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\$4.7 BILLION LOAN IMF defers release of 4th tranche

Two installments likely to be disbursed in June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Monetary Fund has deferred the release of the fourth tranche of the \$4.7 billion loan to June instead of March as Bangladesh could not meet some prior conditions.

Earlier in December last year, upon completion of the third review, Chris Papageorgiou, the chief of IMF's visiting staff mission, had said that the proposal for the fourth tranche would be submitted before the IMF executive board on February 5.

However, the multilateral lender shifted the initial board meeting for the fourth tranche, which is likely to be \$645 million, from February 5 to March 12.

As per the latest development, the IMF might release both the fourth and fifth together in June, which could amount to more than \$1 billion, upon fulfilling conditions.



"We told IMF that there are certain conditions that we will not be able to implement immediately. While the government has its own necessity to meet those conditions, it would do so at its own pace and not on the IMF's timeline."



SALEHUDDIN AHMED

Bangladesh could not fulfil the prior conditions related to the Bangladesh Bank and the National Board of Revenue as there has been disagreement between the government and the IMF over the issues.

"We will wait -- we requested IMF to release the next two tranches together in June," Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed told reporters yesterday after attending the Deputy Commissioners' (DCs) conference in the capital.

Asked whether the deferral came from the IMF side, Ahmed said: "They supported it. We also told them that there are certain conditions that we will not be able to implement immediately."

While the government has its own necessity to meet those conditions, it would do so at its own pace and not on the IMF's timeline.

At present, Bangladesh's macroeconomic indicators are not looking bad, he said, citing the positive current account and financial account balances and growth in remittance.

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Farmer Jahir Uddin, 58, helplessly stares at the Teesta in Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila. As the river has dried up in the area due to a lack of water flowing downstream, his farmland has been suffering without proper irrigation, causing him losses. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

We'll launch independent student body Say July uprising leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some leaders and activists of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement are set to launch a new student organisation soon with the slogan "Student First, Bangladesh First".

The announcement was made by Abdul Kader and Md Abu Baker Mojumder, former coordinators of the student platform, at a press conference held at the Madhur Canteen on the Dhaka University campus.

Kader and Baker emphasised that the organisation would be

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16

India must share water first if it wants friendship

Fakhrul tells demo along the Teesta

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday set a precondition for India to be a friend of the people of Bangladesh: It must resolve the Teesta water-sharing issue first.

India must also stop border killings and abandon its "big brother" attitude, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said at the launch of Teesta River Protection Movement Committee's two-day programme in Lalmonirhat.

The programme with the slogan "Jago Bahe, Teesta Bachai" (Wake Up, Save the Teesta) has been organised at 11 locations in Kurigram, Rangpur, Nilphamari, and Gaibandha to demand a just share of Teesta water from India.

Rallies, processions, and cultural events are being held as part of the programme. Senior BNP leaders and their allies joined the events.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Govt moves to save electricity

Announces plans for equal rural-urban outage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan yesterday said air conditioner temperatures in government offices, banks, homes, and mosques should not be set below 25 degrees Celsius to lower electricity consumption, especially during Ramadan.

He said a Power Division team would monitor compliance and take necessary steps, including cutting off electricity supply, if violations were found.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) said it was planning to ensure no power cuts across the country in Ramadan.

Kabir told reporters that all areas of the country, except Key Point Installations and hospitals, will see

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

"THE ECONOMY: REVIVING & REBUILDING"

features a collection of articles on how Bangladesh's economic system should be restructured, and how its business climate can be improved.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Transport reforms a pressing need



FILE PHOTO

WASIM BIN HABIB

Four-year-old Ibrahim Islam was walking to his school in Kushtia town with his grandmother around 8:00am on Sunday. Perhaps his mind was buzzing with excitement, thinking about the games he would play with his friends.

The school, Prititi Biddyaloy, is in the Phultola area next to the Kushtia-Jhenaidah highway. Walking across the highway, they stopped on the median strip. Just as they stepped on the road again, a truck ran them over. Ibrahim died on the spot and his grandmother suffered serious injuries.

"My son wanted to be a pilot," his mother Jasmine cried beside his lifeless body at Kushtia General Hospital. In the blink of an eye, her hopes and dreams have been shredded and life turned

upside down.

This is just one of the countless tragedies happening on Bangladesh's roads every day, leaving families torn apart and stealing futures in an instant. The human toll from the crashes is incalculable, extending beyond personal grief, affecting the economy and public confidence in the transport system.

Every day, newspapers and TVs report road crashes and fatalities, often accompanied by harrowing images. Yet, these tragedies have become so routine that they rarely spark an outrage. Despite numerous laws and occasional crackdowns, the grim reality remains unchanged: the country's roads and highways remain plagued by disorder and lawlessness.

According to a report by road safety

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

10 lives lost on the road

Couple, father-son among the victims

STAR REPORT

Three separate incidents of tragic road collisions yesterday claimed the lives of at least 10 people and left 25 others injured. The victims included a couple in Dhaka and a father and his son in Pirojpur, while six others died in Feni.

In the capital, a couple and their daughter, with heavy hearts, were on their way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital early in the morning, hoping to bid a final farewell to a departed relative.

As they were crossing the road near Saddam Market in Matuail around 7:00am, a lorry hit them.

Runa Akter was killed on the spot, while her husband Abdul Jabbar, a kindergarten teacher, died after he was taken to a nearby hospital.

Their daughter, Jui Akter, 14, is undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Central Police Hospital in Rajarbagh with serious injuries.

"My parents and sister were going to DMCH to see the body of my mother's cousin who died on Sunday night... Just because of a single case of reckless

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



In Loving Memory

On this day, we fondly remember
Mr. Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, a leader who shaped industries and inspired generations.
His influence remains timeless.

(1937-2023)

Bank Asia

BANDARBAN ABDUCTIONS

One worker escapes captivity

Joint operation begins to rescue others

STAR REPORT

One of the 25 plantation workers, who were abducted by unknown people from various rubber plantations in Fasiakhali area of Bandarban's Lama upazila on Sunday, managed to escape last morning.

Meanwhile, joint forces have started an operation to rescue the abductees.

Ziaur Rahman fled by dodging the abductors' eyes and informed the authorities, said police.

The kidnappers were constantly changing their locations with the abductees, said Lama Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shahadat Hossain, quoting Ziaur.

The OC, quoting him, said there were at least 12 to 14 suspected abductors and all of them were armed.

He also said rubber garden officials claimed that they received ransom letters from the abductors.



Protesters injured in the July uprising block the Shahbagh intersection yesterday, demanding rehabilitation and compensation from the government. Story on Page 3.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

MOVE FOR STATE REFORMS

It won't work without elected reps: Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said the initiative for state reforms will not work until elected representatives are entrusted with the responsibility of running the country.

"Those who believe reforms should come before the election must understand that for those reforms to be successful, people who are truly connected to the masses are needed [in power]. Without them, no reforms will be possible," he said while addressing a programme at the Krishibid Institution Bangladesh virtually.

He also warned that any delay in election would only deepen the conspiracy against both the country and the government.

"Amra BNP Poribar" organised the programme aimed to provide financial assistance to photojournalists who were injured during the July uprising.

Tarique said it was politicians, not anyone else, who presented the reform proposals to the nation over two years ago.

"If real reforms are to be made in this country, they must be carried out by real politicians," the BNP leader said.

He said politicians must seek suggestions and opinions from professionals, intellectuals, and members of civil society to effectively run the state.

"Based on those suggestions, we will gradually move the country forward. But until the direct representatives of people are entrusted with the responsibility of running the country, no reform will be fully implemented in any way," he said.

Tarique also said those who have a good connection with people can understand their desires and move the country forward in line with the people's wishes.

He said the public wants a Bangladesh where basic rights and economic freedom are ensured.

He said political freedom is essential for economic freedom and to build a discrimination-free Bangladesh. "To achieve this, voting rights and the guarantee to exercise that right must be ensured."



We'll launch independent student body

FROM PAGE 1

formed based on the spirit of the July Uprising and promised to uphold its principles. The organisation will never engage in partisan politics or follow a parent political party's agenda.

The need for a standalone student organisation came as the student platform would not allow them to carry out all necessary political activities, Kader said.

Many essential tasks could not be accomplished under that platform, so they felt a responsibility to form a new student organisation.

The student platform included students from various political backgrounds, including Chhatra Dal, Shibir, leftist groups and Islamist groups. However, after the uprising, everyone returned to their original political positions.

"Those who support the ideals of July'24 and wish to work for the greater good of the country are welcome to join the new organisation," Kader said.

The organisational structure

and official launch date will be determined after discussions with students, Baker said.

The leadership structure will be entirely democratic and bottom-up, and the organisation will be funded through membership fees from its members.

The new organisation will operate independently according to its own programmes and will not engage in partisan politics.

A public opinion survey and membership recruitment drive would be conducted nationwide as part of the preparations for forming the new part.

This campaign will take place both online and offline in key locations at Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and all other public and private universities, national universities, colleges, schools, and madrasas across the country.

The leaders of the new organisation proposed seven fundamental principles: establishing

moderate student politics that move beyond ideological and cultural binary conflicts; creating an inclusive student movement that does not discriminate based on nationality, religion or race; and building the future of Bangladesh through a new form of politics shaped by the July uprising.

The other principles are: addressing the lack of female representation in mainstream politics; creating a political environment supportive of women and ensuring equal opportunities for all; recognising Bangladesh's history of struggle and independence, upholding the legacy of the movements of 1947, 1952, 1962, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1971, 1990 and 2024 as foundational to their student politics; restoring student unions in educational institutions to counteract the systematic political disempowerment of students and ensuring democratic representation in student governance; and strengthening student-citizen solidarity to safeguard the rights of students and citizens alike.

Transport reforms a pressing need

FROM PAGE 1

campaigner Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, around 1.05 lakh people were killed and 1.49 lakh others were injured in 60,980 crashes from 2013-2024. Of those who got killed, 8,067 were children.

However, the actual number of fatalities is likely to be much higher because many of the crashes often go unreported.

The report, launched in October last year, said 88,127 vehicles were involved in the crashes. The highest, 37.59 percent, of the crashes happened on regional highways and 31.76 percent on national highways.

What is more worrying is the spike in the road crashes and casualties.

In another report, the Jatri Kalyan Samity on January 4 said there were 6,359 crashes, 8,543 deaths, and 12,608 injuries in 2024, compared to 6,261 crashes, 7,902 deaths, and 10,372 injuries in 2023.

Motorcycles were involved in nearly one-third of all crashes, said the platform.

The sheer number of deaths on Bangladesh's roads exposes a glaring lack of governance and deep systemic flaws in the transport sector. The

causes of these tragedies are well known: reckless driving, dilapidated roads, weak enforcement of traffic laws, and the unchecked presence of unfit vehicles and unqualified drivers. Unregulated transport syndicates operate with impunity while political influence shields wrongdoers from law.

Over the years, successive governments have attempted to address the issue through ad hoc interventions like traffic awareness campaigns and crackdowns on unfit vehicles. However, these measures only provided temporary relief. The previous Awami League government's effort to enforce a law, enacted in response to public outrage following the 2018 student protests demanding safer roads, failed to bring about any meaningful change. The law's implementation was delayed and ultimately weakened by opposition from transport owners and workers.

After the fall of the Awami League government in the wake of a mass uprising, there has been a growing public expectation for a long-overdue overhaul of the transport sector. Sadly, apart from sporadic drives to fine unfit vehicles, the interim government has yet to take meaningful steps to make the roads safer. Road safety campaigners

have already called for the establishment of a Road Safety Commission, arguing that the era of superficial solutions and temporary fixes must end.

The reform commissions tasked with addressing various sectors have offered a glimmer of hope for systemic changes. The transport sector deserves the same level of attention given its profound impact on millions of lives. The interim government now has an opportunity to pave the way for real reform by treating road safety as a national priority. Bangladesh urgently needs a comprehensive, data-driven strategy to make its roads safer. Establishing a Road Safety Commission would be a bold and necessary step toward that goal, ensuring that road safety is no longer a neglected issue but a top concern.

We cannot afford to let more precious lives be lost due to negligence and mismanagement. The transport sector cannot continue to operate at the whims of a few syndicates. Without structural reforms, the cycle of preventable deaths and injuries will persist, and each delay in action will only add to the growing toll of tragedies. The question remains: How many more lives must be lost before real, lasting change takes place?

IMF defers release of 4th tranche

FROM PAGE 1

"That is why we are not desperate to get loans from the IMF and the World Bank. Besides, getting funds from development partners is not begging as Bangladesh has to comply with various conditions," he added.

One of the issues could be that the government was supposed to take few tax-related measures to collect additional Tk 12,000 crore this fiscal year, said Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

While the government took measures to increase revenue collection, it walked back on the step, which might have displeased the IMF, he said.

Also, there could be some disagreements between the government and the IMF over separating tax policy and administration and also the exchange rate management.

"These could be the issues which are likely under discussion between the government and IMF at present."

The government should settle the issues through effective negotiations.

"Issues like VAT rate hikes are not politically feasible in the present context. However, there are some other conditions which the government could fulfil," he said.

The deferral of the fourth tranche might make it tough for the government to get budget support from the WB.

Besides, such delay could also negatively impact outlooks forecast by different international credit rating agencies, Hussain added.

So far, Bangladesh received \$2.3 billion in three tranches under the programme.

"There are some conditions which we will not fulfil just based on their demands but achieve those in our way," he added.

He further said that Bangladesh's macroeconomic indicators are good to some extent, citing now the current account and financial account balances are positive while inward remittances have also been seeing a significant growth.

"That is why we are not desperate to get loans from the IMF and the World Bank," he added.

Earlier, the IMF staff mission led by Chris Papageorgiou visited Bangladesh between December 3-18 last year.

Upon completion of the visit, IMF in a statement said "We are pleased to announce that the IMF team reached a staff-level agreement with the Bangladesh authorities on the policies needed to complete the third review under the ECF, EFF, and RSF arrangements. The IMF's Executive Board will consider completion of the review based on the implementation by the authorities of prior actions."

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office, said he assumed the loan release had been deferred because of disagreements over some issues.

He said one of the issues could be that the government was supposed to take few tax-related measures to collect

additional Tk 12,000 crore in revenue by this fiscal year.

However, the government took measures to increase revenue collection but later stepped back which might have displeased IMF, he added.

Also, there could be some disagreements between the government and IMF over separating tax policy and administration and also exchange rate management, said Hussain.

"These could be the issues which are likely under discussion between the government and IMF at present," he added.

Hussain said the government should settle down these issues through effective negotiation so that the problems are resolved.

"Issues like VAT rate hike are not politically feasible in the present context. However, there are some other conditions which the government could fulfil," he said.

He said deferral of the fourth tranche might make it tough for the government to get budget support from the World Bank.

Besides, such delay could also negatively impact outlooks forecast by different international credit rating agencies, he said.

The \$4.7 billion loan programme was approved by the IMF in January 2023. So far, Bangladesh has got \$2.3 billion in three tranches.

During the last visit to Dhaka, the IMF staff mission upon request from the interim government agreed to provide \$750 million additionally.

In Feni, at least six people were killed and nine others injured when a lorry hit a pickup in Sadar upazila last night.

The deceased were identified as Mohiuddin, Arif, Jahangir, Shohag, Nur Uddin, and Nazmul.

The bodies of the deceased were taken to the Feni Sadar General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Harunur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Mohalip Highway Police Station.

The lorry hit the pickup carrying construction workers around 7:30pm in the Halizia area on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, said the OC, adding that five people died on the spot.

Arif died on the way to a hospital. The injured were being treated at a nearby hospital, he added.

FROM PAGE 1

According to our Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur correspondents, the demonstrators, including students, locals, and BNP activists, were staying on Teesta shoals for the programme.

Other events, including cultural performances such as Palagan, Sarigan, Bhawaiya, and Lalon songs, and traditional rural games, including kabaddi, Chengupenti, kite flying, Gollachhoot, and races, were also organised.

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman will virtually join the programme at 11 locations across five districts today.

Party leaders called on the government to take a stronger stance to ensure a fair share of Teesta water for Bangladesh and implement the Teesta Mega Project.

Fakhrul said, "We want to make it clear to India, as I have said before and am saying now: If you [India] want to be friends with the people of Bangladesh, then first ensure our just share of water from the Teesta. Stop the killings at the border. And stop treating us like you are the big brother."

"We certainly want India as a friend. But that friendship should come with respect."

