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Work together, or our sovereignty will be at stake

Cautions army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday said that Bangladesh's sovereignty will be in jeopardy if people do not set aside their differences and stop slinging mud at each other.

"I am warning you. If you cannot forget your differences and work together, if you engage in mudslinging and fighting, the independence and sovereignty of this country and nation will be at stake," he said.

"I am telling you today, otherwise you would say that I did not warn you. This country belongs to all of us. We all want to live in peace and harmony. We do not want conflicts or fights. We are working towards that goal," he added.

The army chief was speaking at an event at Raowa Club in the capital, marking the National Martyred Army Day. The day was observed commemorating the sacrifice of army officers who were brutally killed during the carnage at the Pilkhana headquarters of the then Bangladesh Rifles in 2009.

Speaking on the occasion, General Waker stressed the need for remaining united despite differences in opinion or ideology.

"At the end of the day, we need to stay united keeping in mind the welfare of our country and nation. Only then, the country would progress and go in the right direction. Otherwise, we will plunge into more problems. We don't want to head in that direction," he said.

"I have no other desire. My only desire is that I want to see this country

SEE PAGE 2 COL.1



Don't attack army; inspire and offer constructive advice

Free, fair, inclusive election by December

Law and order deteriorating due to divisions

Many police officers not performing due to legal proceedings

Pilkhana atrocity committed by then-BDR personnel

Don't undermine law enforcement, intelligence agencies

Don't undermine judicial process regarding Pilkhana trial

Want to see Bangladesh in a beautiful place, and go back to cantonment

SEE PAGE 2 COL.5



A mother touches the grave of a Bangladesh Army officer who was killed during the BDR mutiny in Pilkhana on February 25-26, 2009. Yesterday was the 16th anniversary of the carnage. The photo was taken at the Banani Military Graveyard.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 2 COL.5

BDR MUTINY Bangladesh committed to ensuring justice: Yunus

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus paid glowing tributes to martyred army officers in the Pilkhana carnage on National Martyred Army Day.

"On this day, I remember the glorious sons of the soil, the martyred army officers with a heavy heart and pay homage to them. I also pray for the eternal peace of

Govt procurement under monopolistic control

Finds TIB after analysing e-GP data from 2012 to 2015

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 17 percent of all government tenders had only one bidder in the last 12 years, found a study by Transparency International Bangladesh.

This means the government contracts were awarded without any competitive price bidding among several contenders, which is in violation of the government procurement policy.

TIB, which analysed the data of 52,837 contractors of the government's e-GP portal from 2012 to 2025, found that a further 27 percent of all bids had between two and three bidders.

Over 44 percent of all tenders were

floated by the government under the "limited tendering method".

The limited tendering method can be deployed when the goods, services or works are only available from a limited number of suppliers.

Since the launch of the e-GP system in 2011, a total of Tk 596,921 crore has been spent through the platform. The top 10 contracting ministries account for about 92 percent of the total spending.

Analysing the top 10 contracting ministries, the report found that the top 5 percent of contractors were awarded 61.31 percent of the total money spent.

SEE PAGE 2 COL.1

82 senior cops made OSD for 'role in polls'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a rare administrative decision, the government has made 82 senior police officials Officers on Special Duty (OSD), including an additional inspector general of police, who served during the 2018 national election.

The officials include additional IG Abdul Alim Mahmud, 13 deputy inspectors general (DIGs), 49 additional DIGs, and 19 Superintendents of Police (SPs), according to three separate notifications issued by the Public Security Division of the Home Ministry's Police-1 branch yesterday.

However, the official orders did not specify the reason behind the decision.

Sources at the home ministry and Police Headquarters confirmed that all 82 officers had been involved in election

SEE PAGE 2 COL.5



Today, we are proud to present to you the fourth instalment of our five-part special supplement series, titled

"TOWARDS EQUALITY"

featuring a collection of articles on how to achieve inclusive development and growth in Bangladesh.

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MINORITIES IN BANGLADESH
India's SC dismisses plea seeking their protection

Says cannot remark on another country's internal affairs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court on Monday rejected a public interest litigation that sought protection of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh, saying that the court cannot comment on the internal affairs of another country.

"It pertains to foreign affairs...how can this court comment upon the affairs of another country? It would be so odd if this court interferes with another country, that too a neighbour!" said the bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar.

After noting the comments by the two judges, the petitioner withdrew the plea and the matter was dismissed.

"It's not for us at all. Do you think the government is not aware of this? How can this court comment upon this?" the chief justice remarked.

The petition was filed by a businessman and philanthropist Rajesh Dhanda, chairman of Bhagwan Jagannath Rath Yatra Mahotsav Committee, Ludhiana, and vice-chairman of ISKCON Mandir Steering Board.

Besides the protection of Hindus from violence in Bangladesh, the plea also sought an extension of the deadline for consideration of applications for citizenship to Hindus who have entered India.

The plea said there are instances in modern history wherein many sovereign countries have utilised international forums like the International Court of Justice and United Nations in raising issues related to violation of human rights in other sovereign countries.



As prices of essentials continue to rise, state-run mobile shops selling subsidised goods see large crowds. Sometimes the trucks run out of goods before everyone in the queue gets what they need. The photo of the shop of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh was taken in the capital's Begunbari yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ensure the expected impartiality

Tarique urges interim govt

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday expressed hope that the interim government would uphold the impartiality as expected by the people.

While addressing the biannual council of Cumilla city unit BNP virtually, he said various questions have now emerged among the people over different matters of the interim government.

Instability is being seen in several parts of the country, Tarique said.

Since the formation of this government, he said that the BNP has been supporting it because the party wants the government

to be successful.

Tarique said the people of Bangladesh believe that this interim government will do whatever necessary to protect their political and other rights through a fair and impartial election, which were snatched away by the fugitive dictator many years ago in the dark of the night.

But for the past few days, it has unfortunately been observed that different persons within the government

are making various remarks about restoring the people's voting rights, he said. "As a result, different kinds of unrest are being created in different parts of the country. We don't want any instability in

Bangladesh," he said.

Tarique reiterated his party's support for this interim government for the sake of a smooth journey of democracy in the country. "We want to cooperate with this government because we believe the more smoothly and beautifully this government can hold a neutral election, the smoother the democratic journey will be for this country and its people in the coming days."

Noting that the BNP firmly believes in democracy, he said the differences -- whether within the party or with other parties -- should be resolved through negotiations.

Work together, or our sovereignty will be at stake

FROM PAGE 1

in a beautiful place and then return to my work. I have had enough in the last seven-eight months."

Speaking about "hostility towards the army," he said, "Do not attack our army. I see a common trend of hostility of some people towards the army and the army chief. I did not find any reason for this. We are the only force that has been working for you. Of course, the air force and navy are also here -- we all are. Do not attack us."

The four-star general sought constructive advice and said, "Inspire us, give us advice. We will certainly embrace good advice."

The army chief touched upon various issues, including the current law and order, national election, and the BDR carnage trial, in his speech.

Speaking about the upcoming national polls, he said the country is heading for a free, fair, and inclusive election, and the government will certainly help with the reforms before holding the polls.

"Every time I spoke with Dr Yunus, I completely agreed with him that there should be a free, fair, and inclusive election and that the election should be held within December or close to that, which I initially mentioned about an election within 18 months. I believe the government is heading in that direction."

He further said Chief Adviser Prof Yunus is trying his best, working to keep this country united. "We need to help him succeed. We will all make our efforts and work together towards that goal."

OPPORTUNITY FOR CRIMINALS

The army chief said there are several reasons behind the deteriorating law and order.

"The first reason is that we are busy fighting ourselves. We are busy slandering each other. This is a perfect opportunity for criminals. As we are in a state of anarchy, they know it well if they commit the crimes this time, they will be able to get away... We can definitely deal with this situation only if we stay united," he said.

General Waker noted that many police officers are not performing their duties because cases have been filed against them while some are in jail. The forces -- Rapid Action Battalion, Border Guard Bangladesh, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, and National Security Intelligence -- are jittery as investigations into allegations of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings against some of their officials are underway.

"Investigations must continue and those responsible must be brought to justice. However, this should be done in a way that does not undermine these organisations. If you think peace and order can be restored by undermining these institutions, that will not happen; it is not possible," he added.

The army chief further said despite some misdeeds in the past, law enforcement and intelligence agencies such as the police, Rab, BGB, DGF, and NSI have done countless important work for the country.

"The reason the country has remained stable for so many years is that members of the armed forces and civilians collectively kept these organisations effective."

He said those who committed crimes will be punished, otherwise such incidents will recur. "We want to stop it permanently," he said.

Noting that maintaining law and order is not the responsibility of the army alone, General Waker said apart from 200,000 police personnel, there are BGB, Rab, and Ansar VDP members. But the army has only 30,000 troops deployed.

"How can I fill this void with just 30,000 soldiers? Troops [30,000] are deployed in rotation -- one group goes to the cantonment while another returns. We are working tirelessly.

"The disorders that have happened here are of our own making.... We have created these ourselves. We have to keep in mind that if we continue the contrary actions, peace and order will never be restored."

DON'T UNDERMINE JUDICIAL PROCESS

Terming February 25 a day of deep sorrow, the army chief recalled the tragic loss of 57 army officers and their family members in the 2009 carnage.

He said that the atrocity was committed solely by the then-BDR personnel, not by any member of the armed forces.

"It was committed completely by the then BDR men. Full stop. There are no 'ifs' and 'buts' here. If you raise question, the judicial process that has been going on for the last 16 years will be disrupted."

"We need to keep this in mind very clearly. Do not undermine the judicial process. The convicted members who have been punished deserve punishment."

He said that an independent commission was formed to investigate whether any political leaders or any foreign entities were involved. The commission will find it out and their findings will be shared, he said.

"The reason the country has remained stable for so many years is that members of the armed forces and civilians collectively kept these organisations effective."

He said those who committed crimes will be punished, otherwise such incidents will recur. "We want to stop it permanently."

"The bottom line is that our brave soldiers who lost their lives were killed by the bullets of the then BDR members," he asserted.

The army chief said that a certain quarter is trying to divert the issues in different directions, which will not benefit anyone. "Let us not create divisions among ourselves... If there are any problems, deviations, or grievances among us, we will resolve them through discussion."

Regarding the claims of some members of the then BDR to have been unfairly punished, General Waker said that a board with a lieutenant general as its member has been formed to review such cases.

"In the first phase, recommendations for 51 members have been submitted to me. I approved most of the recommendations. I even provided some more recommendations," he added.

The army chief also said that the navy and air force are conducting similar review processes. However, he made it clear that any proven offenders would receive no leniency.

"It is a disciplined force, and let the force be disciplined," he said, adding, "Today, at this critical juncture for the country, all forces and organisations have collapsed. Only the army, air force and navy remain properly functional, thanks to their discipline."

Reiterating his call for unity, General Waker said, "Let's work together. Let's take our country to a beautiful place where our children can live peacefully. Let's not leave them a country for conflicts. Otherwise, our next generation will not be able to live here."

82 senior cops made OSD

FROM PAGE 1
duties during the controversial 2018 parliamentary polls.

At least 60 officials on the list, were earlier awarded the Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM), Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM Service), President's Police Medal (PPM), and President's Police Medal (PPM Service) by the ousted Awami League government for their role in 2018 election.

The home ministry on February 23 stripped 103 police officers of their medals awarded in 2018, including the listed 60 officials.

According to the notification, the award of the officials has been revoked as the officials were directly involved in the controversial 10th National Parliamentary Election held on December 30, 2018.

According to officials, the designation of OSD is generally considered an administrative reallocation, but in practice, it often strips officials of their functional responsibilities. While the government officially states that OSD status is part of administrative restructuring, it is widely perceived as a punitive measure when applied to officials removed from key positions.

In recent years, the police force has witnessed several high-profile reshuffles, with senior officers frequently being transferred or placed in OSD status in line with government policy decisions.

However, the move to sideline 82 senior police officials at once is unprecedented, said officials.

This sweeping action has sparked widespread discussions within law enforcement and political circles, with many questioning the rationale behind such an extensive shake-up in the police force.

On February 23, four DIGs of police, who had previously served as superintendents of police (SPs) and additional DIGs during the 2014 and 2018 national elections, were sent into forced retirement in "public interest".

The government announced the decision in four separate notifications

School picnic buses robbed in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Robbers stopped school picnic buses on Ghatail-Sagardighi Road in Tangail's Ghatail upazila yesterday and looted cash, gold ornaments, and phones.

Khalilur Rahman, headmaster of Sowaitpur High School of Fulbaria in Mymensingh, said students, teachers, and guardians were going to Green Valley Park of Natore for a picnic on four buses.

He said around 4:00am, a gang of 10 to 12 robbers stopped their buses by placing tree logs on the road near Sagardighi area. Later, the gang, armed with sharp weapons, looted 10 mobile phones, some cash, and gold ornaments from the passengers.

The criminals also assaulted Shakhat Hossain, a computer operator of the institution, and Shahidullah Talukder, a guardian, when they tried to resist the robbers.

When a call was made to 999, a police patrol car immediately came to the spot, prompting the robbers to flee into the forest adjacent to the road, Khalil said.

To help students recover from the unsettling experience, the headmaster said that they went ahead with the picnic in Natore.

Khalil told this correspondent that they would lodge a case with Ghatail Police Station.

Contacted, Rabiu Islam, officer-in-charge of Ghatail Police Station, said they would take action after the case was filed.

Two men sent to jail in rape cases

STAR REPORT

Two men were sent to jail yesterday in separate rape cases filed in Shariatpur and Munshiganj.

In Shariatpur, Md Afzal, 30, was arrested in a case filed over the rape of a 14-year-old speech-impaired girl in Naria upazila on Monday.

The girl is now undergoing treatment at a hospital, said Aslam Uddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Naria Police Station.

In Munshiganj, Jibon, 30, was arrested in a case filed over the rape of a seven-year-old girl in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Later in the day, the accused was produced before a court and was subsequently sent to jail, said Rashed Chowdhury, Munshiganj Court Police Inspector.

