

The lost colossus awakens, WITH RENEWED PURPOSE



KHALID HOSSAIN

With a promise to stir the long-dormant heartbeat of the sport, the ICC Champions Trophy returns to cast its mighty presence once more.

First birthed as the ICC KnockOut Trophy in 1998, then rebranded in 2002, the tournament has always gifted the sport with moments etched in history. For instance, the victory of South Africa in the inaugural edition still stands as their solitary silverware in a global tournament. Then Pakistan tasted their first victory against India in

an ICC event in the 2004 edition, the tournament eventually reaching its crescendo with West Indies tailenders snatching victory from the jaws of defeat against England.

For several years, the tournament was held every two years but following the 2009 edition the tournament shifted to a four-year cycle, featuring the top eight teams from the ICC ODI rankings.

However, for the past eight years since the preceding 2017 instalment, the Champions Trophy has been a ghost of the past, a missing piece in one-day international (ODI) cricket's identity.

Now, in 2025, the Champions Trophy is back, stepping into a world where cricket itself has changed. The Twenty20 leagues now rule the calendars, Test cricket fights to preserve its ancient traditions, and the once-mighty ODI format lies in a state of limbo -- neither here nor there -- drifting between worlds.

This is more than a return; it is a battle cry. The International Cricket Council has thrown its weight behind it. The game's global governing body's decision to inject a record-breaking USD 6.9 million prize pool -- a whopping 53 percent increase from the last edition -- into the tournament is not just a financial boost, it is a statement of belief. Also, with each group stage win worth over USD 34,000 for the victorious teams ensures that the competition remains fiercely contested from the get-go.

Beyond the spectacle, a larger question looms: what does this tournament, returning after eight long years, mean for the future of ODI cricket? Once cast aside in favour of a single global event per format, the Champions Trophy's return

suggests that ODIs still have a heartbeat. But for how long?

As it stands, 50-over cricket continues to struggle in an era of shrinking attention spans. Matches often drift in the middle overs, offering neither the sustained intensity of T20s nor the strategic depth of Tests. Bilateral ODIs, once central to international schedules, are increasingly sidelined by lucrative T20 leagues and marquee Test series. The format risks being restricted to global events like the World Cup and Champions Trophy, with only occasional high-profile series keeping it relevant.

The Champions Trophy's success could reaffirm ODI cricket's place in the modern game; failure may accelerate its decline. And where better to make this statement than Pakistan? A land where cricket pulses through the veins of its people, yet an ICC event has not graced its shores since 1996. Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Lahore now stand ready to welcome the game's elite.

The format is unforgiving. Two groups of four. No easy matches, no free passes. Only the best move forward. A slip-up can cast teams into the shadows.

The opening salvo will come from Pakistan and New Zealand, a clash that will set the tone for a tournament where each match carries the weight of destiny. But the biggest subplot? India. Political tensions have drawn an invisible boundary, forcing their matches to be staged in Dubai. It's a compromise, a reminder of cricket's entanglement with geopolitics.

The Champions Trophy has always been a tournament of firsts. In its infancy, it was known as the "Mini World Cup", designed to spread the game's reach, with the first edition held

in Bangladesh -- a nation then on the fringes of full membership -- and the second in Kenya.

In 2002, however, the tournament found its stage in Sri Lanka and with it came change. The knockout format was discarded, and the revolutionary Decision Review System (DRS) was trialled for the first time; though it wouldn't be formally introduced until 2008.

Similarly, this time the Champions Trophy introduces Artificial Intelligence to enhance fan engagement, offering personalised recaps and driving new interactive experiences across the ICC's digital platforms, bringing fans closer to the action.

For the teams, the stakes couldn't be clearer. India and Australia, the two top-ranked ODI sides, will arrive with their World Cup final duel still fresh in memory. Pakistan, playing at home, will seek to channel the energy of their fervent supporters. England, wounded but dangerous, will look to prove that their white-ball dominance hasn't faded. Former champions South Africa and New Zealand each arrive with their own ambitions, while Bangladesh and Afghanistan know that momentum in a tournament like this can change in an instant.

As the cricketing world turns its gaze toward Pakistan and the UAE, the Champions Trophy 2025 becomes more than just another event -- it is a litmus test for ODI cricket itself.

For now, though, the anticipation is palpable, like the first crackle of thunder before a storm. Will this be the moment that breathes life back into the format, or merely a last hurrah before it fades further into the background? Only time will tell.

**Beyond the
spectacle, a larger
question looms:
what does this
tournament,
returning after
eight long years,
mean for the future
of ODI cricket?**

 Prime Bank



**10th EDITION OF
THE BIGGEST
NATIONAL SCHOOL
CRICKET TOURNAMENT
BEGINS!**



 Prime Bank
NATIONAL SCHOOL
CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Since 2015 Prime Bank in partnership with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has been organizing National School Cricket Tournament.

Over the past 10 years, this initiative has helped the youngsters in their journey of determination, perseverance, and relentless pursuit of excellence, helping them pave their path to glory!

3,157
SCHOOLS

5,544
MATCHES

67,535
STUDENTS

OUR FOOTPRINT SINCE 2015

ROLLOFHONOUR



YEAR	HOST(S)	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP
1998	Bangladesh	South Africa	West Indies
2000	Kenya	New Zealand	India
2002	Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka and India	-
2004	England	West Indies	England
2006	India	Australia	West Indies
2009	South Africa	Australia	New Zealand
2013	England and Wales	India	England
2017	England and Wales	Pakistan	India
2025	Pakistan and UAE	?	?



Interesting facts and stats



- » The ICC Champions Trophy is a special cricket tournament. It started to make ODI cricket popular and bring the best cricket teams in the world together to play exciting matches. The first tournament happened in 1998 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. South Africa won that first tournament, beating the West Indies in the final match.
- » In the beginning, the tournament was simple: if a team lost, they went home! But later, the tournament changed and became bigger, with teams playing in groups before the knockout matches. In 2002, the name became the ICC Champions Trophy.
- » Australia and India are the only two-time winners of the ICC Champions Trophy. Australia won in 2006 and
- 2009, while India shared the 2002 title with Sri Lanka and then won outright in 2013.
- » The 2002 Champions Trophy final was washed out by rain, despite 110.4 overs of action across two days, resulting in a shared title for India and Sri Lanka.
- » From 2000 to 2004, associate nations

CHAMPIONS
TROPHY 2025 • PAKISTAN

GROUPS

A:	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	New Zealand
B:	Australia	England	Afghanistan	S. Africa

FIXTURES

GROUP STAGE

Date	Match	Time (BST)	Venue
19 February	Pakistan vs New Zealand	3:00 pm	Karachi
20 February	Bangladesh vs India	3:00 pm	Dubai
21 February	Afghanistan vs South Africa	3:00 pm	Karachi
22 February	Australia vs England	3:00 pm	Lahore
23 February	India vs Pakistan	3:00 pm	Dubai
24 February	Bangladesh vs New Zealand	3:00 pm	Rawalpindi
25 February	Australia vs South Africa	3:00 pm	Rawalpindi
26 February	Afghanistan vs England	3:00 pm	Lahore
27 February	Bangladesh vs Pakistan	3:00 pm	Rawalpindi
28 February	Afghanistan vs Australia	3:00 pm	Lahore
1 March	England vs South Africa	3:00 pm	Karachi
2 March	India vs New Zealand	3:00 pm	Dubai

SEMIFINALS

4 March	A1 vs B2	3:00 pm	Dubai
5 March	B1 vs A2	3:00 pm	Lahore

FINALS

9 March	Winners of SF1 vs Winners of SF2	3:00 pm	To be confirmed
---------	-------------------------------------	---------	-----------------

PRIZE MONEY

Eight teams will compete for a grand prize of \$2.24 million (USD) at the ICC Champions Trophy, returning for the first time since 2017. The runner-up will receive \$1.12 million, and each losing semi-finalist will take home \$560,000. The total prize pool has increased by an impressive 53 percent since the last tournament, reaching \$6.9 million.



DEBUTANTS



Following their memorable 2023 Cricket World Cup victory over England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Afghanistan qualified for their first-ever Champions Trophy. Led by Hashmatullah Shahidi, they come into the tournament after reaching the semi-finals of last year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup, their best-ever finish in an ICC event.

Stranded at the NON-STRIKER'S END

Shakib's Champions Trophy love affair ends in bitter silence

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

On October 7, 2006, a nervous yet fearless Shakib Al Hasan stepped onto the field in Mohali for his first ICC event match, just two months after his international debut. Bangladesh had lost that game against a vastly superior Sri Lanka in the Champions Trophy, but the 19-year-old left-hander stood

tall, crafting a team-high, unbeaten 67 – an innings that whispered of the greatness to come.

A little over eighteen years later, that story should have reached its natural conclusion, with Shakib signing off in the very tournament where he first made his mark. Instead, when Bangladesh boarded their flight to the UAE for the Champions Trophy, their

finest product was missing.

The Champions Trophy was supposed to be his final stage. Before the Kanpur Test last year, Shakib spoke openly about bowing

out after the 2025 edition. Instead, his career ended in limbo. The Bangladesh jersey he had worn in battle for nearly two decades never touched his shoulders again.

His absence had little to do with form or age. Off-field turmoil pulled him away. When the Awami League government fell on August 5, the political landscape shifted. Shakib, associated with the ruling party, was caught in the storm. The writing was on the wall.

Then came the final blow. In a County match, his bowling action was reported, leading to suspension following failed bowling action tests. And with that, Shakib's 18 year journey in ICC events ended abruptly after having appeared in a staggering 16 marquee tournaments, featuring five ODI World Cups.

No fitting farewell at a mega event. No last walk to the crease. Yet, the bitter irony remains: Bangladesh might not have even been in the Champions Trophy if not for Shakib.

November 6, 2023. Delhi. Bangladesh were in a free fall following six straight losses in the World Cup. However, qualification for the Champions Trophy was on the line. A loss to Sri Lanka would end Bangladesh's hopes.

Shakib, captain in name and spirit, knew what was at stake. After Sri Lanka had started strong, he struck twice; the dangerous Sadeera Samarawickrama, his second victim. Then came the moment that had the cricket world divided.

Angelo Mathews arrived at the crease late due to a helmet malfunction. Shakib appealed. The umpires had no choice – Mathews was timed out, the first such dismissal in international cricket history. Critics called it unsporting, while others saw it as ruthless pragmatism.

Then, with the bat, he delivered once more. A blistering 82 off 65 balls. A 169-run stand with Najmul Hossain Shanto. It was their first ICC event win over Sri Lanka. More importantly, Bangladesh had finished eighth by the time the tournament ended, qualifying for the Champions Trophy by the slimmest of margins – on net run rate.

And yet, when the team prepared for the Champions Trophy, Shakib remained out of the frame. Even the Bangladesh captain Shanto was left an agitated figure when asked a Shakib-related question in the press conference, which took place before the team departed for the UAE. Can one blame him, though? Entering an ICC event without a player who had managed to somehow station himself mostly at the top of ODI rankings since 2009, it may well be that Shakib's teammates are trying a little too hard to move on without him.

The Champions Trophy had been the setting for some of his finest moments: his debut in 2006; the unforgettable partnership with Mahmudullah in 2017; guiding Bangladesh to their first ever ICC semifinal appearance. And now, it was the stage to complete the circle, culminating an illustrious career.

But life rarely offers the endings we expect. What is lost cannot be blotted, they say, so perhaps this tournament was never meant to be his swansong. Instead, he remains a figure frozen in time.

And so, the curtain falls. Not with a roaring crowd, but with the lingering silence of what could have been.



Riyad, Mushfiqur's chance to stand out among the 'Big Five'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

For Bangladesh to stake a claim as a contender in the Champions Trophy, two of their most vital cogs in the machinery must play their roles to perfection.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad are the last remaining members of the 'Big Five' of Bangladesh cricket. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was the first to leave the scene before Tamim Iqbal called it quits, with a final decision on the matter coming only after much speculation right before the Champions Trophy squad announcements. Shakib Al Hasan's involvement in politics did not end well either.

This leaves

Mushfiqur and

Mahmudullah as the sole survivors of a generation that made Bangladesh believe they could stand among the best.

Mushfiqur, with 272 ODIs to his name, has played the most ODIs for the Tigers. His average of 36.75 and a strike rate just under 80 show why Bangladesh has always banked on him. Nine centuries and an astonishing 49 half centuries earned him the tag of 'Mr. Dependable'.

Mahmudullah, too, has witnessed many matches and has kept Bangladesh's hopes alive on numerous occasions. Known as Bangladesh's 'finisher' and the 'silent killer', Mahmudullah has set lofty standards in ICC tournaments, with all four of his ODI centuries coming in ICC events. One of those centuries helped Bangladesh achieve an improbable victory against New Zealand in Cardiff during the 2017 Champions Trophy.

The Tigers went on to play the semifinals in that tournament, marking their best-ever outing in an ICC event to date. The contributions and stories these two players have delivered will not fade, while the ups and downs they have faced throughout their long careers have also defined Bangladesh in the international circuit.

Just as Mushfiqur captured imaginations in a 2012 Asia Cup game against India – delivering a win while batting alongside Shakib in a crucial match to eliminate the giants from the tournament – or as Mahmudullah's ice-cool finish in the Nidahas Trophy against Sri Lanka remains a cherished memory, there have been many high points.

But the defeats have also left their mark. The 2012 Asia Cup final saw Mushfiqur and Shakib in tears, while the 2016 World Cup match against India in Bangalore

remains one of the most heart-breaking moments in Bangladesh's cricket history.

As Mahmudullah and

Mushfiqur prepare for what is likely their final appearance in the Champions Trophy, their roles will extend beyond on-field performances. It will take something extra from them for the Tigers to finally cross the threshold and win a major tournament – something that has eluded the 'Big Five' throughout their careers.

For the first time, the Tigers will enter a major event without Shakib, Tamim,

or Mashrafe. Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur's responsibilities will begin in the dressing room, but they will not end there.

The duo will have to balance Bangladesh's need for aggression in what is expected to be a high-scoring tournament. In the 2023 World Cup, they struggled to provide momentum to an unstable and ever-changing batting lineup. This time, they will need to complement the top order's aggression with their own calculated approach – rotating the strike, building crucial partnerships, and guiding the batting effort. Given their ability to finish strongly with shots all around the wicket, they will provide the stability Bangladesh needs to accelerate on flat tracks.

Their vast experience has long aided the Tigers, but the duo will want to finish with a worthy hurrah. Without Shakib, the onus will now fall on them – not only to inspire but to lead from the front.

"Mahmudullah Riyad Bhai and Mushfiq Bhai's experience should be shared with everyone on the field. They have vast knowledge of the game and the tournament, and it will help us in many ways," skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto said at the final press conference before departing for the tournament.

Now, Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur's final chance has arrived to step up and claim what has remained elusive.





PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED/AFP

Bangladesh in global events A HISTORY OF MEDIOCRITY



ASHFAQ UL ALAM

Bangladesh's relationship with the ICC Champions Trophy has been paradoxical from the get-go.

For instance, the inaugural edition in 1998, when the tournament was called the Wills International Cup, took place in Dhaka amidst tremendous fanfare and Bangladesh were lauded for getting this tournament off to a perfect start.

But even though Bangladesh was the facilitator, the hosts were not represented in the field as the Tigers, who were an associate nation at that time, were not eligible to participate as the tournament was reserved for only Test-playing nations.

After being a silent spectator in 1998, Bangladesh's on-field journey in the Champions Trophy began in the second edition in 2000 but it has been far from a smooth ride.

In five appearances in total, the Tigers have won just two out of 12 games and have a paltry win percentage of 16.667 in the

Champions Trophy, lower than the other two ICC limited overs' tournaments – ICC ODI World Cup (32.65 percent) and the ICC T20 World Cup (26.667 percent).

So, statistically, the Champions Trophy is the worst ICC tournament for the Tigers.

However, if looked at from a different perspective, Champions Trophy could also be termed as the best ICC tournament for Bangladesh as their biggest ever success in a major men's ICC tournament at the senior level came at this very event.

In 2017, the previous edition of the competition, Bangladesh got pummeled by hosts England by eight wickets in the group stage and were saved by the rain against Australia in a match they were on track to lose.

But then the Tigers pulled off a memorable five-wicket win over New Zealand in Cardiff in their last group phase match, courtesy of a mammoth 224 run partnership between Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah. And that one win was enough for them to qualify for the semifinal of a marquee ICC event for the very first time.

However, reality came crashing down in the knockout match as India thrashed Bangladesh by nine wickets in the semifinal.

If Bangladesh reaching their



Super Eight of the T20 World Cup last year.

biggest success in statistically its weakest ICC tournament does not seem paradoxical enough, there is also the fact that the win over the Kiwis that catapulted the Tigers to the semifinals was essentially their first win in the main competition of the Champions Trophy as their previous win, which had come against Zimbabwe in the 2006 edition, was in the qualifying round.

Bangladesh's other significant achievements in major ICC events is the quarterfinal finish in the 2015 ODI World Cup and reaching the



Super Eight of the T20 World Cup last year.

For a country that has been a Test-playing nation for quarter of a century, where cricket has been played since the 1800s, which has hosted first-class cricket and Test matches even before independence, which has an incredible fan base and has a cash-rich board at the helm, these paltry results are simply not acceptable.

Over the years, many theories have been spewed to explain these poor results. From the lack of infrastructure, poor playing

conditions at home, unlucky draws in major events and even elaborate conspiracies – there has never been a shortage of excuses.

But when fans see a country like Afghanistan galloping to the top of white-ball cricket, these excuses seem laughable.

The difference in mentality between Bangladesh and Afghanistan became clear as daylight during the two team's virtual quarterfinal clash in last year's T20 World Cup.

To reach the semifinals, Bangladesh needed to chase down 116 in 12.1 overs but instead of striving to make history, the Tigers tried to complete a meaningless win, while the Afghans played like bravehearts, won the bout and punched their ticket to the semifinals.

The way that the Tigers went about their business against Afghanistan exemplifies their mentality -- going for the face-saving option instead of having a go at unprecedented success, which perhaps any other team would have opted for.

This line of thinking is the result of mediocrity that has seeped into the fabric of Bangladesh cricket. Until this stench of mediocrity evaporates, it's tough to be optimistic about Bangladesh's prospects in major events.

A rivalry that goes way beyond cricket

NABID YEASIN

When the Prime Minister of a nation makes a serious statement about sports, it is clear that the underlying causes go beyond the game itself – that the tension arises from something much larger on a broader scale.