Asadul Habib Dulu, chief coordinator of the Teesta River Protection Movement and an organising secretary of the BNP, presided over the rally in Lalmonirhat.

Appreciating Dulu for organising the programme, Fakhrul said "Jago Bahe Teesta Bachai" was not merely a slogan, it is crucial for the survival of the people living along the river, BSS reported.

"When India opens the dams or barrage gates, floodwater washes away

our houses, properties and villages. And then, the whole area dries up when India closes the dams or barrage gates, causing unending sufferings to our people.

"Nothing can be achieved without struggle. We will bring Teesta water and establish our rights through this struggle for survival," he added, according to the BSS.

It also reported that Fakhrul said Bangladesh always talked about the Teesta water issue, even before its independence from Pakistan.



PHOTO: STAR

People attend the Lalmonirhat rally

"When the Awami League government came to power, everyone initially thought: 'Since the Awami League is friends with India, perhaps they will get Teesta's water.' Right? In 15 years, they have sold Bangladesh, but they couldn't bring a drop of water," he said.

"India has built dams not just on Teesta, but on 54 rivers upstream. They take the water and generate electricity, while our people can't grow rice or crops, and are deprived of their livelihoods. Our fishermen can't fish. Everyone is suffering today."

The BNP leader also criticised India

Govt moves to save electricity

FROM PAGE 1

similar levels of outages in summer.

"There will be no difference between cities and villages [in terms of loadshedding]," he told reporters after a session on the second day of the Deputy Commissioners' Conference 2025 at the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The national power demand reaches 18,000 megawatts in summer, compared to around 9,000MW in winter, he said.

"This increase is primarily due to irrigation and excessive use of ACs. Since irrigation is crucial for food security, we'll prioritise it while also controlling AC usage to save several thousand megawatts of electricity."

In the last two years, power cuts disproportionately affected the rural areas, with many villages facing almost eight-hour outages in a day last year.

Meanwhile, power cuts in the capital lasted around two hours.

Kabirpointed out that in some offices, ACs are set at 19-22 degrees C while people wear sweaters and jackets indoors. "The country's weather does not require such low temperatures."

"Our demand for cooling can be reduced if we enforce these [AC temperature] guidelines," he said, adding that instructions had also been sent to the religious affairs' ministry to ensure that AC temperatures in mosques remain at or above 25 degrees Celsius during Taraweeh prayers.

Addressing financial constraints, he said the economy remains fragile due to significant amounts of money being siphoned out of the country earlier, making it difficult for the government to pay fuel import bills for power generation. "Despite this, we've made all

necessary arrangements to ensure a stable power supply during the upcoming Ramadan."

Earlier, he said that if the AC temperature guidelines were properly followed, the country could save 2,000-3,000MW during summer.

Currently, the PDB produces 10,000MW to 11,000MW -- a 2,000MW increase from recent months. According to PDB projections, the power demand may reach 15,700MW during Ramadan, and up to 18,000MW on the hottest summer days.

The board has planned for zero loadshedding during Ramadan, but there will be power outages of up to 750MW in summer -- meaning there would be one-hour power cuts per day across the country. However, sources said outages may increase due to technical issues.

10 lives lost on road

FROM PAGE 1

driving, our whole family has been torn apart!" Jui's elder sister, Jannatul Ferdous, cried in disbelief.

"We did not inform my sister of the death of my parents as it may worsen her condition," she told this newspaper.

Jannatul said their family is from Islampur upazila in Jamalpur and that they resided in the capital's Demra area.

Police seized the lorry, but the driver fled the scene, said Mahmudul Hasan Irfan, sub-inspector (SI) of Jatrabari Police Station.

In another tragic accident, a man and his son died after a Dhaka-bound bus rammed a battery-run three-wheeler in Pirojpur's Nazirpur upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased Mahubb Mollah, 45,

and his son Yead Mollah, 15, were from the upazila's Chalitabari village.

The accident took place at Ruhitalabuniya village on the Pirojpur-Nazirpur-Gopalganj road around 8:00am, said Mahamud Al Farid, officer-in-charge of Nazirpur police station.

Ariful Islam, a witness, said the father and his son were going to Nazirpur on a three-wheeler when a bus of Emad Paribahan hit the vehicle.

When they were taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital, the doctors declared Mahubb and his son dead.

The driver of the three-wheeler was also injured.

"The accident likely occurred because of dense fog," said OC Ariful.

Police seized the bus, but its driver fled.

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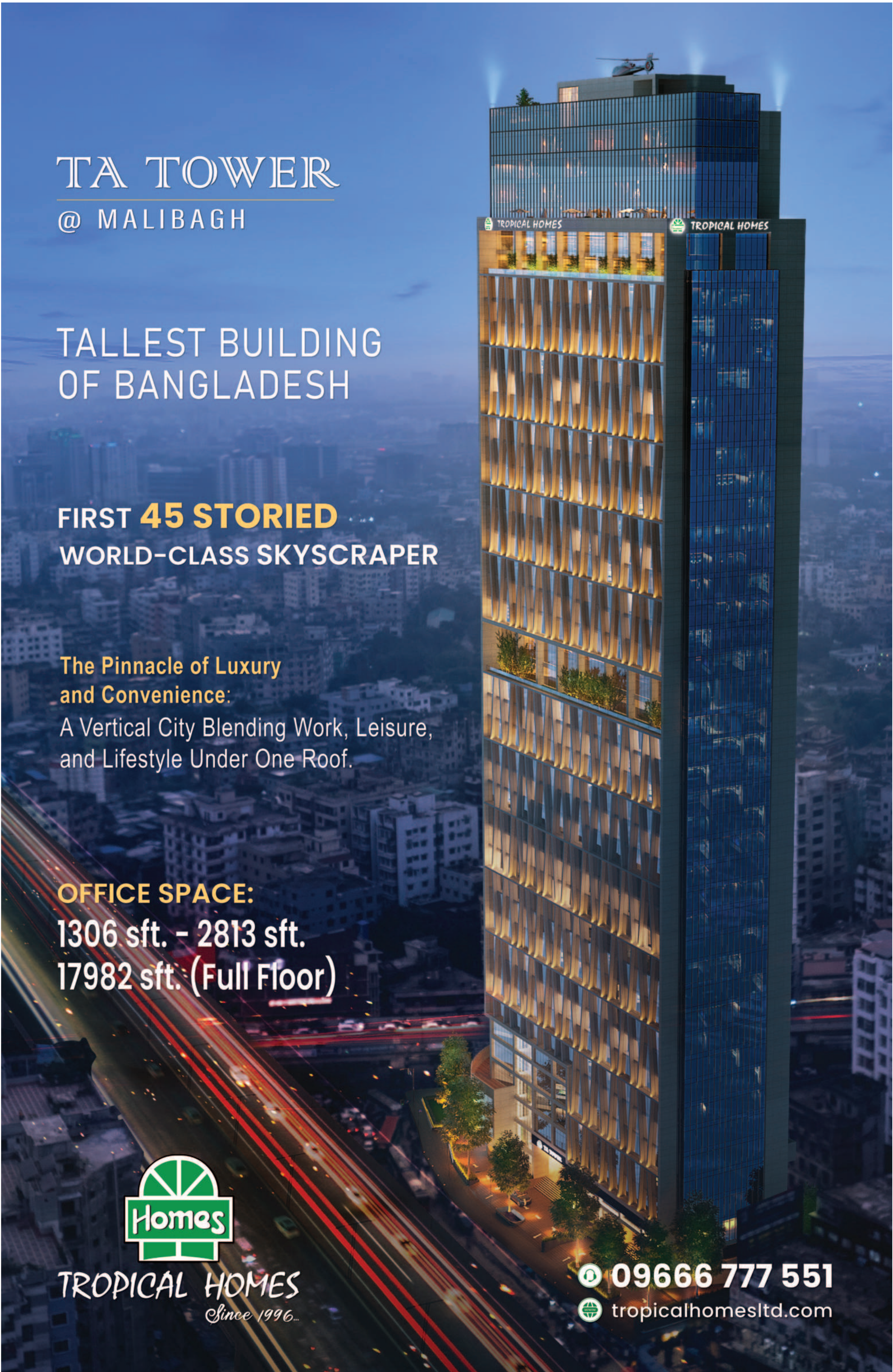
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Judiciary, executive must not be in conflict

Chief justice tells DC conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed yesterday said the judiciary and executive must not be in conflict with each other.

"The judiciary exists to uphold rights, deliver justice, and ensure that no person irrespective of status remains without redress. The executive, on the other hand, is tasked with implementing policies, maintaining stability, and facilitating governance. These functions, while separate, must harmonise, and not be in conflict with each other," he said.

He was speaking as chief guest to the Deputy Commissioners' (DCs) Conference, 2025 at the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Death anniv of A Rouf Chowdhury

STAR REPORT

Today is the second death anniversary of eminent businessman A Rouf Chowdhury.

He passed away at his home in the capital in 2023 after suffering prolonged illness. He was 86.

Founding chairman of Rangs Group and Sea Resources Group, Rouf had his footprint in the country's media as well.

He was one of the directors of Mediaworld Ltd, the company which owns The Daily Star.

The noted entrepreneur is survived by his son Romo Rouf Chowdhury and daughters Romana Rouf Chowdhury and Sohana Rouf Chowdhury.

Rouf graduated in business management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US.

The prolific businessman founded over 50 firms in the last four decades. He invested in automobiles, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, real estate, IT, deep sea fishing, telecommunications, electronics, food processing, banking, and insurance firms.

He started his career at a pharmaceutical company and began his own business in 1979.

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Four SPs withdrawn

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Police Headquarters yesterday withdrew the superintendents of police from four districts.

They have been instructed to report to the PHQ by today.

The four are Cox's Bazar SP Muhammad Rahmat Ullah, Sunamganj SP AFM Anwar Hossain Khan, Jashore SP Md Ziauddin Ahmed, and Nilphamari SP Mohammad Morshed Alam.

However, the orders issued by Deputy Inspector General (administration) Kazi Mohammad Fazlul Karim did not specify any reasons for the withdrawals.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach him for comment.

Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general (media & public relations) at the PHQ, confirmed the withdrawals, but said he did not have any more information in this regard.



People crowd this TCB truck opposite the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation in Tejgaon yesterday. With rising price of daily essentials, such facilities have become a beacon of hope for lower-income groups. Even so, the limited number of goods available often means many people are eventually turned away from these trucks, after waiting for hours, without being able to purchase anything. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Set up waiting list system to recruit teachers

Recommends advisory committee on primary edn reform

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

The government's advisory committee on primary education reform has proposed a new system for teacher recruitment.

The proposed system includes preparing a waiting list based on projected vacancies at the upazila-level schools. Teachers would be appointed from the waiting list as positions become available.

The committee also recommended that when teachers take extended leave -- such as for maternity or study purposes -- interim appointments could be made from the waiting list on a fully temporary basis, with full pay.

If no candidates from the waiting list are willing to take temporary positions in remote areas, local teachers could be hired with full pay, with relaxed educational qualifications.

Retired local teachers could also be considered for these roles, it said.

The committee, led by BRAC University's Emeritus Professor Manzoor Ahmed, made these recommendations in its detailed report presented to Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus last Monday.

According to the Directorate of Primary Education, around two crore students are studying in 1,14,630 primary schools, including government, private, and Ebtedayee madrasas, across the country.

Of them, over one crore students are studying in 65,567 government-run schools.

At present, there are approximately 6,50,000 primary

school teachers across both public and private institutions, including around 3,84,000 teachers against 4,27,000 positions in the government-run institutions.

The committee also proposed launching a "Primary Education Pre-Service Academic Programme" with an aim to ensure that candidates with relevant academic backgrounds are prioritised in the teacher recruitment process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers appointed from waiting list as positions open
- Temporary hiring allowed for teachers on extended leave
- Local teachers or retirees may fill vacancies in remote areas
- Pre-service training for teacher candidates
- Increased autonomy, accountability for headteachers
- Reducing non-teaching workload for teachers

Initially, individuals holding degrees or diplomas under this programme would be given priority in recruitment, with a gradual transition towards making it mandatory, said the report.

The committee suggested the programme to be introduced in all Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTIs). To implement this, it called for recruiting against all vacant positions in PTIs, creating

new positions, and strengthening its institutional capacity.

Additionally, the report proposed forming a consortium of specialised education institutes from different universities, in collaboration with the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), to enhance the capacities of PTIs.

The report also said, "To properly fulfill the responsibility of academic supervision in schools, the capacity of headteachers must be enhanced, and they should be given the necessary autonomy."

"Headteachers must be held accountable -- both individually and jointly with other teachers -- for children's learning and the overall development of the school," it added.

The report recommended establishing a "learning-focused accountability framework" for teachers and officials working in primary education, to ensure that all educators take responsibility for student learning outcomes and school improvement.

The report highlighted the need to reduce non-teaching workload of teachers so they can focus more on classroom activities and student development.

Stating that currently 80 percent of positions for Assistant Upazila/Thana Primary Education Officer and Assistant URC Instructor are reserved for divisional candidates, while 20 percent of positions are open to others, the report further recommended a 50-50 split between divisional and open positions.

Remove unfit buses, overhaul the sector Demands Jatri Kalyan Samity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity yesterday demanded the removal of unfit and rundown buses from Dhaka and Chattogram.

It called for a public transport system through a public-private partnership under a route rationalisation system, instead of being controlled by transport owner associations.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, the organisation also called for the introduction of 5,000 high-quality buses to address the growing crisis in urban public transport.

Md Mozammel Haque Chowdhury, the association's secretary general, alleged that passenger sufferings have worsened due to a transport crisis caused by the overnight repainting of old, unfit buses into pink-coloured vehicles instead of replacing them with new ones.

On December 19 last year, Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fauzul Kabir Khan instructed the removal of buses older than 20 years from Dhaka by May.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



JULY UPRISING

Injured protesters block Shahbagh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesters injured during the July uprising staged a demonstration at Shahbagh intersection yesterday, demanding rehabilitation and compensation.

Around 30 to 40 protesters gathered at Shahbagh around 11:00am, setting a 2:00pm deadline for the government to initiate talks. As there was no response from the government within that time, they blocked the Shahbagh intersection.

Khaled Mansur, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station, said the protesters blocked the Banglamotor-bound lane in front of BSMMU around 2:00pm. Vehicular movement in that direction was disrupted. The protesters remained on the streets until 7:00pm.

The protesters demanded financial assistance for those who have lost their ability to work permanently, alongside a monthly allowance of Tk 20,000, one-time compensation, and job training and employment in government or semi-government sectors for a family member.

For those who have recovered and regained working ability, they demanded a Tk 15,000 monthly stipend, one-time compensation, and job opportunities.

Victims to be recognised as 'July martyrs, warriors' Says adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The martyrs of the July uprising will be recognised as "July Martyrs", while the injured as "July Warriors". Both the groups will receive certificates and identity cards in acknowledgment of their contributions to the uprising that led to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government.

Liberation War affairs Adviser Faruq E Azam, Bir Pratik, made this announcement after meeting with the deputy commissioners on the second day of the DC Conference yesterday.

According to information from the July Memorial Foundation, the mass uprising resulted in 820 deaths and 11,850 injuries.

Azam said the process of forming the July Directorate is in its final stages. It is expected to be completed within the week.

The adviser said families of the martyrs will receive Tk 30 lakh through savings certificates. This fiscal year, they will be granted Tk 10 lakh, while in the next fiscal year, they will receive savings certificates worth Tk 20 lakh.

Injured individuals will receive lifelong medical benefits and allowances. Those who are severely injured will receive a one-time payment of Tk 5,00,000 and a monthly allowance of Tk 20,000. Those who have lost a limb will receive a one-time grant of Tk 3,00,000 and a monthly allowance of Tk 15,000. Individuals with minor injuries, who have recovered and are fit to work, will be prioritised for employment and rehabilitation programmes, though they will not receive any allowance.

Families of the martyrs will receive Tk 30 lakh through savings certificates. This fiscal year, they will be given Tk 10 lakh, while in the next one, they will get certificates worth Tk 20 lakh.

A DAY IN COURT Inu, Menon put on remand; Qamrul shown arrested

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The lawyer for Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday claimed that his client was in favour of abolishing the quota system in government jobs.

He said this while placing arguments before Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate GM Farhan Ishtiaq.

However, state lawyer Omar Faruq Faruqi said Inu was a key associate of fascist Sheikh Hasina. Inu was placed on a three-day remand in a murder case.

