work at Ch.0+000(Shatpakkia) to Ch.3+500 (Nalchik) & RCC Palisiding work Satpakkia (Barishal-Jhalokati Highway)-Nalchity Road (Z-8709) under Jhalokati Road Division during 2024-2025.	1072472	30,50,000/-	16-03-2025 05-00pm	17-03-2025 12-00pm

01. These are online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal.

02. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Shahriar Sharif Khan
ID No. 602247
Executive Engineer, RHD (c.c)
Jhalakathi Road Division

GD-417



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police

Police Telecommunication Organization
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbagh, Dhaka
Web: telecom.police.gov.bd

Invitation for International Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis in FY 2024-2025.

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs
2. Agency	Bangladesh Police
3. Procuring entity name	SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization
4. Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis in FY 2024-2025.
5. Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.057.11.033.24/637/Betar
6. Date	12/02/2025

KEY INFORMATION

7. Procurement method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) - (International)
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FUNDING INFORMATION

8. Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB)
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9. Tender publication date	13 February 2025.
10. Tender last selling date	06 April 2025.
11. Tender closing date and time	07 April 2025 at 12:00 hrs.
12. Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	07 April 2025 at 12:30 hrs.

Name & address of the office

13. Name & address of the office	Bangladesh Police, Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.
Selling tender document	ASP (Procurement), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.
Receiving tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.
Opening tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.

14. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	03 March 2025 at 12:00 hrs. at Police Telecom Conference Room (1st Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.
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INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15. Eligibility of tenderer	1) Up-to-date Export license (2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal (3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability (4) Original full Brochure of products of the Principal (5) Other requirements described in the tender document.
16. Brief description of goods: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis in FY 2024-2025.	

Sl. No.	Description of good	Price of tender document (non-refundable)	Tender security	Completion time
1.	DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis	10,000/-	Tk 35,50,000/- or US\$ 29,100.00	150 days from the Date of Opening L/C.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

17. Name of official inviting tender	Shahriar Bin Saleh
18. Designation of the official inviting tender	SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbagh, Dhaka-1217.
19. Address of official inviting tender	Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbagh, Dhaka-1217.
20. Contact details of official inviting the tender	Phone: +880 2-8301253 Fax: +880 2-8301404, Mobile: +88 01320-020041, e-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

21. The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore, both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.
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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

22. a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.
b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.
c) The procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.
d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.
e) Evaluation will be done by Lot basis.
f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.
g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.
h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.
i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2008.

Shahriar Bin Saleh
BP 7810126915
SP (Logistics)
Police Telecommunication Organization
Rajarbagh, Dhaka
Mobile: 01320020041
E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

GD-422



Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.

(A Company of Petrobangla)

(Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100)

গ্যাস ব্যবহারে সশ্রান্তি হোন এবং

সময়মত গ্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করুন

শুক্রবার চৰ্তা কৰি

সমৃদ্ধ সোনার বাংলা গড়ি

বিনা কাৰণে গ্যাসেৰ চৰা জলিয়ে রাখা

আৱ বিপদকে ডাকা একই বিষয়

Ref. No. 28.16.9100.095.70.001.24.130

Dated: 11 February, 2025

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender have published through National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Package No. & date of publishing	Name of the work	Tender last selling and closing date & time
01.	e-Tender Id: 1073301 Package No: JGDSL.PL.PW-02 Date of publishing: 11 February, 2025	“Construction of (i) 10"dia x 8.00 km x 150 Psig & (ii) 4" dia x 1.20 km x 150 Psig Gas Pipeline from Andiura to Korora (Al-Amin CNG Station) Shahjibazar, Hobigonj.”	Last selling: 03-Mar-2025, 17:00 Closing date & time: 04-Mar-2025, 15:00 Opening date & time: 04-Mar-2025, 15:00

The interested persons/firms may visit the website <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> to get the details of the tender. 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 Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal/e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Engr. Mohammad Sarwar Jahan Mahmud
General Manager (Planning & ICT Division)
Tel: +8802997700612
E-mail: gm_planning_ict@jgtdsl.gov.bd

GD

Shanto stakes claim for solidity

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto made a big statement ahead of the squad's final training session at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday, saying that they are going to the Champions Trophy with the goal of winning the tournament. Far from trying to convince anyone, Shanto was perhaps just sending a message of what they should seek out.