[Our correspondents from Shariatpur and Munshiganj contributed to the report.]

Govt procurement under monopolistic control

FROM PAGE 1

"Public procurement is among the most corruption-prone sectors globally. While many countries manage to control it, Bangladesh is heading toward greater complexity, as our research shows," said TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman at the launch of the report yesterday.

Despite the maximum authorised contract value being Tk 881 crore, larger contracts remain outside the e-GP (electronic Government Procurement) framework.

In the road transport and highways division, just 11 percent of all contractors were awarded 93.55 percent of the Tk 82,506 crores spent by the department between 2015 and 2025.

Only 1 percent of contractors -- 35 firms -- hold 72.9 percent of the market of this division.

Around 9 percent of the contractors control 91.5 percent of the project value in the Ministry of Water Resources, with 38 contractors holding a 30.9 percent market share. The water resources ministry spent Tk 57,809 crores in the last decade.

Only 7.45 percent of all contractors (607) in the Ministry of Housing and Public Works control 71 percent of the market.

Even among them, 63 contractors stood out. They were consistently in the top 10 contractors over the past decade and were awarded 35.44 percent of the total money spent by the ministry, taking home Tk

18,229.23 crore.

In the local government division, only 1 percent of all contractors (294 firms) hold 27.7 percent of the market share.

The dominance of the top 5 percent contractors has grown substantially from 36.26 percent in 2015 to a staggering 58.35 percent in 2024, the report said.

The report identified 65 contractors who prominently featured in the top 10 list for the division over the past decade. The contractors got Tk 28,475 crore or 41 percent of the total money spent by the division.

The study found that political leadership changes also influence contractor dominance. For example,

following a change in the mayor of the Chattogram City Corporation, the top 10 contractors were completely replaced.

"Leadership changes in local governments or ministries often lead to shifts in contractors, but overall control remains with the same influential groups," Iftekharuzzaman said.

Regular monitoring, limiting market share, and disclosing true ownership information would weaken monopolistic control and enhance good governance in government purchases, he added.

The report recommended introducing market share caps for individual contractors and joint ventures.

their departed souls and convey deep sympathy to their bereaved families," he said in a statement.

Mentioning that the family members of the martyrs are still waiting to get justice for the murder of their relatives even after so many years, Yunus said the nation was kept in confusion for many years after the brutal killings of the brave army personnel in Pilkhana.

He said Bangladesh is committed to ensuring justice for this brutality.

"We are working in this regard. At the same time, I hope that the country and the people with compassion will stand by the family of the martyrs and all the oppressed," he added.

Bangladesh committed

FROM PAGE 1

In remembrance of their sacrifice, he said, "As a nation we are pledge-bound as we can guide ourselves in the right direction. May no more lives be lost due to misrule, conspiracy, and arrogance!"

He also expressed hope that people can reach their deserved destination through their own merit and talent with self-respect and human rights.

The chief adviser said Bangladesh should be the ideal benchmark

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BDR MASSACRE

Identify direct and behind-the-scene perpetrators

Demand families; National Martyred Army Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The families of the martyred army officers have called on the National Independent Investigation Commission to identify both the direct and behind-the-scene perpetrators of the 2009 Pilkhana BDR massacre.

At a memorial event at the Retired Armed Forces Officers Welfare Association (RAOWA) auditorium in Mohakhali yesterday, they said that the current



Police scuffled with an activist as law enforcers disperse MPO-registered teachers protesting for nationalisation in front of Shikha Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday. The teachers were stopped at a barbed-wire barricade on Abdul Gani Road before clashes erupted.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

KEY DEMANDS

- » Families want a thorough investigation
- » Calls for identifying both direct perpetrators and masterminds
- » Calls for stronger national unity on issues like sovereignty, democracy
- » Calls for ensuring such tragedies don't repeat again

environment is conducive to such an investigation and that the nation is awaiting justice.

They said those responsible for the murders of 57 army officers must be held accountable.

The event was attended by Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Mohammad Nazmul Hassan, Principal Staff Officer (PSO)

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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CITY

Kuet shut sine die
Students asked to vacate dormitories

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (Kuet) administration has announced the indefinite closure of all residential halls due to security concerns following recent student protests.

Students have been instructed to vacate the halls by 10:00am today.

According to an official notice, all academic activities will also remain suspended until further notice.

The announcement, issued under the directive of the vice-chancellor, was signed by Kuet Registrar Anichur Rahman Bhuiyan.

The decision was finalised during the 99th syndicate meeting held yesterday, with some members attending in person and others joining online.

Additionally, the Kuet administration has requested the Khulna police commissioner to deploy adequate police personnel around the university halls, campus, and surrounding areas.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Mayer Dak files 100 complaints with ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred complaints have been lodged with the office of the chief prosecutor of the International Crimes Tribunal over alleged enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings during the 15 years of Awami League rule.

Mayer Dak, a platform representing the families of victims of enforced disappearances, filed the complaints on behalf of the affected families yesterday.

Sanjida Islam Tuli, coordinator of Mayer Dak, along with several victims' family members, was present during the submission.

Over 60 individuals have been accused, including former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, former defence adviser to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former Inspectors General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary and Benazir Ahmed, former Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit chief

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Students of No 10 Malibagh Chowdhurypara Girls Government Primary School browse through books at a stall of the Amar Ekushey Book Fair at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. Accompanied by their teachers, the children flip through pages, discovering new stories and authors. The visit aims to inspire a love for reading and nurture creative thinking

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

TANGAIL BUS ROBBERY
Mastermind among two more arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Detectives yesterday arrested two more individuals, including the mastermind, in connection with a robbery, alongside sexual harassment of women passengers, on a moving bus on the Dhaka-Tangail highway on February 17.

The arrestees are Md Alamgir, 34, the ringleader, and his younger brother Md Rajib, 21.

Alamgir was apprehended in Purbadhal, Netrokona district, while Rajib was arrested in Ashulia, Dhaka, following raids conducted in different areas since Monday night.

Md Mizanur Rahman, superintendent of police

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Robbers' stab 2 cops during raid

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two sub-inspectors of the Chattogram Metropolitan Police were injured after a group of suspected robbers stabbed them during a raid in the port city's Barik Building area yesterday.

The injured officers -- SI Ahlad Jamil and SI Nazrul of Double Mooring Police Station -- were admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), police said.

During the operation, police arrested two suspects, identified as Tarek and Jewel.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Hossain Kabir said, "Based on information that a group of seven to eight robbers was preparing for a robbery, teams from the DB police and Double Mooring Police Station cordoned off an area near the Barik Building intersection around 3:00pm."

As police attempted to arrest them, the robbers attacked the officers with knives, injuring two. While two suspects were detained, the rest managed to flee. The injured officers sustained multiple stab wounds and were immediately taken to CMCH, he said.

The DC further mentioned that before the raid, the gang members had been involved in a scuffle among themselves over the distribution of looted money. Police stormed their hideout during the altercation.

Efforts are underway to apprehend the remaining suspects, he added.

CMCH'S NEPHROLOGY WARD

A struggle for space and resources

Kidney patients forced to seek treatment on floor amid bed shortage

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

Kamal Uddin, 58, a kidney patient from Chandanish upazila of Chattogram, who was recently admitted to the Nephrology Ward at Chattogram Medical College Hospital for a critical blood transfusion, found himself relegated to the floor after failing to manage a bed due to overcrowding.

"My father depends on regular dialysis, and urgently needed this transfusion. We were left with no choice but to keep him on the floor as all beds in the ward were occupied," said his son Tausif Reza.

Kamal's experience is shared by thousands of other kidney patients in Chattogram as treatment facilities for them are largely inadequate in the district.

CMCH's OVERBURDENED NEPHROLOGY WARD

A recent visit to the Nephrology Ward at CMCH revealed a distressing scene: all 40 available beds occupied, with many patients receiving treatment in cramped and often unsanitary conditions across the corridors.

Doctors and nurses were seen struggling to cope with the number of patients seeking treatment -- much higher compared to the ward's capacity.

Established in 1991 with 25 beds, the ward witnessed a significant increase in patient numbers over the past three decades, but only 15 more beds were added during this time, said Dr Imran Bin Yunus, a former professor and head of the ward.

As such, the ward's capacity has been severely outpaced by the growing need for specialised kidney care, while kidney diseases have continued to become



increasingly prevalent not only in Chattogram but also other neighbouring districts -- Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Rangamati, Feni, Noakhali, and Lakshmipur.

Ayub Ali, 50, who came from Cox's Bazar for treatment, said he was being treated on the floor for past four days amid bed constraint.

"CMCH is my only option as there is no proper dialysis facility in Cox's Bazar," he added.

Professor Dr Nurul Huda, head of Nephrology Ward, said, "With limited space and a constant influx of patients, providing adequate care is a monumental challenge."

He acknowledged that expanding the ward within the existing infrastructure is not possible, and called for urgent establishment of more specialised kidney care facilities across the region.

INADEQUATE DIALYSIS FACILITIES

Compared to the influx of patients, treatment facilities are largely inadequate in the port city's hospitals.

Among the government hospitals, only CMCH has affordable dialysis facilities. However, the nine haemodialysis machines there can provide the service to only 32 patients twice a week.

Also, a public-private partnership initiative at CMCH, comprising 31 machines, has been delivering haemodialysis service to patients at a cost of Tk 3,000-4,000 since 2017.

However, the total number of patients coming for dialysis is almost three times more than CMCH's capacity.

Apart from CMCH, there are haemodialysis machines in different private clinics, but the service costs around Tk 25,000-30,000 monthly.

A CKD patient has to maintain haemodialysis lifelong until kidney transplantation.

GRIM SCENARIO FOR TRANSPLANTATION

According to sources, an initiative on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

City polls should be held soon
Says LGRD adviser

BSS, Dhaka

To alleviate public suffering, elections for city corporations and municipalities should be held without delay, said LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud yesterday.

He was speaking as chief guest at an event organised by the Local Government Division marking "National Local Government Day 2025" at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital.

"It is a great regret that I see many political leaders making confusing statements, whereas the people of Bangladesh are looking for positive changes in all directions after the July mass uprising," said the adviser.

"I hope you will make efforts to deliver more refined and polite statements," he added.

Ensuring public service is one of the primary objectives of the local government department, Asif said, adding, "At present, there are several challenges in assigning the responsibilities to elected representatives through conducting local government elections."

The government is working towards restructuring the local government department with a new approach, said Asif.

230 tonnes of faecal waste dumped in Dhaka daily
Say Unicef and WaterAid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 230 tonnes of faecal waste are dumped into open water bodies in Dhaka every day, contributing significantly to environmental pollution and posing serious health risks, particularly to vulnerable communities, said Unicef and WaterAid, at the International Toilet Conference 2025 held in Dhaka yesterday.

The two organisations also revealed that over 65 million people -- more than a third of Bangladesh's population -- still lack access to safely managed sanitation services, they said in a press release.

The conference, organised in partnership with SNV and ITN-BUET, underscored the pressing need for urgent advancements in sanitation and hygiene practices.

Rana Flowers, Unicef Representative in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Institute of Health Economics

University of Dhaka

Executive Master in Health Economics (EMHE)



Admission Notice

Institute of Health Economics, University of Dhaka, invites application from national and foreign candidates in the prescribed form for admission into EMHE program for the session 2025-2026.

Program Features

- Total 48 credits (12 courses).
- 4 semesters with total duration of 18 months.
- Total seats: 40
- Class schedule: Friday (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon, 3:00 p.m. -6:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.).
- Classes will commence on 4th July 2025

Eligibility Criteria

- At least a Bachelor degree from any recognized institution with minimum CGPA of 2.5 out of 4.
- Preference will be given to the Academicians/ Researchers/ Executives/ Officers working in Government, Autonomous bodies and NGOs with professional experiences preferably 3 years.
- Candidate on service must apply through appropriate channel.
- Candidates should not have 3rd class in any public examinations.
- National candidates must attend a Written Test on Functional English, Analytical Ability, and Viva Voce.
- International candidates must provide proof of English proficiency (minimum score 6.0 in IELTS/80 in TOEFL).

Core Courses

- Health Economics
- Health Policy and Planning
- Biostatistics and Epidemiology
- Economic Evaluation of Health Care
- Health Project Design and Project Paper
- Pharmacoeconomics
- Advanced Health Economics
- Economics of Health, Nutrition and Population
- Economics of Uncertainty and Health Insurance
- Research Methodology & Dissertation
- Hospital Management

Admission and Fees

- Application form is available both in online (<https://ssl.du.ac.bd/fontView/images/file/1740375719EMHEform2025 -2026.pdf>) and offline from the office of the Institute from March 1, 2025.
- Last date of submission of application form is 16th May, 2025.
- Written exam will be held on 23rd May, 2025 From 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and Viva Voce will be held on the same day from 1:30 p.m.
- The application fee is BDT 1,500 to be paid at the time of application form submission

For detail information please visit IHE Website: <https://www.du.ac.bd/allPostRecord/101/Notice>

Contact

Address: Institute of Health Economics, 4th Floor, Arts Building, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh.
Email: info.ihe@du.ac.bd; director.ihe@du.ac.bd; For any further queries, please contact K. M. Nafiz Ifteakhar Tulon, Assistant Professor (Mobile: +88 01675 915 701) and Muhammad Ihsan-Ul-Kabir, Lecturer (Mobile: +88 01961 896 386) or Md. Rabiu Islam (01552483002)

GD-517

Nazrul Utsav 2025 concludes with messages of unity and resilience

DOWEL BISWAS

The much anticipated annual Nazrul Utsav 2025 kicked off last Monday and concluded yesterday, celebrating the philosophies of our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose works embody powerful messages of secularism, humanity, and unity. The two-day festival, organised by the Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Songstha (BNSS) at the Chhayanaut premises, featured performances by over 100 artistes from Bangladesh.

Khairul Anam Shakil, a celebrated Nazrul Sangeet exponent and the general secretary of BNSS, commenced the inaugural ceremony on Monday and spoke about the festival. "Kazi Nazrul Islam's vision of a non-communal, secular society remains relevant today. This festival is not just a celebration, it's a reminder of the humane, inclusive values Nazrul stood for – and they remain essential for the future of this country."