Meanwhile, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon was also placed on a three-day remand in the same case.

Earlier, Inu and Menon were brought to the court amid heavy security.

When journalists sought Inu's comments at the court premises, Inu simply said, "I have nothing to say. Going to a remand hearing."

Later, at 11:25am, as police escorted them back to the CMM Court lockup, he added, "What can I say? It's the same old story."

Menon, when asked for a comment, replied, "What more can I say?"

QAMRUL'S ADVICE TO LAWYER

Meanwhile, former food minister Qamrul Islam was brought to a courtroom at the CMM Court at 10:13am to be shown arrested in a murder case.

Standing inside the dock, he asked one of his lawyers, "Is this a new case or just a remand?"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A young patron of this year's Ekushey Boi Mela walks through the fair with a bag full of books in hand. True to its tradition, the Boi Mela remains an event that appeals to all ages. The photo was taken at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

‘ZOHAN DAY’ AT RU Students call for Nat’l Teachers’ Day recognition

NURAHISAN MRIDUL

Dr Shamsuzzoha, a professor at Rajshahi University, sacrificed his life to protect his students during the mass uprising of 1969.

On this day in 1969, he was shot by the Pakistani army while attempting to defuse tensions between protesting students and the military.

During the anti Ayub Khan movement, RU students defied Section 144 and gathered in front of the university gate on February 18. As tensions escalated, Prof Shamsuzzoha, then the university proctor, rushed to the scene and urged the students to retreat.

When they refused, Pakistani army officer Captain Hadi ordered his troops to open fire. In a final act of defiance, Prof Shamsuzzoha stepped forward and declared, “Shoot me before you shoot my students.” An officer then drew his pistol and shot him around 11:00am. Prof Shamsuzzoha died on the way to a hospital.

Since then, the day has been observed as Shaheed Zoha Dibas, but calls for it to be recognised as National Teachers’ Day have gone unanswered.

Abu Sayed, the first martyr of the July uprising, had posted on Facebook before his death: “Sir! We desperately need you right now, Sir! It is far more honourable, glorious, and fulfilling to die as a ‘Shamsuzzoha,’ lamenting the absence of teachers beside them.”

Each year, as February 18 approaches, discussions about honouring Prof Shamsuzzoha resurface, with renewed calls for state recognition. However, the momentum fades once the day passes, said RU student Torpona Dey.

To push for official recognition, Salahuddin Ammar and Mehedi Sajid, coordinators of Students Against Discrimination at RU, recently submitted a memorandum to the education and home affairs advisers, urging the government to declare the day as National Teachers’ Day.

“During the July uprising, we truly understood the spirit of Zoha Sir. We desperately needed someone like him -- someone who would shield the students. What has Bangladesh done to honour a man whose name continues to inspire

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Two Shaliks feed on the nectar of a Shimul flower in Khulna. With the arrival of spring, nature gradually shakes off the dull shades of winter and reveals the vibrant colours of the new season. This photo was captured yesterday in the Amvita village of the Terokhada upazila.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

MYMENSINGH MEDICAL COLLEGE

Teacher shortage disrupts academic activities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An acute shortage of teachers has long been disrupting academic activities at Mymensingh Medical College.

Some 100 posts of professors, associate and assistant professors at the college are lying vacant for years.

Due to the vacant posts, the medical facilities in the 1,000-bed Mymensingh Medical College Hospital are also being disrupted, said sources.

Established as Liton Medical School in Mymensingh city’s Baghmara area in 1924, it was later upgraded to Mymensingh Medical College in 1962 on an 84-acre campus with 32 students.

According to MMC sources, at present there are over 3,600 students studying in the college, including 1,505 students under MBBS programme and others studying

different post-graduate courses.

Teaching posts are currently lying vacant in many important departments including pathology, microbiology, pharmacology, community medicine, rheumatology, forensic medicine, respiratory medicine, neurology, physical medicine and



rehabilitation, gastroenterology, cardiology, endocrinology, burn and plastic surgery, pediatric orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, pediatric nephrology, physical medicine and hematology, pediatric surgery,

pediatric hematology and oncology, psychiatry, and dermatology.

MMC’s present scenario deprives its students of quality education, said a postgraduate student.

“If the students do not get adequate classes and smooth progression through their curriculum, it will surely pose obstacles to their academic pursuits,” said an MBBS student.

Dr Ranjan Kumar Majumder, a retired medicine specialist and an alumnus of MMC-13 batch, called for immediate measures to appoint teachers against the vacant posts.

Prof Dr Nazmul Alam Khan, principal of MMC, said many teachers either got transferred or went on retirement, creating the vacant posts.

“The authorities are informed about the vacancies. However, it is not certain when teachers would be appointed against the vacant posts,” he added.

Man beats 7-year-old son to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Moulvibazar court sent a man to jail yesterday after he was arrested in connection with the murder of his son in Moulvibazar’s Sadar upazila.

The deceased, Mahid, 7, is the son of Khokon Mia of Jagannathpur village, said police.

Locals said Khokon used to live with his second wife Tania Akhter and his two children -- Mahid and Rafid, 6.

Neighbours alleged that he was a drug peddler who often tortured the children over trivial matters.

Talking to The Daily Star, Tania said Mahid defecated on the bed on Sunday afternoon, which angered Khokon. He dragged Mahid out of the house and started beating him.

At one point, Mahid ran and took shelter at a neighbour’s house, said Tania.

The neighbour, Zabeda, said Khokon got hold of Mahid at her house, took him outside, and repeatedly hit his head against a pillar. At one stage, Mahid started bleeding from his nose.

Later, Khokon took Mahid to a hospital as his condition worsened, said Tania.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

154 citizens protest expulsion of 10 CU female students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and fifty-four citizens in a statement yesterday demanded that the Chittagong University authorities immediately revoke the expulsion order of ten female students, conduct a fair investigation, and take appropriate action against the proctor for his unprofessional behaviour.

They said the students were expelled based on vague allegations, without a proper investigation or the opportunity to defend themselves. The statement mentioned that the university’s proctor made sexist remarks on social media about the protesting students.

“We have also learned that when a group of male students attempted to vandalise a boat sculpture in front of the university’s female dormitory at midnight, the administration remained passive. An assistant proctor verbally abused the female students and labelled them as associates of Awami League, putting their safety at risk,” the statement read.

The signatories include former JU teacher Anu Muhammad, anthropologist Rehnema Ahmed, DU teacher Samina Lutfa, Supreme Court advocate Jyotirmoy Barua, CU teacher Maidul Islam, and RU teacher A-AI Mamun.



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Taiwan Strait not China's

Says Taipei after Canadian warship passes through

REUTERS, Taipei

The Taiwan Strait does not belong to China and any attempts to create tension threaten global security, the island's defence ministry said yesterday, after Beijing criticised Canada for sailing a warship through the sensitive waterway.

The US Navy and occasionally ships from allied countries like Canada, Britain and France, transit the strait, which they consider an international waterway, around once a month.

Taiwan also considers it an international waterway but China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory, says the strategic waterway belongs to it.

China claims the strategic waterway belongs to it

Last week the first US Navy ships transited the strait since President Donald Trump took office last month, drawing an angry reaction from China, which said the mission increased security risks.

Taiwan's defence ministry said China had responded to those sailings by carrying out "joint combat readiness patrols".

"The Taiwan Strait is absolutely not within the scope of China's sovereignty," the ministry said in a statement.

Freedom of navigation by "friendly and allied" countries through the strait are concrete actions that highlight the strait's legal status, and China is trying to create a false appearance that the strait is an "internal issue", it added.



A member of civil defence sprays water on a damaged car after an Israeli strike, according to security sources, in the southern port city of Sidon, Lebanon, yesterday. The Israeli military said it killed a Hamas commander in the airstrike in southern Lebanon, accusing him of planning attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory.

PHOTO: REUTERS

No point in inviting Europeans to Ukraine truce talks: Russia

AGENCIES

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said yesterday he saw no reason for Europeans to take part in Ukraine truce talks, accusing them of wanting to "continue war" in Ukraine.

Lavrov's comments came ahead of his visit to Saudi Arabia to meet US officials and as European leaders convene in Paris for an emergency summit on Ukraine, amid alarm at Washington's diplomatic outreach to Moscow.

"I don't know what they would do at the negotiating table... if they are going to sit at the negotiating table with the aim of continuing war, then why invite them there?," Lavrov told a press conference in Moscow.

The veteran foreign minister said Europe had "its chance" at resolving the conflict from 2014 -- when Russia annexed the Crimean

- » European leaders hold Ukraine summit in Paris
- » Lavrov says there will be no territorial concessions

peninsula and backed pro-Russian armed separatists in the east -- and that the bloc had failed, reports AFP.

The United States has said that it wants both Russia and Ukraine to make concessions if ceasefire talks ever materialise.

But Lavrov insisted Moscow would not compromise on territory it has seized in

eastern and southern Ukraine, saying there could not even be a "thought" of that during negotiations.

A source with knowledge of Kremlin thinking said yesterday that Putin was serious about doing a deal, but not at any price, reports Reuters.

The Kremlin said the talks would focus on restoring Russian-US relations and preparations for possible talks on ending the war.

Meanwhile, Russian drone attacks on Ukraine damaged storage facilities and private residences after Russia launched 147 drones to attack the country overnight, Ukrainian military and officials said yesterday.

Separately, Ukrainian drones struck a key pumping station at a major international pipeline in southern Russia disrupting supplies from Kazakhstan, the operator said yesterday.

Parties fret over govt initiative to publish their stance online

FROM PAGE 16

or disagreed will be posted on the website. If anyone has amendments, they can submit them too. Our responsibility is to present your wishes to the nation," said Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

He explained, "One party may agree to 98 out of 100 proposals. Another may agree with only two. We will decide our next steps later based on this."

Led by the chief adviser himself, the National Consensus Commission held its first meeting on Saturday to discuss reform proposals. Around 100 representatives from 27 parties and alliances, including BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, participated.

With a view to ensuring transparency and public engagement in reaching a consensus on reforms, it was suggested that the proposals be published on a website. Yunus assured that the commission's role is to present recommendations, not to impose decisions.

However, the government's push for transparency has caused discomfort among some political leaders.

They say the initiative is unclear about how consensus will be achieved and worry that it might subject them to public criticism.

For instance, if a party opposes popular proposals like barring MPs from becoming the prime minister while remaining the party chief, or nomination quotas for the youth, it could invite backlash from voters.

A senior leader from the BNP-led alliance, wishing not to be named, said that for example, a proposal limiting a person to two terms as the prime minister was rather popular. "Which party could oppose it? If they

do, and the government publishes it, they will face public scrutiny. For some proposals, public opinion has already formed, making it difficult for parties to oppose them without providing explanations."

Mujibur Rahman Manju, chairman of AB Party, said the government should list all common proposals from different parties and focus discussions only on areas of disagreement. "This would reduce complexity and accelerate progress."

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosambhati Andolon, stressed the need for further dialogue on the process. "These matters will be clarified through discussions with the government," he added.

Meanwhile, a senior leader from the 12-party alliance, speaking anonymously, expressed frustration. "This process feels like pressure is on political parties. It seems the responsibility for implementing the reforms is being placed entirely on us."

On Sunday, Jamaat Naye-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher said, "We welcome all positive decisions. Once the commission makes its final recommendations, we will start preparing for the election."

However, despite these concerns, some leaders see value in the initiative. They believe it could help voters understand party priorities ahead of the national election. "The initiative is promising, and the government has pledged not to impose decisions. But reforms cannot be reduced to a multiple-choice exercise. Reaching a consensus requires debate, rationale, and dialogue," said Saiful Haque, president of Revolutionary Workers Party.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources
Power Division
Power Cell
Biddyt Bhaban (13th Floor), 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTING FIRM FOR BASELINE SURVEY FOR GLOBAL MULTI-TIER MEASUREMENT FOR ACCESS TO ENERGY (PACKAGE NO. S-35)

No: 27.71.0000.004.31.001.24-78Date: 17/02/2025

1. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a fund from the International Development Agency (IDA) and it intends to apply a part of the proceeds of this credit to payment under the contracts for appointment of consulting firm for "Baseline Survey for Global Multi-tier Measurement for Access to Energy (Package No. S-35)". Power Cell, therefore, intends to appoint a reputed consultancy firm to accomplish the mentioned services by using this fund under "TA for Strengthening and Development of Sustainable Power Sector in Bangladesh" project of Power Cell, Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resource.

2. Interested consulting firms must provide information indicating the qualifications to perform the services. The short-listing criteria are:
a) General experience of the firm;
b) Experience in similar projects of compatible complexity, and technical specialty;
c) Financial soundness of the firm;
d) Resources, key experts & support services of the firm.

3. A consulting firm is allowed to submit the Expression of Interest (EOI) alone if it considers itself to be fully qualified on its own for the assignment, as it is not mandatory for a consulting firm to associate with any other firm(s), whether foreign or local. Alternatively, if the firm chooses to associate to enhance their qualifications and capability for the assignment, then such associations may either be as a Joint Venture (i.e., all members of the joint venture shall be jointly and severally responsible) and/or Sub-consultants (The Consultant will be responsible for the services of the sub-consultant, and the qualification and experience of the sub-consultants will not be evaluated). In case of an association, the Consultants must explain in the EOI submission (a) the rationale for forming the association and (b) the anticipated role and relevant qualifications of each member of the Joint Venture and/or of each sub-consultant for carrying out the assignment, to justify the proposed inclusion of the JV members and/or sub-consultants in the association. Failure to provide the above explanation in the EOI may risk the association not being shortlisted for the assignment.

4. Consultants are requested to submit the following supporting documents against the above mentioned criteria: (a) The Firm's Incorporation/Trade/registration documents from the country of the firm; (b) JV agreement/letter of intent (if applicable); (c) Firm's brochure; (d) Description of similar consultancy contracts, including the scope, contract amount, name of Client, period of the contract (date of contract signing to date of completion), location/country of the services, etc.; (e) Service experience record (including nature, total cost, total inputs in terms of staff month, employer, location, scope of the service etc.); (f) Short biography of key professional; (g) Company's Income Tax certificate/Income Tax registration certificate. The experience of a parent company, subsidiary company, group company or associates (whatever the names) of the applicant (consulting firm) shall not be considered in evaluation.

5. Detailed Scope of Work will be available in the Terms of Reference (TOR) which can be downloaded from the website of Power Cell (www.powercell.gov.bd), and CPTU website from the date of publication of EOI.

6. Interested Firms are requested to submit their EOI in 2 (Two) sets, (one original and one duplicate) with soft copy in pen-drive in the address of the undersigned and clearly marked "Baseline Survey for Global Multi-tier Measurement for Access to Energy (Package No. S-35)" on or before the submission deadline of March 19, 2025, 12:00 Hours (BST). Any submission received after the submission date & time will not be accepted.

(A J M Ershad Ahsan Habib)
Joint Secretary (Budget), Power Division &
Director General (Addl. Charge)
Tel: +88 (02) 223386040
E-mail: dg@powercell.gov.bd

17.2.25

Journos

FROM PAGE 16

The international organisation Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) highlighted these findings in a report, published on CPJ's website yesterday.

The report said CPJ documented a recent spate of beatings, criminal investigations, and harassment of journalists for their work.

The report said Bangladesh's interim government has drawn criticism from journalists and media advocates for its January introduction of drafts of two ordinances: the Cyber Protection Ordinance 2025 (CPO) and Personal Data Protection Ordinance 2025.

While the government reportedly dropped controversial sections related to defamation and warrantless searches in its update to the CPO, rights groups remain concerned that some of the remaining provisions could be used to target journalists.

Journalists are also concerned that the proposed data law will give the government "unchecked powers" to access personal data, with minimal opportunity for judicial redress, writes the cpj report.

"Democracy cannot flourish without robust journalism," said CPJ Asia Program Coordinator Beh Lih Yi.

She said, "Bangladesh's interim government must deliver on its promise to protect journalists and their right to report freely. Authorities should amend proposed laws that could undermine press freedom and hold the perpetrators behind the attacks on the press to account."

Gabtoli-Dasherbandi route

FROM PAGE 16

of Tk 47,721 crore, with 2031 set as the deadline.

The project was initially proposed in 2023 under the Awami League government at an estimated cost of Tk 54,618 crore. However, after revision, the cost came down to Tk 47,721 crore. Of this amount, Tk 32,332 crore will be financed by the Asian Development Bank and the South Korean government.