The Tigers' best outing in the tournament came in the last edition in 2017 in England when they made the semifinals against India – also their best ever finish in an ICC tournament. But there has been an overhaul of the squad from that time and recent ICC events have not gone in Bangladesh's favour.

Shanto, however, was seeking solidity in an ICC tournament during this phase of Bangladesh's transition. The Tigers' growth in the ODI format has remained incomplete. They are yet to fire in the biggest stages against the biggest opponents when it really matters. ODI cricket on more batting friendly surfaces have also caught the Tigers napping. But for seminal work on the team's mettle, there needs to be solidity, something that was missing due to haphazard batting order changes in the 2023 ODI World Cup in India where Bangladesh had one of their best ever squads.

The results suffered greatly and Bangladesh squeezed into the Champions Trophy by winning their final league phase fixture against Sri Lanka. Shanto said they have a good idea about the batting order this time around and injuries during the West Indies series allowed them to take a litmus test on their overall abilities.

"In the last series [in West Indies], two-three players couldn't play due to injuries. This gave an opportunity to Jaker [Ali], who had a brilliant series.

[Mahmudullah] Riyad bhai performed well, and [Mehedi] Miraz did well at number four. We have now understood where each player fits best and who is in good form. The injuries helped us see these things. We are pretty clear about the batting order and who will bat where. We know each player's role, so this won't be a big issue," Shanto said.

The bigger worry would be around high-scoring pitches, given the team's struggles in the West Indies on lavish batting friendly wickets.

"I expect the pitches in Pakistan to be 300+ wickets. If we bat first, we need to post such scores. Even while defending, we will need to defend such scores. In Dubai, conditions vary at different times. Still, I think scores will be around 260-280. It's tough to predict exact numbers, but historically, that's how it has been," Shanto replied to a question regarding what scores they expect to see in the tournament.

Spinners were especially ineffective on those St. Vincent surfaces and lack of wickets in the middle-overs were an issue. Shanto backed the three spinners in Miraz, Nasum Ahmed and Rishad Hossain to play to their abilities. There are gaps yet, such as Shakib Al Hasan's exclusion, but Shanto did not want to reflect on it at this stage.

This time there is an in-form Taskin Ahmed, and Nahid Rana's raw pace gives them a slight morale-boost. Asked which would be their strongest suit – the batting or bowling, Shanto felt they have new utilities and now only execution remains.

"We are not thinking separately. At one point, we didn't have quality pace bowlers, but now we have a strong pace-bowling unit. We didn't have wrist spinners before, but now we do. Overall, we have a balanced team. If everyone fulfills their responsibilities properly, we can defeat any team at any time," Shanto concluded.



● This is the first time that Real Madrid beat Manchester City at Etihad in the Champions League. Real had lost three and drew three in their previous six visits.

● Manchester City have failed to win any of their last four Champions League games in which they've scored first, with all those coming this season (1-4 v Sporting CP, 3-3 v Feyenoord, 2-4 v PSG, 2-3 v Real Madrid).

● City failed to win a Champions League game in which they led twice for the third time, and first time ever at the Etihad Stadium. All three occasions have been against Real Madrid (also September 2012 and April 2024).

● Jude Bellingham (Borussia Dortmund and Real Madrid) became the first English player to score a Champions League goal against an English side for two different clubs.

● Manchester City have conceded 57 goals in 38 games in all competitions this season, three more than they did in 59 games last term. Only in 2016-17 (60) have they conceded more in a campaign under Pep Guardiola.

Vinicius has the last laugh on City fans

AFP, Manchester

Vinicius Junior started the night with a reminder of his Ballon d'Or heartbreak, but ended it by reminding Manchester City why Real Madrid have such a strong record in the Champions League.

Real Madrid twice came from behind before snatching a dramatic stoppage-time winner in their 3-2 playoff round first-leg victory over Premier League champions City on Tuesday.

Home fans displayed a huge banner with a picture of City midfielder Rodri Hernandez holding the Ballon d'Or, which he won in October 2024 ahead of Vinicius.

"Stop crying your heart out" City's banner chided the Spanish giants, giving a nod to a song of the same name by Manchester band Oasis.

However, it was City who ended the night in tears after Jude Bellingham stabbed home a late winner, set up by Vinicius.