Yakub Ali Khan, another leading Nazrul Sangeet teacher and president of



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

the organisation, voiced concerns about the cultural environment in Bangladesh, noting that political stability is essential to safeguard cultural practices.

Mofidul Haque, laureate, researcher, and adviser of the Nazrul Sangeet Songstha, reflected, "Nazrul lived in a turbulent time, and his commitment to humanity and resisting oppression speaks to the challenges we face today. His works remind us of the strength in unity."

Nazrul often hailed as the "Rebel Poet",

opposed colonial rule, religious bigotry, and social injustice. His vision of a united Bengali identity transcended communal divisions, and his work remains a cornerstone of Bangladesh's cultural and intellectual heritage.

In addition to this year's festival, Nazrul Sangeet Songstha launched its official website, offering 125 original compositions by renowned and emerging artistes. These recordings are now freely available to the public, reaffirming

Nazrul's lasting influence on South Asia's cultural tapestry.

However, concerns over the event's arrangement surfaced, with Kolpona Anam, coordinator of the Nazrul Utsav Committee, voicing her reservations.

"Nazrul's free spirit deserves to be celebrated under an open sky, with a large stage and Nazrul enthusiasts gathered around to fully experience the magic of his work," she remarked. "But, given the current political and law-and-order situation, we had to move indoors this year. Even as the event unfolds, there is a lingering fear that extremists could disrupt our cultural practices. It's a frightening reality, but we will continue to resist the only way we know how – through our songs, poetry, and unwavering commitment to cultural expression."

Today, as artistes perform Nazrul's verses like *Dao Shorjo Dao Dhorjo* and *Joy Hok*, along with Warda Rihab and her team performing the nritylekhkha *Jago Jatirmoy*, the message is clear: Bangladesh's cultural strength lies in its diversity and inclusivity.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Brave Daughters of July'

A dedicated exhibition celebrating the brave women of the July Revolution and highlighting their significant contributions to protests, resistance, and leadership is underway at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA).

The *Brave Daughters of July* exhibition holds recorded photos, artworks, documentaries, and personal accounts to illustrate their struggles and contributions, offering an immersive experience and valuable documentation for the future.

Date: Wednesday-Friday | February 26-28

Time: 6pm-7pm

Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Oscars 2025 announces star-studded lineup of performers



The 2025 Oscars will feature an impressive lineup of performers, including Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo, Blackpink's Lisa, Doja Cat, and Raye.

Grande and Erivo, co-stars of *Wicked*, are confirmed to perform together, though it remains unclear if they will sing a number from the musical.

Lisa, Doja Cat, and Raye will perform separately, with the Academy

promising something legendary.

Queen Latifah will also take the stage, albeit her performance details are yet to be revealed.

This year, the Academy has opted for personal reflections from Best Original Song nominees instead of traditional live performances.

Films like *Gladiator 2*, *Wicked*, and *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* are in the running for Best Original Score.

'Ki Jeno Bhulte Cheye Chilam' drama brings poet Helal Hafiz's journey to life

Ki Jeno Bhulte Cheye Chilam, a drama directed by Rubel Anush, and inspired by the life of poet Helal Hafiz, stars Jonaid Bukhdadi as Helal Hafiz and Tonni Mahmud Trina as Helen, his beloved.

The story portrays Helal's unfulfilled love for Helen, his neighbour from Netrokona whose father disapproved of their relationship and arranged her marriage to a man in Dhaka.

Helal eventually moved to Dhaka to study, publishing his only poetry book, *Je Jole Agun Jole!*

Helen, upon reading the poems one day, realised they were expressions of



Helal's longing, leading to her eventual emotional collapse.

The drama captures the tragic depth of their love, exploring themes of heartbreak and loss. It is available on Global Television's YouTube channel.

Director Zahidur Rahim Anjan passes away

National Film Award-winning director Zahidur Rahim Anjan, best known for his film *Meghmallar*, passed away last Monday night in Bengaluru, India.

His friend, filmmaker Amitabh Reza Chowdhury confirmed his passing to The Daily Star.

Anjan was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Bengaluru for several months due to liver complications. Last week, a liver transplant was performed, but his condition worsened and he was put on life support before passing away.

He debuted with *Meghmallar* in 2014, which won him the National Film Award for Best Director and Best Dialogue Writer. His latest govt-funded film, *Chander Amabasya*, is awaiting release.



COUNTRYWIDE

Govt beefs up security

FROM PAGE 16

while the Bangladesh Coast Guard will boost its presence in designated zones.

Senior officials, including heads of police units, deputy police commissioners, and brigadier commanders from the Bangladesh Army, will regularly brief the media on security operations and developments.

To enhance mobility and rapid response, personnel from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), BGB, Ansar, and the Coast Guard will be provided with motorcycles.

Additionally, security operations will be expanded beyond Dhaka, with heightened patrols in Tongi, Borsila, Keraniganj, and Munshiganj. To reinforce security efforts, 500 members of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) will be deployed to work alongside the DMP.

Police stations will compile and regularly update lists of known criminals, allowing for swift legal action against offenders. Moreover, steps will be taken to counter misinformation, rumours, and propaganda through the proactive dissemination of accurate information.

According to separate notifications from the BGB, DMP, and Rab, special measures have already been implemented, including setting up patrol teams and checkpoints for public safety.

During a visit to the capital's Gabtoli, Mirpur-I, and Mirpur-10 areas between 12:10am and 1:30am yesterday, this newspaper saw police setting up three checkpoints. The police teams were seen stopping CNG-run autorickshaws and private cars if they noticed any suspicious activity.

Speaking to this correspondent, Abdur Rahim, a ride-sharing driver, said he mainly works at night. "We are very happy to see police patrolling and checkpoints. If this continues, I believe the law and order situation will improve."

In a notification, the BGB headquarters announced that the paramilitary force has launched night-time special patrols in Dhaka and across the country.

According to the DMP's Crime Command and Control Center, from 12:00am to 11:59pm on Monday, a total of 500 patrol teams were deployed

Mobs beat

FROM PAGE 16

suspecting him to be a mugger started beating him. Later, he was rushed to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries," said the OC.

The body has been kept at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master General Hospital.

Faridul said, "After preparing the inquest report, the body will be sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy."

Legal proceedings are underway, he added.

In Dhaka's Uttara, two youths were hung upside down on a footbridge near BNS Centre in the capital's Uttara and beaten up by a mob last night.

The incident occurred near Rajuk Uttara Model College around 9:30pm.

Hafizur Rahman, officer in-charge of Uttara West Police Station, said the two youths were aged around 20-25.

A video of the incident has since gone viral on social media.

Witnesses said the mob hung the two suspected muggers upside down on the footbridge, beat them up and then handed them over to the police.

The OC said the injured youths were admitted to Kuwait Maitri Hospital.

Police are investigating to determine whether the two were actually involved in mugging.

Nahid resigns

FROM PAGE 16

force or party that is being formed. I have resigned from the government to mingle with the people once again, unite them and work on the ground to implement the promises of the mass uprising."

When asked if he is becoming the convener of the new party, Nahid said: "The announcement of the party will be on February 28. We will have to wait until then. We will know on that day."

Asked whether Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan and Mahfuj Alam, the other two student-turned advisers, would be following his lead, he said: "There are still two people in the government who think they will serve the people from their positions. If they feel the need to engage in politics, they might resign from the government as well."

The people may see the results of his work in the future, although six months is a very short time and there were bureaucratic complexities, said Nahid, who also resigned from the Thaj Shaheed Smriti Foundation.

Asked who will take over the vacant ministry positions, he said that the advisory council will take a call on that.

Abdullah Al Noman dies

FROM PAGE 16

leaders and activists attended the prayers. His second namaz-e-janaza will be held at Jamiatul Falah Mosque ground in Chattogram on February 28. He will be buried at his family graveyard in Raozan after a third namaz-e-janaza there, said Idris Ali, former city BNP office secretary.

Born in 1942 of Raozan's Gohira, Noman was a key figure in Bangladesh's labour movement and played a vital role in shaping the labour policies. He held several ministerial positions throughout his political career.

After being elected lawmaker from Chattogram-9 (Kotwali) in 1991 for the first time, Noman served as the fisheries and livestock minister. He became the food minister following his victory in the 2001 election from the same

constituency.

Noman began his political journey in the early 1960s as a member of Chhatra Union while protesting against the Hamidur Rahman Education Commission. He served as the general secretary of Chattogram city unit of Chhatra Union, president of Greater Chattogram of Chhatra Union, and central organising secretary of Chhatra Union.

After his student life, he joined labour politics under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani. He was the vice-president of the East Bengal Workers' Federation and was also secretly involved in the politics of the Bhashani-led NAP. In 1970, he was made the central organising secretary of Noman.

In 1971, Noman took part in the Liberation War and fought against the

constituency.

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In his condolence message, the chief adviser said Noman was a talented leader in Bangladesh politics and was a valiant freedom fighter, reports BSS.

He added that Noman remained active in politics from the early sixties and till his last breath.

In a condolence message, Tarique said Noman used to take a stand for the people during all the crises.

Pakistan occupation forces. Following the war, he was active in NAP politics.

After president Ziaur Rahman formed the BNP, Noman joined the party in 1981.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and other leaders expressed profound shock over the demise of Noman.

In his condolence message, the chief adviser said Noman was a talented leader in Bangladesh politics and was a valiant freedom fighter, reports BSS.

He added that Noman remained active in politics from the early sixties and till his last breath.

In a condolence message, Tarique said Noman used to take a stand for the people during all the crises.

US president's claim

FROM PAGE 12

officials and their respective funding allocations. None of these officials are Bangladeshis.

The project was co-funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (formerly DFID) that pledged £10 million for the project in Bangladesh, of which £7.2 million was transferred to USAID. A portion of that money was then allocated to Democracy International's SPL project.

A 2020 review report by The Hunger Project stated that under SPL, 236 training of trainers workshops were conducted, engaging 5,410 Bangladesh political leaders and activists.

In the last couple of weeks, the city

has had temperatures of around 22-24 degrees celsius at daytime while temperature drops to 14-16 degrees at night.

However, yesterday morning, the mercury dropped to 16 degrees celsius with drizzle and dark clouds hovering over the city, which eventually led to the abandonment of the Australia South Africa match.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh team had no practice scheduled for Monday and the team spent time at the team hotel under tight security.

Pakistan cricket team reached the city on Sunday after losing their second match to India in Dubai.

Aus-SA match

FROM PAGE 16

two games.

According to the local met office, the city of Rawalpindi will witness rainy weather through the week, with forecast of rain on Thursday.

In the last couple of weeks, the city has had temperatures of around 22-24 degrees celsius at daytime while temperature drops to 14-16 degrees at night.

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Transforming Bangladesh Public Administration

Overcoming Challenges and Shaping Reforms

UNDP Bangladesh's Strengthening Institutions, Policies and Service (SIPS) project and The Daily Star jointly organised a roundtable titled "Transforming Bangladesh Public Administration: Overcoming Challenges and Shaping Reforms" on December 4, 2024, supported by the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh, with research support from the Centre on Budget and Policy of Dhaka University. Below is a summary of the discussion.



Dr Kazi Maruful Islam, Professor, Department of Development Studies, Dhaka University

Discussions on reforming public administration in Bangladesh have been ongoing, but the July mass uprising has brought the issue to the forefront. This movement, centred on equitable access to government jobs and civil services, underscores the urgent need to reform the administrative framework to build a truly democratic Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's civil service, shaped by its colonial legacy, has evolved over decades but still reflects colonial influences in its structure and psyche. A lack of accountability within the administrative machinery has nurtured a gradual slide into totalitarianism, deeply entrenched in systemic flaws that have persisted over time.

Two key challenges exacerbate this issue: (1) the politicisation of the civil service and (2) centralised decision-making. The civil service has become a tool for political partisanship, while decision-making remains concentrated within secretariats, leading to inefficiency. A third challenge, inter-cadre discrimination, has rendered the civil

and transfers. With unresolved issues, we could not determine the relationship between politics and administration.

Politics and administration complement each other in many countries, creating a balanced relationship. In Bangladesh, however, the bureaucracy has lost its credibility and fails to represent citizens' perspectives. Striking a balance is critical—a weak bureaucracy allows politicians to dominate, while an overbearing one ignores public demands. Professionalism in civil service is essential to achieving this balance.

A Civil Service Court, as practiced in the UK, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Bhutan, could define civil service integrity, political neutrality, and permissible actions. Current rules inadequately address the bureaucracy's broader political role, leaving officials vulnerable. A Civil Service Court protects by offering guidelines on conduct and violations.

Ilira Dewan, Member, Local Government Reform Commission
Before quota system was abolished in 2018,

indigenous communities were allocated 5% of the quota, which was later reduced to 1% and shared with persons with disabilities. During the 34th to 39th BCS exams, 16,988 candidates were recommended for appointment, of whom only 164 were indigenous, constituting just 0.95%, despite the 5% quota allocation. Following the quota's abolishment, only four indigenous individuals were recommended in the 40th, 41st, and 42nd BCS exams, representing a mere 0.05%. Given that Bangladesh is home to over 50 ethnic groups, the current 1% quota is inadequate



include a strict code of conduct with enforceable penalties for violations.

An effective implementation strategy is equally crucial. An independent authority should oversee reform implementation, addressing the prevalent culture of non-implementation.

Md Azaher Uddin Anik, Member, Central Nagorik Committee
The quota protest aimed to address discrimination in

freedom fighters and other quotas in government jobs and not to eliminate benefits for marginalised groups. Future reforms must ensure citizen participation to promote inclusivity and reduce backlash. Economic fragility, weak labour law enforcement, and exploitation in the private sector have made secure, high-paying government jobs highly coveted. Bridging the industry-academia gap and aligning university curricula with market needs are crucial to reducing dependence on government jobs. Additionally, BCS exams and recruitment processes must be transparent, addressing issues like nepotism and question leaks.