According to project documents, after the interim government took office, the planning commission returned the project proposal to Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited under the Roads and Highways Division to determine whether the project should proceed.

The RHD confirmed it would be implemented and then resubmitted the proposal to the planning ministry for the next steps.

Once constructed, the southern route will start from Gabtoli and end at Dasherbandi, passing through Kalyanpur, Shyamoli, Asad Gate, Russell Square, Karwan Bazar, Hatirjheel, Tejgaon, and Aftabnagar.

It will feature 11 underground and four elevated stations. The underground stations will be between Gabtoli and Aftabnagar, while the elevated ones will be from Aftabnagar to Dasherbandi.

Initially, 19 trains with six air-conditioned coaches will operate on the route.

According to the documents, the middle coaches of each train will accommodate a maximum of 323 passengers, while the trailer coaches will carry 308 passengers.

With a travel time of 28 minutes between Gabtoli and Dasherbandi, one train will depart every four and half minutes.

The route is expected to help reduce traffic congestion and improve the environment in the capital and surrounding areas.

Operations of the country's first metro rail line, formerly known as MRT Line-6, began in November 2023, except for its Motijheel-Kamalapur section.

Two more lines -- MRT Line-5 (northern route) and MRT Line-1 -- are currently being constructed.

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Shahbaz Sunny NO MORE

Young actor Shahbaz Sunny has passed away. The news was confirmed by actor Ziaul Faruq Apurba through a Facebook post this morning.

Apurba wrote, “Actor Shahbaz Sunny is no longer with us. Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilayhi Raji’un.” The cause of his death was not mentioned in the post.

Shahbaz Sunny began his journey in the entertainment industry with director Imraul Rafat’s drama ***Kache Ashar Pore***. In a short span of time, he won the hearts of audiences with his acting skills and gained the trust of directors as well.

In 2018, the drama ***Abdullah***, directed by Golam Kibria Farooki, earned him widespread appreciation from the audience. Some of his other notable dramas that earned audience acclaim include ***Chorer Master***, ***Bifole Mullo Ferot***, ***Travel Show***, and ***Mohabbat***, among others.



Mehazabien Chowdhury will marry Adnan Al Rajeev this month



There have been numerous rumours about actress Mehazabien Chowdhury’s relationship and marriage with director Adnan Al Rajeev. However, both have consistently avoided discussing their wedding plans. This time, it has been revealed that an official announcement regarding their marriage is forthcoming.

Their *gaye holud* (turmeric ceremony) is set to take place on 23rd February at a resort near Dhaka, followed by the wedding ceremony on 24th February. Multiple close sources have confirmed the news to The Daily Star.

However, when approached for a comment, actress Mehazabien Chowdhury did not answer her phone.

Meanwhile, the actress confirmed the news of her marriage to Prothom Alo, however, refused to disclose the date and venue.

Mehazabien Chowdhury entered the media industry in 2009 through a reality show. Moving beyond television dramas, she has now become a regular presence on OTT platforms and in films. Last month, her film ***Priyo Maloti*** was released. Additionally, to mark Valentine’s Day, her new web film ***Neel Shukh*** is set to premiere tomorrow.

On the other hand, Adnan Al Rajeev is a well-known director and ad-filmmaker.

BTS’ RM named best hip-hop artiste at Hanteo Music Awards



The 32nd Hanteo Music Awards concluded its second day on February 16, recognising the outstanding achievements of K-pop artistes over the past year. SEVENTEEN and (G) I-DLE took home the highest honours at the event, which was livestreamed globally via the BIGC website.

Among the notable winners, BTS’ RM was awarded Best Hip-Hop Artiste, with his latest album, ***Right Place, Wrong Person***, described as “a masterpiece that transcends cultural and genre boundaries.”

The special announcement also hailed RM as “a storyteller of this era, proving himself through music infused with artistic sensibilities.”



Lux star Shanu confirms marriage to Mahbub Jamil

Actress and former Lux Channel 1 superstar winner Shanarei Devi Shanu recently revealed that she married last year. While the wedding took place in 2024, the actress shared the joyful news with the public on February 16.

Her husband, Mahbub Jamil, is an engineer with a passion for writing. Their love story blossomed through a shared interest in literature, eventually leading to their decision to marry.

Shanu confirmed that they officially wed on February 14, 2024, in an intimate family ceremony. She shared this news during an interview with Prothom Alo. The couple first crossed paths two years ago at the Aajob Prokash office in Moghbazar, Dhaka, sparking a friendship that later turned into romance.

At this year’s Amar Ekushey Book Fair, Shanu released her latest book, ***Bagh Manush***.

NEWS

Sylhet dailies lead call for Bangla

FROM PAGE 16
fostered a distinct identity, and so it was inevitable that the powerful wave of the Language Movement would sweep through this northeastern district.

According to the book “Bhasha Andolon Teknaf theke Tentulia” by Ahmed Rafiq, the mouthpiece of the Muslim Literary Society of Sylhet was the newspaper Al-Islah.

In an editorial in the August 1947 issue of the daily, it was stated: “We can never support any language other than Bangla as the state language.”

On November 9 and 30 and on December 28 of that year, three separate discussions on the state language were held in Sylhet.

During the November 30 discussion at an Aleya Madrasa, writer Syed Mujtaba Ali presented arguments in favour of Bangla as the state language.

He said, “Imposing Urdu as the state language instead of Bangla would be sheer foolishness.” This

statement was later published in 1949 in a book titled “Purbo Pakistan er Rashtrabhasha” (The State Language of East Pakistan).

On January 11, 1948, when the Minister of Communications Sardar Abdur Rab visited Sylhet, the local Muslim Chhatra Federation submitted a proposal to him, demanding Bangla as the state language.

On February 22, prominent women leaders sent a memorandum to Chief Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin, requesting the same. Among the signatories of the memorandum were Zobeda Khatun Chowdhurani, Sahera Banu, and Syeda Luthfunnisa.

Later, a campaign was launched throughout the district in preparation for March 11 as the main day of the movement.

According to the book “Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolon o Tatkalin Rajniti” by Badruddin Umar, a public meeting, presided over by Mahmud Ali, was held at Gobindacharan Park

on March 8.

It was disrupted by radical members of the Muslim League, who severely assaulted student leader Maksud Ahmed. Several others, including the editor of Nawbelal newspaper, Dewan Mohammad Azharf, Abdus Samad, and Dewan Wahidur Reza were also injured.

On March 10, District Magistrate M Islam banned all state language-related gatherings across Sylhet for two months, citing the highly volatile situation. Consequently, no activities were conducted the following day.

On January 27, 1952, students and locals took to the streets, protesting Khawaja Nazimuddin’s statement that Urdu would be the state language. A Bhasha Sangram Parishad (Language Struggle Committee) was formed, with Pir Habibur Rahman as its convener and Mahmud Ali, Nurur Rahman, Monir Uddin Ahmad, and Hajera Mahmud, among others, as members.

After it was decided that February

21 would be the main day of the movement that year, a district-wide campaign was launched.

On February 21, a full-scale hartal and shutdown were observed across the city. In the morning, students brought out processions from their respective schools and colleges.

The book “Bhasha Andolon er Ancholek Itihash” by Dr Abu Mohammad Delowar Hossain states that the news of student killings in Dhaka caused an uproar in Sylhet. In protest, several leaders and workers of the Muslim League resigned from their positions, while enraged locals took to the streets.

On February 21, another daylong hartal was observed.

In the morning, a women’s meeting, presided over by Zobeda Khatun, was held at Gobindacharan Park. There, Begum Hajera Mahmud, in a fiery speech, strongly protested against the killing of students and demanded Bangla as the state language.

Bangla Academy blames it on the event manager

FROM PAGE 16
Although the academy denied directly receiving any complaint, Dreamer Donkey CEO Raqeeb Hasan backed the firm’s claim that there were “concerns about mob reaction”. He, however, acknowledged their “mistake”.

The controversy arose on Sunday when PRAN-RFL Group’s sanitary pad brand Stay Safe shut its booths set up through Dreamer Donkey.

Meanwhile, a Dreamer Donkey letter requesting PRAN-RFL to shut the booths went viral on social media.

In the letter dated February 14, Dreamer Donkey CEO Raqeeb claimed some Islamist groups started demanding the sale and display of these products in public be stopped on February 11. The academy, police, Ansar and volunteers of Dreamer Donkey had to calm the situation when many people came up with the same demand the next day.

The letter further claimed some groups complained directly to the academy about the stalls after their reopening on February 13.

“Mobs are being created in different parts of the country over such issues. So, it is essential to close the two stalls to avoid any such unwanted issues,” read the letter.

A handwritten note from Bangla Academy Director General Mohammad Azam on the letter reads: “I am aware of this situation; this step needs to be taken very swiftly.”

Kamruzzaman Kamal, director of marketing at PRAN-RFL Group, said in a press release, “Honoring religious sentiments, we have decided to close the services of the Stay Safe brand at the book fair.”

The academy came up with its apology in a statement on Sunday night after facing intense criticism on social media “for giving in to mob demand”.

The academy said the stalls were shut because they were selling unauthorised products like sanitary pads, toothpaste and baby diapers.

“The event management firm

said it was in trouble because it had already signed deals with [sponsor] companies... It said it would send a letter to the sponsor company and tell them that there would be problems if they continued to sell sanitary napkins.

“The Bangla Academy director general signed the letter with consent just to make their task easier.

“...No one told the academy to stop the sale of sanitary napkins. ...We want to make it clear that there is no question of Bangla Academy having any reservations about the use of sanitary napkins.

“We’ve asked the event manager to distribute sanitary napkins as per [users’] need... In this situation, we express regrets and are making sure that sanitary napkins will be available for free beside the washrooms.”

Contacted, academy DG Azam said, “I did not give yesterday’s statement under any pressure from any group, and there were no complaints about displaying sanitary napkins from any religious groups.”

About the Dreamer Donkey letter, Azam said, “What I meant is that the event management company informed me that they had received such complaints and I’m aware of that. This can be considered a slip of information or a technical mistake.”

Dreamer Donkey’s Raqeeb told The Daily Star the academy had informed the firm that the sale of sanitary napkins is not authorised at the fair, but there was a “miscommunication” regarding the entire issue.

“Meanwhile, after the attack on Sabyasachi Prokashoni’s stall around February 10, some people started questioning why sanitary napkins were being sold openly. So, we also had concerns about the mob’s reaction,” he said.

“This wasn’t just one issue—there were multiple complications. We were worried that if this turned into a bigger issue, it could escalate further.... We simply wanted to avoid any trouble.”

Army working for stability and safety

FROM PAGE 16
Cantonment yesterday.

The briefing focused on 50 days’ activities of the army from December 28 to February 16.

“In the current situation of the country, the army is working tirelessly to protect the nation’s sovereignty, ensure the people’s safety, and their properties, safeguard important state assets and installations, and maintain overall stability,” Col Shafiqul said.

Pointing to an improvement in law and order, he said that incidents of mob justice, extortion, mugging, theft, and murder have significantly reduced.

Comparing the average data from the last two months with the previous two months, the army official said cases of extortion decreased from 250 to 110, that of theft from 850 to 600, and incidents of murder from 350 to 120. However, he did not provide any data on mob justice.

“Our operations are ongoing. We have identified certain hotspots and are keeping the areas under surveillance 24/7. The situation will

further improve in the near future.”

In joint drives over the last 50 days, 334 drug dealers or those involved in drug-related activities have been arrested, and a significant number of illegal drugs, including yaba pills and Phensedyl, have been seized, the army official said.

Overall, 2,142 individuals involved in various criminal activities have been arrested across the country during this period, Col Shafiqul said.

He added that 172 illegal weapons and 527 bullets were recovered during the period.

The army played an active role in controlling 88 incidents of unrest, including 30 road blockades, in various industrial zones like Gazipur, Ashulia, and Savar.

Col Shafiqul said that as a result, 2,097 garment factories in the country, except a few such as Beximco Group, Southern Designers Ltd, Shadhin Garments (Pvt) Ltd, and Self Innovative Fashion Ltd, are in operation.

Besides industrial areas, army personnel brought under control

42 different types of chaotic situations, of which, 14 were related to educational institutions, three to government agencies or offices, nine to political conflicts and 16 to other types of incidents.

In addition to maintaining law and order, the army has also arranged treatment for 3,859 individuals injured during movement by Students Against Discrimination. Of them, 41 are undergoing treatment in different CMHs.

When asked about the involvement of current and former army personnel in two robberies in Mohammadpur and Banani, Col Shafiqul described them as isolated and regrettable incidents. He assured that high-level investigation committees have been formed, and that active members of the army would be tried under military law, while former members would be tried under civilian law.

Asked about derogatory and negative comments about the army on social media by a few vloggers living abroad, Col Shafiqul said, “Everyone has the right to express

their opinions on social media. We are not obstructing anyone from doing so. However, we leave it to you [people] to judge the opinions based on who is expressing it, why, and how much objectively they are expressing it.”

Regarding the abduction of rubber plantation workers in Bandarban, Col Shafiqul said that 20 workers have been abducted by a criminal group that is demanding ransom. Efforts are going on to rescue them.

Col Shafiqul further said, “We have managed to curb the influence of Kuki-Chin and have destroyed several of their camps, including two on Sunday.”

He mentioned that 11 Bawm families, who had fled due to Kuki-Chin atrocities, have returned to their areas with the army’s assistance.

About the syndicates’ activities ahead of Ramadan, Col Shafiqul said there is a ministry that is responsible for controlling markets, and the army will cooperate with the government if it seeks assistance.

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Resolve the CNG auto-rickshaw debacle

BRTA’s retreat from a poorly planned and enforced decision raises questions

By now, this has become a pattern: a long-festering grievance comes to the fore (whether or not there is an immediate trigger), protesters in large groups block streets, public sufferings mount, and the authorities then cave under pressure—retreating from a decision or reform initiative or acquiescing to protesters’ demands. We have seen this cycle recur across various sectors over the last six months. The helplessness of the interim government in the face of such pressure tactics was once again on display when the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) withdrew its decision to take legal action against the drivers of CNG-run auto-rickshaws disregarding government-set metered fares, after the latter blocked key city streets and even besieged BRTA headquarters on Sunday.

In this particular instance, however, what worsened an already poor optics of governance is how hasty the decision was in the first place. According to a report, the BRTA attempted to enforce a fare system for CNG-run auto-rickshaws that was set nine years ago, without any review or consultation whatsoever. The CNG sector has long been fraught with various issues including fare disputes, conflicts between owners and drivers, and illegal operations. According to our report, the last fare revision was in 2015—which also set a Tk 900 daily deposit payable to owners—but neither drivers nor owners adhered to these rates, each blaming the other for overcharging. A 2022 attempt to revise fares and deposits also failed due to disagreements between them. Following the political shift in August, conflicting demands, and policy responses emerged, leading to the current debacle.

The question is, why would BRTA even try to enforce an outdated system instead of revising fares and deposits in consultation with the stakeholders? Drivers argue that owners currently charge between Tk 1,200 and Tk 1,600—far above the government-set deposit rate—while prices of essentials have also risen significantly, forcing them to overcharge passengers. Owners also cite inflation and rising gas prices as reasons for ignoring the fixed deposit rate. While it is absolutely unacceptable that passengers remain at the mercy of drivers, and by extension, the owners, the lack of enforcement—or rather, enforceable decisions—on the part of the government is also to blame. This whole episode only trivialises its decision-making process and enforcement capacity as well as the welfare of passengers, who are having to pay for its failures.

The fact is, overcharging passengers beyond metered fares and overcharging drivers beyond fixed deposit rates are both punishable under the Road Transport Act 2018. There can be no going around this legal obligation. However, the time has come to revise these rates in a manner that reflects present economic realities as well as passenger expectations—something the BRTA must do without delay. Resolving this issue judiciously is essential not only to establish discipline in this sector but also to prevent future disruptions.

Crack down on illegal brick kilns

We must gradually move towards better alternatives

The news of unchecked expansion of illegal brick kilns across nine upazilas of Pabna district once again highlights the authorities’ persistent failure to address this issue. According to a report by this daily, more than 150 illegal brick kilns are operating in the district, many of which burn wood instead of coal, exacerbating pollution levels in the region.