"The real challenge now is not only to secure the Champions Trophy but also to defeat our archrivals, India. The entire nation stands firmly behind them," Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said a few days before the start of the Champions Trophy 2025.

The statement from Pakistan's

nations closer despite their many differences, has been intertwined with politics for decades.

Even long before the cricketers of the two bordering countries step onto the field, it sends the cricketing world into a frenzy. It ceases to be just about the battle between Imran Khan and Kapil Dev, Shoaib Akhtar's searing pace against Sachin Tendulkar's elegance, the two Ws (Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis) versus the long and celebrated Indian batting lineup, or the modern-day comparisons of Virat Kohli and Babar Azam. The excitement and anticipation seep into the souls of players, fans, and stakeholders across these cricket-



years. Among the damages was the 1983 World Cup trophy, the first ever won by Kapil Dev's men.

That Pakistan tour went ahead as both the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and BCCI deemed it prudent to ensure that cricket was not harmed by external factors.

It was such bold stances that made Virender Sehwag the 'Sultan of Multan' during India's first tour of Pakistan in 15 years back in 2004 -- a tour that took place under what then PCB CEO Ramiz Raja described as the most extensive security measures ever seen at a sporting event.

Things, however, changed drastically post-November 2009.



The horrific Mumbai attacks that took place during that time had connections to a Pakistani extremist group, prompting the Indian government to take a rigid stance against sending any of their national teams to Pakistan.

Hence, it was no surprise that questions arose about whether India would travel to Pakistan as soon as the latter was announced as the sole host for the Champions Trophy back in November 2021.

For Pakistan, securing the hosting rights of a major ICC event for the first time since the 1996 World Cup -- co-hosted with India and Sri Lanka -- was only the beginning of a long negotiation

process. Talks stretched on for months, with the fate of the entire tournament hanging in the balance until just two months before its scheduled start.

While India ended up getting what they wanted, playing all of their matches at a neutral venue in Dubai, the PCB also secured some ground in the negotiations. Pakistan will still host at least 12 of the 15 Champions Trophy matches across its three designated venues -- Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Lahore -- except, of course, for those involving India.

The recent resolution, mediated by the ICC, includes an agreement between the two boards stating that

premier might sound like a request usually heard from the fans of the two neighbouring countries who detest even the notion of a defeat each other.

But nothing that concerns India and Pakistan is ever only about the matter at hand -- in this instance, cricket. In fact, cricket, often seen as a potential bridge to bring the two

both India and Pakistan will play in neutral venues for any tournaments hosted by either nation in the 2024-2027 event cycle.

Unfortunately, amid all this, the biggest casualty has been cricket itself. Playing all their matches in Dubai, India will stand to benefit in terms of reduced travel. While the cricket's governing body curates pitches in ICC events, the conditions of the UAE and the three different venues in Pakistan might require significant adaptations from the teams travelling between these venues.

The same will apply to Pakistan during the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup in India and the 2026 Men's T20 World Cup, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

For now, this resolution appears to be the only way to make these politically strained rivals agree on something, even if it comes at the expense of the quality of cricket and ICC events.

The history, the politics, and the uproar seem destined to continue, but at least the next phase of it will have cricket in store. On February 23, one of the most-watched sporting events in history will unfold at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, as defending champions Pakistan take on India finally after so many phases of negotiations and years of unending tensions.

It was no surprise that questions arose about whether India would travel to Pakistan as soon as the latter was announced as the sole host for the Champions Trophy back in November 2021.

obsessed nations.

However, the rivalry's darker side often escalates into mob violence and militant activities -- the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) bore the brunt of it when a group of militants attacked their Bombay headquarters in 1999, just days before Pakistan were scheduled for their first Test tour of India in 12



DHAKA WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 36

FALGUN 6, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHABAN 19, 1446 HIJRI

20 PAGES: Tk 15.00

Kuet tensions spill onto other campuses

At least 40 hurt as JCD, anti-discrimination students clash in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Activists of Chhatra Dal and Students Against Discrimination faced off at different universities last night, hours after clashes between the groups left over 40 people injured on Kuet campus.

The clashes at Kuet began in the afternoon over a restriction on student politics that has been in place at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology since the fall of the Awami League regime in August last year.

On Dhaka University campus last night, anti-discrimination students held a rally and marched.

The central committee of Jatiyatabdali Chhatra Dal (JCD), a pro-BNP student body, last night sent a team to

'General Students of Kuet' demanded a complete ban on student politics, punishment of the attackers, and resignations of the VC, pro-VC, and student welfare director. Until the demands are met, all classes and exams will remain suspended at Kuet, they said.

Kuet to investigate what happened there and report in 24 hours.

JCD President Rakibul Islam Rakib, General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir, Senior Joint General Secretary Shyamal Malum, and joint general secretaries Shahadat Hossain and Sohel Rana are in the team.

Dhaka University Chhatra Dal said the clashes at Kuet were instigated by a "secret organisation".

Ganesh Chandra Roy Sahas, president of DU Chhatra Dal, stated that JCD activists were distributing entry forms at Kuet when a group misled people into believing that Chhatra Dal was aligned with the fascists.

DU Chhatra Dal General Secretary Nahiduzzaman Shipon said the group responsible for the Kuet clashes had a history of anti-Liberation activities in 1971, supporting

PHOTOS ON PAGE 2, 12

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Tens of thousands of people gathered on the banks of the Teesta in Lalmonirhat's Sadar upazila yesterday to participate in the second day of the 48-hour programme demanding a fair share of the river's water. BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman virtually addressed the mammoth rally.

PHOTO COURTESY: BNP

CASES AGAINST HASINA ICT extends probe deadline by 2 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday extended the deadline for the submission of probe reports in two high-profile cases, including one against ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on charges of crimes against humanity during the July uprising.

This is the second time the deadline, now set for April 20, has been extended.

The other case, involving the same charges, was filed against 45 individuals, including Hasina, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, other former ministers, advisers, bureaucrats, and a former justice.

Investigators sought the extension to incorporate new evidence from a recent UN report, which they believe is crucial for strengthening their case, Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam told the court.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Apologise if you are to join polls

Asif tells AL ranks not complicit in July atrocities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain yesterday said the Awami League members not involved in the July atrocities can participate in polls after apologising to people for the crimes committed by their colleagues.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Prepare for nat'l election

CEC asks DCs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin yesterday sought the active involvement of deputy commissioners in the electoral process, and urged them to raise public awareness regarding polls.

Speaking at a session on the final day of the Deputy Commissioners' Conference-2025 at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka, he called on the DCs to maintain neutrality and uphold electoral laws while performing their election duties.

He also reassured the DCs, who typically

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Expanding trade horizon should be the focus

Say speakers at nat'l dialogue on foreign policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to adopt a foreign policy that prioritises national interest while actively seeking new economic opportunities, said speakers at a national dialogue yesterday.

The daylong dialogue styled "Post July Revolution Foreign Policy of Bangladesh: Navigating

New Horizons" was organised by all sides and a deteriorating relationship with the neighbour could lead to unrest.

India will be keen on keeping Bangladesh under its influence as it is tied to their security concerns, she said. However, blaming only India would not be beneficial either as every country prioritises its own interests, she said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

India can at least 'put restrictions' on Hasina

Foreign adviser tells The Hindu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain has called on India to restrict Sheikh Hasina from making "incendiary and false" statements publicly.

In an interview with The Hindu, on the sidelines of the Indian Ocean Conference in Muscat, the foreign adviser also touched upon a number of issues saying that India's relationship with Bangladesh should not be "regime specific".

Asked by the Chennai-based Indian newspaper about Bangladesh's expectations from India regarding Sheikh Hasina, Touhid said Bangladesh has already requested that the former prime minister -- accused in scores of murder cases -- be extradited.

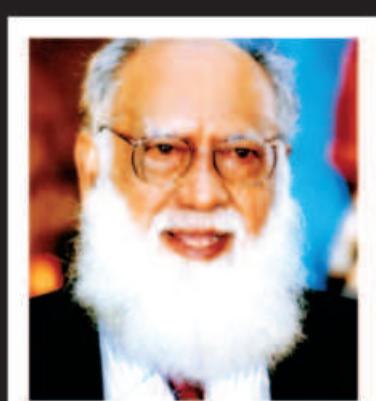
"As long as the Indian government doesn't do that, we would expect they can at least put some restrictions on her so that she does not make incendiary and false statements which instigate reactions among the people," Touhid was quoted as saying by the Hindu.

He added that the issue remains deeply sensitive, particularly given Hasina's 15 years in power, and said her actions continue to provoke strong reactions in Bangladesh.

Touhid further stressed that the India-Bangladesh relationship should not be "regime-specific", arguing that political ties between the two nations must transcend individual governments. Reflecting on the historical cooperation between the two countries, he said.

"Whichever government, whichever party, is in power in our two capitals, that should not affect our relations."

Touhid also clarified that the Bangladesh government is committed to protecting minority



Al-Haj M. A. Khayer (1928-2014)

February 19 marks the 11th death anniversary of Alhaj M. A. Khayer, former Member of the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh. He was elected from the Moksudpur-Kashiani constituency of Gopalganj in the 1970 general election, which played a crucial role in the nation's Independence Movement.

Mr. Khayer was a freedom fighter, industrialist, and dedicated social worker. In recognition of his significant contributions to the Liberation War, he was posthumously awarded the Swadhinata Padak (Independence Award) in 2014.

As the Founder Chairman of Jamuna Bank, he was instrumental in shaping its growth and development from the very beginning.

We pray to Almighty Allah for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

Jamuna Bank



Touhid Hossain

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Eastern Bank PLC.

সম্মানিত যাত্রীদের সহজ র্যাঙ্কিং
সেবানিশ্চিত করতে

মকল মেট্রোরেল স্টেশন

এখন ইরিয়েল টেক্স এন্টিএম-এর সুবিধা

স্টেশন সমূহঃ

- মাতিবিল
- বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়
- চাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
- শাহবাগ
- কাবুলিয়াত বাজার
- অ্যাগারগাঁও
- মিরপুর ১০
- মিরপুর ১১
- মার্কিন সচল এটিএম
- বিজয় সরণি
- মেডিক্যাল একাডেমি
- কার্মিমপাড়া
- মন্ত্রী
- উত্তরা দক্ষিণ
- উত্তরা সেতোর
- উত্তরা উত্তর
- শীঘ্রই সচল হতে যাওয়া এটিএম

ENQUIRIES CONTACT CENTER
16230
16230

ebi.com.bd
myebi

ATM

Japan to provide \$1.8m aid to Rohingyas

UNB, Dhaka

The government of Japan has signed an agreement with the World Food Programme to provide \$1.8 million in life-saving food assistance to Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, according to a press release from the Embassy of Japan yesterday.

The aid will support over 191,000 refugees through malnutrition prevention programmes, income-generating activities, and rehabilitation of e-voucher outlets. The Rohingya community, living without livelihood opportunities, remains entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival.

WFP Country Director Dom Scalpelli emphasised the need for continued support as the crisis enters

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



The leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement brought out a rally on the Dhaka University campus last night, demanding the immediate arrest of those who attacked their members at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology earlier in the day. The attack incident also sparked protests across several other university campuses.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

India can

FROM PAGE 1

communities, dismissing allegations of widespread violence as sensationalised by Indian media.

"I would invite you to go through the findings of the UN, which has been published two days ago, and say that [the interim government was not involved in the violence]. They came at our request as we wanted an absolutely neutral survey of the situation," he said.

Regarding the Adani power project, Touhid mentioned that the interim government in Bangladesh is currently in talks with the Indian conglomerate.

He indicated that while the initial power agreements had faced criticism due to high tariffs, the government is now negotiating for a more reasonable deal.

"We will look at it with the Adani Group and try to make it [the deal] more rational," he said, adding that the restoration of power supply is a priority for Bangladesh's ongoing infrastructure projects.

After holding talks with his Indian counterpart, S Jaishankar, at the Omani capital, Touhid said he hoped that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus may finally meet on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in April. He told the Hindu that he had mentioned it to the Indian foreign minister but nothing concrete has emerged yet, as these things are planned just days ahead once the full programme is finalised.

Apologise if you are to join polls

FROM PAGE 1

"If someone [AL members] wants to contest elections, there will be no obstruction. They can contest polls. However, if any person is accused of mass killing, they will not be allowed to participate in the elections under any circumstances," he added.

Asif Mahmud made the remarks while speaking to journalists after the sixth session of the third and final day of the Deputy Commissioners' Conference 2025 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

He also said no final decision has been made regarding local government elections before the national election, but a decision regarding the matter will be taken soon.

"Officials currently performing additional responsibilities as [administrators] in various local government institutions, frequently urging us to appoint [full time] administrators or conduct elections," he said.

Asif also said that not having elected representatives in local government institutions for so long has become a grave issue.

He pointed out that divisional commissioners are performing additional responsibilities to run some city corporations, and district commissioners have to fulfil the duties of the district councils.

"When an officer has to perform two or three duties, it becomes difficult for one person to handle all the responsibilities together," Asif said.

He said the government will decide whether to hold elections or appoint administrators to run the local government agencies.

It would be good to hold local government elections before the national election. Local government institutions can play an important role in organising a good national election.

"But my personal opinion does not determine the decision. The final decision will come from the government after discussions with other political parties," the adviser said.

Kuet tensions spill onto other campuses

FROM PAGE 1

the Ershad regime in the 1990s, and attempting to derail democracy in 1996.

"Now, they are disguising themselves as general students to run a campaign against Chhatra Dal," he warned.

The JCD attempted to march towards Raju Bhashkorjor around 8:15pm, but due to the presence of anti discrimination students, they held a brief rally near Rokeya Hall.

On the other hand, Hasnat Abdullah, leader of the anti discrimination students, told a rally at Dhaka University last night, "Whoever wants to emerge as the Chhatra League and take a position against students will face the same consequences the banned student organisation had faced."

They will today exhibit at Dhaka University the photos and videos of the oppression during July uprising and what they said were Chhatra Dal and local BNP men's attack on students at Kuet.

The exhibition will be streamed and projected on large screens at other universities.

At Jahangirnagar University, Touhid Mohammad Siam, a leader of the anti discrimination students, said at a demonstration, "If they resort to such violence without being in power, one can only imagine how reckless they will become if they are in power. It took 36 days to depose a dictator like Hasina. It won't take more than 36 minutes to oust the BNP and its student wing if they continue their terrorist activities."

WHAT HAPPENED AT KUET

On Monday, pro-BNP Chhatra Dal activists distributed handbills that said students should be able to engage in politics, according to sources.

In response, the anti discrimination activists marched on

campus in the afternoon yesterday, chanting slogans denouncing student politics.

The situation became tense when they were marching past a group of Chhatra Dal activists.

Around 1:00pm, the groups began chasing each other and clashed until 6:00pm, said witnesses.

Photos of injured students and men holding large scythes and machetes went viral on Facebook in the afternoon. The warring sides said they were not the ones who brought the sharp weapons.

Mirajul Islam Emon, spokesperson of the anti discrimination students, said Chhatra Dal activists had brought local BNP men to attack the students.

"They stabbed some students and assaulted others," he said.

Police said around 45 people were injured.

Ahmmad Ishtiaq, former convener of Khulna city Chhatra Dal, who was at the scene, said members of Chhatra Shibir, along with a few supporters of Chhatra League, were trying to stop Chhatra Dal's political activities on and around the campus.

"This led to the clashes," he told The Daily Star.

Khulna's Khan Jahan Ali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Kabir Hossain said around 45 people were injured.

Kuet Vice Chancellor Mohammad Mashud refused to comment on the situation.

Around 10:00pm last night, a group of students under the banner of General Students of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology held a press conference.

They demanded a complete ban on student politics, punishment of the attackers, and resignations of the VC, Pro-VC, and Student Welfare Director. Until the demands are met,

all classes and exams will remain suspended at Kuet, they said.

PROTESTS ON CAMPUSES

At DU, Students Against Discrimination demanded the arrest of those who attacked its members at Kuet within 24 hours.

They marched on campus and held a rally where Arif Sohel, convener of the student body, said,

"The oppression we fought against has returned. The students and people who were martyred in the July uprising did not die so that we can witness such oppression on campuses.

The students and people who were martyred in the July uprising did not die so that we can witness such oppression on campuses. Anyone who tries to engage in criminal activities again will face resistance. We will not compromise with anyone. Some of the defeated fascists from August 5 are trying to rehabilitate themselves."

Hasnat Abdullah said an exhibition of the photos of the uprising and yesterday's attack will commence at 3:00pm at DU.

Chittagong University campus was tense as student groups came face-to-face.

A section of university students, mostly from Inqilab Manch, and JCD marched on campus.

Md Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, inspector of the Chittagong University police outpost, said, "To prevent any untoward incidents, police are on high alert."

At Jahangirnagar University, protesters marched around 8:00pm and held a brief rally.

At Rajshahi University, anti discrimination students demonstrated until 9:30pm.

Coordinator Salahuddin Ammar said, "We don't want student politics. It destroys the campus environment."

There were protests at Jagannath University too.

[Our Chatogram staff, and RU, JU, and JnU correspondents contributed to this report]

Prepare for nat'l election

FROM PAGE 1

serve as returning officers during national elections, that there would be no pressure from higher authorities.

Speaking to reporters after the session, he said, "In the past, there was pressure from high-ups.... I've assured them that there will be no unlawful pressure exerted on them this time. We won't impose any unjust pressure, and if there is any, we'll remove it."

He added that the DCs should not wait until election day or just a few days before it to be involved in the electoral process.

"Consider yourselves already actively involved in the process from now. Wherever you speak, whether at meetings or gatherings, a portion of your speech should focus on election."

He said awareness needs to be raised among people regarding the election as many of them have lost faith in the country's electoral system.

"So when you [DCs] speak to the people, make an effort to educate them about their voting rights."

Referring to DCs as "companions of the EC during polls," he stressed that they must proactively enforce the law and perform their duties impartially.

"We've instructed them [DCs]

'It came as a surprise to me'

Rafiqun Nabi on being barred from taking stage at DU art exhibition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Eminent artist Professor Rafiqun Nabi (Ranabi), creator of the iconic "Tokai" character, said that it was unexpected that university authorities asked him not to take the stage at the annual art exhibition of the drawing and painting department at Dhaka University's Fine Arts faculty on Monday morning.

Rafiqun Nabi told this newspaper that despite being a special guest and emeritus professor, he was informed that Pro-VC Prof Mamun Ahmed would not attend the event if he took the stage. The reason for this objection was not made clear to him.

"Although this came as a surprise to me, I decided to leave to avoid disrupting the event."