Mysha Farah, Student, Dhaka University
It is difficult to pursue a career in research or academia as

politicised and biased recruitment process in universities are disheartening especially for students without political affiliations. Merit is often overshadowed by bias, leaving capable candidates with limited options such as pursuing opportunities abroad that fuels 'brain drain' for Bangladesh. Alternatively, many seek government jobs, driving the widespread 'BCS craze' across the country. Similarly, I observed a disconnect between my academic education and the exam materials when preparing for the BCS exams. I recommend reviewing exam questions so that these are tailored to students from different disciplines, ensuring better alignment with their academic backgrounds.

Abu Jafor Ripon, Director, BPATC
The Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) trains civil servants across various career levels. Starting with the Foundation Training Course (FTC), the curriculum emphasizes professionalism, current national issues, and effective communication.

BPATC fosters accountability and service-oriented attitudes, training civil servants on key accountability tools like the Right to Information Act, Annual Performance Agreement, the National Integrity Strategy, and the Grievance Redressal System. Despite these efforts, challenges persist due to weak political systems, which hinder bureaucratic efficacy.

Improved inter-agency coordination, especially during disasters, and better utilization of digital tools like one-stop services could enhance governance and curb corruption.

Neil Gandhi, Senior Governance Adviser, British High Commission, Dhaka
We agree now is the

time to significantly improve public administration in Bangladesh. The country has the opportunity to think through the purpose of the public administration, change recruitment methods to hire the best people and create a civil service that is truly independent, effective and accountable.

All of this will take work, and we are committed to supporting people who can drive sustainable change in the public administration that can improve service delivery.

The people of Bangladesh will lead this change, but we are ready to share our expertise, provide access to our networks and fund efforts to support improvements in public administration.

The task of the reform commission is to identify impactful reforms, but it is the responsibility of the people of Bangladesh, future governments and the international community to ensure that these recommendations are implemented and that these reforms deliver for everyone.

Md Sirajul Islam, Senior Academic Coordinator, BIGD, BRAC University
We must remain vigilant about the

vision of public administration and carefully consider how much good governance and administration can truly contribute to our goals. Effective damage control management must be in place to ensure good governance. To achieve greater success and enhance the efficiency of the bureaucracy, we should adopt a bottom-up approach. Any public policy execution should involve stakeholders from the grassroots level, particularly at the district level. It is essential to encourage the participation of lower-tier officials.

I believe technological innovation is crucial for accelerating rapid transformation. For instance, in the case of the AC Land office, installing web cameras for proper surveillance can help improve oversight. Lastly, I want to highlight the issue of high mandates given to bureaucrats with limited capacity, leading to poor outcomes. This cycle must be addressed for improved performance and accountability.

Najia Hashemee, Senior Governance Adviser, UNDP Bangladesh
I want to highlight three key areas for the reform commission to take into consideration:

First, develop a framework for young bureaucrats. To drive meaningful change, young people must be placed in decision-making roles within the administration. It's not enough to simply include them; they should be empowered to take decisions, bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm needed to transform governance in Bangladesh.

Secondly, we need to prepare the civil service for the digital era, with emphasis on building their capacities to understand and utilize artificial intelligence to the benefit of service to the public.

Thirdly, while youth participation is frequently highlighted, there is a lack of clear strategies for fostering meaningful collaboration between younger and senior professionals within the civil service. This disconnect hampers the exchange of ideas, institutional knowledge, and innovation, which are crucial for building a dynamic and future-ready public administration. I urge the Reform Commission to address this gap and prioritize effective intergenerational leadership as a key element of civil service reform.

Kamrul Islam Khan, Hridoy, Chief Business Development, Intelion Techbridge
As a visually impaired individual, I believe

several critical issues regarding access and inclusion within public administration require urgent attention. While technology holds great potential for fostering inclusion, assistive technologies remain inaccessible to many. The government must ensure their availability and widespread distribution.

Age limits in civil service should reflect the unique barriers faced by differently abled individuals in education and career preparation.

Moreover, the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013, though commendable, remains poorly implemented. Initiatives by the Social Welfare Department, such as

pedagogical methods for the visually impaired, lack trained personnel familiar with tools like Braille.

During BCS exams, scribal assistance often falls short, further limiting opportunities for differently-abled candidates.

Abu Sayed Md Kamruzzaman, Additional Secretary, ICT Division
In the age of digital

technology, service delivery that once took ages is now available at our doorsteps. However, it is deeply concerning that our privacy and data security are at risk. To mitigate these hazards, digital literacy must be prioritised, and a solid foundation in digital skills should be embedded at every level of society.

Decolonising the BCS discourse is essential for fostering an entrepreneurial youth cohort in Bangladesh, encouraging fresh thinking and innovation. While we often discuss the ICT-driven new generation, it is crucial to recognise that project management must be placed on equal footing with other aspects of innovation and governance.

Dr Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Government of Bangladesh
Establishing an effective

civil service must be a national agenda. Rwanda, for example, has achieved notable success over the years as part of rebuilding itself in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. In contrast, Bangladesh's bureaucracy has been systematically weakened, as it is inherently dependent not only on political leadership but other vested interests.

Since independence, we have failed to establish an environment conducive to an effective bureaucracy. Instead, a new elite settlement has emerged that benefits from a weak bureaucracy. Although we have formed numerous commissions in the past, the lack of political will has stunted impactful reforms. Moving forward, any meaningful reform must be part of a broader political agenda aimed at state-building and governance.

Dr Md Omar Faruque, Rector, BCS Administration Academy
Politics plays a central role in the functioning

of bureaucracy—it is like a horse that follows the reins of politics. If politics remains flawed, the bureaucracy or civil administration cannot function effectively. Promotion within the bureaucracy is another issue. If the focus is solely on increasing quantity, quality inevitably declines. The BPSC should recruit fewer candidates; for instance, India, despite its vast size, recruits around 5,000 candidates into the IAS, while we now recruit over 5,000.

Assessments within the public service should be qualitative, objective, and transparent—not subjective. The promotion process, too, lacks a systematic structure and often relies on ad-hoc, selective promotions. A standard exam is necessary to prevent any political government from manipulating the promotion system.

To improve communication and information dissemination, the Cabinet or Information Ministry could establish a media cell similar to the ISPR (Inter-Services Public Relations), creating a centralised database and information system. Additionally, departmental

punishments tend to be preemptive rather than corrective. To address inter-cadre disparities, a dedicated commission could be formed to achieve equitable solutions.

Khondoker Aminur Rahman, Member, Public Administration Reform Commission

The allure of government positions due to opportunities for corruption underscores a troubling reality. Having worked with the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), I have witnessed how major corruption occurs, particularly in project implementation. Altering pivotal systemic processes is essential to address these issues effectively.

Many Asian counterparts have surpassed Bangladesh in development, largely due to adopting transformative approaches. Learning from past, present, and future commission reports can guide necessary reforms. Asset declaration is a commendable step towards promoting transparency. Income Tax Returns (ITRs) ensure compliance with tax laws and provide visibility into financial transactions.

Strengthening monitoring systems, such as tracking assets and money flows, is vital for curbing illegal activities.

Recognising and promoting honest, dedicated officials can set essential precedents and foster a culture of integrity within the bureaucracy.

Dr Rizwan Khair, Former Additional Secretary and Member, Public Administration Reform Commission

Almost all of us in the commission believe that merit-based steps are the need of the hour. Thus, an ethical workforce is mandatory; without this, training may not count for much. When a reform takes place, changing behaviours is more difficult than altering processes and structures. We often overlook the fact that in Bangladesh, structural improvements are lacking, even though reforms have been initiated.

The public sector should be given the space to think innovatively and express their views. In addition, the sector must be authorised not always to take the politically biased option and make bold moves. The prevalence of yes-men in bureaucracy stifles innovation and critical thinking, as decision-making becomes driven by conformity rather than genuine problem-solving.

Anowarul Haq, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh
Based on UNDP's experience,

initiative can succeed without political consensus and a strong sense of ownership. Comprehensive reform of the administrative system is critical, including discussions on decentralization. Key issues such as how the state will function, the roles and relationships between central and local governments, and the ambiguities in accountability between bureaucrats and elected representatives must be addressed.

Our recommendations include making the administration gender-responsive and inclusive, establishing robust accountability mechanisms, and embracing digital transformation for smart and people-friendly service delivery, such as online tracking systems.

Prioritizing anti-corruption measures is essential to rebuilding public trust. The recently published whitepaper on corruption highlights that a significant challenge lies in the overlap of interests among the state, market, and civil society. Effective strategies are needed to prevent such occurrences in the future.

Tanjim Ferdous, In charge, NGOs and Foreign Missions, Business Development Team, The Daily Star & Moderator

The Bangladesh Civil Service faces challenges in effectiveness, transparency, and public trust. This roundtable gathers experts, policymakers, civil society, student, media, and development partners to address these issues and explore reform pathways. Key objectives include enhancing transparency, ensuring merit-based recruitment and promotion, improving monitoring, and leveraging technology in public administration.

- » **Enhancing Recruitment Efficiency:** Ensure the selection of qualified candidates by scientifically assessing their skills, problem-analysis and problem-solving abilities to reduce the timeline of recruitment process.
- » **Ensuring Transparency and Impartiality:** Develop clear policies for recruitment, postings, and promotions, keeping them free from political interference.
- » **Legislative Reform:** Modernize and update public service laws by reforming outdated colonial-era legislation.
- » **Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Administration:** Make all structures and services within the civil service gender-responsive and inclusive.

- » **Accountability to Combat Corruption:** Strengthen structural mechanisms (e.g., public hearings, complaint filing systems) to ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.
- » **Intergenerational Coordination:** Foster coordination between younger and senior officials, leveraging their strengths to drive effective civil service reform.
- » **Utilizing Digital Technology:** Emphasize the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence at every level of the civil service to enhance public services.
- » **Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities:** Ensure separate recruitment provisions for persons with disabilities.

service dysfunctional. Differences in responsibilities, authorities, and facilities among cadres demotivate officials and hinder effectiveness.

The recruitment process also requires reform. Entry-level exams, which are lengthy and focus on questionable subjects, fail to adequately assess candidates' aptitude and skills. Training and practices within the civil service reflect colonial era mindsets, creating additional barriers.

Proposed reforms must address legislative, structural, and attitudinal changes. For instance, the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules 2018 must be revised to align with the Civil Service Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CRPC). Outdated laws, such as the Bangladesh Government Servants (Conduct) Rules of 1979, must also be updated. Seniority and promotion policies should be transparent and merit-based.

Dr Asif Mohammad Shahan, Professor, Department of Development Studies, Dhaka University

Since 1972, bureaucracy has been excessively empowered under authoritarian governance. Subsequent regulations, including the Civil Servant Recruitment (Conduct) Rules 1979 and the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules 1985, further entrenched bureaucratic dominance, reinforcing authoritarian control. Despite democratic transition in 1991, the role of public administration in democracy remained undefined, leading to politicisation in recruitment, contractual promotion,

to ensure fair representation for both indigenous communities and persons with disabilities.

Additionally, quota provisions apply only after candidates pass the preliminary and written exams. To ensure equity for underrepresented groups, I propose introducing separate exams for indigenous candidates.

Dr Ferdous Arfina Osman, Former Chairman, Department of Public Administration, Dhaka University

We must decide whether our public administration should focus on service delivery or act as a catalyst for nation-building. East Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia, and Japan transformed from war-torn states to thriving economies by strengthening their bureaucracies. In Bangladesh's case, our bureaucracy has largely been politicized rather than contributing as a driving force for economic growth and policymaking. This has left our democracy fragile and our bureaucracy weakened, devoid of institutional integrity and independence.

To address this, we must first address challenges of centralized decision-making and move towards decentralization. Similarly, we must address politicization challenges in recruitment and promotion processes. Structural reforms should include considering whether it is possible to reduce the number of ministries and cadres, revise the BCS exam to emphasize assessing aptitudes over rote learning, and ensure transparent promotion policies. Behavioural reforms should

reflect the unique barriers faced by differently abled individuals in education and career preparation.

Abu Jafor Ripon, Director, BPATC
The Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) trains civil servants across various career levels. Starting with the Foundation Training Course (FTC), the curriculum emphasizes professionalism, current national issues, and effective communication.

BPATC fosters accountability and service-oriented attitudes, training civil servants on key accountability tools like the Right to Information Act, Annual Performance Agreement, the National Integrity Strategy, and the Grievance Redressal System. Despite these efforts, challenges persist due to weak political systems, which hinder bureaucratic efficacy.

Improved inter-agency coordination, especially during disasters, and better utilization of digital tools like one-stop services could enhance governance and curb corruption.

Neil Gandhi, Senior Governance Adviser, British High Commission, Dhaka
We agree now is the time to significantly improve public administration in Bangladesh. The country has the opportunity to think through the purpose of the public administration, change recruitment methods to hire the best people and create a civil service that is truly independent, effective and accountable.

Kamrul Islam Khan, Hridoy, Chief Business Development, Intelion Techbridge
As a visually impaired individual, I believe

several critical issues regarding access and inclusion within public administration require urgent attention. While technology holds great potential for fostering inclusion, assistive technologies remain inaccessible to many. The government must ensure their availability and widespread distribution.

Age limits in civil service should reflect the unique barriers faced by differently abled individuals in education and career preparation.

Kamrul Islam Khan, Hridoy, Chief Business Development, Intelion Techbridge
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Israel squeezes Jenin camp in West Bank Palestinians fear Gaza-style clearance

REUTERS, JENIN

Israeli bulldozers have demolished large areas of the now virtually empty Jenin refugee camp and appear to be carving wide roadways through its once crowded warren of alleyways, echoing tactics already employed in Gaza as troops prepare for a long-term stay.

At least 40,000 Palestinians have left their homes in Jenin and the nearby city of Tulkarm in the northern West Bank since Israel began its operation just a day after reaching a ceasefire agreement in Gaza after 15 months of offensive.