A recent investigation by the Department of Environment (DoE) identified 92 kilns in four upazilas using wood in 120-foot chimneys—39 in Pabna Sadar, 46 in Ishwardi, six in Faridpur, and one in Santhia. Among them, 13 have even set up illegal sawmills to ensure a steady supply of timber. Despite clear prohibitions against using wood as fuel under brick manufacturing regulations, most kilns continue to source large amounts of illegally logged timber without permission from the forest department, according to Pabna’s district forest office.

While the assistant director of the DoE in Pabna has stated that a report has been sent to the higher authorities in this regard, no significant action appears to have been taken. Meanwhile, the district administration claims to be conducting mobile court drives, but these efforts have been woefully insufficient, as evidenced by the sheer number of illegal brick kilns still in operation and their persistent environmental degradation. According to the district administration, there were 165 registered brick kilns as of 2020, but only 24 have renewed their licenses. What about the rest? How have they managed to operate illegally without consequences?

This is not an isolated issue. Last month, this newspaper reported that 984 kilns in Rangpur division were operating in violation of regulations. Prior to that, similar concerns were raised about Brahmanbaria, too. All of this points to the urgent need for the government to intensify its efforts to shut down illegal operations. Throughout this winter, Dhaka has consistently ranked among the most polluted cities in the world, and unregulated brick kilns are a major contributor to this sorry state of affairs—not just in the capital, but across the country.

That said, permanently eliminating such kilns requires viable alternatives. Fortunately, solutions already exist, including thermal blocks, compressed stabilised earth blocks, and sand-cement hollow blocks. The government, in collaboration with the stakeholders, must develop a clear, enforceable strategy to transition away from traditional brick kilns towards these more environmentally friendly alternatives. Otherwise, this menace will continue to persist at the cost of our environment and public health.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Clyde Tombaugh discovers Pluto

On this day in 1930, Clyde W. Tombaugh, a 24-year-old American with no formal training in astronomy, discovered the dwarf planet Pluto using a 13-inch (33 cm) telescope at Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona.

The grand choreography of blood



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H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

The July-August uprising of Bangladesh, as history will remember it, was not merely a movement—it was a symphony of repression, meticulously orchestrated by none other than the then prime minister and home minister.

On July 18, a core committee meeting convenes. The setting? A conference room where history would be rewritten with the ink of innocent blood. Picture it—a gathering of the highest-ranking officials of security agencies, intelligence officers, and political henchmen, all waiting for the orders. The home minister, a man whose name will forever be whispered with dread, looks around and declares, “More lethal force!” A nod from the prime minister seals the fate of thousands. A moment worthy of *Game of Thrones*, if only the Red Wedding were stretched over weeks, spilling far more blood.

Imagine the scene: A soldier loads his rifle, a commander nods approvingly, an intelligence officer drafts a list of “targets.” The stage is set. The cast is ready. And the audience? Unwilling, unarmed, and unprepared for the brutal show that would unfold.

In the days that followed, the streets became rivers of blood. 1,400 dead. Tens of thousands maimed. The government, ever so magnanimous, claimed only 826 casualties as if the dead needed their existence to be validated by a government ledger. Children were not spared, for what is a political massacre without its share of shattered innocence? The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report details the gruesome reality—kids, mere children, gunned down with precision, their bodies discarded like chess pieces in a game played by hands too cowardly to admit their crimes.

The historical parallels are staggering. If history were to hold a conference, the ghosts of Nanjing (1937) and the victims of the Amritsar massacre (1919) would find familiar company in Bangladesh’s martyrs. And yet, in the grand halls of denial, the former state minister for information, Mohammad Ali Arafat,

scoffs at the UN report. “A biased fabrication!” he proclaims as if words could scrub the blood off the streets.

Ever watched *Narcos*? The way the drug cartels operated—extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, brutal torture—all with the wink of an approving state? Turns out, one does not need a drug empire to run a similar operation. Just a government willing to trade morality for power.



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

The OHCHR report painstakingly details the institutionalised human rights abuses: abductions, torture, and disappearances. The intelligence agencies—DGFI, NSI, NTMC, DB, SB, CTTC—became the real-life boogymen. A dystopian *Stranger Things*, but here, the monsters weren’t hiding in the Upside Down. They wore uniforms, carried badges, and answered directly to their overlords.

One cannot help but be astounded at the crooked efficiency of the previous regime. The opposition crushed, the bodies disposed of, the perpetrators shielded behind the

perfect contrast to the monsters who preceded him. But history remains sceptical. The trials of former ministers and MPs have begun. Eighty are already behind bars, yet the stench of injustice still lingers in the air. One must wonder: will these trials serve justice or merely provide the illusion of it?

Meanwhile, the former ruling party cries foul, their voices hoarse with the desperation of the dethroned. “This report is a lie!” they scream, the echoes of their denials drowned by the very evidence they cannot erase. The world watches, some with outrage, some with indifference. But the dead? The

ground, one thing remains certain—some wounds never heal, and some blood never washes away. The question is, will the future be written in justice or in more blood?

History books will one day recount the July-August massacre, though perhaps not with the gravity it deserves. The blood of the innocent will dry, and their cries will fade, but their stories must remain. For in every tale of oppression, there lies a warning: power unchecked is power unhinged.

For now, let us weep, let us rage, and let us remember. Because forgetting would be the greatest crime of all.

Key governance reforms needed for a fairer Bangladesh



Martin Raiser
is vice president for the South Asia Region of the World Bank.

MARTIN RAISER

Bangladesh has gone through several political transitions since its independence in 1971. Caretaker or interim governments in the past have often delivered important institutional reforms. The present team under Professor Mohammad Yunus is no exception. But to meet the expectations of Bangladeshis during this short window, a focused reform agenda is required.

Bangladesh has come far in the past 53 years, but its economic engines were starting to sputter in the aftermath of Covid and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Recent data revisions suggest growth was considerably lower than previously estimated, while substantial capital flight weakened the financial sector’s health. Add to this the continuous loss in international reserves during the 2022-24 period and persistently high inflation, and the economy by mid-2024 was not in the best of health.

With the move to a crawling peg exchange rate, the tightening of monetary policy, the alignment of prudential standards with international norms, the launch of an asset quality review, and the appointment of independent boards for several of the troubled banks, the Bangladesh Bank has already taken important

steps to regain macroeconomic and financial stability. These should now be completed with the introduction of a robust bank resolution framework that gives the central bank the tools necessary to intervene in failing banks, enforce capital requirements, and, importantly, protect depositors.

While stabilising the economy is a priority, the roots of Bangladesh’s recent turmoil lie in a crisis of governance. The interim government is pursuing a programme that can be described as one of full transparency and wide consultation to help put in place the rules and institutions needed to secure a fairer Bangladesh for the next generation. In the economic sphere, three priorities stand out:

First, today, the government loses a massive seven percent of GDP annually (about 3.5 lakh crore taka) from tax breaks awarded in non-transparent and arbitrary ways. While some tax incentives are justified, they should only be granted after a due process. Bangladesh does not have such a process and unsurprisingly has one of the highest rates of tax exemptions in the world. Transferring the authority to approve tax policy from the National Bureau of Revenues to the parliament, as is the case in almost all other

countries globally, and separating tax policy from tax administration, are foundational reforms to ensure everyone pays their fair share.

The governance of public finances can also be strengthened by disclosing the winners and ownership of government contracts and granting independence to the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General.

While stabilising the economy is a priority, the roots of Bangladesh’s recent turmoil lie in a crisis of governance. The interim government is pursuing a programme that can be described as one of full transparency and wide consultation to help put in place the rules and institutions needed to secure a fairer Bangladesh for the next generation.

In the area of social assistance, the creation of a dynamic, unified social registry to better target welfare programmes is a positive step in the direction of greater transparency.

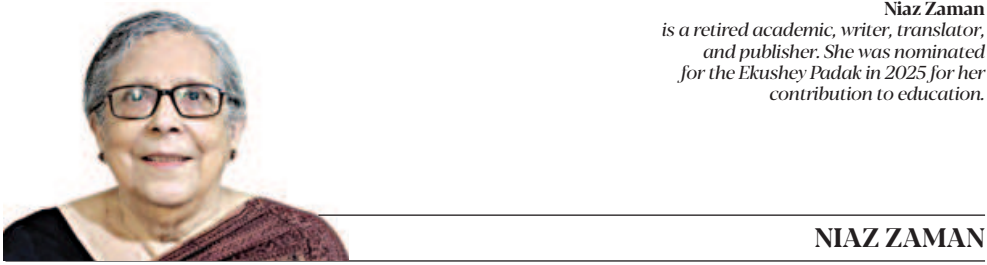
Second, lax regulation of banks allowed connected groups to secure loans that greatly increased the risks to banks. The Bangladesh Bank should require all banks to check and disclose their ultimate owners and borrowers and the links between them to manage risks.

In parallel, with the help of the international community, Bangladesh is working to recover some of the assets it believes were illicitly transferred out of the country. With a properly regulated banking system, the foundation would be laid for attracting additional investment into the sector, reducing the large stock of non-performing loans and rebooting private sector credit for growth and job creation.

Third, digital and data revolution offers great opportunities to strengthen public sector governance and service delivery. Reforms to bolster the quality and independence of the statistics system are under preparation. These could be complemented with the creation of a digital public infrastructure to make the public administration more transparent, user-friendly and efficient, following the example of other developing countries from Brazil to Estonia and Indonesia to India. Bangladesh—the country with the second largest population of digital gig workers—should not be far behind. A modern data protection framework, creating an interoperable digital payment system for mobile financial transactions, the creation of a unified digital ID system, and a consent-based data sharing framework could be priorities, as recommended by the task force on re-strategising the economy.

In strengthening the governance of public finances, the financial system and the administration of data and statistics, the interim government would leave a strong economic legacy on which all future elected governments could build.

Professor Anisuzzaman: Scholar, Mentor, Friend



He was known just as Professor Anisuzzaman. Most people of his generation used to have longer names; and indeed he did have a longer name as I learnt when I started to check online: Abu Tayyab Muhammad Anisuzzaman. But he was always known by just one name.

Born in Bashirhat on February 18, 1937, he moved with his family to Kolkata, then, after Partition, to Khulna, and finally to Dhaka which became his home. An academic, a scholar, and a writer; he was also an activist, taking part in the Language Movement in 1952 and working for the Bangladesh government in exile in Kolkata during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. When the Constitution of Bangladesh was written, it was written in English and then translated into Bangla. Dr Anisuzzaman was responsible for the Bangla translation. In 2008, Dhaka University awarded him the title of Professor Emeritus. Ten years later, in 2018, the government honoured him as National Professor. He served as chairman of the Trustee Board at the Nazrul Institute and was president of the Bangla Academy from 2011 till his death from Covid in 2020.

Professor Anisuzzaman completed his master's in 1957 in Bangla from the University of Dhaka. Five years later, in 1962, he completed his PhD at the age of 25 from his alma mater. A true scholar, during 1964-1965, he was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Chicago, and during 1974-1975, a Commonwealth Academic Staff fellow at the University of London. He was a visiting fellow at the University of Paris (1994), the North Carolina State University (1995) and the University of Calcutta (2010), and a visiting professor at the Visva-Bharati (2008-2009, 2011).

His PhD thesis was published in 1964, titled *Muslim Manas o Bangla Sahitya* (The Muslim

Mind and Bangla Literature). Among Professor Anisuzzaman's numerous publications, his study of factory correspondence in the India Office Library is significant. Published as *Factory correspondence and other Bengali documents in the India Office Library and Records* (1981), the volume catalogues a collection of Bangla correspondence dated between 1774 to about 1814, between the East India Company Representative in Dhaka with agents who ordered and supplied cotton textiles for export to Europe. These documents had not previously attracted the attention of cataloguers or readers. As KN Chaudhuri, in his brief review of the *Bulletin of SOAS*, volume 46, issue 1 (1983), notes, "The catalogue would be of great assistance to any historian interested in the economic history of Bengal at the end of the 18th century." Professor Anisuzzaman's book *Creativity, Reality and Identity* (1993), which contains four papers presented on different occasions, includes part of the introduction to this volume.

Professor Anisuzzaman received the top national awards: the Bangla Academy Literary Award for research (1970), the Ekushey Padak for education (1985), and the Swadhinata Padak for literature (2015). Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta, honoured him with an Honorary D.Lit, (2005), Asiatic Society of Kolkata awarded him the Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar Gold Plaque (2011) and the Government of India honoured him with the Padma Bhushan for his contribution to literature and education (2014).

In 1961, when I enrolled in the Department of English at Dhaka University, Professor Anisuzzaman was working on his doctoral dissertation. As a student of the English department, I had no reason or occasion to meet Dr Anisuzzaman. By 1969, however, Dr Anisuzzaman had started teaching at the

newly founded Chittagong University. The university was looking for English teachers—even a teacher with a simple BA Pass, but with a First Class MA degree, was welcome. Chittagong University was several miles away from Chittagong town, and one got to know not only the teachers of one's own department but of others as well. It was then that I first met Dr Anisuzzaman. It was not an exceptional meeting, but my husband was



Dr Anisuzzaman (1937-2020) was a lighthouse to the nation.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

very excited when I told him about meeting Prof Anisuzzaman. My husband's family had migrated from Kolkata shortly after Partition. It so happened that Dr Anisuzzaman's family had lived in the same area. His father, a homoeopathic doctor, was well-known to my husband's family.

In December 1970, I had to resign from the university for personal reasons. In 1972, I joined Dhaka University. I lost touch with Dr Anisuzzaman, who remained at Chittagong University. However, he must have visited Dhaka frequently at the time because his supervision of the Bangla version of the constitution would be ready in November that year. At the time, I did not know Dr Anisuzzaman's role; I only knew that Dr Kamal Hossain was actively involved in preparing it—and that Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin had been in charge of its aesthetic aspect. (Little did we know at the time, that the constitution, prepared with such pride, would undergo several amendments and, by 2024, prove controversial.)

In 1985, Dr Anisuzzaman rejoined the Department of Bangla at Dhaka University. I was not in the country at the time, and it was only after I returned that I would see him in the teachers' lounge. Then he retired—as I did a couple of years later. I was appointed supernumerary professor in my department, teaching one class every Tuesday. After class, I would have lunch at Dhaka Club. I would see him also at the Club very often, and we would exchange pleasantries. If he or I had already started eating, I did not feel obliged to accept his offer to move to his table. A couple of times, however, we both entered at the same time and then I could not refuse his offer to lunch with him.

In October 2011, I received an invitation from Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, to present a paper on Rabindranath Tagore at their conference on "Redefining Paradigms of Sustainable Development in South Asia" to be held in Islamabad in December that year. I informed the organisers that I was not a Tagore scholar. There were several excellent Tagore scholars in Bangladesh, and I could pass on their names to them. The organisers insisted that the invitation was for me. I had been specifically invited by Mr Ahmed Salim, one of the organisers, a poet and short story writer, who had been jailed in 1971 for his support for Bangladesh.

I didn't see how a paper on Tagore would fit into the conference theme, but I was assured that there would be other papers on writers and my paper would be quite in place. In other words, a paper on Tagore was expected from me. What could I write on Tagore that would be of interest to a Pakistani audience? In the 1960s, the central government had banned Tagore songs on East Pakistan radio and television, but the people of Bangladesh had resisted. During 1971, Tagore's "*Amar Sonar Bangla*" had been the tune that reverberated through every Bangalee mind. And, in 1972, the song became our national anthem. Tagore is the only poet whose songs have become the national anthems of two nations. How does "*Amar Sonar Bangla*" represent Bangladesh? And how does Tagore's "*Jana Gana Mana*" represent India? I decided to write on "Rabindranath Tagore and the Creation of National Identity." However, where did I begin?

I knew Dr Anisuzzaman was a scholar. Hopefully, he could guide me. I called him, and he was most welcoming. When I reached his house, he was ready with photocopied material that he thought would be helpful. Yes, I was able to get a lot of information online, but that discussion with Dr Anisuzzaman gave me the courage to write a paper on a subject I had never studied before. Mrs Anisuzzaman had been the librarian at IBA where my daughter-in-law studied, so I briefly knew about her. What I was not prepared for was the hospitality she showed someone taking up her husband's time. A tea trolley rolled in with sweet and savoury snacks. Siddiqua Zaman, to give her her own name, must have shown that hospitality to the many visitors who came to meet her husband, and she must have greeted them with the same smile. Afterwards, I learned that she had met Dr Anisuzzaman in 1959 and married him two years later, in 1961. Apart from hosting guests who came to visit her husband, Siddiqua Zaman had to suffer his long absences when he went off on his foreign teaching assignments. It was only the nine months when he was in London, from 1974-1975, that the family accompanied him. The best years of her life, she told me later, were the three months they spent at Santiniketan.