Kylian Mbappe levelled for Madrid after Erling Haaland sent them ahead, and Brahim

Diaz snatched an 86th-minute equaliser after the Norwegian netted his second from the penalty spot.

Vinicius and Bellingham combined for Madrid's third in the 92nd minute, sealing another late comeback win for a side who have made a habit of them in Europe.



The City fan group who organised the banner said it was aimed at Real Madrid chief Florentino Perez.

The home fans certainly had Vinicius in their sights though. "Where's your Ballon d'Or?" jeered supporters at the Brazilian winger.

Vinicius responded in the moment by pointing at the badge on his sleeve, the number 15 representing Real Madrid's record number of European Cup triumphs.

However, Vinicius' most

effective answer came on the pitch.

The forward's shot was saved with Diaz turning home the rebound to tie the game at 2-2 before Vinicius helped engineer Madrid's winner on the night.

Vinicius burst into the area, lofting the ball past the onrushing Ederson, with Bellingham able to turn home from close range.

"I saw the banner, but whenever opposition fans do things (like that) it gives me more strength to have a great game, and here I did that," Vinicius told Movistar.

It was not a vintage Vinicius display, although his persistent probing down the left was still enough to earn the man of the match award – the best way he could have answered all the jeers and taunts by City fans as he posed with the MOTM crest in front of the City fans, at their home ground.

Not someone to let something go, Vinicius will be scenting blood in the second leg at the Santiago Bernabeu next Wednesday, although he said the team comes above individuals.

Long-ignored district leagues back in focus

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is set to revive district football leagues, which have been neglected for over a decade.

Since the formation of District Football Associations (DFAs) in 2008 under FIFA guidelines, the league has been held only four times – 2013, 2014, 2018, and 2020 – under former BFF president Kazi Salahuddin. This decline has weakened the supply line of footballers to Dhaka leagues from districts.

Financial constraints and limited stadium access have been major obstacles, as District Sports Associations control both facilities and government funding, excluding football.

Keeping both issues in mind, Iqbal Hossain-led new BFF district football league committee has assured the DFAs of partial financial support as well as assistance in resolving ground problems through the National Sports Council.

"Some 10 to 12 districts have agreed to start their respective leagues, and they are supposed to inform us about their league schedules by February 15, as we want each DFA to hold their district league regularly to revive football across the country," Iqbal told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that they would recommend the BFF executive committee make the district league mandatory for all DFAs.

"Those DFAs which will not be able to run the league at their district level don't need to be associated with the football federation. The DFAs must hold the league, either on a big scale or a small scale, because we will provide financial support to them if needed," said the former national midfielder, adding that they have been searching for area-based sponsors to support the district leagues.

So far, 11 districts have agreed to run their respective district leagues: Narail, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Madaripur, Faridpur, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Dinajpur, and Sunamganj.

Sunamganj DFA president Juned Ahmed Rajran told The Daily Star yesterday, "I held the district league once in 2022 and organised the DFA Championship tournament twice without financial help from the BFF. Now, we can't hold the league due to the unavailability of the ground, despite the allotment of the district stadium being sought from the district administration last December.

"If the football leagues in all 64 districts are held regularly and some four to five good players from each district emerge, then the crisis of quality footballers can come to an end."



Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka led by example and smashed a belligerent hundred to set up a 49-run victory over a depleted Australia in their low-scoring opening ODI in Colombo on Wednesday. Australia's second-string pace attack bowled out Sri Lanka for 214 in 46 overs despite Asalanka's nearly run-a-ball 127 while coping with cramps following his decision to bat first. Chasing a modest target, Australia could not recover from a top order meltdown and were all out for 165 in 33.5 overs.

PHOTO: AFP

Stars sidelined in CHAMPIONS TROPHY 2025

The ICC Champions Trophy 2025, running from February 19 to March 9 across Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Dubai, is already marred by high-profile withdrawals. A mix of established and rising stars have been ruled out, with two-time champions Australia hit the hardest. Here's a look at the biggest absences ahead of the mega event:

Jasprit Bumrah (India; fast bowler; lower back injury)



Pat Cummins (Australia; all-rounder; elbow injury)



Josh Hazlewood (Australia; fast bowler; hip injury)



Mitch Marsh (Australia; all-rounder; lower back pain)



Mitchell Starc (Australia; fast bowler; personal reasons)



Anrich Nortje (South Africa; fast bowler; back injury)



Sain Ayub (Pakistan; batter; ankle injury)



Jacob Bell (England; batter; hamstring injury)



Arsenal's Havertz out for season

AFP, London

Arsenal's bid to win the Premier League could suffer a major setback following reports Kai Havertz is set to be ruled out for rest of the season.