"Jenin is a repeat of what happened in Jabalia," said Basheer Matahen, spokesperson for the Jenin municipality, referring to the refugee camp in northern Gaza that was cleared out by the Israeli army after weeks of bitter fighting. "The camp has become uninhabitable."

He said at least 12 bulldozers were at work demolishing houses and infrastructure in the camp, once a crowded township that housed descendants of Palestinians who fled their homes or were driven out in the 1948 war in what Palestinians call the 'Nakba' or catastrophe at the start of the state of Israel.

He said army engineering teams could be seen making preparations for a long-term stay, bringing water tanks and generators to a special area of almost one acre in size.

No comment was immediately available from the Israeli military but on Sunday, Defence Minister Israel Katz ordered troops to prepare for "a prolonged stay", saying the camps had been cleared "for the coming year" and residents would not be allowed to return.

The month-long operation in the northern West Bank has been one of the biggest seen since the Second Intifada uprising by Palestinians more than 20 years ago, involving several brigades of Israeli troops backed by drones, helicopters, and, for the first time in decades, heavy battle tanks. "There is a broad and ongoing evacuation of population, mainly in the two refugee camps, Nur Shams, near to Tulkarm and Jenin," said Michael Milshtein, a former military intelligence official who heads the Palestinian Studies Forum at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies.



Weak banks

FROM PAGE 16
macroeconomic instability.

The current account balance has shown improvement due to import restrictions, he said.

Prof Main Uddin, former chairman of the Department of Banking and Insurance at Dhaka University, recommended increasing the number of independent directors at banks and prohibiting bank owners from becoming chairpersons.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank, highlighted governance issues that emerged in 2017 when "an influential family" took control of Islami Bank Bangladesh.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD and member of the Task Force, presented the keynote paper.

She recommended ensuring proper loan sanctioning, enforcing single borrower exposure limits, halting loan rescheduling, and appointing administrators at the troubled banks.

She also emphasised protecting the independence of Bangladesh Bank, ending bank bailouts through recapitalisation, and stopping the issuance of licences to new banks.

POLITICAL REFORMS

The concluding session titled, Institutional Governance and the Way Forward, outlined specific reform proposals for the interim government as well as recommendations with timeframes for future political governments.

Presiding over the session, renowned economist Prof Rehman Sobhan urged the taskforce to make recommendations that the interim government could begin to implement.

In his keynote presentation, Syed Akhtar Mahmood, a member of the taskforce, recommended that the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority be designated as the core agency to streamline investment promotion functions.

He also proposed modernising the regulatory framework under a regulatory reform commission and improving public service delivery across all sectors.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman said if a reform is to take place, be it in the political parties.

Reform proposals will only be successfully implemented if political parties are willing to pursue them, he added.

Political scientist Rounaq Jahan noted that reform initiatives often faltered with changes of political power. "Oftentimes, the designs of our development projects are based on relationships between donors and implementing agencies, rather than on the actual needs of service recipients. This approach must change," she said.

Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, chairman of the Public Administration Reform Commission, and Zonaed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganasamhati Andolon, were among the speakers at the event. The session was moderated by KAS Murshid, chairman of the taskforce.

Russia praises

FROM PAGE 12
cooperation with the United States on developing Russia's large reserves of strategically important rare and rare earth minerals.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday evening in a televised interview said that Russia is a world leader in terms of reserves and "needs to do more" with them.

He said Russia is ready to work with "foreign partners including Americans" to develop such reserves in Russia and its "new territories", referring to areas it has occupied in Ukraine through its military offensive.

AIDING IRANIAN OIL SALES

US slaps sanctions on four Indian firms

TNN, New Delhi

The United States has imposed sanctions on four Indian companies citing their alleged role in Iran's petroleum and petrochemical industry. The move, announced by the US department of the treasury on Monday, is part of Washington's continued pressure campaign against Tehran's oil trade.

A press release from the treasury's office of foreign assets control (OFAC) revealed that the US had sanctioned Austinship Management Pvt Ltd, BSM Marine LLP, Cosmos Lines Inc, and Flux Maritime LLP.

These companies have been accused of facilitating the transportation of Iranian petroleum-related products, exposing them to severe restrictions under US law. This marks the second wave of sanctions targeting Iran's oil exports since US President Donald Trump issued

a national security memorandum on February 4, instructing authorities to intensify pressure on the middle eastern country.

As part of this crackdown, over 30 individuals and vessels across multiple countries, including the UAE, China, and Hong Kong—have also been sanctioned. Iran continues to rely on a shadowy network of vessels, shippers, and brokers to facilitate its oil sales and fund its destabilising activities," said US treasury secretary Scott Bessent.

"The United States will use all our available tools to target all aspects of Iran's oil supply chain, and anyone who deals in Iranian oil exposes themselves to significant sanctions risk."

The US state department has additionally designated eight entities based in India, Iran, Malaysia, Seychelles, and the UAE for their alleged involvement in the trade of Iranian oil.

Saving nature can 'unite world'

Countries told at rebooted UN talks

AFP, Rome

Global talks to protect nature restarted yesterday with a call for humanity to come together to "sustain life on the planet" and overcome the deep divisions that caused a previous meeting last year to end in disarray.

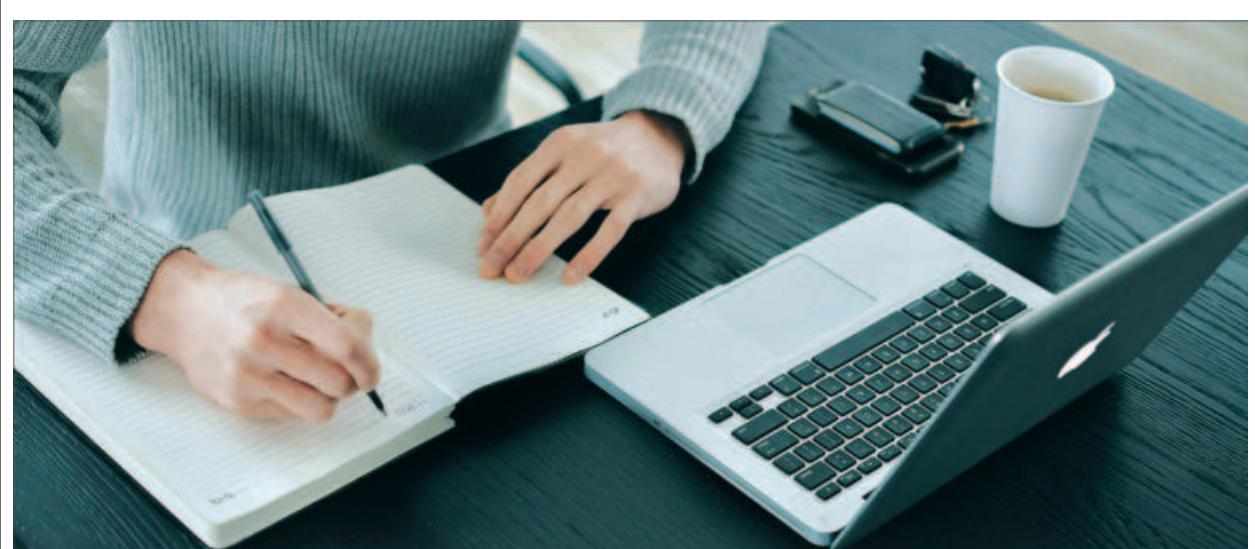
More than two years after a landmark deal on nature—including a pledge to protect 30 percent of the world's land and seas by 2030—nations continue to haggle over the money needed to reverse destruction that scientists say threatens a million species.

Negotiators meeting at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome this week are tasked with breaking a deadlock on funding between rich and developing countries that saw COP16 talks in Cali, Colombia break up without agreement in November.

The mission to protect nature "has the power to unite the world", said COP16 president Susana Muhamad.

"And this is not something small in this very polarised, fragmented, divisive and conflicting geopolitical landscape," the Colombian environment minister added.

She urged countries "to work again together in a collaborative manner for something that probably is the most important purpose of humanity in the 21st century, which is our collective capacity to sustain life in this planet".



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Improve public safety as a top priority

Challenges abound, so the govt must take effective steps

Only yesterday, we criticised the home adviser's overly optimistic portrayal of the law and order situation, and now a report citing statistics on crimes—from government sources, no less—shows how far from "satisfactory" the situation really is. According to police data based on filed cases, incidents of murder, abduction, robbery, burglary, dacoity, and theft have all increased in January this year, compared to the same month over the last five years. For instance, at least 294 murder cases were recorded in January 2025, up from 231 in the same month last year. Meanwhile, robbery cases rose to 171 in this January, compared to 114 in January 2024, while abduction cases rose to 105 compared to 51 last year.

This trend, fuelling public outrage and security concerns simultaneously, is anything but a sign of a normal situation. On what basis, then, did the home adviser draw his conclusions? Even the much-publicised Operation Devil Hunt, resulting in over 9,000 arrests since February 8, hasn't had the desired effect in restoring order or public confidence. While there is no denying that law enforcement activities have increased significantly of late, experts say that it is the rise in high-impact crimes—rather than overall crime rates—that most influences public perceptions of safety.

For instance, the multiple muggings reported in different parts of Dhaka on Sunday night or the robbery and sexual assault incident on a moving bus on February 17 have, understandably, tapped into anger accumulating over several months, resulting in an outburst of calls for the home adviser's resignation. True, social media can sometimes disproportionately highlight certain cases while overlooking others that may be more grievous. But a modern police force cannot be distracted by that. It must stay ahead of evolving crimes and criminals, and take effective, multi-pronged steps that improve both safety and public perceptions surrounding it. We have yet to see that happening.

We must recognise that law enforcement agencies are facing challenges on multiple fronts. Leave aside the alleged machinations of the cohorts of Awami League and other political actors. Beyond murder, mugging, and extortion, we have also seen repeated protests, clashes, and mob violence involving different groups over the last few months. Many incidents of attacks on *mazar* (shrines), *darbar sharif* (Sufi centres), and *Baul akhras* were reported. There has been a spike in rape and sexual violence as well. The release of some top criminals after the mass uprising as well as continued circulation of arms and ammunition looted from police stations have also contributed to the rising crime. According to police sources, of the 758 mugging suspects arrested in Dhaka from January 1 to February 20, some 115 have been released on bail. Add to that the role of rumours and misinformation on social media, which is only making matters worse.

Given this explosive situation, we need visible improvements in law and order, not assurances or boastful claims. For that, it is not enough to simply increase law enforcement activities; those in charge must too be made accountable. Given the alarming crime statistics as well as security risks associated with Ramadan and the election-related activities down the year, the government must treat law enforcement as its number one priority going forward.

How long will char dwellers be neglected?

Govt must do more to improve their lives

We are saddened to see the plight of char dwellers who continue to be denied basic necessities. A recent report in this daily has highlighted the dire living conditions in many chars in Kurigram, where people struggle to earn enough for a tolerable life as they constantly battle floods, droughts, and erosion throughout the year. Improving their quality of life is a battle they cannot win on their own, without proper government support.

Kurigram district alone has 450 chars that are home to around 5.5 lakh people. Unfortunately, employment opportunities in these areas remain scarce. While agriculture is their main source of livelihood, farmers often lack the necessary support to sustain their work. They are forced to sell their produce at low rates while paying exorbitant prices for essential goods. Amid this bread-and-butter struggle, sending their children to school is a luxury many cannot afford.

Not just in Kurigram, those living in chars in other districts also suffer immensely, especially during floods, amid inadequate government relief operations. According to a char resident in Kurigram, during floods, they receive only a few kilogrammes of relief, and in winter, just a blanket—nothing more. Meanwhile, child marriage and malnutrition remain at alarming levels, and healthcare services are virtually nonexistent, with women and girls suffering the most.

Unfortunately, the government's attempts to improve their situation often lack proper planning and sustainability. For instance, six years ago, to rehabilitate 450 families displaced by natural disasters, the government established three cluster villages on chars in Khulna's Koyra upazila. However, as a recent Prothom Alo report revealed, these houses have already been damaged by tidal surges due to their proximity to the riverbank, a development that should have been foreseen.

We, therefore, urge the government to adopt a bottom-up approach to address the struggles of char dwellers and implement well-thought-out measures to improve their living conditions. Creating sustainable employment opportunities and providing necessary agricultural support should be prioritised. Given that chars are highly disaster-prone areas, the government must pay special attention to disaster preparedness and mitigation. It is unacceptable that residents of remote chars still lack access to basic education and healthcare. These issues must be addressed immediately. Since several NGOs are already working in these regions, the government should coordinate with them to design effective and comprehensive interventions.

How zila parishad can be an effective local govt body



Dr Nawshad Ahmed, a retired UN official, is an economist and urban planner. He has written books on local governance and works in local government projects as an expert. He can be reached at nawnahid@gmail.com.

NAWSHAD AHMED

Established as a local government body in the Indian subcontinent by the British rulers in 1885, zila parishads (district councils) have not functioned as an ideal democratic institution over the last five decades. In post-independence Bangladesh, zila parishads were formed under the Local Government Ordinance, 1976, but elections were not held. Between 1988 and 1990, zila parishads functioned briefly under appointed chairpersons who were mostly MPs from the ruling party, who enjoyed the status of deputy ministers. In the 1990s, zila parishads existed only in name as a local body, with a few officials and staff working without elected representatives.

Since the Zila Parishad Act was passed in 2000, the government, after more than a decade, appointed administrators in 61 districts, except the three hill districts, for the first time in December 2011. In 2016, elections were held in the zila parishads except in the hill districts, followed by the latest elections of the parishads in 2022. Unfortunately, tokenism became the norm in every regime when it came to the question of zila parishads being a stratum of local government, and none of the governments in Bangladesh genuinely considered it as a viable local government institution. According to recent media reports, the Local Government Reform Commission, constituted on November 18, 2024 by the interim government, has recommended forming strong zila parishads through direct voting, instead of the present system of indirect elections. In the first week of February, the Public Administration Reform Commission, in its recommendations, proposed the abolition of zila parishads, but the Local Government Reform Commission suggested the opposite. The latter recommended that zila parishads should take up the primary role of planning, while upazila and union parishads should undertake

implementation of said plans.