Moinul Abedin, son of legendary artist Zainul Abedin, who was with him, also left quietly.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

ICT extends probe deadline by two months

FROM PAGE 1

Although the probe is nearly complete, he stressed the importance of including the details referenced in the UN report, along with new evidence still emerging, to ensure accuracy and credibility.

A three-member bench, led by ICT Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozunder, approved the extension, stating that additional time is permissible to ensure the investigation is thorough and credible.

The probe reports in both cases were due yesterday after the first extension.

The tribunal also ordered the prison authorities to produce Solaiman Selim, former AL lawmaker and son of Haji Selim, before the court on April 20 over his alleged involvement in atrocities in Old Dhaka during the uprising.

Earlier yesterday, 16 accused were brought to the tribunal around 10:00am and held in the lock-up. They were produced before the court minutes before the proceedings began at 11:30am.

The 16 individuals include former ministers Anisul Huq, Amir Hossain Amu, Qamrul Islam, Lt Col (Retd) Faruk Khan, Shahjahan Khan, Abdur Razzaque, Dipu Moni, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haq Inu, Kamal Ahmed Majumder, Golam Dastagir Gazi, and former state minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

Others presented before the court included former prime minister's advisers Salman F Rahman and Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, former justice Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik, and former home secretary Jahangir Alam.

Among them, Amu, Faruk Khan, Palak, and Kamal Ahmed Majumder appeared visibly pale.

As they were being escorted out of the court and into a prison van around 1:30pm, journalists heard Palak shouting, "Bangabandhu said we must fight to survive!"

During the proceedings, Tajul Islam said public hearings at various universities had yielded new information about crimes committed during the uprising. "Students captured many footages on their mobile phones."

He added that reports had surfaced regarding the rape of women protesters during the uprising, but declined to provide further details.

Tajul remarked that the accused had recorded phone conversations of individuals.

"But the traps they set to kill people may now turn into traps for them... They gave orders to eliminate students and the people. They instructed the shutdown of television channels. The conversations they exchanged were secretly recorded... We've obtained such evidence. In these cases, digital evidence will play a crucial role."

Asked if the prosecution had communicated with the UN for evidence, he said discussions were ongoing.

On February 12, Rory Mungoven, chief of the Asia Pacific region at the UN rights office, stated at a press conference that the UN would not share evidence from its investigation with Bangladesh unless the trials met international standards.

He added, "The issue of the death penalty is a problem for us -- as per UN policy, we are constrained from cooperating with trials that may lead to the death penalty."

Just after the release of the UN report, Tajul had said necessary reforms in ICT laws had already been made.

Regarding the UN's concerns, he said, "Since our judges have the power to decide the type of punishment, this matter will be addressed later."

On October 17, the ICT issued an arrest warrant for Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India following the July uprising. It also directed that probe reports for both cases be submitted within a month.

On November 18, the prosecution sought a two-month extension from the tribunal, with the new submission deadline set for yesterday.

PANNA SEEKS PROTECTION

Senior Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna, the defence counsel for several of the accused, was present at yesterday's court proceedings in a wheelchair.

Before the proceedings began, he turned to the accused in the dock, raised his hands, and said, "Guru salaam, guru salaam [greetings guru, greetings guru]." Amu and Inu reciprocated by raising their hands as well.

Addressing the court, Panna said, "My Lord, I'm unwell. I've come directly from the hospital with a two-hour leave. My life is now at risk. This morning, there were even rumours on social media that I had passed away. By the grace of Allah, I'm still alive."

Claiming that he had been receiving death threats, he sought protection from the tribunal. "I wish to inform the court that I fear for my life... My death should come naturally, not through any external causes."

When the tribunal chairman asked why he was receiving threats, Panna did not provide a direct answer.

Standing next to him, Tajul remarked with a smile, "He was supposed to sit on the right side [where the prosecutor sits], but he mistakenly took the seat on the other side."

Addressing the court, Panna said, "We need a political consensus on the foreign policy too," he added.

Worldwide, foreign policy depends on economic interests, said BNP's Organising Secretary Shama Obaid.

"We also want our economic growth and the interconnectivity of youths across the globe. The ministry of foreign affairs is the same as what

Expanding trade horizon

FROM PAGE 1

Both India and China will be very influential in this region in future and Bangladesh needs to handle its foreign policy efficiently to navigate these dynamics successfully.

চুক্তি এ রিপোর্ট প্রতিযোগিতা পাঠান
প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...
যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রোমটিয়াল গ্রহণ করলেই
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রশংসন
সাথে অন্যও আরও নিশ্চিত আত্মসমীক্ষ প্রস্তুত
* শর্ত প্রযোজন

ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূর্বালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

পূর্বালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি.
PUBALI BANK PLC.
Best Financial Institution
DHL-The Daily Star Business Awards.

AAA
Rated Bank
ISO/IEC
27001:2022

ঘরে বসেই
ব্যাংক
অ্যাকাউন্ট
খুলুন

পাই ব্যাংক (PI Banking) -
একটি পূর্বালী ব্যাংক অ্যাপস

3 arrested after attack on couple in Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the two persons, who were seen in the video carrying out an attack on a couple with sharp weapons in the capital's Uttara area on Monday night, was arrested from Dhaka's Abdullahpur area yesterday evening.

Alfaz Hossain Shimon, 22, one of the attackers, was arrested around 7:00pm, Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Uttara West Police Station.

"We are trying to arrest others," he said.

Alfaz is the nephew of Milion Mia, expelled convener of Uttara West Thana unit of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, an official of the police station told The Daily Star.

Dhaka city north unit of Jubo Dal expelled Milion on September 7 last year for "breaching organisational discipline".

Earlier on Monday night, police arrested Mobarak Hossain, 25, and Robi Ray, 22, in connection with the attack.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'DEVIL HUNT' 506 more arrested across the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces arrested 506 more people across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday afternoon as part of the "Operation Devil Hunt", according to the Police Headquarters.

With the latest arrests, the numbers of arrestees under the operation are now 5,825.

Additionally, 1,141 others, who were either accused or wanted in previous cases, were also arrested in the last 24 hours.

Law enforcers also recovered a firearm.

The government launched the operation on February 8 to restore law and order.

ROAD ACCIDENT Journalist Masuma succumbs to injuries

A CORRESPONDENT,
Rajshahi



Four days after suffering severe injuries in a road accident, journalist Masuma Akter, correspondent of Ekhon TV's Rajshahi bureau, died at a private hospital in Dhaka early yesterday.

She breathed her last around 4:15am. She was on life support since she sustained head injuries during the accident in Cumilla on last Friday.

Masuma's husband Rakibul Hasan Razib, a senior journalist of the same television channel, confirmed the death to The Daily Star.

Masuma, from Narayapur village in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Accompanied by her son, Farida Yasmin heads home to Lalbagh after completing her dialysis at BSMU in Shahbagh. As teacher-candidates continued their protest for their 13th consecutive day, police erected these barricades opposite the National Museum. With no other way to go, her son was forced to move the barriers so that Farida could cross the spot in her wheelchair. The photo was taken yesterday.

'Moral policing a rising concern in universities'

University Teachers' Network says pluralism still missing in country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Teachers' Network has expressed concern that the absence of teacher association elections and the lack of reforms for fair student union polls have reinstated an autocratic system on campuses, threatening institutional democracy.

As a result, moral policing in universities has increased, creating an unsafe and discriminatory environment, especially for female students, they said.

Also, efforts to ban student politics are enabling the unchecked rise of extremist student organisations, they added.

They made the remarks at a press conference titled "The State of the Country and Educational Institutions in Six Months of the Interim Government" at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The network highlighted that despite the government's claims of being non-partisan, political influence remains dominant in the appointments of key administrative positions, including vice-chancellors, deans, hall provosts, and proctors, which they fear will extend to faculty recruitment.

If events are cancelled and speech is restricted, how will people express their freedom?

Prof Anu Muhammad

Speaking at the programme, Prof Anu Muhammad said the expectation from the interim government was to remove barriers to freedom of expression, yet now attacks on freedom are coming from all directions.

"If such events are cancelled and speech is restricted, how will people express their freedom? These are issues we faced during Sheikh Hasina's era," he said.

"We cannot accept this under the current government," he added.

Prof Muhammad also highlighted recent incidents at Chittagong University and Khulna University, including student expulsions and arbitrary renaming of buildings after prominent figures.

He said, "We are deeply shocked and concerned about this. These names must be reinstated immediately. We also demand that major institutions be named after these eminent individuals."

Dhaka University Professor Kamrul Hassan Mamun stressed the need to modernise faculty recruitment policies, warning that political appointments will

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

AL, allies should be banned for aiding Hasina
Says Sarjis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sarjis Alam, chief organiser of Jatiya Nagarik Committee, yesterday

said if Sheikh Hasina was the mastermind behind the July killings, then the Awami League and its associate bodies should also be banned for aiding her in committing the crimes.

"We cannot hold voters accountable for the crimes of the party. However, the registration of the Awami League must be completely revoked," he said while speaking to journalists after a dialogue at the BISS auditorium.

Sarjis said they expect to announce their new party within the next week.

Reforms and elections can proceed simultaneously.

Shah Alam
CPB president

Left parties for nat'l polls before local govt elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Left Democratic Alliance has expressed a preference for national elections to be held before local government elections.

During a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin at the Election Commission office yesterday, alliance leaders also demanded that parliamentary elections take place within this year.

Iqbal Kabir Zahid, coordinator of the alliance, told reporters that the downfall of a fascist government came through movements against undemocratic systems.

He said the primary objective following this change should be a return to a democratic system, urging that elections be organised promptly.

Shah Alam, president of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), said reforms and elections can proceed simultaneously.

He said a new debate is emerging regarding whether local or national elections should be conducted first. Alam accused the government of using this debate as a tactic to delay elections, which he deemed self-destructive for the nation.

CPB General Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince said

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

'Release Azharul, restore party registration' Demands Jamaat ameer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shafiqur Rahman yesterday warned that the interim government would be forced to accept their demands, including the release of former assistant secretary general ATM Azharul Islam, through an unstoppable mass movement.

Azharul has been sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal. Shafiqur made the remarks at a protest rally organised by Jamaat's Dhaka north and south units at Paltan in the capital.

The rally was part of a centrally declared programme demanding the release of Azharul, reinstatement of the party's electoral symbol "scale", and restoration of the party's registration.

He said although the fall of the Awami fascists has occurred, Azharul remains imprisoned. He said their movement would not stop until Azharul is released.

Shafiqur said from 2009 to August 5, 2024, the Awami fascists ruled the country through misrule and tyranny, specifically targeting Jamaat by arresting and imprisoning its top leaders.

"During this crisis, Azharul was serving as the party's acting secretary general. However, the Awami League unjustly kept him in prison for 13 years under false, baseless, and politically motivated charges," Shafiqur claimed.

He questioned the interim government, asking, "Even though the country has been freed from fascism, why has Azharul Islam not been released?"



Huge traffic congestion brought the Kakrail area to a standstill yesterday. Weekday traffic continues to be a problem that plagues the capital.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Freeze foreign assets of Bashundhara MD, family Orders court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has discovered additional assets of Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir, his wife Sabrina Sobhan, and his brother Safwan Sobhan Tasvir in the UAE, Slovakia, and the UK.

Following an ACC application, a Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities to take steps to have these foreign assets frozen and confiscated.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court issued the order after ACC Deputy Director Nazmul Hussain submitted the application.

The assets include shares, real estate, and business holdings. Anvir owns two Slovakian companies, a luxury flat in Burj Khalifa worth Tk 12.4 crore, and shares in two UK firms.

Sabrina holds shares in a UK-based company, while Safwan is a director of another. The court's order, issued under the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012, will remain in effect.

Authorities in Slovakia, the UK, and the UAE have been notified.

The ACC was directed to publish the order in newspapers and the official gazette. This follows a previous order to freeze assets of Bashundhara Group chair Ahmed Akbar Sobhan and his family.



Rakib clears out dry leaves that have fallen onto this roof of tong house. Made using bamboo and straw, such sheds are quite durable. The photo was taken from the Machrang village of Banaripara upazila in Barishal recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Nine brick kilns fined Tk 40 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A mobile court has fined nine brick kilns Tk 40 lakh, demolished two, and shut down another in Sirajganj on charges of operating illegally and violating rules and regulations.

Abdullah Al Mamun, executive magistrate of the enforcement wing of the Department of Environment, conducted the drive in Sadar and Raiganj upazilas of the district on Monday.

"During the drive, the mobile court found their illegal operation and use of wood in the kilns polluting the environment," said Md Tuhin Alom, assistant director of DoE, Sirajganj.

It fined MRS Rain Bricks Tk 6 lakh and demolished a part of it in Sadar upazila.



Besides, Surma Bricks, H Ali Bricks, HS Bricks, Sun Bricks, and Hero Bricks were fined Tk 5 lakh each; SNB Bricks was fined Tk 4 lakh; and MRS Super Bricks and MRS Reza Bricks were fined Tk 2.5 lakh each in Raiganj.

The mobile court also closed MRS Alfa Bricks and demolished Jenin Bricks in Raiganj. It also demolished a part of Sun Bricks in the upazila.

TRIPLEX LUXURY HOUSE SALE / RENT

At Road No 9/B, House No 08, Nikunja-1

5500 sft. Luxury House with 3 Parking at basement, Bed 4 & a Computer room, Master bed size 20 X 20sft., Drawing / Reception 4, Ground floor Drawing 32 X 17sft., Front door China made & other doors Burmatic. 6 AC, 5 Bath, 3 Toilet, Swimming pool (31 X 11sft.). 2 Master bath with Zakuji. All rooms have cabinet. Top floor water tank, Geyser & Washing Machine space. Entire outside wall fixed with tiles.

**Asking sale price 9.5 crore
Rent asking 5.5 lac (offered 4.50 lac)
Contract: 01626111250 / 01755501090**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Ferry Division, Topkhana, Sylhet
Phone: +8802-996631429
Email: eefdsyl@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No-55

Notice For e-GP Tender(s)

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Works/ Goods and related service of RHD, Ferry Division, Topkhana, Sylhet : e-Tender ID No-1075473 to 1075475, 1075477, 1075481, 1075482 & 1075484 to 1075493 total 16(sixteen) e-tenders. These are online Tender(s), where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. For further information, visit e-GP Help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(MD. ABDUL AWAL)
ID NO-602293
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD,
Ferry Division, Sylhet.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF FAMILY PLANNING
LOGISTICS & SUPPLY UNIT (5TH FLOOR)
06, KARWANBAZAR, DHAKA 1215, BANGLADESH.

e-Tender Notice (OTM, NCT, Goods)

Ref. No: 59.11.0000.303.07.55.2025-1107

Date: 18.02.2025

e-Tender is invited hereby in the national e-GP portal for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No. & Package No.	Tender Package Name	Last Selling/ Downloading Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1	2	3	4

Tender ID No: 1076741
Package No: MCHTIL/GR-07
Procurement of Others
Machinery & Equipment
05-Mar-2025 17:00
06-Mar-2025 12:30 PM

2. This is online tender where only e-tender (online tender) will be accepted through the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.
3. The fees for downloading the e-tender documents from the national e-GP portal have to be deposited online through any schedule bank of Bangladesh registered by the CPTU.
4. Further information visit national e-GP portal & e-GP help desk (e-mail: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Marzia Haque
Director (Logistics & Supply)
Logistics & Supply Unit
Directorate General of Family Planning.

GD-462

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION

(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO 219 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF: An application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF: Nazmul Hussain, son of Rafiqul Hussain and Fazilatunnessa, Shareholder and Managing Director, Odessa Fashions Ltd. of 35/1, East Hazirpara, Khilgaon, Dhaka.

—RESPONDENTS—

Odessa Fashions Ltd. of Nalzani, Chandana, Joydebpur, Gazipur, Bangladesh and The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies and Firms, TCB Bhaban (6th Floor), 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka.

Take notice that an application under Sections 81(2) and 85(3) read with Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the above named Petitioner for condonation of delay in holding Annual General Meeting of Odessa Fashions Ltd. for the calendar years 2023 and 2024 and to give necessary direction for holding the said meeting within a reasonable time. Upon hearing of the application on 10-02-2025 the Hon'ble Company Judge Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel has been pleased to admit the said application. If you are interested to respond the said application you may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through an advocate on or before the date fixed for hearing. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary cost.

Advocate Md. Anowar Hossain
Room No. 351, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Dhaka-1000
Mobile: 01913391551

STATUTORY NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION

(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 192 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF: An application under Section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) of the Companies Act, 1994.

—AND—

IN THE MATTER OF: Mustafa Azim Kashem Khan, Managing Director and Shareholder FloSolar Solutions Limited, a private limited company, having its registered office at Road-68/A, House-19, Unit-A1, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

—PETITIONER/APPLICANT—

—VERSUS—

1. FloSolar Solutions Limited having its registered office at Road-68/A, House-19, Unit-A1, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.
2. The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, TCB Bhaban (6th Floor), 1 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka - 1215, represented by its Registrar.

—RESPONDENTS—
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 81(2), read with Sections 85(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, was filed and moved on behalf of the above-named Petitioner before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon hearing, His Lordship Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the said application on 09th February 2025 and directed to file affidavit-in-compliance within 3 weeks from the publication of this notice. Thereafter, the Hon'ble Court may fix a date for the hearing of the application. Anyone interested in participating in the hearing may enter an appearance either personally or through their appointed Advocate to contest the matter. Copy of the application will be available from the undersigned upon payment of the applicable costs.

Shawn S. Novel
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
260/C, Tejgaon IA, Dhaka-1208, Phone: +88029830281

Moral policing

FROM PAGE 3
become permanent unless challenged.

DU Prof Tasneem Siraj Mahboob called for reforms and bringing those responsible for the July killings to justice.

She also criticised government actions against teachers, stating, "A nation that cannot respect its teachers - how can it move forward? What can we expect from a government under which teachers are assaulted and beaten with sticks?"

Addressing police violence against protesting teachers, Prof Mahboob said, "Has one form of fascism been replaced by another? If necessary, we will take to the streets again."

Prof Nasir Uddin of Jagannath University denounced systematic attacks on Bengal's ancient culture. "We cannot allow mob culture to be sponsored by the state. We do not want impunity. We want justice to prevail," he said.

Jahangirnagar University Professor Mirza Taslima Sultana noted that students have been severely traumatised, and there have been insufficient efforts to help them focus in class.

The network stressed the need for politically independent faculty search committees and evaluating candidates based on academic results and research work, an increase in the education budget, alongside recognition of education, health, and agriculture as priority sectors. The event was moderated by Samina Luthfa, a Dhaka University teacher and member of the network.