That was the first of several visits to their place. The last few I remember because of the police guard at their entrance. In 2015, bloggers Avijit Roy, Washiqur Rahman, Ananta Bijoy Das, and Niloy Neel were hacked to death with machetes. In October that year, publisher Faisal Arefin Dipon was similarly killed in his office. Dr Anisuzzaman had condemned these killings. He received a death threat: he, too, would be killed in exactly the same way. The threat was serious, and he was provided police protection.

I met Dr Anisuzzaman at the launch of Syed Waliullah's posthumously published *The Ugly Asian* at the Dhaka Lit Fest in 2018. He looked quite well in his white kurta and white *dheela pyjama*. He did not look quite so well when I last met him on January 25, 2019, at a conference at East West University. A little over a year later, on May 14, 2020, he passed away from Covid. A personal loss for his family, his death was also a loss to the nation of a lighthouse, and, to me, of a mentor and friend.

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তারিখঃ ১৬/০২/২০২৫ খ্রি.

এমএসসি ইন নার্সিং কোর্সে ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকার গত ০৯-০৬-২০২৪ খ্রি: তারিখের ৮১৮/ক.প ও ০৯-০৬-২০২৪ খ্রি: তারিখের ৮২৯/ক.প এবং স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগের ০১-০৮-২০২৪ খ্রি: তারিখের ৫৯.০০.০০০০.১৪৩.৯৯.০০৩.২৩৮-২৫৬ স্মারকসূলে স্নাতকোত্তর চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞান ও গবেষণা অনুষদের অধিভুক্ত সরকারি ০২ (দুই) টি নার্সিং শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানে ০২ বছর মেয়াদি নিম্নবর্ণিত এমএসসি ইন নার্সিং কোর্সে ২০২৫-২৬ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ৮০ টি আসনের বিপরীতে শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তির জন্য অনলাইনে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

কোড	কলেজের নাম	কোর্সের নাম	আসন সংখ্যা	মোট আসন
০১	ঢাকা নার্সিং কলেজ, ঢাকা	১. এমএসসি ইন নার্সিং ম্যানেজমেন্ট (১০১)	১০টি	৬০ (ষাট)টি
		২. এমএসসি ইন কমিউনিটি হেলথ নার্সিং (১০২)	১০টি	
		৩. এমএসসি ইন চাইল্ড হেলথ নার্সিং(১০৩)	১০টি	
		৪. এমএসসি ইন এডাল্ট এন্ড এন্ডাল্টি হেলথ নার্সিং (১০৪)	১০টি	
		৫. এমএসসি ইন মেন্টাল হেলথ এন্ড সাইকিয়াট্রিক নার্সিং (১০৫)	১০টি	
		৬. এমএসসি ইন ওমেন হেলথ এন্ড মিডওয়াইফারি (১০৬)	১০টি	
০২	কলেজ অব নার্সিং, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা	১. এমএসসি ইন এডাল্ট এন্ড এন্ডাল্টি হেলথ নার্সিং (১০৭)	১০টি	২০ (বিশ) টি
		২. এমএসসি ইন কমিউনিটি হেলথ নার্সিং (১০৮)	১০টি	
			সর্বমোট আসন সংখ্যা= ৮০ টি	

০২। প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী :

- আবেদনকারীকে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক হতে হবে। আবেদনকারীকে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অথবা বাংলাদেশ নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক নিবন্ধিত নার্সিং শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হতে ০২ বছর মেয়াদি ব্যাচেলর অব সায়েন্স ইন পোস্ট বেসিক নার্সিং/ ব্যাচেলর অব সায়েন্স ইন পোস্ট বেসিক পাবলিক হেলথ নার্সিং অথবা ০৪ বছর মেয়াদি ব্যাচেলর অব সায়েন্স ইন নার্সিং ডিগ্রি থাকতে হবে।
- এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখে আবেদনকারীর সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমা ৪৫ বছর হতে হবে।
- এমএসসি ইন নার্সিং কোর্সে ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি তথ্য স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগের ওয়েবসাইট www.mefwd.gov.bd এবং নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি অধিদপ্তরের ওয়েবসাইট www.dgnm.gov.bd এর মাধ্যমে জানা যাবে।
- প্রার্থীদের বাংলাদেশ নার্সিং ও মিডওয়াইফারি কাউন্সিল এর নার্সিং রেজিস্ট্রেশন হালনাগাদ নবায়ন থাকতে হবে।
- সরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কমপক্ষে ০২ (দুই) বছরের চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
- সরকারি প্রার্থীদের জন্য যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং অভিজ্ঞতার স্বপক্ষে স্থানীয় কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট হতে প্রত্যয়ন পত্র আছে মর্মে অনলাইন আবেদনে উল্লেখ থাকতে হবে।
- এমএসএন কোর্সে অধ্যয়নকারীরা কোন বেসরকারি প্রার্থী সরকারি চাকুরিতে যোগদান করলে উক্ত প্রার্থীর কোর্স স্বয়ংক্রিয়ভাবে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। এমএসএন কোর্স সম্পন্ন করতে চাইলে পুনরায় পরবর্তী বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে ভর্তি হতে পারবে।
- যদি কোন সরকারি প্রার্থী তথ্য গোপন করে বেসরকারিভাবে আবেদন করে এবং তা প্রমাণিত হলে তার বিরুদ্ধে প্রশাসনিক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহন করা হবে।
- বেসরকারি প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে রেজিস্টার্ড নার্স হিসাবে ০২ (দুই) বছরের ক্রিনিক্যাল প্র্যাকটিসের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
- আগ্রহী প্রার্থীগণ <http://dgnmmssc.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে পারবেন।

০৩। অনলাইন আবেদন, প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড ও পরীক্ষার সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপ:

অনলাইন (Online) আবেদন (Application) শুরুর তারিখঃ	১৭-০২-২০২৫ খ্রি: (সোমবার, সকাল-১০.০০ ঘটিকা হতে)
অনলাইন (Online) আবেদন (Application) শেষ তারিখঃ	১৭-০৩-২০২৫ খ্রি: (সোমবার, বিকাল-৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত)
প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড (Download) এর তারিখ	১০-০৪-২০২৫ খ্রি: তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ টা হতে ১৯-০৪-২০২৫খ্রি: তারিখ (সকাল-১০.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত)
ভর্তি পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও পদ্ধতি	১৯-০৪-২০২৫ খ্রি: তারিখ রোজ শনিবার সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ০১ ঘণ্টাব্যাপী MCQ পদ্ধতিতে লিখিত পরীক্ষা।

০৪। অনলাইনে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও ফি জমাদানের নিয়মাবলীঃ

- (ক) উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ online-এ আবেদনপত্র submit-এর সময় থেকে পরবর্তী ৪৮ (আটচল্লিশ) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে SMS এ পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।
- (খ) Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তীর রশ্মিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০xপ্রস্থ ৩০০ pixel) ও স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০xপ্রস্থ ৮০ pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন। ছবির সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 100 KB ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 60 KB হতে হবে।
- (গ) Online আবেদনপত্রে পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে সেহেতু Online-এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সত্যিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।
- (ঘ) প্রার্থী Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্ট কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।

(৪) SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান: Online-এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে

নির্দেশনা মতে ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষর upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। যদি Applicant's Copy তে কোন তথ্য ভুল থাকে বা অস্পষ্ট ছবি (সম্পূর্ণ কাহো/ সম্পূর্ণ সাদা/ ঘোলা) বা ছবি/ স্বাক্ষর সঠিক না থাকে তাহলে আবেদন ফি জমা না দিয়ে থাকলেই কেবল পুনরায় (Web-এ) আবেদন করতে পারবেন। উল্লেখ্য যে, আবেদন ফি জমাদানের পরে আর কোন পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জন/পরিবর্ন গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় বিধায় আবেদন ফি জমাদানের পূর্বে প্রার্থী অশুধাই উক্ত Applicant's Copy-তে তার সাক্ষরিক তোলা রশ্মিন ছবি, নির্ভুল তথ্য ও স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত PDF কপি ডাউনলোডপূর্বক নিশ্চিত করে রশ্মিন প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন।

(৫) Applicant's Copy-তে একটি User ID নম্বর দেওয়া থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk pre-paid mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই) টি SMS করে আবেদন ফি (অফেরতযোগ্য) বাবদ ১০০০ (একহাজার) টাকা অনধিক ৪৮ (আটচল্লিশ) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। এখানে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য যে, "Online-এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই পৃথীত হবে না।

SMS নিয়মাবলী:

প্রথম খাপ SMS : DGNMMSC<space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: DGNMMSC ABCDEF & send to 16222
Reply: Applicant's Name, Tk 1000 will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678. To pay fee Type DGNMMSC <Space>Yes<space>PIN and send to 16222.

দ্বিতীয় খাপ SMS: DGNMMSC <space>Yes<space> PIN লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: DGNMMSC Yes 12345678 & send to 16222
Reply: Congratulations! Applicant's Name, Payment completed successfully for DGNMMSC Application for (MSC in Nursing) User ID is (ABCDEF) and password (xxxxxxxxxx).

(৬) প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি <http://dgnmmssc.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (শুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাসময়ে জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে।

০৫। ডিক্লারেশন: প্রার্থীকে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের ডিক্লারেশন অংশে এ মর্মে ঘোষণা দিতে হবে যে, আবেদনপত্রে প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য সঠিক এবং সত্য। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার পূর্বে বা পরে যে কোন পর্যায়ে প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত তথ্য বা তার অংশবিশেষ অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোন অযোগ্যতা পরিলক্ষিত হলে তার প্রার্থীতা এবং ভর্তি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

০৬। ভর্তিভুক্ত প্রার্থীকে ১০০ নম্বরের MCQ প্রশ্নের লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে। এ পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার যাতায়াত/ পৈনিক ভাতা প্রদান করা হবে না। পরীক্ষার হলে যে কোন প্রকার ইলেকট্রিক এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ডিভাইস (ক্যালকুলেটর, স্মার্ট ওয়াচ, মোবাইল ফোন বা এ জাতীয় কোন যন্ত্রপাতি) সংগে আনা যাবে না। শুধুমাত্র পেনসিল, কালো কালির বলপয়েন্ট কলম, রাবার, স্কেল ইত্যাদি ব্যবহার করতে পারবেন।

৭। MCQ পরীক্ষায় কমপক্ষে ৫০ (পঞ্চাশ) নম্বর প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ উত্তীর্ণ মর্মে বিবেচিত হবেন। প্রশ্নপত্র প্রণয়নের ক্ষেত্রে নার্সিং বিষয়ে ৮০% এবং ইংরেজি ও সাধারণ জ্ঞান বিষয়ে ২০% প্রশ্ন থাকবে। প্রার্থীর নির্বাচনী পরীক্ষার মেধাক্রম ও প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত পছন্দক্রম অনুযায়ী কোন প্রতিষ্ঠান/ কোর্সে ভর্তি হবে তা নির্ধারিত হবে।

৮। অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী:

- (ক) সরকারি চাকরিতে কর্মরত প্রার্থীকে আবেদনের পূর্বে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট হতে অনাপত্তি পত্র গ্রহন করতে হবে।
- (খ) ভর্তি পরীক্ষায় নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীকে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাগজ পত্রাদির অনুলিপি ১ম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড সরকারি কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে জমাদান পূর্বক নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে সংশ্লিষ্ট নার্সিং কলেজে ভর্তি হতে হবে।
- বাংলাদেশ নার্সিং এন্ড মিডওয়াইফারি কাউন্সিল হতে প্রাপ্ত হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত রেজিস্ট্রেশন এর সত্যায়িত কপি;
 - শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা সম্পর্কিত সকল প্রকার মল/ সাময়িক সনদপত্র, অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি;
 - জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের অনুলিপি;
 - Download করা Applicant's Copy এর অনুলিপি ;
 - Download করা প্রবেশপত্র (Admit Card) এর অনুলিপি।
- ৯। নির্বাচিত প্রার্থী নার্সিং কলেজে অধ্যয়নকালে কোন প্রকার চাকরি, প্রশিক্ষণ বা অন্য কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে অধ্যয়ন করতে পারবেন না।
- ১০। কোর্সে অধ্যয়নকালে সংশ্লিষ্ট নার্সিং কলেজ/ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কোর্স কারিকুলাম/বিধি-বিধান মেনে চলতে হবে।
- ১১। নির্বাচিত পুরুষ প্রার্থীদের নিজ দায়িত্বে আবাসনের ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে। আবাসন সংকুলান না হলে মহিলা প্রার্থীকেও নিজ দায়িত্বে আবাসনের ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে।
- ১২। মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠীদের জন্য সংরক্ষিত আসনের ক্ষেত্রে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার দিন কার্যকর সরকারি কর্তৃক জারিকৃত সর্বশেষ বিধি-বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে। তবে সংরক্ষিত আসনে উপযুক্ত প্রার্থী পাওয়া না গেলে সাধারণ মেধাক্রমের ভিত্তিতে শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তি করা হবে।
- ১৩। ভর্তি ও ভর্তি পরবর্তী কার্যক্রমে সরকারি চাকরিতে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে "জনপ্রশাসন প্রশিক্ষণ ও উচ্চশিক্ষা নীতিমালা, ২০২৩" এর বিধানাবলী অনুসৃত হবে। নীতিমালায় উল্লেখ নেই এমন বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

ড. মোসাদ্দিক শাহিনুর বেগম

অধ্যক্ষ, কলেজ অব নার্সিং, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা

ও
পরিচালক, শিক্ষা (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্বে)
সদস্য সচিব
ভর্তি পরীক্ষা পরিচালনা কমিটি

FROM DATA TO DECISIONS

A beginner’s guide to data visualisation



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

MARWAN KHADEM

Making quick and informed decisions is crucial to stay ahead in today's fast-paced, data-driven world. As we generate vast amounts of data, transforming it into actionable insights has never been more important than now. However, how do we turn all that information into something meaningful?

Enter data visualisation—your secret weapon for transforming large and complex datasets into clear and actionable insights.

WHAT IS DATA VISUALISATION AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Simply put, data visualisation is the graphical representation of data and information. By using visual elements such as charts, graphs, and maps, individuals and organisations can interpret and understand patterns and trends from their complex and large datasets. These visuals make it easier to notice important insights and changes that could be hidden in a sea of raw data.

By simplifying data using visuals, individuals and organisations can make data-driven decisions quickly and effectively. Whether it's assessing the performance of businesses,

understanding the behaviours of customers, or anticipating future trends, data visualisation empowers businesses to make informed decisions with clarity and confidence. Md. Taimur Islam, Data Science Manager at Banglalink, states, "Visualisation deciphers the hidden code of data, transforming complexity into clarity."

HOW DATA VISUALISATION IMPACTS DECISION-MAKING IN BUSINESS

Data visualisation has become a game-changer for organisations, drastically changing how companies approach the decision-making process. Here's how.

Clear insights and swift decision-making: Md. Abu Saleh Ovi, Principal Data Engineer at local fintech company NEXT Ventures, points out, "Visualisations simplify complex data which enables faster and more informed decisions." Whether you're analysing sales trends or assessing marketing campaign performance, visualisations allow important metrics to be understood at a glance, enabling quicker and more informed decisions.

Identifying trends and patterns: Atiqul Islam Chowdhury, Senior Data Analyst at NEXT Ventures, highlights, "In my experience, data visualisation has been

key to effective decision-making. It clarifies complex information, making it easier to understand trends and patterns. Visuals facilitate faster comprehension, enabling quicker reactions to market changes." Spotting these trends and patterns in raw data could take hours of analysis, but with visual tools, people can identify critical trends instantly in real-time.

Improved collaborative understanding:

One of the most valuable aspects of data visualisation is that it simplifies the communication of complex ideas. Ovi states, "Non-technical stakeholders can understand and engage with data-driven insights. Visuals are more impactful than raw numbers, making it easier to convey insights across teams." A simple visual can convey what could take paragraphs of text to explain, making it easier for both technical and non-technical stakeholders to grasp.