The Local Government Reform Commission is yet to submit its full report; it submitted only a summary of its recommendations to the interim government earlier this month. It includes a total of 210 recommendations in 14 areas. The commission recommended a strong local government system for the country and proposed that zila parishads be formed via direct elections, instead of the current practice of elections by

and empowerment of women; developing social, educational and religious institutions; and ensuring maintenance of rural bridges, tanks, ghat, wells, canals, and drains.

In order to carry out the above-mentioned functions, the roles of zila parishad chairperson and members, officers and employees are crucial, but at the same time, it is essential to demarcate the roles of the district administration and give enough scope and allocate adequate funding to the local bodies. As per the administrative structure of Bangladesh, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives oversees the operation of 61 zila parishads. The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) Affairs, on the other hand, oversees the work of the three hill districts. The capacity of these two ministries also needs to be enhanced, and permanent cells should



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

upazila parishad, union parishad, and municipality members.

As per law, the zila parishad is supposed to undertake wide-ranging functions, such as: developing infrastructure that includes constructing roads, bridges, culverts, and other rural transport networks; providing social services such as building hospitals, dispensaries, schools, and other educational institutions; building health and sanitation facilities, arranging drinking water, and building rest houses; coordinating activities of union parishads within the district; promoting rural employment

be established within these ministries to strengthen regular monitoring and supervision, and to provide guidance on planning, budget formulation, project implementation, etc.

The Local Government Reform Commission's recommendation to give zila parishads a stronger planning function makes sense. The commission suggested that zila parishads formulate local plans in line with the national plans. Adequate resources should be made available to the parishads for planning and development functions. These responsibilities will require the parishads to reorganise its manpower, which the government needs to

approve. It is necessary to allocate sufficient funds to zila parishads so that they can become a viable local government entity and play a significant role in ensuring growth and planned development of their respective areas. There have been no genuine local-level planning efforts in the country except some pilot exercises undertaken in selected districts in the past. If the recommendation of the commission is accepted, a new participatory planning mechanism will be possible in Bangladesh, and together with stronger monitoring, supervision and evaluation roles added to the zila parishads' functions, a qualitative change in project implementation is likely to be possible in the country. This will have a positive effect on the local economy and the well-being of local people.

Despite good intentions of the Local Government Reform Commission to make zila parishads successful as a local government body in the future, there is a need to appreciate certain issues that should be addressed in order to make the body viable. These are: i) lack of experience of the zila parishads to formulate short- and long-term strategic plans, land-use plans, and regional plans; ii) limited experience in project formulation, infrastructure development, and maintenance; iii) poor leadership capacity; iv) lack of manpower; v) limited local resource generation capacity; and vi) lack of cooperative working relationships with the district administration, service delivery organisations, ministries, and the Planning Commission.

In order to introduce direct elections on the basis of universal adult franchise, the existing zila parishad election rules will have to be amended to switch from the existing electoral college system. Since the district has a large area, in order to ensure that all the eligible voters of the district can cast their votes, the area will have to be divided into a number of smaller constituencies or wards based on the number of voters. In order to undertake the proposed functions, a strong support by the government, local government experts, and trainers to the zila parishads will be required. Some bold steps should be taken in the local government area to fulfil people's aspirations generated through the July uprising. A run-of-the-mill reform will not bring any good for the country.

Street crime is a product of desperation, poverty, inequality



Abu Afsarul Haider is an entrepreneur. He can be reached at afsarulhaider@gmail.com.

ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

Mugging has long been a concern in Dhaka, particularly after dark. However, in recent times, they have been striking in broad daylight, too, armed with machetes, knives, and other weapons. Their targets include shops, pedestrians, rickshaw passengers, and commuters stuck in traffic. Those who resist often suffer serious injuries or even death. This alarming trend has created a climate of fear and insecurity among the residents of the city, raising urgent concerns about public safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement.

Criminal behaviour thrives when a nation fails to provide for the well-being of its citizens. According to the Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics 2023, the country's population stands at 17.15 crore, with 39.88 percent of youth (aged 15-24 years) neither studying nor working. Approximately 20 percent of the population still lives below the poverty line, with limited access to essential services. However, many experts argue that the actual poverty rate is much higher. Research also shows that income inequality is widening, with the wealthiest 10 percent controlling 40 percent of national income, while the bottom 50 percent holding just 19.05 percent.

Additionally, rising inflation has worsened the struggles of low-income earners in Bangladesh. The prices of daily essentials have consistently increased, in contrast to the global trend of declining prices. A recent World Bank report highlights that 71 percent of families have been affected by rising food prices, meaning nearly 2.91 crore households face food insecurity. In such circumstances, the most vulnerable often turn to

petty crimes like mugging, theft, and drug dealing as survival tactics. Social scientists argue that when survival is at stake, criminal activities may seem like opportunities rather than risky, and crime becomes normalised rather than seen as a deviant act.

I believe two other factors are also fuelling the crisis of rising street crimes in Bangladesh. First, the role of politicians in criminal networks significantly exacerbates street-level crimes. Many politicians are known to control or patronise extortion networks, drug trafficking rings, and youth gangs. Reports suggest that some politicians directly benefit from extortion schemes, with businesses often forced to pay "protection money" to individuals affiliated with political parties.

Law enforcement agencies frequently turn a blind eye to such activities, further emboldening these criminal enterprises. This involvement enables politicians to consolidate power at the grassroots level, using criminal groups to intimidate opponents and manipulate elections.

Second, high-profile corruption cases have recently exposed how ministers, top officials, law enforcement leaders, and politically connected businessmen have accumulated billions of dollars through fraudulent means, including bank loan scams. During the 15-plus years of Sheikh Hasina's regime, an estimated Tk 1.61 lakh crore to Tk 2.80 lakh crore was lost to corruption from the development projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP). This money, obtained through political extortion, bribery, and inflated budgets, was often laundered abroad or reinvested domestically in untraceable sectors, such as real estate.

The unchecked criminality of the upper class has profound psychological effects on society. When politicians and businessmen amass wealth through fraud, theft, and extortion without consequences, it erodes public trust in honest work. Seeing such impunity, marginalised individuals may feel justified in turning to petty crimes, believing that the system rewards corruption over integrity. The issue is further compounded by an ineffective and, at times, complicit law enforcement system. Many police officers are underpaid or politically pressured, becoming susceptible to corruption. Media reports indicate that police officials often take bribes to ignore criminal activities or, in some cases, actively facilitate crimes.

The rising street crimes in Bangladesh reflects a society in crisis—one where poverty, inequality, unemployment, and corruption intersect to create a toxic environment. Tackling this issue requires more than just stricter policing; it demands a comprehensive approach that addresses the root social and economic causes driving individuals towards crime. Expanding employment opportunities is crucial. Education and vocational training programmes should be prioritised, particularly in marginalised communities. At the same time, the government must take decisive action to hold corrupt politicians, high-profile government officials, and businesspeople accountable. Without justice at the top, it will be impossible to build a society where ordinary citizens feel safe.

Bangladesh stands at a crossroads. If the current trajectory of unchecked corruption and rising street crime continues, the country risks plunging deeper into social unrest. However, with meaningful reforms, there is still hope for a future where economic justice prevails and street crime is no longer a desperate response to systemic failure.

'Passion may drive young people, but strategic thinking will help them in the long run'

Pita Limjaroenrat, winner of Thailand's 2023 elections and leader of the now-disbanded progressive Move Forward Party, in a conversation with The Daily Star contributor Sarzah Yeasmin, discusses his vision to create a Thailand that is competitive not just for the elites, but for all its people—a country that is not just a paradise for tourists, but for its natives as well.

When your party, Move Forward, achieved an unprecedented victory in the elections, did you expect it?

Thailand has been deeply affected by military intervention, which has become normalised in our politics. The military junta that seized power more than a decade ago has systematically entrenched itself. They did this by amending the constitution to make it almost impossible to change, appointing senators who have the power to select the prime minister, and instituting a 20-year national strategy that restricts any political movement or policy changes outside of their control.

When the military took over in 2014, they ensured their continued dominance. The frustration among the people had been building for a long time, and it culminated during the Covid crisis. The pandemic exposed the military government's inability to handle modern challenges. When Move Forward came into the picture, we proposed a new approach—one centred on professional civilian-led governance, decentralising power, and demilitarising the government. We argued that military defence funds should be reallocated to deal with real world issues like climate change and digital transformation. We also focused on decentralising the economy and political power, as Bangkok has long been over-centralised. This left rural areas, which make up a vast part of the country, severely underfunded and underserved in terms of healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

How did you get people to buy into your vision?

Politics isn't like business—you can't just issue orders and give KPIs and expect people to follow. You have to inspire people, engage with them, see them as equals, and build a sense of shared purpose.

One key difference between business and politics is that in business, there's a predetermined hierarchy, and decision-making is often streamlined. But in progressive politics, things are more collaborative, and that means you have to engage in dialogue, persuasion, and sometimes compromise. We attracted people because we offered something different. Our platform wasn't just about getting into power; it was about fundamentally changing the way power is distributed in Thailand. We emphasised decentralisation, de-monopolisation, and demilitarisation.

How did you navigate the deeply hierarchical political system in Thailand?

I have always seen youth as an asset rather than a liability. In a system where age and seniority are highly valued, it can be difficult for younger politicians to break through. But I focused on what I could control: my ability

to analyse, strategise, and communicate effectively.

The older generation may have more experience, but younger politicians have the advantage of being more agile. For me, it was about leveraging those strengths to carve out space for myself at the political table. I was precise with my analyses and communication. Senior politicians often don't have the patience for long explanations, so I developed the ability to deliver concise, two-minute "elevator pitches" that got my point across quickly and effectively.

You also need to manage expectations and build relationships. I call this "upward management." In politics, you have to align with people's expectations before important meetings and make sure there are no surprises.

What factors make a country prone to dynastic politics, and how do you find scope for democratic openings?

First of all, I draw a distinction between dynastic politics and succession planning,

based leadership, and succession planning. You need systems that ensure that those who rise to power have proven themselves capable of leading the country. The difference lies in how leaders rise to power and how they exercise power once in office.

In countries like the Philippines, with the return of the Marcos family to power, and even in Thailand, political families wield enormous influence. In these cases, the line between succession planning and dynastic politics becomes blurred. Families gain power not only through democratic processes, but also through control of key institutions, access to wealth, and monopolising media influence. When the same families stay in power for generations, they limit the space for young or progressive leaders to rise, which can stifle innovation and political reform.

We have seen dynastic politics not just in Southeast Asia, but across the world. For example, in the United States, the Bush and Kennedy families are prominent political dynasties. In Canada, we see the same with Justin Trudeau, whose father was a prime

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In business, there's a predetermined hierarchy, and decision-making is often streamlined. But in progressive politics, things are more collaborative, and that means you have to engage in dialogue, persuasion, and sometimes compromise.

help people reskill quickly and efficiently. In South Korea, for example, people can use their newly acquired skills as collateral to access credit. We can implement a similar system in Thailand, where workers who complete certified training programmes can use those credentials to secure loans or start businesses. This would help bridge the gap between the skills available in the workforce and the demands of the marketplace.

Innovation is key to turning Thailand into a high-tech, high-touch economy. Right now, we're stuck in a low-tech, low-touch paradigm, but we can change that by focusing on niche areas. Thailand is growing at a slower rate, like that of a developed country, when the growth should be like that of a developing nation, so we also need to focus on inclusive economic growth. We need to invest in high-tech industries, and leverage our position in ASEAN to grow regionally. Having a cheap labour force cannot be our only competitive advantage. If that is the case, then we will never have a skilled workforce.

Third, our ageing population is another challenge that can be turned into an opportunity. By 2030, at least 30 percent of Thailand's population will be over 65, making us one of the fastest-ageing societies in the world. But we can leverage this by developing industries around elderly care, wellness, and health tourism. For example, we could create "dementia villages"—communities designed to offer specialised care and a high quality of life. This would not only address the needs of our ageing population, but also create jobs and attract investment in the healthcare sector.

What advice would you give to young people who want to enter politics, especially in closed systems?

My advice to young people is to build your own doors if the existing ones are closed. In many countries, including Thailand, political systems are designed to exclude new voices. You need to have a solid foundation in data-driven strategies and genuine public engagement. One of the biggest challenges is earning the credibility to be at the decision-making table. But once you earn that right, you must focus on providing clear analysis and effective communication. You also need to have resilience and tolerance for failure. Politics is tough, especially when you're trying to challenge entrenched powers. I often say, "Follow your heart, but take your brain with you." Passion is what gets you started, but it's your strategic thinking that will help you navigate the obstacles along the way.



Pita Limjaroenrat with his supporters in Thailand.

PHOTO: COURTESY

which is captured well by former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who was asked if he would encourage his children to become the prime minister of Singapore. He replied that he would encourage young generations to take leadership, but if it's his own children, the bar is 10 times higher. He emphasised the importance of meritocracy in governance.

In a true democracy, there must be institutions that support competition, merit-

minister too. However, these cases also show us that institutions and meritocracy can still function within such a framework when there's competition and checks and balances.

Could you describe the current state of inequality and how it affects the country's future?

When you ask wealthy people in Thailand how the country is, they'll tell you it's very comfortable. The top one percent of Thais

own about 67 percent of the country's wealth. This kind of concentration of wealth creates enormous disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and power. Land ownership is a major issue. Just 10 percent of the population controls 61 percent of private land, while the bottom 10 percent owns only 0.07 percent. If you don't own land, you can't use it as collateral to secure loans from banks. This locks many people out of the formal financial system, making it impossible for them to start businesses or invest in their future. Thailand is also expected to see a 24 percent increase in the number of millionaires by 2028. If you're part of the top one percent, the future looks comfortable. But for the vast majority of Thais, it will be a crisis.

How do you turn these crises into opportunities?

I like to break down these crises into three specific categories.