The German forward sustained an injury during the club's warm-weather training camp in Dubai and was due to face further tests on the club's arrival back in England.

The Athletic reported on Wednesday the 25-year-old Havertz had suffered a torn hamstring.

Arsenal, however, have yet to comment on the extent of Havertz's injury.

His potential long-term absence would though compound the problems confronting Gunners boss Mikel Arteta after Arsenal were unable to bolster their attack during the recent January transfer window.



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NAGAD IRREGULARITIES ACC finds proof of Tk 2,300cr corruption

Nagad administrator attacked
soon after ACC raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nagad's administrator was attacked by miscreants yesterday, moments after an Anti-Corruption Commission team raided the digital financial services provider's headquarters and left with preliminary evidence of corruption and money laundering amounting to Tk 2,300 crore.

"We have collected documents and will scrutinise them before submitting a detailed report to the commission," said Tanzir Ahmed, an assistant director at ACC. Ahmed and Ruhul Haque, another assistant director at ACC, led the raid.

Initial findings indicate that Tk 1,700 crore was laundered, while there were irregularities concerning Tk 600 crore in e-money, Nagad's administrator Mohammad Badiuzzaman Didar told the media after the raid.

Earlier on February 3, BB filed a case against Nagad, alleging fraud, embezzlement and financial irregularities amounting to Tk 645 crore.

The lawsuit named 24 individuals, including 16 officials of Nagad and eight officials of the Directorate of Posts.

After the ACC enforcement team left Nagad's

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'Interim govt
backed by the
will of people'

In its full verdict, HC
says the current govt
is supported by legal
instrument

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court in the full text of an order observed that the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus was supported by legal documents and formed by the will of the people.

"As to the submission [arguments] of Mr [Muhammad Mohsen] Rashid to the effect that the present interim government is not backed by any legal instrument that makes the Yunus government an usurper, it is pertinent to mention that the president of Bangladesh in a unique situation in the history of Bangladesh upon taking advisory opinion as per article 106 of the constitution has acted as per the opinion."

"It is therefore, backed by legal instrument as well as backed by the will of the people of Bangladesh," the HC bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Sikder Mahmudur Razi said in the recently released full text.

Earlier on January 13, the bench summarily rejected a writ petition filed by Muhammad Mohsen Rashid, a Supreme Court lawyer, challenging the process for formation and oath of the Prof Yunus-led interim government under the Supreme

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Relatives of enforced disappearance victims yesterday gathered near the Mayer Daak office in the capital's Shaheenbagh, protesting their exclusion from the Aynagar visits. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, accompanied by some survivors, media personnel, and others, yesterday visited the secret detention centres in three places in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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ICT irked by
law adviser's
comment on
verdict time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday expressed annoyance over remarks that verdicts in three to four cases filed over the killings during the July uprising are expected by October.

Although the tribunal chief, Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, did not mention any names, he was understandably speaking in reference to Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul's comments a day before.

At a press conference at the Secretariat on Tuesday, Nazrul said he expected that judgments in three to four ICT cases would be delivered by October.

Saying that even though the investigations have not been completed yet, Justice Mozumder wondered how the date and time of verdicts of these cases could be speculated.

"We will not pay heed to such comments," said chairman of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Uncertainty over Gaza truce builds

Israeli military calls up reservists after
Netanyahu issues hostage release demand

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel's military has called up reservists in preparation for a possible resumption of fighting in Gaza if Hamas fails to meet a Saturday deadline to release more Israeli hostages and a nearly month-old ceasefire breaks down.

Under the ceasefire deal in force since January 19, the Palestinian group agreed to free three more hostages on Saturday. But it said this week it was suspending the handover because of what it said were Israeli violations of the terms.

US President Donald Trump responded by saying all hostages must be freed by noon on Saturday or he would "let hell break out". Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned on Tuesday that Israel would resume "intense fighting" if Hamas did not meet the deadline, but did not say how many hostages should be freed.