Decisions based on real-time insights: With the help of real-time dashboards, organisations can respond timely to changing circumstances. Dashboards allow for quick responses to changes in the market, making sure that companies are always informed and ready to adjust as needed.

HOW TO BUILD YOUR DATA VISUALISATION FOUNDATION

For those who are new to data visualisation, getting started might feel overwhelming. However, by following a few simple steps, you can easily incorporate this skill into your workflow:

Get comfortable with SQL: Ovi suggests, "SQL is the backbone of data analytics and visualisation. Before jumping into tools, ensure you have a strong grasp of SQL queries, data extraction, and database management." A solid understanding of querying data and managing databases will set you up for success when you begin to use visualisation tools.

Build simple projects: Start with small datasets that are easy to understand and analyse. Atiqul recommends, "Focus on clear and concise visualisations, avoiding unnecessary complexity. Share your initial efforts with colleagues and gather feedback to refine your approach. Continuously explore new techniques and tools to expand your data visualisation skills." By choosing to build simple projects, you'll gain confidence and slowly refine your skills before taking on larger and more intricate datasets.

Focus on storytelling: Data visualisation is more than just creating charts and graphs; it's about telling a meaningful story. Taimur emphasises, "Focus on clarity over complexity. Learn the basics of storytelling with data before diving into advanced tools."

Explore and test out different tools: There is no one-size-fits-all tool when it comes to data visualisation tools, so you need to experiment with different tools. Tools like Tableau Public, Google Looker Studio, Microsoft Power BI, and Metabase are great for beginners. For those who are comfortable with coding, Python libraries like Matplotlib and Plotly provide greater flexibility and more customisation options.

Prioritise accurate and clean data: Before diving into visualisations, clean and prepare your data. Accurate data is the key to generating reliable insights, and investing time to clean your data will ensure better visualisations and more effective decisions.

FROM DATA TO ACTION

The real strength of data visualisation lies in its ability to uncover actionable insights. Atiqul shared a great example from his work: a dashboard designed to help his organisation easily identify customer profiles. By pulling data from various sources, the dashboard allows the team to swiftly assess customer behaviour and their profiles to make informed decisions.

Similarly, Taimur described how a customer usage monitoring dashboard revealed a decline in data and voice usage, which was linked to a price increase in data and voice packages. By visualising historical trends, the root cause was identified, and that led to the introduction of flexible bundling options to improve customer retention.

As such, data visualisation is a game-changer for businesses aiming to succeed in a data-driven world. By transforming large and complex datasets into clear and actionable insights, it empowers organisations to make faster, better, and more informed choices.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Foodpanda

Manager, Strategy & Performance

Deadline: N/A

Eligibility:

🔗 University degree in Engineering, Statistics, Economics, Business or any other analytical discipline.

Minimum experience: 4-5 years



Sheltech (Pvt.) Ltd.

Email Marketing Specialist

Deadline: February 25

Eligibility:

🔗 Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Communications, or a related field, is preferred, with prior experience in a related field.

Minimum experience: 3-4 years



Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

Executive, Commercial

Deadline: March 6

Eligibility:

🔗 Master's degree in any discipline with prior experience in the relevant field.

Minimum experience: 2-3 years



Panjeree Publications Ltd.

Executive, Digital Marketing

Deadline: March 12

Eligibility:

🔗 Bachelor's degree from any reputed university, with previous work experience in digital marketing.

Minimum experience: 2 years

FOR MORE DETAILS AND THE APPLICATION LINKS, SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



"If you turn up worrying about how you're going to perform, you've already lost. Train hard, turn up, run your best, and the rest will take care of itself."



USAIN BOLT

AI is harming your critical thinking: Microsoft study suggests

NEXT STEP DESK

A recent study by researchers from Carnegie Mellon University and Microsoft has found that using generative AI tools - such as ChatGPT and Copilot - may be reducing our ability to think critically. The research, which surveyed 319 knowledge workers and examined 936 real-world examples of generative AI use, suggests that heavy reliance on these technologies can lead to a reduction in the mental effort needed to evaluate and verify information.

The study, titled 'The Impact of Generative AI on Critical Thinking', shows that when people have high confidence in AI's ability to handle tasks, they tend to skip important steps of critical thinking. Instead of carefully checking facts or questioning the AI's output, many users simply accept what the tool provides. In contrast, those who trust their own judgment are more likely to double-check and integrate AI suggestions into their work thoughtfully.

The study also highlights a noticeable shift in cognitive effort when using generative AI. Traditionally, knowledge work involved gathering information, solving problems, and crafting detailed responses. Now, with AI handling much of the initial work, users are mostly left with tasks like verifying AI-generated content and making sure it fits their specific needs. While this shift can improve efficiency—especially for routine tasks—it also raises concerns. The researchers warn that over time, relying on AI to do the heavy lifting may result in a "mechanised convergence" of ideas.

Skills vs. networking: Why you need both in your job hunt

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

New job hunters often wonder which is more important: skills or networking? The truth is, you need both. Your skills are the magic you bring to the table—everything you know and can do to get the job done. Networking, on the other hand, is all about making sure the right people know just how capable you are.

When you combine in-demand skills with a strong network, you open the door to new opportunities, recommendations, and promotions. Let's break it down.

Mastering your skills

Your skills are the core of your professional value. Think of them as the building blocks of your career. Whether you're coding in tech, crafting campaigns in marketing, or channelling creativity in the arts, having a robust set of skills is what makes you indispensable. But here's the thing—skills aren't a one-and-done deal. They need constant nurturing and updating.

Imagine you're renovating your home; if you don't maintain the foundation, everything else eventually starts to crumble. That's exactly how skills work. Invest time in learning new techniques, stay updated with industry trends, or pick up fresh tools that can make your work more efficient. Maybe you take an online course to master new software, attend workshops to sharpen your problem-solving abilities, or volunteer for projects that push you out of your comfort zone.

Every bit of knowledge you gain not only improves your performance but also boosts your confidence. Over time, these improvements make you the go-to person in your field, ready to tackle bigger challenges and add more value to your team.



Making the right connections

You might be an expert at what you do, but if no one knows about your expertise, it's hard for opportunities to come knocking. Networking is all about spreading the word and building genuine relationships that can help your career. It isn't just about having a long list of contacts; it's about cultivating relationships with people who truly support you and can help open doors.

Networking can be as simple as striking up a conversation with someone after a meeting or leaving a thoughtful comment on a LinkedIn post. These small interactions can add up over time, building a community around you that recognises your talent and potential. Think of networking like tending to a garden—you plant seeds by reaching out and nurturing those relationships, and eventually, you'll see them bloom into

opportunities like job referrals, mentorships, and even collaborative projects.

Don't worry if you're not a natural extrovert or if you feel a bit awkward at events. Authenticity matters more than flashy self-promotion. Focus on being yourself, sharing your experiences, and showing genuine interest in others. When people see that you're passionate and approachable, they're more likely to remember you and recommend you when new opportunities arise.

At the end of the day, your skills and your network are two sides of the same coin. Excelling at your job builds your professional reputation, but making sure the right people know about it can turn that reputation into real career opportunities. Keep sharpening your skills, stay curious, and don't be afraid to reach out!

Protection and Improvement of Living Standards of Domestic Workers



Co-funded by
the European Union



গণসাক্ষরতা অভিযান
CAMPAIGN FOR POPULAR EDUCATION



OXFAM



CAMPE, in collaboration with The Daily Star, organised a roundtable titled “Protection and Improvement of Living Standards of Domestic Workers: Our Role” on December 18, 2024. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



Tapon Kumar Das,
*Deputy Director,
Campaign for Popular
Education*

The 2022 Labour Force Survey reports 1.65 million domestic workers in Bangladesh, though estimates from non-state actors suggest the actual number may range from 7 to 10 million. Studies highlight that most domestic workers lack basic education, with 61% not having received primary or alternative education and 99% without secondary education. Many also lack formal training certifications. Domestic workers often face difficult working conditions, including undefined working hours, irregular pay, mistreatment, and poor health support. Despite the introduction of the Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy in 2015, its implementation has been limited, and progress has been slow.

To improve their situation, eight NGOs, supported by Oxfam, launched the SUNITI Project to advocate for domestic workers’ rights. This includes pushing for the inclusion of “domestic work” under the Labour Law, endorsing ILO Convention 189, offering non-formal education and vocational training, ensuring decent work conditions, providing legal documentation like joining letters, and establishing health support and minimum wage regulations. Despite challenges, a new initiative funded by the EU and coordinated by Oxfam continues to address these issues.



Abul Hossain,
*Acting Coordinator,
Domestic Workers
Rights Network
(DWRN)*

Our demand is straightforward: we are labourers, and we want our rights to be established. We seek recognition, dignity, and security, as guaranteed by the Constitution. The Labour Law of 2006 states that the law is applicable to all labourers. However, it explicitly excludes domestic workers, dashing our hopes.

The government’s “Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy 2015” is a comprehensive document, rare in its scope as an executive policy. It refers to previous decrees, including the 2011 High Court verdict, and declares that all benefits outlined in the draft policy should be ensured by the state until the enactment of a law. Yet here we are in 2025, still waiting for tangible outcomes.

The Labour Reform Commission’s first meeting included domestic and cleaning workers. If the government does not grant us our rights, we are determined to earn them ourselves. I have faith in the committee’s recommendations and remain hopeful that our voices will finally be heard.



Lipi Begum, *Domestic Worker, Kallyanpur Pora Bosti*

As domestic workers, we are treated unfairly and without dignity. Despite working tirelessly to maintain households, when we ask for water, we are given old, dirty glasses, different from those we clean every day. We are not allowed to sit on the sofas or beds we clean and can only sit on the floor. Unlike RMG workers, we do not receive bonuses, vacations, or even basic rights like fixed working hours or a weekly day off. If we break something by accident, we face verbal and sometimes physical abuse, and are forced to pay for damages, with costs deducted from our wages. Our wages remain stagnant, and we have no job security. If we complain, we are threatened with being laid off. Even taking a day off requires us to finish all the work first. Our struggles continue as there is no legal protection for us.



Champa Begum, *Domestic Worker, Kallyanpur Pora Bosti*

Domestic workers like us do not get time off, even during pregnancy, and are forced to do heavy household tasks. For small mistakes, like mixing up clothes during washing, we are verbally abused, insulted, or slapped. Our



work is undervalued; we are seen as “servants” despite being essential to maintaining households. We have no formal appointment contract, leaving us vulnerable to unfair layoffs without wages. Without legal protection or contracts, we face immense financial hardship when suddenly dismissed, struggling to provide for our families.



Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, *Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) & Chairperson, Labour Rights Commission Interim Government*

Domestic workers in Bangladesh face severe challenges, exemplified by Kalpana, a house help subjected to brutal torture, whose condition in the burn unit was dire. Her parents revealed they had not been allowed to visit her for six years. Similarly, another domestic worker was recently rescued from Bashundhara after being confined for years while caring for a bedridden patient. Her “crime” was wanting to visit her family during Eid.

The core issue confronting our domestic workers is the pervasive system that fuels their exploitation and strips them of essential dignity and rights. To address this, ensuring their formal registration is crucial. This is feasible with collaborative efforts from the Social Welfare and the Local Government Ministries. For instance, registering workers under the government’s ‘Somota’ universal pension scheme for low-income individuals could incentivise employers to contribute to their well-being, with shared deposits from employers, workers, and government support.

Such registration would provide domestic workers with government recognition, compelling the Labour Ministry to protect their rights. This step would also combat the culture of discrimination, which impacts both domestic workers and employer families, as children either internalise or become desensitised to this inequality. Establishing regular communication channels with authorities and mandating employer accountability can significantly reduce abuse and uphold domestic workers’ dignity.



Zakia Sultana, *Domestic Worker*

I urge the government to prioritise comprehensive skill development programmes for domestic workers and recognise us under the Labour Law 2006. While the Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy 2015 outlines provisions such as forming a monitoring cell under the Labour Ministry, these remain unimplemented. Without action, domestic workers continue to face exploitation and invisibility.

On behalf of 4 million domestic workers, I ask: how long must we suffer and be tortured for meaningful change? Until domestic workers are included in the Labour Law, the 2015 policy must be enforced. Additionally, platforms for awareness and dialogue must involve domestic workers so that we can voice our concerns directly.



Salma, *Domestic Worker*

Domestic workers remain excluded from the Labour Law, and the Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy 2015, though formulated, has yet to be implemented. If our rights were enshrined in law, we could rightfully demand a weekly day off, formal contracts, or maternity leave. Currently, we have limited vacation opportunities and inadequate compensation. I humbly request the government to pass the law for us; then we can fight to overcome the rest

of the challenges ourselves.



ABM Khorshed Alam, *Consultant, The World Bank & Former CEO, NSDA*

I believe many incidents of violence against domestic workers stem from their lack of skills. When I was with the National Skill Development Authority (NSDA), I worked on initiatives to enhance domestic workers’ skills. With proper training, incidents like breaking a glass or burning clothes could be avoided, which, in my opinion, would reduce violent encounters by 50 at least per cent.

Addressing domestic workers’ challenges requires revising the Labour Law to include them, as formulating new laws is a lengthy process. Mandating specific working hours, safe resting places, and housing facilities is crucial. Domestic workers, particularly those from rural areas without local support, need secure housing, much like working women’s hostels. Providing such facilities would significantly reduce violence and improve employer attitudes. The Government’s Labour Welfare Foundation, funded by contributions from multinational corporations like Unilever, can allocate resources to these initiatives. Transparent use of these funds is essential to support domestic workers’ welfare.



Mirza Nurul Ghani Shovon, *Chairperson, Informal Sector Industry Skills Council (ISISC)*

Policy and law are fundamentally different. In our country, where constitutional laws are often poorly implemented, policies tend to be even less effective. What we urgently need is a dedicated law to protect the rights of domestic workers. Such legislation should be comprehensive, addressing housing, security, and healthcare facilities for them.

The government’s existing incentives and social safety net programmes can be extended to include domestic workers. In this regard, the Social Welfare Ministry has a crucial role to play. Additionally, there should be a dedicated constitutional body responsible for all matters concerning domestic workers, including the protection of their rights, provision of facilities, and overall management.

This is a pressing issue that must be addressed during the tenure of the interim government; otherwise, it might never be addressed because, despite highlighting these issues to previous political governments time and again, there has not been any tangible progress.



Dr. Fauzia Moslem, *President, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP)*

Firstly, I would like to highlight that while we are advocating for the protection of domestic workers, we must ask ourselves: are we even recognising domestic work or care services as a distinct sector? In our country, care services are undervalued. If care services were acknowledged as a legitimate sector, the establishment of domestic workers’ rights would naturally follow. The Social Welfare Ministry has a crucial role to play in this regard, but recognising domestic workers as labourers and ensuring their rights and dignity falls under the mandate of the Labour Ministry.

To build a society free from discrimination, we must first address the deeply rooted biases in our culture, attitudes, lifestyles, and gender norms. Alongside this cultural shift, supportive laws must be enacted to ensure domestic workers’ rights and dignity. Change must start from within, at the individual level. Only

then can care work be valued as an essential job, and the contributions of domestic workers be properly recognised and appreciated.



Shahajadi Begum, *Programme Coordinator, Oxfam in Bangladesh*

Oxfam in Bangladesh has been working with domestic workers for the past 12 years, and it is clear that incorporating domestic workers under the Labour Law is essential. I am able to speak here today because someone is shouldering the burden of work in my home, and this once again highlights the importance of this sector. It is crucial to recognise domestic workers as integral participants in the labour market, moving beyond a traditional sympathy-driven, humanitarian perspective.

We have collaborated with organisations present here and trialled two projects aimed at creating job contracts, setting working hours, and facilitating job placements. These initiatives are ongoing. From our experience, I can confidently say that there is no alternative to enhancing skill development for domestic workers. It not only benefits employers but also empowers the workers themselves. The issue of safety for domestic workers is critical—not only for their well-being but also for the job providers who rely on them.



Shirin Parveen Haq, *Founding Member & Prominent Human Rights Activist, Naripokkho*

As the driving force behind the recently established commission, I am frequently reminded of the term ABRODH, which signifies solitary confinement and the degrading conditions endured by many domestic workers. This term aptly encapsulates the various predicaments faced by domestic workers, as they are excluded from any form of leave or humanitarian support. The urgent need for a robust legal framework, coupled with the introduction of universal pension schemes, cannot be overstated. Key measures such as registration through enrolment, reform and expansion of the existing labour welfare commission, and comprehensive training initiatives hold the potential to mitigate domestic workers’ vulnerabilities. Over time, such efforts may also help overcome the stigma against domestic work as so-called ‘menial jobs,’ fostering dignity and inclusion for domestic workers.