First, climate change is a major issue. Thailand is the fifth most vulnerable country to climate impacts, and we're already seeing the effects: flash floods, forest fires, and rising temperatures. But this also presents an opportunity for Thailand to lead in climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy. We can invest in solar energy infrastructure and electrify public transportation, which would reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and create new jobs. By decentralising energy production and democratising access to clean energy, we can make Thailand more competitive and environmentally sustainable.

Secondly, Thailand's labour productivity has been declining, and we need to address that if we want to compete globally. By offering nanodegrees and micro-credentials, we can

Analysing India-US relations under Trump 2.0



Dr Rakib Al Hasan
is founder and executive director of the Centre for Partnership Initiative. He can be reached at md.rakib.al.hasan.bd@gmail.com.

RAKIB AL HASAN

the deals endure, they would further solidify India's position as a major defence partner of the US and strengthen defence diplomacy between the two nations.

However, this also raises crucial geopolitical dilemmas for India. There has been a precipitous drop in its share of arms from long-standing ally Russia, which supplied 76 percent of its military imports in 2009-13 but only 36 percent in 2019-23, according to SIPRI data. The push towards US defence systems could potentially affect New Delhi's long-standing military cooperation with Moscow and shake up the delicate balance that India continues to strike between its relations with Russia and the West.

Moreover, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)—the Indo-Pacific alliance comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia—is expected to intensify under Trump's counter-China strategy. According to the joint statements issued by India and the US after the two leaders met, Modi and Trump are expected to activate new initiatives under the QUAD grouping and convene partners from the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor, and the I2U2 Group is expected to announce new initiatives. India is set to host this year's QUAD meeting, which, according to analysts, could advance a multifaceted bilateral partnership.

But perhaps the most immediate and direct impact of Trump's policies in India would result from the US president's immigration crackdown. The US deported 104 Indians on the longest such military flights used thus far, before Modi's visit to Washington. During his first term, Trump tightened H-1B visa regulations, dealing a blow to Indian

professionals in the US technology sector. His second term is likely to see a return of these restrictive measures, which could hurt Indian IT firms, disrupt the \$150 billion outsourcing industry, and slow the flow of South Asian talent to Silicon Valley.

In an unusual diplomatic move, Modi publicly assured Trump that India would take back undocumented Indian migrants from the US. While this signals compliance

to Pakistan, coupled with strong rhetoric against cross-border terrorism. But Trump offered to mediate the Kashmir conflict during former Prime Minister Imran Khan's bilateral visit to Washington during his first administration, after which Trump said he had heard a "very aggressive statement" from Modi, according to a report by Al Jazeera in 2019. If Trump revisits such rhetoric, it could create fresh diplomatic tensions.



US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shake hands, at the White House in Washington, DC, US, on February 13, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

with Trump's anti-immigration drive, it also reflects India's attempt to avoid deeper tensions on this front. However, concerns regarding skilled Indian professionals and students who may face heightened visa barriers in the coming years remain.

On the other hand, Trump's unpredictable approach to Pakistan and Afghanistan remains a major concern for India. His first term saw a sharp reduction in US aid

A major diplomatic win for India came in the form of Trump's approval of the extradition of Tahawwur Rana, a Pakistani-origin businessman accused of involvement in the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Preliminarily, this move signals a tougher stance against terrorism-related cases involving Pakistan-based networks.

In another notable move with far-reaching consequences, Trump's executive order has

suspended all USAID and IRI funds to South Asian countries, including Bangladesh and India. If these funds are not reinstated after the initial 90-day review period, crucial development projects across the region—spanning healthcare, education, and infrastructure—could be severely impacted.

One of the most striking aspects of the Trump-Modi meeting was the conspicuous absence of discussions on human rights, press freedom, and religious minorities. While the Biden administration often raised concerns over democratic backsliding in South Asia, Trump's foreign policy is expected to remain transactional, prioritising economic and security interests over democratic values. The BJP government has been accused of cracking down on opposition and backsliding India's democracy, and Trump's approach could embolden them to take a harsher stance on dissent, media freedoms and minority rights without fear of US diplomatic pressure. For Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, where democratic institutions have faced increasing strain, this diplomatic indifference from Washington could also accelerate authoritarian tendencies.

Donald Trump's second presidency presents India and South Asia with a paradox: unprecedented opportunities wrapped in profound challenges. For India, closer defence cooperation and strategic alignment against China are promising. Yet, trade tensions, restrictive immigration policies and the unpredictability of Trump's diplomacy pose real threats. Modi's personal chemistry with Trump may provide some diplomatic cushioning, but it will not override the cold calculus of transactional foreign policy. South Asian nations must now diversify their economic dependencies, recalibrate diplomatic ties and invest in regional cooperation to mitigate the volatility of Trump's second term. As Trump reshapes America's global engagement, the region must master the art of navigating an unpredictable superpower. The next four years will test South Asia's ability to turn challenges into strategic gains, proving that in global politics, survival depends on adaptability.

CLIMBING THE CORPORATE LADDER:

Top strategies for career advancement



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

In the modern workplace, career progression is no longer simply a matter of tenure or seniority. While hard work and diligence remain essential, climbing the corporate ladder requires a strategic approach that encompasses continuous learning, strong professional relationships, and a proactive attitude towards growth. Employees who want to advance must demonstrate their value in ways that align with both personal ambitions and the evolving needs of their organisations.

ZARIF FAIAZ

Having clear goals

A key element of professional success is having a clear vision of career objectives. Individuals who define their goals early on are better equipped to make decisions that will propel them forward. Understanding where one wants to be in five, ten, or fifteen years provides a roadmap that guides professional choices, from the skills one develops to the roles one pursues. For example, according to a Pew Research survey, 63% of US workers who resigned in 2021 cited limited opportunities for advancement as a primary reason.

A well-defined career trajectory enables employees to make informed decisions about which industries, organisations, and roles will offer the best opportunities for advancement.

Always learning

Beyond having a clear vision, continuous learning has become an indispensable part of professional development. The rapid pace of technological advancements and industry shifts means that employees must stay updated on new trends, tools, and methodologies. Those who commit to lifelong learning stand out as adaptable and resourceful professionals. Enrolling in courses, obtaining certifications, and attending industry conferences are all ways to ensure that one remains competitive.

Investing in professional development is not only beneficial for personal growth but also influences employee retention. LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report 2024 reveals that 70% of workers say learning improves their sense of connection to a workplace.

Learning does not always have to be formal; engaging with thought leaders, reading widely, and participating in professional forums also contribute to the expansion of knowledge and expertise. Those who cultivate a deep understanding of their field become indispensable assets to their organisations.

Networking

While technical skills are crucial, career advancement is also heavily influenced by the ability to build and maintain professional relationships. Studies indicate that networking is positively related to both current salary and

the rate of salary growth over time. Networking is not merely a tool for finding new jobs; it is an essential practice for those looking to climb the corporate ladder. Employees who cultivate relationships both within and outside their organisations create opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and professional growth. A strong network provides access to valuable insights, career guidance, and potential job openings. Developing genuine connections with colleagues, superiors, and industry peers enhances an individual's professional reputation and increases the likelihood of career opportunities arising.

Taking initiatives and skills specialisation

Within an organisation, those who take initiative distinguish themselves from their peers. Demonstrating a willingness to go beyond one's job description by taking on additional responsibilities or leading projects signals ambition and reliability. Employers and managers take note of individuals who proactively seek solutions, propose ideas, and contribute to the company's success. This proactive attitude not only builds credibility but also increases the chances of being considered for promotions or leadership roles. Organisations value employees who exhibit a sense of ownership and a commitment to innovation.

Closely related to taking initiative is the importance of developing specialised expertise. Employees who become authorities in their respective fields are more likely to be recognised and rewarded for their knowledge. Rather than attempting to be proficient in every aspect of an industry, professionals should focus on areas where they can provide unique insights or skills. Specialisation not only enhances job security but also makes an employee a go-to resource within the company. Those who master a specific area within their industry gain leverage when negotiating salaries, promotions, or career moves.

Open communication

Effective communication is another vital component of career progression. Employees who articulate their ideas clearly, whether in meetings, presentations, or written correspondence, establish themselves as leaders.

Communication is not just about speaking or writing well; it also involves listening actively, adapting messages for different audiences, and fostering productive dialogue. Employees who master these skills are more likely to be entrusted with leadership responsibilities, as communication is a cornerstone of management and strategic decision-making.

Understanding and aligning with an organisation's goals further strengthens an employee's prospects for advancement. Those who take the time to study their company's mission, values, and long-term strategy can tailor their contributions accordingly. Managers and executives are more inclined to promote individuals who demonstrate a strong understanding of how their work supports broader organisational objectives. Employees who align their efforts with corporate priorities show that they are invested in the company's success, making them prime candidates for leadership roles.

In a competitive professional environment, it is also important to document and highlight achievements. Employees who keep track of their contributions, whether in the form of successful projects, efficiency improvements, or revenue growth, are better positioned to advocate for themselves during performance reviews. A well-maintained record of accomplishments provides tangible evidence of value to the organisation and strengthens the case for promotions and salary increases. Those who articulate their achievements effectively are more likely to be recognised for their contributions.

Willingness to take risks

Risk-taking is another often overlooked aspect of career growth. While caution and stability have their merits, professionals who seek advancement must be willing to embrace calculated risks. This might involve taking on a challenging project, moving to a new department, or applying for a position that stretches one's current capabilities. Growth often occurs outside of comfort zones, and those who push their boundaries are more likely to encounter new opportunities. Employers respect individuals who demonstrate adaptability and a willingness to tackle challenges head-on.

Handling priorities

Despite the emphasis on hard work and ambition, maintaining a work-life balance is essential for long-term career success. Burnout is a real risk for professionals who neglect personal well-being in pursuit of career goals. Employees who manage their time effectively, set boundaries, and prioritise self-care are more likely to sustain high performance over time. Companies increasingly recognise the importance of employee well-being, and those who model a balanced approach to work set a positive example for their colleagues.

Climbing the corporate ladder requires a combination of strategic planning, skill development, networking, and self-advocacy. Professionals who set clear goals, commit to continuous learning, build strong relationships, take initiative, and communicate effectively position themselves for long-term success. By aligning their efforts with organisational goals and maintaining a balanced approach to work, they not only enhance their own careers but also contribute to the broader success of their workplaces. In an era of rapid change, those who remain adaptable, proactive, and committed to growth will be best equipped to navigate the complexities of career advancement.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Standard Chartered



Associate Relationship Manager, Priority Acquisition

Deadline: March 7

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree from a reputed university. Prior banking experience will be an added advantage.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years

DBH Finance



PLC

Brand & Communications

Deadline: March 6

Eligibility:

• BBA/MBA degree preferably in Business Administration/Marketing with high academic attainment from recognised universities.

Minimum experience: 5-7 years

RADIANT PHARMACEUTICALS

Radiant Pharmaceuticals Limited

Assistant Manager, Commercial

Deadline: March 1

Eligibility:

• Master's degree in Supply Chain Management, Business Administration, or any relevant field.

Minimum experience: 5-8 years

Asset



Developments & Holdings Ltd.

Executive, Sales & Marketing

Deadline: March 12

Eligibility:

• Graduation from a recognised university with prior experience in sales and marketing.

Minimum experience: 1-4 years

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



A thinker sees his own actions as experiments and questions—as attempts to find out something. Success and failure are for him answers above all.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Alibaba to invest \$50 billion in AI and cloud computing

AFP

Alibaba has said that it will spend more than \$50 billion on artificial intelligence and cloud computing over the next three years, a week after co-founder Jack Ma was seen meeting President Xi Jinping. Investors have piled into Chinese technology stocks since the start of the year, with Alibaba -- which runs some of the country's biggest online shopping platforms -- seeing its shares soar to three-year highs.

In an official statement, the company said its strategy was aimed at "reinforcing (Alibaba's) commitment to long-term technological innovation... (and) underscores the company's focus



on AI-driven growth". The statement did not detail how the company would allocate the funds or what specific projects would be supported. It did add that the investment would exceed its total AI and cloud spending over the past decade.

TikTok lays off trust and safety staff in Singapore

NEXT STEP DESK

TikTok has laid off at least a dozen employees from its trust and safety team in Singapore as part of a global restructuring effort aimed at aligning its operations with long-term growth plans, according to a report by The Straits Times.

As per the report, employees in Singapore were notified of the layoffs on February 26, 2025.



20 via an internal email, which cited operational efficiency as the reason for the restructuring. Some affected staff had their access revoked within an hour of being informed, while others were retained. Among those impacted was trust and safety product manager Eric Tan, who posted on LinkedIn that he had been made redundant after more than three years at the company.

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

We've all been there—burning the midnight oil, skipping lunch breaks, or replying to emails at 2 am because we believe that grinding harder than everyone else is the golden ticket to promotions and respect. But is it really? The truth is far more nuanced than a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

When hustle pays off

There's a reason 'hustle culture' has become a badge of honour. In the short term, putting in extra hours can create opportunities. For example, taking on high-visibility projects or stepping up during a crisis might earn you recognition from leadership. It is generally accepted that employees who occasionally work longer hours during critical periods are often perceived as more committed, potentially leading to faster promotions.

Industries like startups, finance, or consulting often reward 'always-on' mentalities. If you're gunning for a partnership at a law firm or a leadership role at a fast-growing tech company, showing grit during crunch times might help you stand out.

But here's the catch: this only works if it's sustainable and targeted. Think of it like sprinting in a marathon—you can't sprint the whole race, but a well-timed burst might help you pass competitors.

**The case against overworking**

Flip the coin, and overworking isn't just exhausting—it's counterproductive. The World Health Organization (WHO) officially classified burnout as an occupational phenomenon in 2019, linking it to chronic workplace stress. A Stanford study found that productivity plummets after 50 hours of work per week. By hour 55, you're basically getting nothing done except reheating coffee and staring blankly at your screen.

Beyond productivity loss, overworking tanks your physical and mental health. A 2024 study from the Journal of the American Heart Association states that work-related stress is a psychosocial risk factor linked to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. Plus, when you're perpetually exhausted, creativity and problem-solving

skills take a dip.