Meanwhile, Israel continued its siege of the city of Tulkarem, as well as the refugee camps of Tulkarem and Nur Shams, in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli officials said government ministers had endorsed Trump's threat to "cancel" the ceasefire unless all the remaining Israeli hostages are released on Saturday.

Hamas has said it remains committed to the agreement but has not agreed to release the

hostages on Saturday.

A Palestinian official close to the talks said mediators had stepped up their intervention "to prevent things sliding into a real crisis."

Asked for comment on where things stand, another Hamas official told Reuters, without giving details: "Contacts are under way."

Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit told the World Government Summit in Dubai that if Trump pressed ahead with his vision for Gaza, he would lead the Middle East into a new cycle of crises with a "damaging effect on peace and stability."

Jasem al-Budaiwi, who heads the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council political and economic alliance, called on Trump to remember the strong ties between the region and Washington.

"But there has to be give and take, he says his opinion and Arab world should say theirs; what he is saying won't be accepted by the Arab world," he said.

Egypt will host an emergency Arab summit on February 27 to discuss "serious" developments for Palestinians.

Aboul Gheit said the idea of the Arab Peace Initiative floated in 2002, in which Arab nations offered Israel normalised ties in return for a statehood deal with the Palestinians and full Israeli withdrawal from territory captured in 1967, would be reintroduced.

- Qatar, Egypt working intensively to resolve crisis: Palestinian source
- Trump's Gaza plan risks new crises: Arab League
- Israel wrecks havoc in occupied West Bank

JULY UPRISING
Ex-Ctg police
commissioner,
another former
cop arrested

STAR REPORT

Two senior police officers, including a former Chattogram Metropolitan Police commissioner, were arrested yesterday in connection with cases filed over the July uprising.

The arrestees are former CMP commissioner Saiful Islam and Rajan Kumar Saha, former assistant commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Badda zone).

Meanwhile, the Detective Branch of police detained Tanvir Salehin Emon, superintendent of police at Sardah Police Academy in Rajshahi.

Saiful was arrested in Dhaka and brought back to Chattogram yesterday afternoon.

He was then presented before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mostafa with a 7-day remand prayer in a case filed over the murder of a Chittagong University student during the July uprising.

The court allowed police to interrogate him at the jail gate for three days.

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EC seeks record Tk 2,794cr for next nat'l polls

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission has sought Tk 2,794 crore for conducting the 13th parliamentary election, making it the costliest poll in Bangladesh's history.

In the 12th national polls in 2024, Tk 1,927 crore was shelled out, almost double the amount spent in the previous election held in 2018, according to the report from the Electoral Reform Commission. In the 10th parliamentary polls that saw 153 members of parliament get elected unopposed, Tk 282 crore was spent.

"Although this is our initial demand, it will be reviewed and finalised after a meeting with the EC Secretariat," EC Additional Secretary KM Ali Newaz told reporters yesterday.

As much as 60 to 70 percent of the total money is spent on law enforcement agencies, according to EC officials.

At least 7.47 lakh members of various law enforcement agencies and other forces -- 5.16 lakh Ansar members,

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TOMORROW LAST DAY

INTERNATIONAL PHARMA & LAB EXHIBITION

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A train from Dhaka is heading north after crossing the newly built Jamuna Railway Bridge. Bangladesh Railway is operating passenger trains over the country's longest dedicated railway bridge on a trial basis. The 4.8km double line dual gauge bridge is expected to be opened formally on March 18. The photo was taken from the bridge's west zone in Sirajganj.

Lalon festival
called off after
objection by
Hefazat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Lalon festival in Tangail's Madhupur was called off yesterday following objections by Hefazat-e-Islam.

Sabuj Mia, convenor of the festival committee, confirmed the cancellation in a Facebook post.

Madhupur Lalon Sangha had planned a cultural event, "Lalon Smaran Utsab 2025," at 8:00pm at Madhupur Upazila Bus Stand to mark Fakir Lalon Sajji's 134th Tirodhan Dibash (death anniversary). Madhupur UNO was set to attend as chief guest.

"Everything was going smoothly. However, suddenly, we heard that Madhupur Hefazat-e-Islam objected to our programme," Sabuj Mia told The Daily Star.

A meeting was held on Tuesday between event organisers and Hefazat-e-Islam leaders, mediated by Madhupur upazila BNP president Zakir Hossain Sarkar. Madhupur Hefazat President Mufti Anwar Hossain, General Secretary

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