Datta and ULAB teacher Oliur Rahman Sun read out the statement.

The network's national demands include ensuring a fair judicial process for the July killings, promoting democracy and ensuring democratic processes at all government levels, ending divisive politics, and promoting freedom of expression and belief.

They also called for disclosing and cancelling state contradictory agreements, ensuring legal procedures in arrests and detentions, and investigating irregularities under the interim government.

Their six-point university specific demand calls for reforms in university management, following democratic processes in administrative appointments, ensuring impartial governance, protecting students' freedom of movement and expression, and holding those in power accountable for violations.

They also demanded active engagement in university forums, punishment for terrorists and occupiers, and the cessation of efforts to ban student politics.

"So far, we have received only 40 percent of the required books. Based on the demand from each sub-district, it may take more than a month to receive all the books," said Uttam Khisa, secondary education officer in Chattogram district.

Left parties

FROM PAGE 3
they do not want any excuses for delays and urged for an immediate announcement of an election date.

He mentioned that the EC assured the alliance of its readiness for parliamentary elections, stating that it would act based on decisions made through political consensus.

Bazlur Rashid Firoz, general secretary of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh, warned that if the country does not engage in the electoral process, the culture of fear and instability will continue to flourish.

40pc secondary

FROM PAGE 5
6th-grade textbooks has not even started, while only 19,000 books were distributed for 8th graders.

Biswajit Barua, headteacher of Kadurkhil Government High School in Boalkhali, said no books for 8th grade arrived yet. Education officials estimated it may take until March to distribute all textbooks required.

"So far, we have received only 40 percent of the required books. Based on the demand from each sub-district, it may take more than a month to receive all the books," said Uttam Khisa, secondary education officer in Chattogram district.

PRAYER TIMING

FEBRUARY 19

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-20	12-45	4-30	6-03	7-30
JAMAT 5-55	1-15	4-45	6-07	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Journalist Masuma succumbs

FROM PAGE 3

Natore, pursued her education in Mass Communication and Journalism department at North Bengal International University. She started her journalism career in 2014, working with local media in Rajshahi. On December 26, 2023, she joined Ekhon

Razib said Masuma took leave on Friday to visit her in-laws in Cumilla. After getting off a bus, Razib and Masuma were negotiating with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw when a speeding bus suddenly hit them and also the driver and then fled the scene.

3 arrested after attack on couple

FROM PAGE 3

They were placed on two day remand each yesterday.

According to police, the incident began around 9:00pm when a motorcycle, driving recklessly, hit an auto-rickshaw on Road-9, Sector-7 of Uttara.

The rickshaw driver

protested the incident, and a couple riding another motorcycle also joined in. This led to an altercation, with the riders of the first motorcycle becoming aggressive and issuing threats. They then made a phone call, calling several youths to the scene.

Shortly after, the youths arrived and attacked the couple with weapons -- the video of the incident went viral on social media.

Hearing the hue and cry, locals intervened, capturing Mobarak and Robi, beating them, and handing them over to the police.

BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY DHAKA-1000 Office of the Chief Engineer		

<tbl_r cells="1" ix="2" maxcspan="3" maxrspan="1"

CITY

40pc secondary students got new books in Ctg

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, Ctg

"I haven't received my books yet, even though classes are ongoing. Without it, I am falling behind in my studies," said Mizanur Rahman Jisan, a student at Pashchim Kadurkhali High School in the Boalkhali upazila, echoing the sentiment of thousands of secondary students across Chattogram.

While one and half months have passed, around 60 percent of secondary and Dakhil students across Chattogram are yet to receive their new books.

Most are from rural areas, according to data from Chattogram District Secondary Education Office.

The data states that only 6.94 million (around 40 percent) books have so far reached the district education office, against a demand of over 17.3 million textbooks, across 15 upazilas and six metropolitan zones.

As of February, a total of 12,69,37,616 books have been distributed across the district – including 53,33,566 in secondary schools, 9,49,326 in Dakhil madrasas, 3,86,894 in Ibtidayee madrasas, 93,500 in vocational institutions, and 1,74,330 in English version schools. However, there is

still a shortage of 1.04 crore books.

Data revealed that no books have been supplied for several grades in secondary schools and Dakhil madrasas in Fatiokhali, Banskhali, Chandanaish, Patiya, Satkania, Lohagara, Boalkhali, Rangunia and Mirsarai upazilas.

Boalkhali has received the lowest number of books, only 18,000 against a demand of 4.8 lakh. In this upazila, no books have been distributed in Ibtidayee madrasas either.

In Anwara upazila, all secondary schools have received textbooks, but Dakhil students have not received any. In Hathazari upazila, 6th-graders have not received their books yet.

In the six educational zones within Chattogram city, only 9,000 books have been distributed for 8th grade Dakhil students, while books for four other classes have not been given. In different city areas – including Panchlaish, Pahartali, and Bayezid – textbooks have not arrived for several secondary level classes, while no Dakhil madrasas received books in Karnaphuli.

For English version schools, printing of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

6.94 million (around 40 percent) books have so far reached the district education office, against a demand of over 17.3 million textbooks, across 15 upazilas and six metropolitan zones.

Bringing Hasina to justice top priority: Shafiqul

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday said bringing Sheikh Hasina back to Bangladesh and putting her on trial in person is the government's top priority.

"We want to bring her back and put her on trial in person. The people of Bangladesh want to see her trial. Bringing her to justice is our top priority," he said in response to a question whether her trial would be held in absentia.

Speaking at a briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital, Shafiqul Alam said Hasina has been accused of committing crimes against humanity in the recently published UN rights report.

"A huge pressure is being created [on India to extradite Sheikh Hasina] following the UN report and other reports from some human rights groups," he said.

Referring to a recent survey conducted by India Today, the press secretary said 55 percent of Indians support Sheikh Hasina's extradition to Bangladesh, a certain percentage want her sent to a third country and only 16-17 percent of Indians want she should be allowed to stay in India.

Shafiqul also said the interim government will form a high-powered committee soon to investigate and prepare a white paper on corruption and irregularities in the ICT sector during the Awami League regime. "This committee will present a white paper within two months," he said.

Traffic chaos grips Trishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Traffic congestion has become a significant problem in the Darirampur Bus Stand area of Trishal upazila, Mymensingh, along the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, causing hardship for thousands of commuters.

The highway sees a constant flow of passenger buses and goods-laden trucks from Mymensingh, Sherpur, Netrakona, Jamalpur, and Kishoreganj districts, while rickshaws, auto-



rickshaws, human haulers, and battery-operated three-wheelers also crowd the area, all vying for passengers heading to various destinations.

This convergence of vehicles leads to severe congestion, often lasting over an hour.

The situation is compounded by an increasing number of illegal local vehicles on the highway, due to lax monitoring by law enforcement agencies.

Additionally, vendors occupying footpaths exacerbate the problem.

Ahmed Shafi, a college student, said around 4,000 students from ten educational

institutions near the bus stand encounter this traffic gridlock daily.

"This issue continues to persist without adequate response from the authorities," he said.

Advocate Nazrul Islam Chunnu, convener of the citizens' platform Jonoddyog Mymensingh, called for immediate action to tackle unregistered vehicles and remove vendors from footpaths.

Traffic Inspector Golam Moula Talukder said drivers frequently disregard traffic rules,

even after being fined for violations.

He said they have taken measures to clear footpaths and engage with drivers and vendors about following traffic regulations.

Monsur Ahammed, officer-in-charge of Trishal Police Station, highlighted the inadequate number of traffic policemen assigned to manage the situation, with only six officers available.

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdulla Al Bari said they need a coordinated effort to find a permanent solution to ease the traffic congestion in the area.

Rab to be restructured, if needed

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rab will be restructured if necessary, said Home Adviser Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

He said this in reply to a query after a meeting of the Law and Order Advisory Council at the Secretariat.

He said a discussion was held regarding Rab in the meeting. "A proposal or idea has been submitted regarding it, including a name. The matter will be discussed in the next meeting."

When asked whether the name would be changed, he said the decision would be made in the next meeting.

Recently, the UN human rights office (OHCHR) has recommended disbanding Rab. The UN office launched its fact-finding report on human rights violations and abuses, related to the July uprising, earlier on February 12 in Geneva.

Rights activists and BNP have long been demanding dissolution of the Rab, which is currently under US sanctions for serious human rights violations.

MIRPUR BRTA

10 Nirapad Sarak Andolon members hurt in attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 leaders and activists of Nirapad Sarak Andolon sustained injuries after a group of "brokers" attacked them inside the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Mirpur office in Dhaka yesterday.

Police and army personnel rescued the injured activists.

Enzamul Haque, spokesperson of the student platform formed after the 2018 movement for road safety, said they had gone to the BRTA office to prevent various malpractices and get rid of brokers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

TEACHER APPOINTMENT

SC full bench hearing on March 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday did not stay the High Court verdict that scrapped the government's decision to issue appointment letters to 6,531 candidates selected for the post of assistant teachers in government primary schools.

Justice Md Rezaul Haque, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, however, sent the government's leave to appeal petition that sought a stay on the HC judgement to its full bench for hearing on March 2.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

The situation is compounded by an increasing number of illegal local vehicles on the highway, due to lax monitoring by law enforcement agencies.



বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

BANGLADESH POWER DEV. BOARD
Directorate of Purchase
WAPDA Building (9th Floor), Motijheel
C/A, Dhaka
Phone No. 22338081.
E-mail dir.purchase@bpdb.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of:

S L N 0	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Reference No.	Description of Goods/Works	Last Selling Date and time	Closing Date and time	Opening Date and time
01	1077051	ZRS-GRL-02 (FY-24-25)	27.11.0000.304. 25.11.425 Date: 17/02/2025	Supply of spare parts for 350 Coil Winder of ZRS, BPDB, Chattogram	2025 13:00	09-Mar 2025 14:00	09-Mar 2025 14:00

This is online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

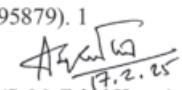
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.

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

For more details please contact to the PE's support desk (01768595879).

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-৮১১(৩)/১৮/০২/২৫


(S. M. Zahid Hasan)
ID No.: 1-01423
Director (In-Charge)
Directorate of Purchase
BPDB, Dhaka

GD-463

Three boys killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Three schoolboys were killed in road accidents in Kishoreganj's Katiadi upazila and Bandarban's Ruma upazila yesterday.

In Kishoreganj, two cousins lost their lives in a bus accident at Modhopara on the Kishoreganj-Bhairab highway around 9:45am.

The deceased are Ali Akbar, 13, son of Faruk Mia, and Junayed Ahmed, 12, son of Ferdous Ahmed -- both from Modhopara village and students of Modhopara High School, said Tariqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Katiadi Police Station.

Meanwhile, in Bandarban, nine-year-old Mothi Tripura, son of Rudriya Tripura from Anandapara of Sadar upazila, died when a bus hit him as he was heading home after school.

He died on the spot, said police, adding that the bus driver fled the scene.



On the occasion of International Mother Language Day, to be observed on February 21, students in the port city paint murals on various walls of the city. The photo was taken in Pahartali area yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

বড়পুরুরিয়া কোল মাইনিং কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানী)
BARAPUKURIA COAL MINING COMPANY LIMITED.

(A COMPANY OF PETROBANGLA)

প্রকাশিত সংবাদের প্রতিবাদ

১৭ মেরুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখে দেশের দুইটি জাতীয় দৈনিক পত্রিকায় 'দুর্বারিত তদন্তের মধ্যেই এমতি হন সাইফুল' এবং 'বড়পুরুরিয়া কোল মাইনিং কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (পিসিএমসিএল)-এর নজরে এসেছে।' বড়পুরুরিয়া কয়লা খনি দেশের উত্তোলিত উত্তোলন কয়লা পার্কিংগ্রাম কয়লা খনি। ২০০২ সাল হতে কৃত্য প্রতিবেশে সুন্মুখের সাথে খনি থেকে উত্তোলিত সন্দূয়ে কয়লা পার্কিংগ্রাম কয়লা খনি থেকে উত্তোলিত তেজস্ব ক্ষেত্রে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রেখে আসছে, যার মাধ্যমে উত্তোলিত সম্প্রদায়ে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে ব্যাপকভাবে উন্নয়ন করে আসছে। বর্তমানে খনি হতে কয়লা উত্তোলন এবং বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে ব্যাপকভাবে উন্নয়ন করে আসছে। এখন খনিক উত্তোলিত সম্প্রদায়ে উন্নয়ন করে আসছে। এছাড়াও অক্ষয়ক্রমে জাতীয় কার্যক্রম এবং প্রকল্প প্রতিবেশে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে ব্যাপকভাবে উন্নয়ন করে আসছে।

বড়পুরুরিয়া কোল মাইনিং কোম্পানী লিমিটেড একটি সরকারি কোম্পানি। সরকারি নিয়ম-নীতি অনুসরণ করে এর আর্থিক/প্রশাসনিক কার্যক্রমসহ যাবতীয় কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হয়ে থাকে। কোম্পানির যাবতীয় অর্থ যথাযথ নিয়ম অনুসরণে তত্ত্বাবধান করে আসছে। বড়পুরুরিয়া কোল মাইনিং কোম্পানী পরিচালনা পর্যবেক্ষণ করে আসছে। এছাড়াও অক্ষয়ক্রমে জাতীয় কার্যক্রম এবং প্রকল্প প্রতিবেশে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনে ব্যাপকভাবে উন্নয়ন করে আসছে।

Japan to provide \$1.8m aid to Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 2

its eighth year. "We are deeply grateful for Japan's unwavering solidarity with the Rohingya people as they face ongoing challenges from fires, cyclones, floods, and insecurity in the camps. Japan's latest contribution is crucial for providing critical assistance, especially to women and children."

Japanese Ambassador Saita Shinichi expressed hope that the assistance would improve living conditions for the Rohingyas. "This \$1.8 million aid underscores Japan's commitment to humanitarian support, alleviating hunger and malnutrition, and fostering stability in the region."

Since the 2017 Rohingya influx, Japan has provided over \$230 million in aid to Bangladesh through WFP, UN agencies, and NGOs, including this new funding.



First responders work at the Delta Air Lines plane crash site at Toronto Pearson International Airport in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, on Monday. The regional jet flipped upside down upon landing at the airport amid windy weather following a snowstorm, injuring 18 of the 80 people on board, officials said.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Disputes over credit now out on social media

FROM PAGE 12

Md Abu Shadik Kayem, who was the president of Shibir's Dhaka University unit during the uprising and also a key coordinator of the Students Against Discrimination, wrote, "Instead of focusing on important tasks, the current bickering over who will be at the centre of power is akin to mocking the martyrs."

Chhatra Shakti, a student organisation formed in October 2023, and Shibir, which was not active publicly, worked as the coordinators of the Students Against Discrimination platform that spearheaded the uprising.

Another platform called the Jatiya Nagorik Committee was formed on September 8 last year, comprising leaders and activists from various

organisations that were involved in the movement.

The 18-member central committee of the Nagorik Committee includes leaders from Chhatra Shakti, at least three former presidents of Shibir's Dhaka University unit, representatives from Qawmi madrasa-based organisations, Chhatra Odhikar Parishad, the AB Party, Chhatra Union, and Chhatra Federation.

Students Against Discrimination and its civic platform the Nagorik Committee are expected to announce a new political party by the end of this month.

The citizens' platform, meanwhile, is split into at least three groups over the top posts of the new party's convening committee, said insiders.

Adviser Nahid Islam is almost certain to be the

convener of the new party while discord has surfaced over the member secretary post.

Sources within the Nagorik Committee say that Adviser Mahfuj Alam wants Nagorik Committee Convener Nasiruddin Patwary to be in the top leadership of the new party.

On the other hand, the former Shibir activists on the platform want Ali Ahsan Zoneda, former president of Shibir's DU unit and member of Nagorik Committee's executive body, into the second-in-command position of the new party.

Sources said that the key policymakers are mulling creating a senior joint convener and senior member secretary post to accommodate former Shibir leaders and avoid a potential split.

Sources said that the key policymakers are mulling creating a senior joint convener and senior member secretary post to accommodate former Shibir leaders and avoid a potential split.

Adviser Nahid Islam is almost certain to be the

Fair share of water

FROM PAGE 1

of Teesta water is a legitimate right under international law, not an act of charity, generosity, or goodwill.

He said the water rights of the Teesta and 54 other common rivers must be ensured to protect the livelihoods of millions in northern Bangladesh. But the neighbouring country has been behaving "unneighbourly" towards Bangladesh.

Tarique said that several significant issues with India are still unresolved.

"Basic equity has not been upheld in these agreements [with India]. The people of Bangladesh believe that all unequal, unjust, and unilateral agreements with neighbouring countries should be reviewed and reassessed, if necessary."

"In today's world, there are no permanent enemies or permanent allies. Instead, the relationship between countries should be founded on mutual interests, fairness, and necessity," he added.

The BNP leader said it is a must to implement the Teesta Master Plan to prevent Bangladesh's northern region from becoming a desert.

The Teesta Master Plan includes dredging the riverbed, constructing embankments, and establishing sustainable water management practices.

The venue near Teesta Rail Bridge point in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila stretched nearly four kilometres to Kaunia in Rangpur. It hosted the largest gathering with approximately 75,000 participants, according to the organisers. The second-largest gathering of around 55,000 people was reported in the Teesta Barrage area of Hatibandha upazila, while Mahipur in Rangpur's Gangachhara upazila saw a turnout of around 45,000 participants.

The events featured rallies, cultural performances, and traditional sports activities.

In Kaunia, our correspondent witnessed thousands of protesters holding banners and placards with messages like "Teesta River is Our Mother, We Won't Let It Die".

The Teesta, which flows 115 kilometres through Bangladesh, has been significantly affected by upstream interventions in India. Hydropower projects and irrigation diversions have reduced water availability in Teesta during the dry seasons, while flash floods occur in monsoons due to the sudden discharge of water from India.

The Teesta crisis has severely impacted agriculture in the region. The river's natural dry-season flow is expected to be 5,000 cusecs, but it often drops to just 400 cusecs, according to the Bangladesh Water Development Board. This

water scarcity extensively disrupts crop production.

Among the attendees was 70-year-old Sudhangshu Barman from Rajpur village in Lalmonirhat. Having lost 26 bighas of his ancestral land to Teesta's erosion over the past two decades, he now lives on someone else's property. "The Teesta took everything from me. I joined this movement so that others don't suffer the same fate," he said.