Sharmeen S Murshid, *Honourable Advisor, Ministry of Social Welfare, Interim Government*

As the head of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Women’s Affairs, I must acknowledge that we often lag behind countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Philippines in addressing issues concerning domestic workers. While the state bears a significant responsibility for ensuring the health and education of domestic workers’ children, equal accountability rests with all stakeholders to prevent violence against them. Addressing child labour must remain a top priority. Currently, there are approximately four million domestic workers in our country, supported by 72 registered organisations advocating for their welfare. This underscores the pressing need for a dedicated authority to improve their conditions. We are also reviewing the Labour Welfare Commission and the Universal Pension Scheme proposed by the previous administration, with plans to introduce unique identification numbers and expanded digitalisation efforts.

It is deeply concerning that

domestic workers remain largely excluded from mainstream integration. However, we are resolute in our commitment to ensuring their safety, dignity, and security. Achieving this requires close collaboration with ministries such as Labour, Home Affairs, Local Government, and Women’s Affairs. Key issues such as wages, working conditions, and the provision of at least one day off per week must be prioritised. Any national policy or task force must transcend mere documentation, driving meaningful change. We firmly believe that a more equitable world is possible if these challenges are addressed with determination and collective action.



Rasheda K. Choudhury, *Executive Director, Campaign for Popular Education*

Despite efforts, minimum social security—basic income or support guaranteeing a minimum standard of living—remains an unrealised goal due to lack legal frameworks. Policies from the 2010s inspired optimism but failed to provide victims with access to justice. While violence against women once spurred media-led change, the rights, dignity, and security of domestic workers remain unacknowledged. Their work conditions often lack essential provisions such as appointment letters and fixed working hours, raising questions about employer accountability. Collaborative initiatives, such as the SUNITI project and partnerships with international entry like Oxfam, aimed to legitimise their struggles.

High admission fees in Dhaka schools and inadequate local academic opportunities highlight broader inequalities. With over 17,000 slums in and around Dhaka, many children of domestic workers rely on low cost madrasa education or NGO-supported schools.

International models, like India’s 2016 Right to Education amendment and Nepal’s Right to Free Education Act (2018), underscore the need for Bangladesh to strengthen its own educational commitments. Articles 17 and 28 of the Constitution enshrine education and non-discrimination, yet their implementation lags. Addressing these gaps aligns with global goals like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Inter-ministerial coordination is crucial for integrating welfare, education, and security for domestic workers and their children. Initiatives like the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) demonstrate potential, but comprehensive reform requires a focus on accountability and collaboration with credible NGOs with good track records like Oxfam. The media must also challenge issues like child abuse and advocate for systemic improvements. Only integrated approaches can secure lasting guarantees for domestic workers.



Mahfuz Anam, *Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star*

As an editor, I have had the privilege of participating in pivotal discussions that embody the essence of perception, knowledge, and growth. The media’s coverage of national issues should undeniably include the struggles of domestic workers, a cause that The Daily Star strongly supports. I urge relevant stakeholders to collaborate with the media to ensure meaningful and effective outcomes. I reaffirm my unwavering commitment to this cause.



Tanjim Ferdous, *In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star (Moderator)*

According to BBS, in Bangladesh, there are approximately 2.5 million domestic workers, of whom 80 per cent are women. Most of them have migrated from rural areas to urban areas in search of livelihoods. However, the lack of proper education, skills, and legal protection has made it challenging to ensure a safe and dignified work environment for them.

Although the government formulated the Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy in 2015, the lack of effective implementation means that domestic workers are still deprived of the fundamental rights granted under labour laws. They are not recognised as workers, which results in their exclusion from labour rights, protection, and social services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Include domestic workers within the Labour Law and establish a dedicated monitoring cell under the Labour Ministry to oversee their welfare in coordination with the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.
- » Recognise domestic work as a formal sector.
- » Endorse the legal framework necessary to implement the Domestic Workers’ Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015.
- » Establish training programmes for domestic workers and organise short-term orientation sessions for employers to promote behavioural change.
- » Include domestic workers under the government’s universal pension scheme, ‘Somota,’ and ensure their inclusion in social safety nets programmes.
- » Ensure access to quality education for domestic workers’ children.
- » Create helplines and helpdesks for domestic workers.
- » Actively promote a positive mindset towards domestic work.
- » Ensure inter-ministerial coordination to integrate welfare, education, and security for domestic workers and their children.
- » Establish regulations for minimum wage, working hours, joining letters, and provide security, healthcare, and housing for domestic workers.



BCB to find new window for BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed held a meeting with former Bangladesh captains at the BCB premises yesterday to discuss how to develop the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and to take their opinion on what could be the best possible window to hold the tournament.

The BPL currently clashes with franchise leagues such as SA20 and ILT20, which has led to many foreign stars choosing those tournaments over BPL.

BPL's current window, spanning from late December to early February, was mandated by the ICC in 2022 and is supposed to run till 2027.

However, after the meeting with former captains like Akram Khan, Habibul Bashar and Mohammad Ashraful and some current players like Mominul Haque, Liton Das and Taijul Islam, the BCB president in a video message shared online claimed they have found a new window for BPL, however, he did not disclose it.

"We have begun work on the next BPL and in this plan, we have found a window. We all know that there are many franchise tournaments in different countries that clash with us. So, we want to do it differently in order to get quality foreign players.

"We held a meeting today [Monday] with former captains and all of them gave their suggestions. We will take those into consideration so we can use them moving forward," Faruque said.

Former captain Rajin Saleh told reporters that the discussion was not only limited to BPL, as "how to develop the NCL T20 and improve first-class cricket, those things were also discussed."

Faruque also informed that the BCB will share a considerable portion of its revenue from ticket sales worth Tk 13.25 crore with the seven franchises that played in BPL II.

"Although revenue-sharing is done in all areas, we haven't been able to do it across the board. But we will surely try to distribute a sizable portion of the revenue earned from ticket sales among the seven franchises."

Reality check for Tigers ahead of main contest

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh received a last-minute wake-up call ahead of the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy after their batting fell apart in their lone warm-up match against Pakistan Shaheens at the Dubai Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The Tigers lack in match practice in the 50-over format heading into the tournament as they have not played an ODI in the last two months and are coming straight from the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), which was followed by a few training sessions and some match scenario practice in Mirpur and Dubai.

The last time the Tigers played



Miraz finishing as the highest scorer with 44 off 53 balls raised some eyebrows, number nine Tanzim Hasan Sakib contributing 30 off 27 balls out of the team's total of 202 was proof of how dismal they were as a batting group against the Shaheens attack.

Among the recognised batters, only Soumya Sarkar had a notable contribution of 35 off 38 balls while Tanzid Hasan Tamim (six), Najmul Hossain Shanto (12), Towhid Hridoy (20), Mushfiqur Rahim (seven) and Jaker Ali Anik (four) could hardly make an impact which led to the Tigers getting folded within 38.2 overs after opting to bat first.

Many of the Bangladesh team batters had an underwhelming BPL and their performance in the warm-up game certainly will not boost their confidence.

Another worrying sign is that the team collapsed from 119-3 to 137-7 – a continuation of the batting collapse problem which

has been plaguing the team for some time.

Although Bangladesh had the option to test all of their batters in the match due to it being an unofficial contest, two of their recognised batters Mahmudullah and Parvez Hossain Emon did not bat.

Bangladeshi batters' vulnerability against leg-spin also got exposed in this contest as Pakistani leg spinner Usama Mir, who has represented his country in 12 ODIs and five T20Is, finished with four scalps which included the wickets of Miraz, Hridoy, Mushfiqur and Jaker while another wrist spinner Sufiyan Muqem also chipped in with one wicket.

The bowling also didn't fare much better as the Pakistan Shaheens chased down the target in just 34.5 overs and completed a comfortable seven-wicket victory.

Bangladesh tried out eight bowlers but only pacers Nahid Rana, Tanzim Sakib and off-spinner Miraz took one wicket each as the Bangladesh bowlers could hardly make a match out of defending the small target.

Mohammad Haris top scored with 76 off 62 balls before retiring hurt while Mubasir Khan remained unbeaten on 63.

The Bangladesh players will get just two days to analyse their mistakes before they face India, who possess the most potent spin attack in the tournament, in their first Group A match on February 20.

The Tigers will then travel to Rawalpindi for their remaining two Group A matches against New Zealand and Pakistan on February 24 and 27 respectively.

Oman's unique ODI record

STAR SPORTS DESK

Oman completed an unprecedented feat on Sunday when they bundled out Namibia in their ICC World Cup League 2 match in Al Amerat without using a single over of fast bowling, becoming the first team in the history of ODI cricket to bowl out an opposition with only spinners.

Oman used five spinners in their 33.1-over innings and the spinners collectively claimed all 10 wickets to bundle out Namibia for 96.

Left-arm spinner Shakeel Ahmed did the bulk of the damage, picking up 4-25 while off-spinner Jay Odedra and left-arm orthodox Aamir Kaleem took a couple of wickets each.

Oman did have one medium pacer in their playing XI in Sufyan Mehmood but he was not used.

This is now also the longest spin-only innings in a decided ODI, and the fourth such instance across men's and women's cricket.

The match in Al Amerat, however, went down to the wire with Oman scraping a two-wicket win, reaching 100-8 in 22.4 overs.

Nabi not mulling retirement yet

ICC

Mohammad Nabi is the only player left who was part of the first-ever Afghanistan One-Day International side, but he still has big international dreams left to achieve.

The 40-year-old is now back on Afghanistan duty, 16 years after he was part of the team that beat Scotland in Benoni in his country's first-ever ODI. And he has not yet decided whether the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025 will be the last time he pulls on an international jersey.

He said: "I'm still thinking (about the future). These might not be my last ODIs, I will probably play less ODIs and give chances to the youngsters to build experience. I've discussed with the senior players and in the high-level games, maybe or maybe not, we'll see. It will depend on my fitness."

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Bayern at ease, Milan up to turn the table

AGENCIES

Bayern Munich will feel much more comfortable going into the second leg of their Champions League playoff against Celtic as they will welcome the Scottish at the Allianz Arena on Tuesday.

Bayern have not lost in Munich in the Champions League since April 2021, a run of 20 games including battles against Real Madrid and Manchester City in the seasons they won the competition.

Goals from Michael Olise and Harry Kane gave Bayern a narrow advantage in the 2-1 win over the Scottish champions in the reverse fixture last week.

The late goal from Celtic's Daizen Maeda could prove vital if Brendan Rodgers' side are to progress to the knockout stages of the competition and eliminate the six-time champions. But it is a big ask for Celtic to win in Munich, especially as Bayern have only lost once at home all season. That defeat was against Bayer Leverkusen in the German Cup, at the beginning of December.

Bayern have also never lost at home

against a Scottish team, winning seven and drawing three of their 10 matches.

While Celtic have never progressed in the Champions League when they have lost the first leg at home, going out on seven previous occasions so they have it all to do at the Allianz Arena.

Meanwhile, Dutch side Feyenoord have to battle their away record to register a memorable win against AC Milan in their second leg Champions League playoff at the San Siro after they beat the Italian giants 1-0 in the Netherlands last week. The visitors are winless in their previous five matches away from in all competitions and have an injury problem going into the contest, with 11 players expected to miss out.

Milan, on the other hand, will bank on their strong home record to take Feyenoord down as the Rossoneri have lost just twice at home in all competitions this season. However, Milan's previous five home victories have been by a single goal meaning they will have to do more than that to go through.

Ismail and Shirin excel as nation's fastest

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ismail regained his status as the nation's fastest sprinter after four years, capitalising on the absence of England-based national record holder Imranur Rahman at the 48th National Athletics Championship held at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Shirin Akter, meanwhile, maintained her dominance in the women's 100m event, securing the title for a record 16th time.

Ismail, who last won the 100m gold medal during the Bangladesh Games in 2021 before losing his title to Imranur Rahman in 2022, clocked 10.61 seconds -- 0.02 less than his Bangladesh Navy teammate Rakibul Hasan -- while Jubail Islam of Bangladesh Army won the bronze medal, clocking 10.89 seconds.

The race was closely contested, with Rakibul leading up to the 90-metre mark before Ismail produced a strong final surge to take the title.

"No one wants to lose his position, and I am no exception to that. There are many strong competitors in the 100m sprint, and I have been trying to improve myself day by day. I have trained for seven successive months to become the fastest man of this national championship," Ismail told reporters after



Bangladesh Navy sprinters Mohammad Ismail and Shirin Akter [bottom] race to the finish line first in their respective 100m events at the 48th National Athletics Championship held at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



becoming champion for the fifth time.

When asked about Imranur's absence, Ismail acknowledged that competing against him would have added extra pressure but insisted that the other sprinters had also performed at their best, making the victory no less challenging.

In the women's 100m sprint, Shirin of Navy was once again unstoppable as she clocked 12.01 seconds to win the 100m sprint, while Sumaya Dewan of Navy and Azmi Khatun of BKSP won silver and bronze medals, respectively, clocking 12.15 and 12.50 seconds.

"It was not easy to defend the 100m title because the competitors were also strong and performed well," said Shirin, crediting her consistent training under coach Abdullah Hel Kafi and the support from Bangladesh Navy for her success.

Controversy, however, overshadowed the 400m event, as organisers allegedly altered the competition format mid-tournament to accommodate star sprinter Zahir Raihan. Despite winning his heat, Zahir had failed to qualify for the final based on his timing.

Initially set to miss the final, Zahir was given another chance when organisers introduced semifinals -- an addition not originally planned. He then topped the semifinals to ensure his place in today's eight-athlete final.

Bangladesh Athletics Federation joint secretary and event manager Kitab Ali admitted to an oversight in not including semifinals in the schedule or informing athletes that final qualification would be based on the timing of the heats. However, he defended the decision to adjust the format, stating that it was done in line with IAAF regulations.

স্বাদ

ধন্য দেশের প্রণয় দিয়ে

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

Sylhet dailies lead call for Bangla

AHMAD ISTIAK

It was in the newspapers of Sylhet that the first demands for Bangla as the state language were raised. Due to its regional characteristics, Sylhet always

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Journos continue to be attacked: CPJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six months after a mass uprising ousted the increasingly autocratic administration of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladeshi journalists continue to be threatened and attacked for their work, along with facing new fears that planned legislation could undermine press freedom.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Anti-Discrimination Student Movement activists hold a press briefing at Dhaka University's Madhur Canteen yesterday to share their plans to launch an independent new student organisation.

MRT LINE-5

Gabtoli-Dasherbandi route in the offing

Project okayed by Planning Commission, now awaits EcneC approval

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Planning Commission yesterday approved the project for constructing the southern route of the Mass Rapid Transit Line-5, which will connect Gabtoli to Dasherbandi.

The approval was granted at a meeting of the commission's Project Evaluation Committee.

The planning ministry is now set to present the project proposal to the EcneC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) for final approval.

According to a ministry official, the line will be constructed at a cost

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

Army working for stability and safety

Says its HQ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army says it has not faced any significant challenges in maintaining law and order over the past six months, and it has been working in close coordination with the law enforcement agencies to ensure stability.

Col Shafiqul Islam, colonel staff of the Directorate of Military Operations at the Army Headquarters, made the remarks while providing updates on the efforts to ensure law and order at a press conference at the Officers' Mess in Dhaka

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

REFORM PROPOSALS

Parties fret over govt initiative to publish their stance online

MOHAMMAD AL MASUM MOLLAH and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The interim government's initiative to publish the positions of individual political parties on reform proposals on a website has led to a sense of unease within the political establishment.

While the government's push for transparency has been praised by many, some politicians worry that it could expose their parties to public criticism, especially with the elections approaching.

The government's plan, announced at a meeting on February 15, aims to make the process transparent by posting each party's stance on key proposals online.

"The issues on which political parties have agreed

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

SANITARY NAPKIN FIASCO

Bangla Academy blames it on the event manager

NILIMA JAHAN

The Bangla Academy has apologised for shutting booths selling sanitary napkins at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela allegedly because of complaints from religious groups.

Blaming its enlisted vendor Dreamer Donkey for the blunder, the academy in a statement said "a matter related to commodification at the fair was presented as a sensitive issue differently".

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

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