Farmer Meher Ali from Kurigram lamented the loss of nine bighas of his 12-bigha farmland to erosion. "With just three bighas left, we struggle to survive. If the master plan is implemented, many of our lands could be restored," he said.

Crops like maize, chilli, pumpkin, wheat, and jute, once abundant in the fertile Teesta basin, now suffer from inadequate irrigation.

The protesters, many of whom waded knee-deep into the cold waters of the Teesta, remain hopeful. "We don't understand treaties and technicalities," said farmer Mofizul Islam from Char Ishli. "We just need water to grow our crops and secure our lives and livelihoods."

Local fishers share similar grievances. "The river is drying up, and so is the fish population," said Ajaharul Islam, a fisherman from Rangpur's Kaunia upazila. "We can no longer sustain our families from fishing alone."

Around 11:00am, the demonstrators marched from the Teesta Bridge point of the Rangpur-Kurigram highway. After the rallies in the afternoon, the protesters joined a sit-in in the evening, carrying torches. Cultural functions and movie-screening were also held.

Tarique joined the programme again at that time, promising that the BNP will implement the Teesta Master Plan if it gets the people's mandate.

The events featured rallies, cultural performances, and traditional sports activities.

As the programme was nearing its end, the organisers vowed to continue their struggle until concrete measures were taken to address the Teesta crisis.

Professor Dr Tuhin Wadud, Director of Riverine People and a faculty at Begum Rokeya University, said the environmental toll from unregulated Teesta water flow was huge. "It causes silt to accumulate, reducing the river's water holding capacity. Without proper management of Teesta, floods will continue to ravage the communities of the Teesta basin," he warned.

Legal expert Palash Kanti Nag said, "Joint river basin management with India and international cooperation are essential for a long-term solution. Bangladesh must assert its water rights through diplomatic channels and global environmental forums."

At the launch of the

Beijing ready

FROM PAGE 12

assistance for the project in 2021 by submitting a proposal.

"China maintains good relations with all political parties," the ambassador said in response to another query.

China is ready to work with Bangladesh to make the 50th anniversary a new starting point to strengthen strategic communications, deepen practical cooperation, and enhance Belt and Road Cooperation, he said.

Speaking on reforms, the Chinese diplomat said that issues related to reforms are internal matters of Bangladesh, and he wished to see stability, unity, and development in the country.

Regarding medical treatment, Wen said Bangladeshis seeking treatment in China will have access to three top-rated hospitals in Kunming, and that medical visa process will be straightforward.

On the

Rohingya crisis,

the Chinese envoy said that China and Bangladesh share the same stance.

He opined that a ceasefire between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar government is a prerequisite for progress and that China

presence at the event might cause disturbances among a certain group.

"Our priority was to ensure the event's success. Given the concerns raised, we felt it was necessary to take precautionary measures to guarantee a peaceful exhibition," he added.

It came as a surprise to me'

FROM PAGE 2

The incident sparked widespread criticism, with many viewing it as an affront to the Bangladeshi art community and a disservice to a renowned artist.

Contacted, Pro VC Prof Mamun told this newspaper that there were concerns that Prof Rafiqun Nabi's

programme on Monday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said India must resolve the Teesta issue, stop border killings and abandon its "big brother" attitude if it wants to be friends with the people of Bangladesh.

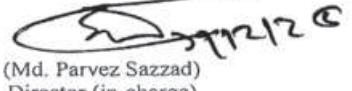
He accused the previous Awami League government of failing to secure Bangladesh's water rights. "In 15 years, they have sold Bangladesh, but they couldn't bring a drop of water," he said.

He accused the previous Awami League government of failing to secure Bangladesh's water rights.

"In 15 years, they have sold Bangladesh, but they couldn't bring a drop of water," he said.

National University, Bangladesh				
Head Office: Board Bazar, Gazipur				
Procurement & Store Department				
Memo No: PSD40-0/00071/2024(1)/1/3796				Date: 17/02/2025
e-Tender Notice				
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://eprocure.gov.bd) for the Procurement of the following:				
Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of works	Procurement Nature, Type & Method	Online Tender Notice Publication and Closing Date
1.	1073534	Purchase of Hessian Bag (with Handle) for Examination Department of National University, Bangladesh	Goods NCT OTM	18-Feb-2025 16:00 11-Mar-2025 14:00

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


(Md. Parvez Sazzad)
Director (in-charge)
Procurement and Store Department
National University, Bangladesh
e-mail: procurement@nu.ac.bd

GD-456

Government of the People's of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Ferry Division

Shiromony, Khulna

Email: eefdkhu@rhd.gov.bd

Date: 18/02/2025

Notice for e-GP Tender

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of Goods/Works of RHD, Ferry Division, Shiromony, Khulna (Tender ID No: 1076073, 1076074, 1076075, 1076076, 1076077, 1076078, 1076079, 1076080, 1076081, 1076082, 1076083, 1076084, 1076085, 1076086, 1076087, 1076088, 1076089, 1076090, 1076091, 1076092, 1076093, 1076094, 1076095, 1076096, 1076097, 1076098, 1076099, 1076100, 1076101, 1076102, 1076103, 1076104, 1076105, 1076106, 1076107 & 1076108). This is an on line tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.



Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD,
Ferry Division, Khulna.

GD-456

READY FACTORY FOR RENT	
100% export-oriented knit Garments (Compliant) factory will be rented.	
Features :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The factory is spread over four acres of land with 4.5 lakh square feet of production floor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The factory has a garment capacity of 80 lines (2400 Machine) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Printing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embroidery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> R.E.B Line <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gas Line <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gas & Diesel Generator 	
Please contact: 01715-496888 01677-611486	
Preference will be given to the foreign investors.	
      <img alt="SMETA" data-bbox="	

SOUTH LEBANON

Israeli troops to remain at five positions

Says minister; Beirut says army ready to assume duties on Israel border

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz yesterday confirmed that troops remain at five positions in southern Lebanon past a pullout deadline, vowing action against any truce violation by militant group Hezbollah.

The Israeli military "will remain in a buffer zone in Lebanon with five control positions, and will continue to act forcefully and uncompromisingly against any Hezbollah violation," said Katz in a statement shortly after an extended deadline expired for Israel to withdraw from Lebanon under the November 27

Deadline for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon expires

truce deal.

Israel had announced hours before the pullout deadline that it would keep troops in "five strategic points" near the border.

A Lebanese security source earlier confirmed that "the Israeli army has withdrawn from all border villages except for five points."

Lebanon said the army is ready to assume duties on Israel border. UN said the delay in Israel's Lebanon withdrawal is 'violation' of resolution on ending war.

The ceasefire between Israel and the militant group has been in effect since late November, following more than a year of hostilities.

Katz said the decision to remain inside Lebanese territory was made "in accordance with the decision of political echelon... to ensure the protection of all Israeli communities".



An Israeli army excavator demolishes a residential building in the Tulkarem camp for Palestinian refugees during an ongoing Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

US senators dismiss Trump's Gaza plan

Expect Arab states to put forward a workable alternative; Hamas to free 6 Israeli hostages this week

REUTERS, Tel Aviv

US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham dismissed on Monday President Donald Trump's proposal to seize Gaza and force out the Palestinians, while Democrat Senator Richard Blumenthal said he expects Arab states to put forward a workable alternative.

The prominent lawmakers were among a bipartisan group of US senators who earlier met in Tel Aviv with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who on Sunday repeated his backing for Trump's controversial vision for Gaza.

Israeli officials have latched onto Trump's proposal, with Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz instructing the military to prepare a plan that would allow for Palestinians in Gaza to leave voluntarily.



But Graham, a longtime ally of Trump and a key Republican in Congress with influence on foreign policy and national security matters, told reporters there was little appetite in the Senate "for America to take over Gaza in any way, shape or form."

Blumenthal simply said the plan was a "non-starter."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said yesterday that Israel will begin indirect negotiations

with Hamas on the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire deal this week and it demands a complete demilitarisation of the enclave.

An extraordinary Arab League meeting on Gaza, initially set for next week, has been postponed to March 4, host Egypt said yesterday.

Trump's proposal has been widely denounced by Arab officials, while some critics have said it equates to ethnic cleansing. Netanyahu as recently as Monday said that the Palestinians in Gaza should be given the choice to leave.

Katz said on Monday that he would establish a directorate within the ministry for the voluntary departure of Palestinians from Gaza.

Meanwhile, Hamas's top negotiator said yesterday the group will release this week six living Israeli hostages held in Gaza.

Meta plans globe-spanning sub-sea internet cable

AFP, Paris

Facebook and Instagram parent company Meta has said it will lay an undersea cable stretching across five continents to carry data, including for developing artificial intelligence.

The cable will run for more than 50,000 kilometres (31,000 miles) between the US, South Africa, India, Brazil and "other regions", Meta wrote in a blog on Friday.

Global digital communication relies on a vast network of undersea conduits, with roughly 1.2 million kilometres of cable already installed, according to a 2024 report by the US-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Digital giants like Meta have recently muscled in to the world of subsea cables, long dominated by specialist companies like America's SubCom, France's ASN, Japan's NEC and China's HNM.

Intercontinental data flows underpin swathes of global economic activity, but suffer regular accidental damage from incidents like underwater landslides, tsunamis or dragging ship anchors.

They can also be targets for deliberate sabotage and spying. Nato in January launched dedicated patrols of the Baltic Sea after suspected attacks on telecoms and power cables that experts and politicians have blamed on Russia.

Dubbed "Project Waterworth", Meta's plan aims to "strengthen the scale and reliability of the world's digital highways... with the abundant, high speed connectivity needed to drive AI innovation".

Musk has no authority to make decisions

Says White House in a court filing

REUTERS, Washington

Billionaire Elon Musk's role in the Trump administration is as a White House employee and senior adviser to the president, and is not an employee of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and has no decision-making authority, the White House said in a court filing on Monday.

According to a filing signed by Joshua Fisher, director of the Office of Administration at the White House, Musk can only advise the president and communicate the president's directives.

"Like other senior White House advisors, Mr Musk has no actual or formal authority to make government decisions himself," it said.

Fisher's filing, made in a case brought against Musk by the State of New Mexico, said that Musk was not an employee of the US DOGE Service, or the US DOGE

Service Temporary Organization, and added: "Mr Musk is not the US DOGE Service Administrator."

DOGE has swept through federal agencies since Donald Trump began his second term as president last month and put Musk, the chief executive of carmaker Tesla, in charge of rooting out wasteful spending as part a dramatic overhaul of government that has included thousands of job cuts.

Meanwhile, a US judge temporarily refused on Monday to block Musk's government efficiency team from accessing Education Department student data, in a minor legal victory for the world's richest man in his blitz on public spending.

The University of California Student Association had sought to block DOGE from accessing students' data including social security numbers, loans and tax information.



Engineering Office University Of Chittagong Chittagong

Date: 16/02/2025

Ref No: Cons-05/CECU-2509/24

Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI)

- Ministry/Division : Ministry of Education
- Agency : University of Chittagong
- Procuring Entity Name : Chief Engineer, Engineering Office, University of Chittagong
- Procuring Entity Code : N/A
- Procuring Entity District : Chittagong
- EOI for selection of : Engineering & Architectural Consulting Firm
- Procuring Method : Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
- Budget and Source of funds : GoB
- Project Name : Consultant for Architectural and Engineering Design of Acoustic Staging & Gallery Works in the Auditorium for Faculty of 2nd Arts & Humanities Building at the University of Chittagong.
- Brief description of Assignment : Providing consultancy services for the Preparation of Architectural and Engineering Design of Acoustic Staging & Gallery Works in the Auditorium for Faculty of 2nd Arts & Humanities Building at the University of Chittagong.
- Submission of Proposal : Up to 12:00 p.m. on 03/03/2025. Technical offer shall be submitted at the Engineering Office at C.U. (Please seal envelope, duly marking it as the technical offer and bearing the Name & Address of the Consultant).
- Proposal opening date & time : Technical offer will be opened at the Office of the Chief Engineer at University of Chittagong on the same day at 2:00p.m. in presence of the consultant or his representative if there are any.
- Eligibility of the Consultant :
 - Trade License (Updated)
 - VAT, TIN and TAX Assessment Certificate (Updated)
 - Last 05 (Five) years Audit report (Only summary part)
 - Average Annual turnover: The consulting firm must have at least an average annual turnover of BDT 1,50,00,000.00 (One Crore and Fifty Lakh) for at least 02 (Two) years within the last 05 (Five) years.
- Experience of the Consultant :
 - The consulting firm shall meet the following minimum qualification criteria.
 - The consulting firm shall have a minimum of 10 (Ten) years' experience in the field of providing architectural and engineering design.
 - The consulting firm must have experience in completing both architectural and engineering design of at least 10 (Ten) different projects in last 10 (Ten) years.
 - The consulting firm should have specific experience in both architectural and engineering design of at least 02 (two) similar types of projects (academic and/or institutional), each having minimum total floor area of 1200 square meter in each project in the last 05 years.
- Scope of Works :
 - The design should be prepared considering sustainability, durability, eco-friendliness and aesthetics.
 - Three-dimensional visualization shall be presented.
 - Preparation of detail Architectural Design, MEP, Fire fighting system, Bill of quantities (BOQ).
 - The plan should fulfill requirements considering present & future demand of the University.
- Name, Designation of official inviting EOI : Engr. Syed Zahangir Fazal
Chief Engineer
- Address, Contact details of official inviting EOI : Engineering Office, University of Chittagong, PABX- 02334460789, Extn: 4213, Mobile No: 01863-521561

18. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any part of all proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever.

19. If it is not possible to receive/open the Proposal on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received/opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.

20. For any kind of query please contact with the related person or email us at ce_engroff@cu.ac.bd



WEST ZONE POWER DISTRIBUTION CO. LTD.

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Dev. Board)
Office of the Chief Engineer
Bidyut Bhaban, 35 Boyra Main Road, Khulna
Ph: 02477-730484, Fax: 02477-730484

Memo No: 27.22.4785.010.74.001.25/441

Date: 17.02.2025

e-Tender Notice (NCT)

e-Tender for the office of the Chief Engineer (O&M) invites in the National e-GP system Portal(www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:

SI	Tender ID	Name of Tender	Last Selling and Closing Date & Time
1	1074738	08 Nos. of Oracle Database Enterprise Edition AMC for 02 (Two) years including all kinds of support services and subscriptions at Disaster Recovery Center (DRC), WZPDC, JESSORE.	12-Mar-2025 11:00:BST 12-Mar-2025 13:00:BST

This is an Online Tender, Where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank.

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


Md. Abdul Mojid
Chief Engineer (O&M)
WZPDC, Khulna.

GD-454



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়
মানিকগঞ্জ
www.manikganj.police.gov.bd

সংশোধনী

স্মারক নং. ১১২/ই

উন্নত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং- ০৫/২০২৪-২০২৫

তারিখঃ- ১৮/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি

পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, মানিকগঞ্জ স্মারক নং-৬৬৮/ই, প্রাচীর-১৩০/১০/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি মধ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের বিভিন্ন তরব ও অন্যান্য স্থাপনা সেবামূলক প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নের জন্য কার্যালয়ের নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে দরপত্র আহরণ করা হলে প্রতিক্রিয়া দেওয়া হবে। প্রকল্প প্রতিক্রিয়া নং ১১২/ই/২০২৪-২০২৫ এবং The Daily Star ১৮/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি ক্রম নং-০৫/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি ও ০৬/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৭/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৮/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৯/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১০/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১১/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১২/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৩/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৪/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৫/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৬/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৭/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৮/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৯/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২০/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২১/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২২/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৩/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৪/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৫/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৬/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৭/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৮/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ২৯/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ৩০/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ৩১/০২/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০১/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০২/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৩/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৪/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৫/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৬/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৭/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৮/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ০৯/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১০/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১১/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১২/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৩/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৪/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এবং ১৫/০৩/২০২৫ টাঙ্গি এব

Make highways safe for passengers

Spike in robberies on Dhaka-Chattogram highway raises alarm

We are concerned about the increase in robberies and muggings on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway over the last six months or so. According to a report by *Prothom Alo* citing frequent travellers of this route, there have been more than 100 incidents of robberies and muggings at different spots of the 462-kilometre highway during this period.

Accounts from victims, police officers, and bus and private car drivers suggest that such criminal activities have noticeably gone up, even though the number of robbery cases filed with police stations along the route may not reflect it. *Prothom Alo* found only 19 related cases filed with three police stations in Narayanganj, one of the districts connecting this important highway. Per these cases, the frequency of mugging and robbery is high in at least 17 spots of the district. Cumilla and Chattogram also have several highly mugging-prone spots. However, victims often don't want to file cases because police cannot generally recover stolen valuables. Instead, many end up being harassed and having to go through trial-related hassles. In most cases, however, police only file a general diary.

In recent times, expatriate Bangladeshis have been frequently targeted by muggers and robbers, who often commit the crime when vehicles slow down or get stuck in one place for too long because of traffic, which is a regular phenomenon in the Narayanganj section of the highway. According to police, people don't want to file cases of highway robberies as they tend to move to a safer place quickly afterwards. Even when they do report and police arrest the perpetrators, the latter manage to get bail and resume their criminal activities.

Our highways are already notorious for the high number of road crashes that occur there. Added to that is the menace of robbery and mugging, not to mention rampant extortion. These crimes don't just affect individuals; cargo vehicles have also come under attack. We, therefore, urge the authorities to take effective measures to make our highways safe. Increasing patrols, raising awareness, and addressing the reasons behind long gridlocks on the highways are some of the measures that can be employed. On the legal front, making reporting of highway crimes easy and ensuring that perpetrators cannot go scot-free after arrests will also help reduce the incidence of mugging and robbery. Transport associations should also cooperate with the authorities to prevent highway criminal gangs. Passengers should be able to travel without the fear of losing their lives and possessions.

Stop allowing black money in real estate

NBR permission is destabilising the housing market

It is unfortunate that black money continues to be in circulation using a legal loophole that hasn't been addressed despite criticism over the past five months. It can be recalled that the National Board of Revenue (NBR), on September 2, announced the cancellation of the opportunity to legalise undisclosed (black) money by paying a 15 percent tax on securities, cash, bank deposits, financial schemes, and so on. However, the provision for legalising undisclosed assets through a fixed tax payment on investment in real estate has been retained. Now, according to a report by *Bonik Barta*, this is being exploited to whitewash black money by individuals purchasing properties at inflated prices in Dhaka's elite neighbourhoods.

Analysing some recent developments in Gulshan, the report suggests that the opportunity to convert illegal money into legal assets is driving up prices of flats and plots. While there are other factors likely contributing to high prices in areas such as Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara—including continued demand from affluent buyers, availability of better living opportunities, and better security—black money continues to play a destabilising role. It is well-known that many individuals, particularly those with political and business ties to the ousted Awami League government, accumulated vast sums of illicit wealth and funnelled it into real estate. Even though many of them have been on the run or behind bars since the political turnover in August, this hasn't dampened the housing trend, thanks to the continued allowance for investment of black money in real estate.

Its consequences are not hard to miss. First, this is leading to artificial price hikes in real estate, making homeownership quite difficult for honest, middle-class citizens. Second, it continues to distort market dynamics with some experts claiming that the prices of flats in some areas of Dhaka have even surpassed those of global metropolitan cities like London, Dubai, and New York. Third, it continues to enable a culture of impunity where those with illegitimate wealth can get away without any scrutiny and consequences whatsoever.

This is totally unacceptable. We urge the NBR authorities to immediately extend the freeze on legalisation of black money through real estate investment. Moreover, there must be strict audits on high-value property transactions to identify the sources of funds. Without these measures, real estate will remain a safe haven for illicit wealth, reinforcing inequalities and preventing efforts to overhaul the financial sector. It is not enough to talk about the crimes of the past; we must prevent their recurrence in the future.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Karl Lagerfeld dies

On this day in 2019, German fashion designer and photographer Karl Lagerfeld—the creative power behind the modern revival of Chanel, the legendary French fashion house founded by Coco Chanel in the early 20th century—died in Paris.

Towards a common minimum reform programme



Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir is professor in the Department of Development Studies at the University of Dhaka.

RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

The ousting of an oligarchic regime and the subsequent formation of an interim administration have unearthed deep-rooted structural crises in Bangladesh. The challenges are omnipresent, with declined investment, sluggish economic growth, and growing public dissatisfaction. The deposed oligarchy failed to control inflation. This cost-of-living crisis disproportionately impacts working-class and marginalised communities. The manufacturing and service sectors are paralysed by policy uncertainty, while the banking sector struggles with liquidity shortages. Investors are reluctant to commit capital in the absence of long-term policy commitments. The economy is contracting, plunging into recession.

The crisis is more than just economic; it is a reflection of a broken political system. The existing power structure, shaped by elite bargains and institutional distortions, has failed to establish a sustainable, inclusive democratic order.

At the heart of the problem is a flawed political settlement where vested interests dictate governance, rather than an inclusive and institutionalised democratic system. Economic policies benefit a politically connected syndicate, rather than fostering broad-based growth. Regulatory bodies, the judiciary, and financial institutions suffer from political influence that undermines their independence. The lack of genuine democratic competition has created a culture of impunity, where the rulers have ruled without the public mandate.

The interim government has inherited these contradictions. Without a legitimate political mandate, no administration can implement meaningful economic and institutional reforms. Bangladesh must define its governance model to serve the median population, rather than a privileged few. A new social contract—based on equity, democratic accountability, and economic justice—is essential to building public trust and ensuring long-term stability.

A free, fair and credible election is the only path to restoring stability,

building confidence, and enacting real reforms. The urgency of an elected government is not a matter of political preference but also an economic necessity. Without legitimacy, any country risks stagnation, institutional decay, and growing public unrest.

The interim government constituted several reform commissions to address constitutional, electoral, and judicial issues, among others. While the proposals of these reform

Bangladesh has successfully handed over power to another party, and this must change. Secondly, it must do away with the prevailing electoral system, which has hardly given voters credible alternatives to make informed and engaged choices in free, fair elections, without fear, intimidation or manipulation. Thirdly, and most importantly, the political parties must agree on a representational public order that safeguards against any rise of autocratic dispensation, including fascism, and instead ushers in a new political culture of ensuring accountability, with adequate checks and balances.

The 2024 July uprising has made it clear: Bangladeshis deserve an indigenous political settlement that reflects the will of the people, not a system built on patronage networks. The state must belong to the people.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

commissions sound promising, there is an urgency for an immediate consensus by following a max-min principle, i.e. consensus on a common minimum reform programme (CMRP) by a maximum of political parties as a second-best alternative. A prolonged transition—or a rigid stance on “reform first, elections later”—will only deepen the crisis. A CMRP agreed upon by the maximum number of political parties is necessary. The elements of CMRP could be on three key issues: a) a peaceful transition of power; b) free, fair and credible elections; and c) representational public order.

Firstly, no political party in

People have spoken against the culture of deinstitutionalisation and political centralisation. The deposed resource-dependent syndicate has eaten away at systems. The collusion between moneyed interests and political rulers have eroded institutions, making the citizen-state relationship a distant ideal. A nation cannot withstand external pressures if it is plagued by power asymmetry and rent-seeking elites who exploit state resources.

A political party, seeking a mandate, must present voters with a clearly articulated new social contract—one that shifts from oligarchic clientelism to a people-centric development. Any uprising, as history suggests, warrants

can provide, and such, in turn, can ensure decent employment for all.

Bangladesh is at a historic turning point. The economic paralysis cannot be solved in isolation from the political crisis. Without democratic legitimacy, no government can restore economic stability or implement necessary reforms. The demand for free and fair elections is not just about political justice—it is an urgent economic necessity too. The country's future depends on democratic governance, where power is derived from the people, not from elite negotiations or external interventions. The time for action is now.

A gathering of South Asian idiots



Hamid Mir is a journalist at Pakistani news channel Geo News. His X handle is @HamidMirPAK

HAMID MIR

I first heard the name Wangchuck in the famous Indian movie *3 Idiots*. Aamir Khan played the character of Wangchuck in the movie. I did not know that Wangchuck is a real character. I was introduced to him last week in Islamabad during the South Asia Climate Symposium organised by Dawn Media Group. This symposium provided a great opportunity for climate experts from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and other countries to find solutions to the climate crisis.

Sonam Wangchuck from Ladakh is an engineer and a climate activist who went on a 16-day hunger strike last year to save the ecology of his hometown. He was invited to the symposium due to his inventions to protect the climate. His inventions also impressed Aamir Khan. One of his inventions is an artificial spring in the shape of an ice stupa that stores downstream water to be used in spring when farmers need water. I never thought that I would see Wangchuck in Islamabad.

I actually went to this climate symposium to meet two old friends. My friends Nirupama Subramanian from India and Mahfuz Anam from Bangladesh are journalists with keen interest in climate issues. Nirupama spent many years in Islamabad as a correspondent of *The Hindu* newspaper. She made a

lot of friends here. Now she works in Chennai. Her own city is facing threats due to climate change. Some World Bank experts were telling us during the symposium that rising sea levels are becoming a threat for the existence of Karachi, Badin, Tatta, Mumbai, Chennai, Kochin, Kolkata, Chattogram, and the whole of Maldives. Some experts discussed the issue of smog, and some were worried about the melting of glaciers due to increasing temperatures. I was happy to see my old friends at this event, but we were also worried about the warnings by many international climate experts.

During one session of this symposium, Sonam Wangchuck was sitting on stage with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's coordinator on climate change, Romina Khurshid Alam. He praised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives on climate change. I was listening to his speech while sitting in the audience. Nirupama whispered in my ear that he was Wangchuck from Ladakh. I immediately asked if he was the Wangchuck from *3 Idiots*. Nirupama smiled and said yes. Then she told me about his hunger strike. Wangchuck always challenged government policies in India, but he was defending the PM in Pakistan. The life line of Pakistan, the Indus River, originates from his native land,

and he was suggesting a joint strategy to address the problem of global warming. He highlighted the idea of creating artificial glaciers. He said, “That is what we do in Ladakh.”

There was a session in this symposium about the role of media and climate change. Zafar Abbas, the editor of *Dawn* newspaper, moderated the session. Mahfuz Anam, Nirupama Subramanian, another Indian journalist Soumashree Sarkar, and Nepali journalist Kanak Mani Dixit agreed that the media must give priority to environmental issues and come up with some bold climate journalism to save South Asia. I noticed that despite tensions between the governments of India and Pakistan, and Bangladesh and India, some “idiot” journalists from these three countries were ready to work together to save the climate of their region. Nirupama had been issued a visa for Pakistan just one day before the conference. She flew from Chennai to Delhi and collected her passport. A very wise Pakistani visa officer did not allow her to cross the Pakistan-India border by foot. She flew to Dubai and took a flight to Pakistan. Only an idiot like her can take this pain for the sake of climate.

I remember that a few years ago, when Mahfuz was facing more than 80 sedition and defamation cases filed on the orders of Sheikh Hasina, I condemned her government. After a few days, I received her message through a diplomat: Mahfuz Anam is an idiot and I should not interfere in the internal matters of Bangladesh just to save an idiot. I responded: “Tell Hasina that I am also an idiot like Mahfuz Anam and he is more important for me than a civilian dictator.” I was happy to see my idiot friend in Islamabad again after many

years. During his visit, at a dinner hosted by Jazz, he took interest in the conversation of young Pakistani journalists Absa Komal, Shehzad Rana, and Nadir Gurmani. He looked happy to know that, like him, these young idiots are not ready to surrender their freedom to any power.

Some World Bank and UNICEF officials told me that PM Shehbaz Sharif gave his word to come to the inauguration of this symposium, but when he learnt that Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur was also invited, he refused to come. Gandapur belongs to the party led by Imran Khan. Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal represented the PM at the symposium. It is unfortunate that climate change needs a consensus in South Asia but Indian and Pakistani governments are not ready to sit together. Then again, Pakistani politicians are also not ready to sit with each other.

Valerie Hickey, World Bank's global director for climate change, stunned the audience by revealing that the world needs \$1 billion per day to combat the threat of drought, but we don't have enough money. Pakistan needs at least \$40 billion annually until 2050 to save Karachi, Badin and Thatta from rising sea waters. Can a Pakistani government afford internal and external fights in this situation? It seems that only idiots understand the gravity of the situation. We need cooperation but our rulers are more interested in confrontation. It's a good thing that idiots from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan have started a dialogue. We need idiots like Wangchuck and Mahfuz Anam who can force the rulers to give more attention to save air and water, not their chairs.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Karl Lagerfeld dies

On this day in 2019, German fashion designer and photographer Karl Lagerfeld—the creative power behind the modern revival of Chanel, the legendary French fashion house founded by Coco Chanel in the early 20th century—died in Paris.

Trump's 'reciprocal tariffs' and the impending risk for Bangladesh



Dr Selim Raihan
is professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Dhaka, and executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM).
He can be reached at selim.raihan@econdu.ac.bd.

SELIM RAIHAN

US President Donald Trump has once again stirred the global trade landscape with his latest announcement on February 13, unveiling plans to impose "reciprocal tariffs" on US trading partners. His declaration—"Whatever countries charge the United States of America, we will charge them"—signals a new phase of economic protectionism that could have wide-ranging consequences. While the move is primarily targeted at China, other major economies, including the European Union, India and Mexico, are also likely to face trade pressures. This policy shift has already triggered concerns among global financial markets, with stock indices reacting to potential disruptions in trade flows. Additionally, several trade analysts argue that such tariffs could escalate trade disputes, leading to retaliatory measures that might further strain international economic relations.

For Bangladesh, the warning signs are evident. In 2023, the US had trade deficits of at least \$1 billion with 48 countries, with China leading the list at \$279 billion, followed by Mexico at \$152 billion and Vietnam at \$104 billion. Trade deficit with India was around \$43.5 billion, ranking the country at the 11th position. Bangladesh, ranked 25th, had a trade surplus of over \$6 billion with the US. While this is a relatively modest figure compared to larger economies, the country's export dependence on the US makes it vulnerable to any potential tariff hikes.

Among these 48 countries, Bangladesh and

Cambodia are the only two least developed countries (LDCs). Cambodia, already facing some US sanctions and with a trade surplus exceeding \$11 billion, is a likely easy target for additional tariffs. Though Bangladesh does not currently enjoy duty-free privileges in the US market—with the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) being suspended in 2013 following the Rana Plaza disaster—its anticipated graduation from the LDC status by 2026 places it at further risk. Any adverse tariff action could significantly impact Bangladesh's exports, particularly in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, which is the backbone of the economy.

The RMG sector accounts for more than 80 percent of Bangladesh's total exports, with the US being one of its largest markets. A tariff increase on apparel exports from Bangladesh could result in higher costs for US buyers, potentially leading to reduced orders and shifting sourcing patterns. Given the already competitive nature of the global apparel industry, US importers may opt for alternative suppliers in countries that benefit from preferential trade agreements, thereby threatening Bangladesh's market share.

Beyond RMG, some other manufacturing and emerging sectors are also at risk. Industries such as leather, footwear, and pharmaceuticals have increasingly relied on US markets. Any tariff hikes could slow down their expansion and make them less competitive compared to other exporters with lower trade barriers. For example,

Bangladesh's pharmaceutical exports, which have shown promising growth in recent years, may face setbacks if additional duties are imposed, limiting access to the lucrative US market.

Furthermore, foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade partnerships may suffer due to the uncertainty surrounding US trade policies. Investors seeking stable trade environments may reconsider expanding

growth, as multinational corporations seek out alternative investment destinations with more predictable trade relations.

In light of these developments, policymakers in Bangladesh must act swiftly to mitigate potential trade risks. Three key measures should be prioritised. First, a data-driven risk assessment is crucial to identifying the precise impact of potential tariffs. Conducting an in-depth analysis

This assessment should be conducted in collaboration with industry associations and trade experts to ensure a comprehensive strategy.

Second, diplomatic engagement is an essential tool. Active and meaningful dialogue with US policymakers, trade representatives and stakeholders is necessary. Both the Bangladeshi mission in Washington, DC and the US diplomatic presence in Dhaka should proactively engage with their counterparts to preempt and negotiate any unfavourable trade measures. Furthermore, leveraging regional trade alliances and organisations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), could provide additional avenues for advocacy. Strengthening ties with other key trade partners could also help diversify Bangladesh's export destinations.

Third, strengthening economic resilience through structural reforms in taxation, trade policy and industrial strategy is essential. Bangladesh must accelerate efforts to expand its export base beyond the RMG sector to reduce vulnerabilities to external shocks. Special emphasis should be placed on enhancing productivity and competitiveness in non-RMG industries, encouraging investment in high-value manufacturing and services, and improving trade logistics to ensure seamless business operations.

The global trade environment is becoming increasingly uncertain, and Bangladesh cannot afford to be complacent. The government must adopt a proactive and strategic approach to navigate the looming challenges posed by Trump's "reciprocal tariffs" policy. A well-coordinated response involving the government, trade bodies and the private sector is essential to ensure that Bangladesh remains competitive in the global market. As the US policy direction unfolds in the coming months, Bangladesh must stay agile and prepared to safeguard its economic interests.



Any adverse tariff action by the US can significantly impact Bangladesh's exports, particularly in the RMG sector.

FILE PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

their operations in Bangladesh, particularly in export-oriented industries. As global supply chains evolve to adapt to new trade barriers, Bangladesh may struggle to maintain its competitive edge. This could have long-term implications for job creation and industrial

at the six-digit Harmonised System (HS) code level will help pinpoint the product categories most vulnerable to tariff hikes. Businesses and policymakers must work together to strategise alternative market access and explore avenues for cost reduction.

How Bangladesh can navigate the geopolitical crossroads



Selim Jahan
is former director of the Human Development Report Office under the United Nations Development Programme and lead author of the Human Development Report.

SELIM JAHAN

In recent times, the geopolitical landscape of the world has changed quite fast. The Ukraine war a few years ago, followed by the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the rise of right-wing governments in different European countries have changed the geopolitical panorama a lot. The ouster of Bashar al-Assad in Syria and that of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh have also added new dynamics at least to the respective regional geopolitics. Very recently, the election of Donald Trump as the newest US president has also added a lot to the changing scenario. Undoubtedly, the world is now at a geopolitical crossroads. One may wonder: what are the implications of all these for Bangladesh? In this context, some observations may be pertinent.

First, traditionally, the term "geopolitics" has a specific connotation. This concept has a "geographical" dimension as well as "political." But it must also be recognised that economic interests remain behind it as an important aspect. In fact, most of the time, economic interests of nations drive the global geopolitical dynamic. Since geopolitical phenomena reflect international relations, it is obvious that one of these relations would be economic. The bottom line is, it is wrong to keep the geopolitical concerns only to the arenas of geography and politics; it is necessary to recognise that "geoeconomics" and "political economy" of nations are equally crucial in the broader context of geopolitics.

Second, given that geo-economics and political economy are important in geopolitics, the world in recent years has moved more and more to what is known as "economic nationalism," which implies economic isolation of nations in order to unilaterally protect each country's own economic interests. Economic nationalism has two implications. One, it demands and requires relatively closed economies, and inward-looking economic policies and strategies. And two, when needed, it may go up at best to bilateral relations from a unilateral position, but economic nationalism will not opt for multilateral interactions. People may think that economic nationalism is more anchored in ideas of the newly elected US president, but in reality, such nationalism was the by-product of the Covid pandemic. With the global

order unstable and complex. Climate change, deforestation, desertification, salinisation, and loss of biodiversity have not only affected the lives of the present generation, but also are reducing the opportunities for future generations.

How do all of these affect Bangladesh? First of all, economic nationalism would affect its external trade, as well as the aid and foreign investment flows into the

those countries. Similarly, there may not be a regional approach to the Rohingya crisis and different environmental issues that concern more than one country. All these may impact the regional public goods scenario in South Asia.

Third, in the new geopolitical order, there will be disparities in global economic opportunities. It will be important for Bangladesh to seize them. For example, the digital revolution around the world would provide numerous openings for Bangladeshi youths and entrepreneurs. The challenge would be whether Bangladesh is prepared in terms of educational standards, skill sets, and human resource development. This is crucial as some of the other countries would be moving faster than Bangladesh. At the same time, the country will have to be aware of the global risks, which may range from economic recession to some pandemics. Given the differences in the state of development, the countries will neither be equally prepared nor equally equipped to overcome the risks. Bangladesh needs forward planning to remain ahead of the game.

Fourth, one of the major milestones that Bangladesh will have to pass in its development process is its graduation from the LDC (Least Developed Country) status in 2026. The event is prestigious. Graduating from the LDC status will boost the nation's morale and aspire the people to reach a higher goal. But at the same time, such a graduation entails some challenges. For example, with the graduation, Bangladesh may lose its preferential treatment status in international trade; it may no longer be a candidate for grants from multilateral organisations. The changed global geopolitical structure may impact the LDC graduation scenario of Bangladesh. The country must be planning ahead of time to address the issues associated with the LDC graduation.

Finally, in the changed geopolitical scenario, it is not only global institutions but also regional groupings that are becoming relevant and effective. Yes, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) exists, but it needs strengthening and must be made more effective. It can be a useful platform for regional negotiations and decision-making. However, Bangladesh must look beyond SAARC. It should explore how it can be linked to platforms such as G15, G20, and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Bangladesh should also use the platform of South-South cooperation to get the best out of the changed global geopolitical situation.



VISUAL: SIFAT AFRIN SHAMS

outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, each country was set to protect its own people and to guard its economic interests in terms of trade, financial investments, and resource flows, including grants and aid. Economic nationalism is a characteristic of the current geopolitical structure.

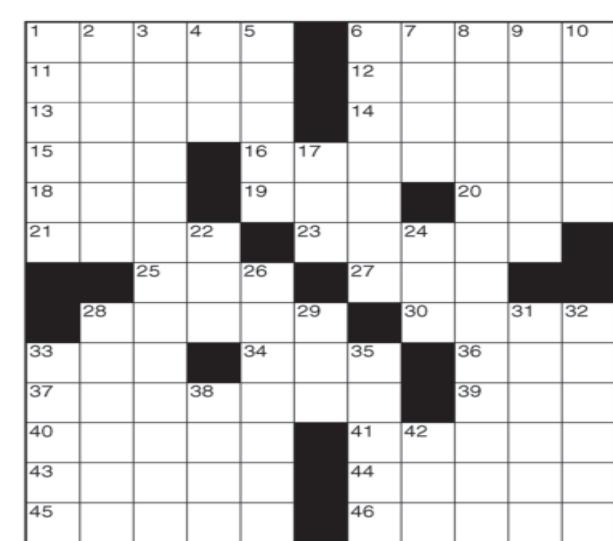
Third, the present geopolitical system is characterised by inequality, instability, and unsustainability. We live in a world that is unequal on many planes—economic, social, political, cultural, etc. There are economic disparities among nations and within nation-states. In many societies, social exclusion is the norm, rather than an exception. At the global level, the political space is dominated by developed nations, and within countries, by the rich and the powerful. Voice and autonomy of those who are poor and marginalised are still more of an idea than a reality. Inequalities are manifested not only in outcomes such as income or wealth, but also in opportunities, such as access to education and healthcare services, entry into information and technology (ICT), etc. Conflicts, violence and intolerance have made the global

country. The trading partners will be more inward-looking, as a result of which some of the benefits that Bangladesh used to enjoy may no longer be available. The country may face higher tariffs and non-tariff barriers from its trading partners. Similarly, aid and foreign investment flows into the Bangladesh economy may be reduced. All these will impact the growth prospect of the country, adversely affecting job creation and employment in the economy.

Second, in a changed geopolitical structure, multilateralism is gradually taking a back seat and bilateral approaches are getting preferences. It means that external aid, particularly grants, will be negotiated bilaterally, rather than on multilateral platforms. It also implies that political concerns like water-sharing, cross-border migration and environmental issues, which sometimes are related to more than one nation, are probably going to be addressed between two nations, rather than by multiple nations. Thus, Bangladesh may have to deal with the flood issues separately with India and Nepal, rather than jointly with

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	44 Tottering
1 Gold hue	45 Battery makeup
6 Elephant of stories	46 Fresh
11 Too trusting	DOWN
12 Skirt	1 Counterpart
13 Change	2 Neighbor of Zambia
14 Turning tool	3 Archfoes
15 Back muscle, for short	4 Seth's mother
16 Anticipated	5 Showed over
18 Have debts	6 Like some birthday cards
19 D.C. baseballer	7 Jai —
20 Hosp. parts	8 Danish sweets
21 Young miss	9 Stick
23 Movie category	10 Oboe parts
25 Twisty fish	17 Funny fellow
27 Bashful pal	22 Summer sign
28 Pig part	24 Japanese drama
30 Coyote call	26 Some minstrels
33 Serving feat	28 Uncommon
34 Scot's cap	29 La Brea stuff
36 Cry of insight	31 Acts spoiled
37 Halloween costume choice	32 Desolate
39 Family	33 Sailor's cry
40 Spring sign	35 Monument Valley sights
41 Paris divider	38 Cooped (up)
43 Fragrance	42 Hurler's stat



5-5

MONDAY'S ANSWERS

P	O	L	S	D	E	U	C	E
O	M	I	T	R	E	A	S	O
M	A	M	A	E	A	R	N	E
P	R	A	Y	T	E	L	L	
S	T	R	U	T	S	M	O	E
C	O	O	P	S	W	A	I	V
A	G	O	—	H	A	L	T	E
R	A	K	E	H	E	L	L	
R	E	F	I	L	L	A	R	E
A	T	O	L	L	S	P	I	N
T	A	X	E	S	S	C	A	T

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

SHIRONAMHIN launches 'Geetikobita Samagra' at Ekushey Book Fair

Popular band Shironamhin has launched *Geetikobita Samagra*, a compilation of all its lyrics, at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair. Published by Gatidhara Prokashoni, the book marks the band's 29 year journey, featuring songs from albums including *Abar Hashimukh*, *Bondho Janala*, and *Batighor*.

Announcing the release, the band wrote on Facebook, "For 29 years, listeners have connected emotionally with our lyrics. Now, all released and unreleased songs, including those from *Batighor*, are compiled in one book." The book is available at Pavilion 17 of Gatidhara Prokashoni.

Meanwhile, Shironamhin has released *Priyotoma*, a Valentine's Day special release, written by Ziaur Rahman. Directed by Kazi Ahmed Shafin, the music video features Sifat Amin Shuvo, Jannatul Ferdous Bismi, and Man Bahadur. The song premiered on the band's YouTube channel on February 15.



Julianne Moore's children's book allegedly banned under Trump administration

Julianne Moore has alleged that her children's book was prohibited during Donald Trump's administration. The 64-year-old actress expressed her "great shock" on social media after discovering that *Freckleface Strawberry* was reportedly banned in more than 160 schools governed by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA).

Moore shared her dismay upon learning that her debut book, *Freckleface Strawberry*, had been banned in Department of Defense-run schools under the Trump administration. In a statement posted on Instagram, she conveyed



her disappointment over the decision.

Originally published in 2007 and illustrated by LeUyen Pham, the book was the first in the *Freckleface Strawberry* series—semi-autobiographical stories about a seven-year-old girl learning to embrace her appearance, according to the series' official website.

In her message, Moore highlighted that she wrote the book for her own children and others, aiming to remind them that while everyone faces challenges, a shared sense of humanity and community connects us all.

KENDRICK LAMAR makes history in Billboard 200's Top 10.

Kendrick Lamar has made history as the first rapper to have three solo albums simultaneously rank in the Top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart, according to a recent announcement by several US-based entertainment magazine.

Following his Super Bowl Halftime performance on February 9, Lamar's albums *GNX*, *DAMN*, and *good kid, mAd city* climbed to the No 1, 9, and 10 spots, respectively.

Lamar's Super Bowl performance also set a new viewership record, surpassing Michael Jackson's. His show attracted 133.5 million viewers, narrowly overtaking Jackson's 1993 performance, which held the previous record with 133.4 million viewers.

"This marks the first time in the nearly 69 year history of the chart that a rap artiste has had at least three albums simultaneously in the Top 10," Billboard stated on its website.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Moar-e Jabo Comedy Night'

Stand Up Dhaka is all set to bring the *Moar-e Jabo Comedy Night* to the stage tomorrow. The event will feature performances by emerging comedians, offering fresh humour and a night of light-hearted entertainment. Audiences are invited to enjoy an evening of laughter and relaxation, making it the perfect respite from everyday stress.

Date: Wednesday | February 19

Time: 8pm-10pm

Venue: Gulshan Moar Link



Zohad Reza Chowdhury reveals wife is cancer-free



Zohad Reza Chowdhury, frontman of the renowned band Nemesis, revealed yesterday that his wife Mahreen is free of cancer. After receiving a confirmed diagnosis from her doctor, he chose to share the encouraging news via

his official Facebook page noting that more treatment is still in store for Mahreen.

He wrote, "I didn't want to share the bad news but instead wanted to share the good news... Mahreen is now free of cancer."

"Thanks to each and every one of you who have supported us throughout this tough journey!"

For his childhood sweetheart turned wife, Zohad dedicated, "More treatment to come but we're hopeful that the tough bit is over! Mahru, you are an inspiration to us all. You're a champ! The bravest person I know!"

Matt Damon confirmed as Odysseus in Christopher Nolan's 'The Odyssey'



Matt Damon will portray Odysseus in Christopher Nolan's upcoming film *The Odyssey*, set for release on July 17, 2026. A photo of Damon in character was unveiled on the film's official social media account. *The Odyssey*, based on Homer's ancient epic, chronicles Odysseus' perilous journey home following the Trojan War.

The star-studded cast includes Tom Holland, Zendaya, Anne Hathaway, Lupita Nyong'o, and Robert Pattinson, among others. Nolan will direct and produce, with Emma Thomas co-producing. Part of the film will be shot in Sicily, with production starting in spring 2025. This will be Damon's third collaboration with Nolan, following *Oppenheimer* and *Interstellar*.

COUNTRYWIDE

Road to bridge collapses a year of construction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Parts of the approach road and guide wall of a bridge constructed last year in Char Montaz union under Rangabali upazila have collapsed at many places, causing troubles to its users.

Local residents alleged that substandard materials were used in the road construction work. They also urged the authorities concerned to repair the damaged portions immediately.

The 66-metre-long bridge, along with a 350-metre approach road, was built over a canal at Uttar Char Montaz village in 2024.

However, within couple of months of its completion, the guide wall and approach road started developing numerous cracks at several spots due to heavy rainfall last year.

Large cracks have also developed at the base of the guide wall, increasing fears that further collapse could put the bridge itself at serious risk.

People, who use the bridge every day, now have to cross the structure with caution.

Moreover, the deteriorating condition of the approach road and guide wall has made vehicular movements much riskier.

"Cracks can be seen all over the guide wall. As a result, the supporting pillars of the bridge

have become unstable. If the entire guide wall collapses, it could severely weaken the bridge," said local resident Bahadur Islam.

Mohammad Suleman, a battery-run auto rickshaw driver, said, "The newly constructed approach road hasn't even lasted a year before parts of it started collapsing. Now, we have to drive with caution amid risk of accidents."

If repair works are not done immediately, the situation will worsen during the next rainy season, he added.

According to Rangabali Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the bridge and its approach road were built under the 'Union Upazila Connection Road Project' at a cost of Tk 6.5 crore.

But surprisingly, within a few months of completion, parts of the structure began to develop cracks before finally collapsing at many places.

Despite repeated attempts, this correspondent could not reach contractor Jamal Hossain for comments as his mobile phone remained switched off.

Contacted, Rangabali Upazila LGED Engineer Habibur Rahman said they have already discussed the matter with the contractor.

The final payment will be made only after full completion of the work, the engineer added.



The approach road of this bridge at Uttar Char Montaz village in Patuakhali's Rangabali upazila starts collapsing only a year of its construction.

PHOTO: STAR

10th grader takes down Pakistan flag

FROM PAGE 12
on December 21, a meeting of the Primary Teachers' Association of Sarail Police Station proposed that Bangla be made a state language.

In 1948, Mohammad Mohiuddin, Mohammad Faizur Rahman and others played a big hand in propelling the movement throughout the district. However, at that time, the students and locals were not able to fully participate.

In 1952, however, nothing was able to stop everyone's participation, including the incensed student community, especially after Khwaja Nazimuddin's January 27 announcement of Urdu being the state language of Pakistan.

Ahead of the central day of the movement on

February 21, widespread campaigns were launched across the district. Key figures such as politician Niyaz Mohammad, schoolteacher Mohammad Musa, Abdur Rahman Khan, Rafiqul Islam, AKM Rafiqul Hossain, Tajul Islam, and others were instrumental in pushing the movement forward.

As noted in "Bhasha Andolon er Ancholik Itihas" by Dr Abu Mohammad Delowar Hossain, Brahmanbaria observed a complete hartal on February 21, as per the pre-planned programme.

Around 1:00pm, a grand procession of approximately 4,000 students from various educational institutions paraded through the district town and gathered at Loknath Maidan in the city.

During this time, a 10th-



Brahmanbaria Central Shaheed Minar

grader Samiul Ahmed climbed the Court Building and took down the Pakistani flag.

Around 2:00am, a train heading toward Chattogram made a stop in Brahmanbaria, where passengers informed the locals about the students who had been killed in

police firing in Dhaka. The following morning, the streets of Brahmanbaria were filled with protesters from all walks of life.

Student leader Matir Rahman was appointed as the convener of the student-formed Bhasha Andolon Parishad. Other key members included Mohiuddin

and Samiul Ahmed, Khan Fatik, Lutfur Rahman, Abdur Rahman, Shafiuuddin Ahmed, Sagir Ahmed Khan, Zia Uddin, and others.

On February 24, students from Daudpur High School in Bijoynagar organised a procession and a student rally.

The next day, a day-long strike was enforced in Akhaura.

On February 26, members of the Brahmanbaria Bar Association called on the High Court judges to conduct a fair investigation into the student killings by police.

Meanwhile, poet Al Mahmud, Mohammad Musa, Tajul Islam, and several other students published a leaflet from the Jubilee Press. Upon its release, an arrest warrant was issued for Al Mahmud, and the press was subsequently sealed off.

Teesta plan with China gains pace

FROM PAGE 12
of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and was scheduled to be signed in 2011. However, opposition from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who argued it would negatively impact water availability in her state, led to the deal's collapse.

Frustrated by the continued impasse, Bangladesh signed a non-binding MoU with POWERCHINA in 2016 to explore an alternative approach to managing the river's challenges.

At the time, POWERCHINA proposed a comprehensive river management plan, covering bank erosion control, flood management, disaster reduction, land reclamation, transportation, and ecosystem restoration. The initiative also aims to mitigate social and environmental impacts while fostering economic

development in affected communities.

Key components of the project include dredging 140 million cubic metres of sediment, reclaiming 171 square kilometres of land, repairing 110 kilometres of embankment, constructing 124 kilometres of new embankments, and developing 224 kilometres of roads. The plan also envisions transportation and jetties facilities at 82 locations.

Currently, POWERCHINA is reviewing its original proposal before launching the feasibility study, according to an official at the Ministry of Water Resources. **THE RIVER'S DECLINE** The Teesta originates in Sikkim, India, and enters Bangladesh through Dimla Upazila in Nilphamari. The river sustains irrigation for 55,000 hectares of rice fields across six districts: Nilphamari, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogura, Joypurhat and Gaibandha. **LOCALS CONTINUE TO SUFFER** Alal Uddin, a 70-year-old farmer from Gaddimari village, five kilometers

downstream of the Teesta Barrage, painted a bleak picture.

"There is some water upstream, but the downstream is completely dry," he told The Daily Star.

Nur Islam, a boatman from Aditmari Upazila, shared a similar plight.

"I have no livelihood in the dry season because I cannot operate my boat due to the lack of water," he said.

The situation has deteriorated over the years. With India unilaterally diverting Teesta's waters and constructing multiple upstream projects in Sikkim and West Bengal, Bangladesh has faced worsening seasonal shortages. The riverbed is now filled with sand, making the region more vulnerable to flash floods and severe erosion during the monsoon.

Region and held a public hearing in Kaunia, Rangpur. "The interim government is prioritising the Teesta Mega Plan to address the struggles of riverine communities," she said. "We have signed an agreement with China, and the project will be implemented with input from the people who live here."

25 plantation

FROM PAGE 12
physically assaulted before the release. The workers received treatment at the Eidgah Upazila Health Complex, he added.

Abductions for ransom have been reported in the area before. On January 14, three workers were abducted, while on February 1, seven lumberjacks were kidnapped from Lala upazila. In both cases, the victims were released after paying ransom.

Last week, Adviser Rizwana visited the Teesta



ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

- Pakistan and New Zealand faced off 118 times in ODIs, with Pakistan holding a slight edge with 61 wins to New Zealand's 53. Three matches have ended without a result, while one ended in a tie.
- Pakistan are yet to secure a win against New Zealand in the ICC Champions Trophy. They lost all three of their matches against the Black Caps.
- New Zealand, however, come into the contest on the back of consecutive wins against Pakistan in Lahore and Karachi in the recently concluded Tri-Nation Series (also involving South Africa) which the Black Caps won.

- Pakistan, on the other hand, got the better of New Zealand in their last 50-over meeting in an ICC event. They beat the Black Caps by 21 runs in the 2023 ODI World Cup in India.
- New Zealand hold a narrow advantage at the National Stadium in Karachi, the venue for the match, as they boast five wins compared to Pakistan's four in nine meetings at the ground.
- The National Stadium, known for flat pitches and high-scoring contests, has seen an average first innings total of 303 in the last five matches.
- Fakhar Zaman -- the player of the final in the 2017 edition of

the tournament -- Babar Azam, and Faheem Ashraf are the three members from Pakistan's triumphant campaign in 2017 to have been included in the squad this time.

Fakhar has played the most number of ODIs against the Black Caps, featuring in 19 out of his 85 matches. He averages 65.81 and has a best score of 180 not out against the Black Caps.

Kane Williamson has scored the most runs in New Zealand-Pakistan contests, amassing 1290 runs in 24 matches at an average of 56.08. The right-handed batter boasts eight half-centuries and three centuries against Pakistan.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND NAGORIK TV
Champions Trophy
Pakistan vs New Zealand
Live from 3:00 pm
SONY SPORTS 2
Champions League

Dortmund vs Sporting Lisbon
Live from 11:45 pm
Real Madrid vs Man City
Live from 2:00 am
(Thursday)
SONY SPORTS 1

PSV vs Juventus
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)
SONY SPORTS 5
PSG vs Brest
Live from 2:00 am (Thursday)

Pakistan pursue perfect start on 'HISTORIC OCCASION'

AGENCIES

Pakistan begin their Champions Trophy 2025 title defence with a firm test against former champions New Zealand in Karachi today.

The hosts have a stacked squad with talent in all departments with Mohammed Rizwan leading the charge. Rizwan's side was tipped by former Pakistan skipper Sarfraz Khan, who won the competition in 2017, to defend their title in 2025.

"Pakistan have a really good chance of defending that title and I think they have a strong team. Some of the boys from 2017 are still there and we're talking about some of the best -- especially Babar Azam," Sarfraz told the ICC.

On the other hand, New Zealand have been plagued with injury issues especially in the bowling department, with Lockie Ferguson (foot injury) joining Ben Sears in being ruled out of the tournament.

The two sides recently met in the

Tri-Nation Series in Pakistan in the lead-up to the Champions Trophy. The Mitchell Santner led New Zealand showed great form, winning all their fixtures including the final to take the trophy.

"Different guys stepping up at different times is good. Though it means nothing till we play that first game at the Champions Trophy," Santner said after New Zealand's Tri-Nation series win.

"We've played Pakistan a lot, home and away, so we've got a good read on each other. We'll take a little bit of confidence into that first game," he said.

While this gives a much-needed boost to New Zealand, it leaves Pakistan with some work to do ahead of the Champions Trophy opener.

The Champions Trophy is the first major cricket event hosted by Pakistan in nearly three decades and is regarded as second only to the World Cup in the one-day game.

"A global event has come to

Pakistan after 29 years so I think the whole nation should enjoy this historic occasion," Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan said on the eve of the tournament, which runs until March 9.

"Having done well in the ODIs recently adds to the excitement and build-up towards the mega-event, and we eagerly look forward to playing in front of our home crowd and excelling in the eight-team tournament."

Former Pakistan captain Inzamam Ul Haq said, "Right now everyone [in Pakistan] is talking about the Champions Trophy, in schools, houses, markets, offices, everywhere."

Another former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja said holding the Champions Trophy has enormous significance that goes beyond sport.

"This Champions Trophy is about youth engagement, cultural promotion and building a global image," he said.

City's chance to pull off a miracle in Madrid

AGENCIES

When the topic of miracles in the Champions League comes to the fore, the first team that would pop up in any fan's mind would be Real Madrid.

This time, however, it is Manchester City who are in need of pulling off a miracle at the Santiago Bernabeu -- the home of the tournament's most successful team -- as Pep Guardiola's men face Real in the second leg today.

City blew a late 2-1 lead in the first leg of the playoff tie last week at home to lose 3-2 to the holders.

Real go into the second leg with a goal in hand, a clear advantage for the record 15-time champions who have made a habit of turning the tie around in the dying minutes -- especially in the Champions League.

City boss Guardiola said his side have just a one percent chance of progress to the last 16 against Real but the English champions' new recruits could offer a lifeline.

City's collapse in the first leg was part of a wider trend this season as Guardiola's ageing squad have struggled to last the pace, particularly when the intensity is turned up on Champions League nights.

As a consequence, City broke with their usual transfer policy to spend big in January, bringing in Omar Marmoush, Abdur Rizwan, Vitor Reis and Nico Gonzalez for fees totalling £170 million (\$214 million).

However, none of them started the first leg against Madrid, with only Marmoush making an appearance for few minutes.

Guardiola may now regret that decision after Marmoush, Gonzalez and Khusanov all played pivotal roles in arguably City's best performance of the season on Saturday when Newcastle were blown away 4-0 at Etihad.

Marmoush hogged the headlines thanks to his first-half hat-trick, finally offering City another potent scoring threat to compliment Erling Haaland.

Khusanov recovered from his nightmare Premier League debut against Chelsea last month when he gave away a goal inside three minutes. This time the Uzbek showed why City paid Lens a reported 40 million euros.

The 20-year-old's pace helped sniff out the danger posed by Newcastle's Alexander Isak and could be what the visitors need to combat the threat of Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior, and Rodrygo.

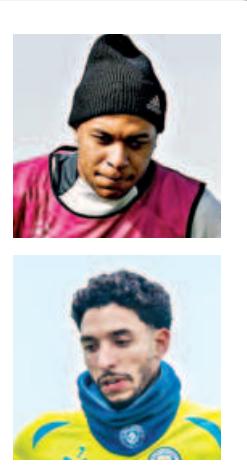
Guardiola, though, reserved special praise for the impact of Gonzalez in bringing the City midfield the stability they have lacked since Ballon d'Or winner Rodri suffered a serious knee injury in September. Gonzalez seems certain to start on his return to Spain with his manager already hailing the 23-year-old as a "mini Rodri."

Yet, even at their best during the golden years of Guardiola's reign in Manchester, City have often found the might of Madrid too tough a nut to crack in the Champions League.

This is the fourth consecutive season the sides have met, with a 5-1 aggregate rout en route to winning the competition for the first time in 2023 City's only success.

But Guardiola is still not ready to give up.

"If you ask anybody before that game, we have one percent chance [against Real] but as much as we have a chance we will try. That's for sure," Guardiola said.



Gauging conditions key to Tigers' CT opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Unlocking the puzzle of how the wicket at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium will play and what would be the right team combination are two factors that could decide the fate of Bangladesh's ICC Champions Trophy opener against India on Thursday before it even begins.

After the lacklustre performance against Pakistan Shaheens in the lone warm-up match on Monday at the ICC Academy in Dubai, in which Bangladesh got bundled out for just 202 and the opposition chased down the target with seven wickets to spare and 91 balls in hand, the management could be tempted to beef up their batting against India.

However, if Bangladesh sacrifice bowling options to do so, they could find themselves in the deep end against a heavyweight Indian batting lineup.

To find the right balance, the management has to correctly predict how the wicket will behave.

The Dubai venue was one of the three stadiums used in the ILT20. The pitches have reportedly been given two weeks' recovery time after the tournament, but there remains confusion regarding whether it will be on the slower side or play as an absolute batting paradise.

The recent ILT20 did not see dew factor come into play but that doesn't guarantee that it would not be present during the tournament as Matthew Sandry, the head curator at the Dubai International Stadium, told the ESPNcricinfo that "dew is a funny thing."

During the ILT20, spinners had

a better economy (7.46) than faster bowlers (8.08) but pacers bagged more wickets and had a better average in Dubai.

Since 2018, the average first innings total at the venue in ODIs where the team batting first won

Chakravarthy and both are regarded as X factors going into the tournament.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh players

named their own wrist-spinner

Rishad Hossain as the potential

'game changer' in the Champions



has been 252, which should work in Bangladesh's favour as the side historically struggle to consistently breach the 300-run mark in ODIs.

There is no cross ventilation at the stadium, which means that pacers do not get the ball to swing for a long period of time. Thus, length and seam deviation would be key to succeed for the Tiger's absolute batting paradise.

It may be likely that India will go in with three spinners and three pacers in the eleven and Bangladesh will also be thinking of what spin options will be conducive.

India have five spinners in the lineup with two wrist spinners in Kuldeep Yadav and Varun

Trophy.

"A wrist-spinner is always a game-changer so we're looking for Rishad," opener Soumya Sarkar told ICC in an interview.

Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto also spoke about Rishad's importance in the tournament, with the latter saying the wrist spinner's role would be "more important" in the Pakistan leg.

But before thinking about the matches against Pakistan and New Zealand in Rawalpindi, Shanto and Co need to figure out how they are going to topple arguably the strongest team in Group A in their tournament opener.



Captains of nine teams pose with the Women's Premier Division Cricket League trophy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The tournament, which begins today with matches across three venues, will be played without the participation of former champions Rupali Bank who opted out due to the change in management in the tournament's organising committee. National team stars Nahida Akter and Marufa Akter will not be taking part in the tournament due to injuries.

PHOTO: STAR

SHORT CORNER

Liverpool can handle title tension: Slot

Arne Slot insists Liverpool can handle the mounting pressure of the Premier League title race after the leaders were hampered by nerves in their tense win against Wolves. Slot's side head to Aston Villa on Wednesday knowing a victory would move them 10 points clear of second-placed Arsenal in their bid to clinch a record-equaling 20th English title.

Lewandowski lifts Barca past Rayo and into Liga lead

Robert Lewandowski scored from the penalty spot as Barcelona scraped out a 1-0 home win over Rayo Vallecano on Monday to climb top of the Spanish Liga. Lewandowski scored his 20th goal of the season with a 28th-minute penalty that went in off the post.

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.

Unheralded Najimul breaks 31-year-old record

SPORTS REPORTER

Unheralded Najimul Hossain Rony broke a 31-year-old record in 400m hurdles of the ongoing National Athletics Championships after clocking 50.84 seconds event at the National Stadium yesterday.

The previous record belonged to Bangladesh Navy's Abdur Rahim Nayeem, who had set it in December, 1993 with a timing of 51.87 seconds.

The second day of the championships saw two more records in women's 400m hurdles and women's 4X100 metre relay, with Bangladesh Army leading the medals table with 15 gold, 14 silver and 14 bronze medals while Navy won 13 gold, 12 silver and eight bronze medals.

Najimul, who started his athletics career after getting into Bangladesh Army in 2017, was initially a 400m sprinter where he won a silver medal in 2023. But he switched to 400m hurdles and won gold in the last edition in 2024.

Najimul, who started his athletics career after getting into Bangladesh Army in 2017, was initially a 400m sprinter where he won a silver medal in 2023. But he switched to 400m hurdles and won gold in the last edition in 2024.

"I didn't know much about athletics before getting into Bangladesh Army.



Record-breaker Najimul Hossain on the right.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

After completing my basic training in December 2017, I won a gold medal in a hurdles event of inter-unit athletics championships," Najimul said.

"I was confident about eclipsing my previous record and winning gold because I clocked a good time in training and the

coach also encouraged me to make it," Najimul said, hoping to do even better at international level, especially in the South Asian Games.

"Whatever timing I produced today is enough to win a medal in the South Asian Games but I believe I can improve further

and deliver a gold medal to the nation if I am given better facilities and training," said Najimul, adding that he would buy a pair of running shoes with the cash award of Tk 20,000 for setting the record.

Meanwhile, Masud Rana of Army and Raibul Islam of Bangladesh Air Force became second and third by clocking 53.06 seconds and 53.26 seconds respectively in the same event.

In women's 400m hurdles, Borsa Khatoon of Bangladesh Army clocked 1:04.61 seconds to set a new national record, eclipsing the previous record of 1:04.70 seconds set by Libia Khatoon in 2022.

"I was encouraged to see my timings in training. I am really happy with the record," said the 24-year-old, who had previously won a gold medal in the same event. Bangladesh Navy's women's relay team comprising Shirin Akter, Sonia Akter, Sumaya Dewan and Kabita Roy produced a new record in 4X100 relay with a timing of 46.43 seconds, breaking the previous record of 48.10 seconds produced by Bangladesh Army.

THE BEST QUALITY
EVERY TIME GUARANTEED
BSRM



SHAH CEMENT
Best Brand Award
Winner Every Year

Teesta plan with China gains pace

PINAKI ROY AND S DILIP ROY

After years of delays and uncertainty, the long-awaited Teesta River project has finally resumed its initial work, bringing renewed hope to communities along its banks. The project, if implemented, will curb bank erosion, reclaim land, and store floodwater for use during the dry season.

On January 29, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and Chinese state-owned POWERCHINA signed an extension to a memorandum of understanding, pushing the Teesta Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project forward.

Under the deal, POWERCHINA will prepare a concept paper by December and conduct a feasibility study in 2026. After that, the Teesta project will be finalised, according to Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan.

"We have agreed to give China two years to complete the two tasks under the project," Rizwana told The Daily Star.

While the project's financing remains uncertain, Rizwana said the final cost will depend on the feasibility study. "We certainly expect support from our development partners, and we hope China will step forward," she said.

Early estimates suggest the project could cost \$1 billion. A FRUSTRATING HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

Bangladesh has struggled for years to secure an agreement with neighboring India on the sharing of Teesta River waters. An initial deal was finalised during the tenure

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

LAMA ABDUCTION
25 plantation workers freed after two days

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Bandarban

Twenty-five workers, who were abducted from rubber plantations in Bandarban's Lama upazila on Sunday, were released yesterday after paying a ransom of around Tk 10 lakh, said a plantation owner.

They were freed in the Murung Jhiri Para area, near the Fasiakhali border, said Shahadat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Lama Police Station.

The workers are residents of Ramu and Eidgah upazilas in Cox's Bazar and Naikhongchhari upazila in Bandarban.

On Sunday, 26 workers were kidnapped by unknown people from various plantations in the Goyalmara area of Fasiakhali around 10:00am. According to locals, one of them managed to escape on Monday.

Md Forkan Uddin, owner of the rubber plantation from where 12 workers were abducted, said that the 25 workers were freed after paying ransom.

Quoting the workers, he said that they were

SEE PAGE 10 COL 7



Army personnel standing guard in front of the main gate of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) yesterday afternoon following clashes between the activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Anti-Discrimination Student Movement. At least 40 people were injured in the clashes over the banning of student politics on the campus.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

DIALOGUE IN SAUDI ARABIA Russia, US hold talks to end Ukraine war

REUTERS, Riyadh

US President Donald Trump's administration yesterday said it agreed to hold more talks with Russia on ending the war in Ukraine after an initial meeting that excluded Kyiv, a departure from Washington's previous approach that rallied US allies to isolate Russian President Vladimir Putin.

As the 4 1/2-hour meeting in the Saudi capital was under way, Russia hardened its demands, notably insisting it would not tolerate the Nato alliance granting membership for Kyiv.

It was the first time US and Russian officials have sat down together to discuss ways to halt the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two. Ukraine has said it will not accept any deal imposed without its consent, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz reiterated "there must be no decision over the heads of Ukraine."

Even before the talks took place, some European politicians accused Trump's administration of handing free concessions to Moscow last week by ruling out Nato membership for Ukraine and saying it was an illusion for Kyiv to believe it could win back the 20% of its territory now under Russian control.

US National Security Adviser Mike Waltz told reporters in Riyadh that the war must come to a permanent end, and this would involve negotiations over territory.

"Just a practical reality is that there is going to be some discussion of territory and there's going to be discussion of security guarantees," he said.

High-level teams would begin talks on ending the conflict and would separately work to restore the countries' respective diplomatic missions in Washington and Moscow to ease the talks going forward, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.

Rubio said he came away from the initial talks convinced that Russia was "willing to begin to engage in a serious process" but that reaching peace would involve concessions from all sides.

Addressing Ukrainian and European concerns, Rubio said no one was being sidelined, the European Union needed to be involved at some point, and any solution must be acceptable to all parties.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said he had postponed a visit to Saudi Arabia planned for Wednesday until next month. Sources familiar with the matter said the decision was made to avoid giving

"legitimacy" to the US-Russia talks.

Kyiv says talks on how to end the war should not be held behind Ukraine's back.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharchova told reporters in Moscow it was "not enough" for Nato not to admit Ukraine as a member. She said the alliance must go further by disavowing a promise it made at a summit in Bucharest in 2008 that Kyiv would join at a future, unspecified date.

- US says both countries will name high-level teams
- Ukraine not at the talks, rejects deals without its consent
- Nato must cancel 2008 promise of Ukraine membership: Russia

JULY UPRISING Disputes over credit now out on social media

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The July uprising activists have lately been embroiled in a virtual battle over credit for their achievements, amid disputes about the member secretary position in a political party they are about to launch.

Former Islami Chhatra Shibir leaders have taken to Facebook to claim they were "major stakeholders" in the uprising that led to the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina regime on August 5 last year.

However, leaders of the now-dissolved Ganatantrik Chhatra Shakti maintain that Shibir leaders and activists participated like everyone else.

Many former and current Shibir leaders described on Facebook how they provided shelter to coordinators of the anti-discrimination student movement; coordinated domestic and international communications; planned the protests; and mobilised activists on the ground.

In response, Abdul Kader, a former coordinator of Students Against Discrimination, wrote that the coordinators were the ones who formulated the nine-point demand, and Shibir merely disseminated it.

Asif Mahmud, a key organiser of the July uprising and adviser to the ministries of youth and sports, and local government, also weighed in.

"... Do not distort the history of the July uprising. We will not tolerate any lies about the July uprising, which was achieved through the blood of this generation. Even if I remain silent on everything else, I cannot remain silent on this. Stop the dirty game of hijacking history," he wrote.

Amid tussles on social media over the issue, Shibir President Jahidul Islam in a statement said, "It is essential to know the true history. Those trying to disrupt national unity by taking credit and creating opportunities for third parties will not be forgiven by future generations."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TEESTA PROJECT
Beijing ready to support Dhaka
Says Chinese envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh, Yao Wen, has said that his country is ready to assist Bangladesh in implementing the Teesta river water management project if Dhaka wants.

The envoy made the remarks in response to a journalist's query at a press briefing on Bangladesh-China relations held at the Chinese Embassy yesterday.

He said that the Teesta project should be implemented as soon as possible for the benefit and welfare of thousands of people living along the river.

However, as a sovereign nation, it is up to Bangladesh to make decisions on the implementation of the project, he added.

Wen said Bangladesh sought the Chinese

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7



AMAR EKUSHEY-18

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.

10th grader takes down Pakistan flag

AHMAD ISTIAK

Since the British rule, Brahmanbaria had been regarded as the cultural hub of East Bengal. So, it was no surprise that when the news of the language movement reached the district, Brahmanbaria became heavily involved and played a pivotal role.

According to Ahmed Rafique's "Bhasha Andolon Teknaf theke Tentulia", the movement in Brahmanbaria actually began in 1947, when,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



Hundreds of villagers with "polos", a traditional fishing instrument, take part in a centuries-old fishing festival known as the "Polo Bawa" in Sylhet's Jaintapur upazila yesterday. The festival was earlier held in the Bangla month of Bhadra. However, due to the banning of fishing in that month, it is now held in Falgun.

Scientists make 'super diamond' 40pc harder than real thing

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Chinese scientists have created an artificial "super diamond" much greater in hardness than real ones, an advance that could lead to breakthroughs across several key industries that rely on the material.

Natural diamonds mostly have a cubic lattice – or arrangement of their carbon atoms – but a hexagonal crystal structure is known to provide a much stronger material.

However, researchers say, the applications of such a hexagonal diamond (HD), known as lonsdaleite, have been "largely unexplored" due to the low purity and minuscule size of most samples obtained.

Previously, the hardest diamonds known have been found only in asteroid and meteoroid impact craters. The synthesis of this material in labs has also remained unverified beyond a few studies.

Now, a new study, published in the journal Nature Materials, reports the synthesis of "well-crystallised, nearly pure HD" by heating highly compressed graphite.



CELEBRATING 34 Years of JOURNALISM WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

PART 2 OF THE DAILY STAR'S 34TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL COMES OUT ON FEBRUARY 20

As we continue our five-part, 200-page anniversary supplement series, we proudly present the second instalment:

"FUTURE FORGED: BANGLADESH'S YOUTH AT THE HELM."

This 40-page edition delves into the lasting impact of the July Revolution, the ambitions and struggles of Bangladeshi youth, and the urgent challenges of brain drain – while spotlighting the vast opportunities within the country's growing digital economy.

DON'T MISS OUT – GRAB YOUR FREE COPY FROM YOUR HAWKER TOMORROW!