And let's not forget the social cost. Missing family dinners, cancelling plans with friends, or neglecting hobbies doesn't just harm your relationships—it erodes the parts of your identity that make you 'you'. Over time, that can leave you feeling hollow, even if your career looks 'successful' on paper.

The middle ground: Work smarter, not (just) harder

The key to thriving without self-destructing is to focus on strategic effort rather than raw hours. Before diving into an all-nighter, ask: "Is this task actually advancing my goals?" Prioritise projects that align with your long-term career vision or your company's key objectives.

Keep in mind that boundaries

aren't selfish—they're survival skills. A 2023 report by global consulting firm Deloitte found that 77% of professionals who set clear work-life boundaries reported higher job satisfaction. As such, try time-blocking your calendar, turning off notifications after hours, or saying "no" to non-urgent tasks.

Companies like Microsoft Japan and countries like the UK and Iceland have experimented with 4-day workweeks—and found that productivity increased. This is because when you're not fixated on clocking hours, you're forced to focus on outcomes. Track your accomplishments (e.g., "launched X project" vs. "worked 12 hours") to prove your value without burning out.

Overworking can give you a short-term edge, but, likely, you'll eventually stumble. Sustainable success isn't about outworking everyone; it's about working with intention. If you're in a season where hustle is unavoidable (e.g., launching a business or upskilling for a promotion), pair it with recovery periods. And if you're stuck in a grind that never pays off? It might be time to reassess your role, company culture, or even your definition of 'success'.

Remember: Careers are marathons, not sprints. The goal isn't to collapse at the finish line—it's to keep running, growing, and enjoying the ride.

Will overworking get you ahead?

SHAMS RASHID TONMOY

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But here's the catch: this only works if it's sustainable and targeted. Think of it like sprinting in a marathon—you can't sprint the whole race, but a well-timed burst might help you pass competitors.



রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
মালিকুল্লার বায়োলজিভ এন্ড প্রোটিন সার্কেল ল্যাবরেটরি
জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড বায়োটেকনোলজি বিভাগ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড বায়োটেকনোলজি (জিইবি) বিভাগের "মালিকুল্লার বায়োলজিভ এন্ড প্রোটিন সার্কেল ল্যাবরেটরি" জন্য ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরে গবেষণা সর্বজ্ঞানাদি ক্ষেত্রে ব্যান্দকৃত অর্থ থেকে বৈজ্ঞানিক যুক্তিপূর্ণ একাইম ও প্রিজেক্ট সর্ববরাহনের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত সর্ববরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে সিলসেমেহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। উচ্চাধিক দরপত্র আগামী ১৭-০৩-২০২৫ তারিখ দুপুর ২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত নিম্নস্থানকারীর অফিস থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। সিলিউল মূল্য অফেরণ্সে নগদ ২,০০০.০০ টাকা (মুই হাজার টাকা মাত্র) নদোপত্রের সাথে জামানত বাদে উচ্চাধিক দর ৩% অর্থ (ফেরতযোগ্য) নিম্নস্থানকারীর অনুমতি ক্রাক্টের মাধ্যমে জমা দিবে হবে। জটিলতা ও অসম্পূর্ণ দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। দরপত্র আগামী ১৮-০৩-২০২৫ তারিখ দুপুর ১২ টার মধ্যে রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে কোষাধ্যক্ষ দণ্ডের রক্ষিত নির্ধারিত বাক্সে জমা দিতে হবে। দরপত্র বাক্স একই দিন দুপুর ১২.১৫ মিনিটে দরপত্রাত্মদের (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উচ্চাধিক মোগা হবে। কর্তৃক সর্বনিম্ন দর প্রাপ্তে বাক্সে নথ এবং কোনো কারণ না দরিয়ে যে কোনো অথবা সমস্ত দরপত্র বাতিল করার অধিকার সংহস্করণ করবে। উচ্চাধিক দে, দরপত্র সম্পর্কে কর্তৃপক্ষের যে কোনো সিকাত হচ্ছাত মলে বিবেচিত হবে।

প্রক্ষেপ ড. মোঃ আবু রেজা

মালিকুল্লার বায়োলজিভ এন্ড প্রোটিন সার্কেল ল্যাবরেটরি
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রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
রাজশাহী

GD-515

KHULNA SHIPYARD LIMITED
BANGLADESH NAVY, KHULNA

PHONE NO: PABX 02-47772003
E-mail: olccomfksy@gmail.com, Web: www.khulnashipyard.gov.bd

BABE (F) - 632/GICT/2024-2025

DATE: 25 February 2025

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 01 | Procuring Entity Name | Khulna Shipyard Limited, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna |
| 02 | Invitation For | Electric Cable, Tray, Elbow, Tee, Reducer, Risers etc. |
| 03 | Invitation Reference No. | BABE (F) - 632/GICT/2024-2025 |
| 04 | Procuring Method | Open Tender (Single Envelope System) |
| 05 | Budget & Source of Funds | Own Finance |
| 06 | Tender Last Selling Date | 12 March 2025 |
| 07 | Tender Closing Date & Time | Date: 13 March 2025 Time: 11:30am |
| 08 | Tender Opening Date & Time | Date: 13 March 2025 Time: 11:30am |
| 09 | Name & Address of the Office for Selling of Tender Documents: | (i) Cash Section, Khulna Shipyard Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna. (ii) Naval Store Sub Depot, Khilkhet, Nama Para, Khilkhet, Dhaka. |
| 10 | Receiving & Opening Tender | Khulna Shipyard Ltd, Bangladesh Navy, Khulna (Tenderer's and their Authorized Representatives are allowed to attend) |
| 11 | Price of Tender Document | Per set 1,000 (Tk. One Thousand) Non-refundable. |
| 12 | Contact Details of Official | Mob: +8801674950715 Email: olccomfksy@gmail.com |
| 13 | Special Instructions | The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all or any Tenders prior to acceptance without showing any reason. |

GD-521

Manager Admin



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GD-513

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Gopalganj
Phone : 02479961678
email: eegopal@rhd.gov.bd

Invitation for Tenders

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Road Transport and Bridge/ Road Transport and Highway Division |
| 2 | Agency | Roads and Highways Department |
| 3 | Procuring Entity Name | Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalganj. |
| 4 | Procuring Entity Code | Not Applicable |
| 5 | Procuring Entity District | Gopalganj. |
| 6 | Invitation for | Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System along with installation of Unified Toll Management System for Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806) for 3 (Three) years under Gopalganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025. |
| 7 | Invitation Ref No | 35.01.3500.428.07.002-25-505 |
| 8 | Date | 25-02-2025 |

KEY INFORMATION

| | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| 9 | Procurement Method | Open Tendering Method (OTM) |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|

FUNDING INFORMATION

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|------|
| 10 | Budget and Source of Funds | GOB |
| 11 | Development Partners (if applicable) | None |

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 12 | Project / Program Code (if applicable) | None |
| 13 | Project Name (if applicable) | None |
| 14 | Tender Package No. | 01/Manual/PSN/GRD/2024-2025 |
| 15 | Tender Package Name | Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System along with installation of Unified Toll Management System for Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806) for 3 (Three) years under Gopalganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025. |

16 Tender Publication Date

25-02-2025

17 Tender Last Selling Date

24-03-2025 and 04.00 pm

18 Tender Closing Date and Time

25-03-2025 and 12.00 pm

19 Tender Opening Date and Time

25-03-2025 and 03:00 pm

20 Name & Address of the office(s)

- Selling Tender Document (Principal)

| |
|--|
| (i) Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka. |
| (ii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Madaripur |
| (iii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Shariatpur. |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------|--|
| 21 | - Receiving Tender Document | (i) Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Gopalganj (ii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalganj. (iii) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Gopalganj. |
| | - Opening Tender Document | Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalganj. |

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--|
| 22 | Eligibility of Tenderer | As Per TDS |
| 23 | Brief Description of Services | Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System along with installation of Unified Toll Management System for Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806) for 3 (Three) years under Gopalganj Road Division during the year 2024-2025. |

24 Price of Tender Document (Tk)

4000.00

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|-----------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Package No | Identification of Package | Location | Tender Security Amount (Tk) | Completion Time in Weeks / Months |
| 01/Manual/PSN/GRD/2024-2025 | Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance | Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806). | 40.00 (Forty) Lakh | 36 Months |

PROCURING DETAILS

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 30 | Name of Official Inviting Tender | Md. Azharul Islam |
| 31 | Designation of Official Inviting Tender | Executive Engineer, RHD |
| 32 | Address of Official Inviting Tender | Gopalganj Road Division, Gopalganj. |
| 33 | Contact details of Official Inviting Tender | Phone: 02479961678, E-mail : eegopal@rhd.gov.bd |
| 34 | The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the tender at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever. This notice will be available on RHD website: rhd.portal.gov.bd and on CPTU website: www.cptu.gov.bd . | |

25-2-25

(Md. Azharul Islam)
ID - 202306
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD
Road Division, Gopalganj.

GD-516

GOVT. OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (EED)
LALMONIRHAT

Invitation for e-GP Tender (LTM)

TENDER NOTICE NO: e-Gp-25/XEN/EED/LAL/5974-TMED/2024-2025

Memo No : XEN/EED/LAL/2025/25

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. The Tender who have registered in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is eligible to participate in this Tender. The fees of downloading the e-Tender documents of following Packages from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to the following date and time.

| Sl. No | Package No. | Name of Works | Tender ID | Last Date & Time of Selling Documents | Last Date & Time of Opening Documents |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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Lost in translation

Hollow excuses follow hype after yet another flop

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Islamabad

Bangladesh marched into the 2025 Champions Trophy with captain Najmul Hossain Shanto declaring that his side aimed to become champions. Yet, just two games in, their campaign lay in tatters – brushed aside by India and New Zealand. With a dead rubber against Pakistan still to play, Bangladesh's campaign was over on the sixth day of the 18-day marquee tournament.

While Pakistan's early exit as defending champions may be surprising, Bangladesh's failure is anything but. The burning question remains: why do Bangladesh keep misfiring when the eyes of the world are upon them?

Following their loss to New Zealand in Rawalpindi on Monday, Shanto admitted: "Even when we win a series, most of the time it's on home soil. We rarely win abroad. It's the same in ICC events. One day, our bowling fails; another day, it's our batting or fielding. The whole thing feels disjointed."

If anything, Shanto's admission only confirms what has long been evident: Bangladesh's problem does not boil down to mere bad days. Beyond their performances, their mindset appears "disjointed." Confidence is key to success, but the Tigers' inability to deliver when it matters suggests they talk the talk without walking the walk.

Since their 2017 Champions Trophy semifinal run, Bangladesh have repeatedly flopped on the global stage. Their two World Cup campaigns have been forgettable, and in three T20 World Cups, they have hardly troubled top-ranked sides.

Lofty expectations inevitably collapse under pressure,



leaving behind the same recycled excuses. "Tournaments are played on true wickets. We need to learn how to play on such surfaces. We must bat more and more on these true wickets," vice-captain Mehedi Hasan Miraz reflected after their elimination.

But the rot runs deeper than results. Off the field, the Tigers are rarely short of controversy; be it selection disputes or internal rifts. These distractions could be overcome with solid performances, yet, barring the occasional individual brilliance, the team never quite functioned as a unit.

Moreover, despite having a nucleus of stars over the years – the likes of Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, and Mahmudullah Riyad – the team have been found wanting on the biggest stages. The presence of veterans Mushfiqur (274 ODIs) and Mahmudullah (239 ODIs) in this Champions Trophy should have been an asset. Instead, much like Mashrafe Bin Mortaza in the 2019 World Cup, the duo appeared more of a liability than a lifeline.

Ultimately, Bangladesh remain trapped in an endless cycle: talking big to create pre-tournament hype, crumbling under pressure, and then scrambling for excuses. Until the Bangladesh think tank addresses the root causes of their faulty mentality and execution, the same script will unravel in a different year.

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

Bangladesh losing convincingly to India and New Zealand and being out of contention for a spot in the semi-final in the ICC Champions Trophy may seem like the worst thing about the team's ongoing campaign in Pakistan and the UAE, but it's not.

The worst part is that hardly anyone seems to be surprised by it.

Coming into an ICC event as underdogs is nothing new for the Tigers; they have been doing so for decades now. But there was a time, during the mid to late 2010s, when some analysts would give Bangladesh at least an outside chance of creating some waves in ICC events.

Many had thought that period was the start of the rise of the Tigers, but it is now considered more like a false dawn.

Bangladesh's main problem in recent ICC events has been their batting, and this Champions Trophy has been no different. At a time when throwing caution to the wind is the norm, the Tigers remain stuck in their archaic ways, determined to anchor the innings but failing to up the ante in slog overs on most occasions.

In a situation like this, the likeliest solution may seem like injecting fresh energy. But that's where the problem lies, as even Bangladesh's new generation,



from the looks of it, is way behind the curve.

In Bangladesh's current Champions Trophy squad, Towhid Hridoy, Tanzid Tamim and Parvez Emon are the only three batters aged below 25. While Parvez is still waiting for his ODI debut, Hridoy and Tanzid are already regular starters in the 50-over format and have played the first two matches in the Champions Trophy.

Hridoy won hearts in the match against India, taking control of the innings after the team was on 35-5 and enduring cramp to make 100 off 118 balls, but his overly defensive 24 ball seven against New Zealand left everyone confused since the right-hander's strike rate stands at 82.55 after 31 ODI innings. Meanwhile, Tanzid started well in both games, making a run-a-ball 25 and 24 but the southpaw had

characteristically gifted his wicket to the opposition on both occasions, in line with his average of 21 in 22 ODIs.

Even though the ongoing Champions Trophy is their third straight ICC tournament for the Tigers, having played in the 2023 ODI World Cup and the 2024 T20 World Cup, one could argue that they are still new to the international arena and are finding their feet.

But that's just it. While Bangladesh have continually given some earmarked batters the long rope in hopes they would mature into the batters the team needs, the leading countries seemingly have an assembly line of youngsters ready to push the limits of the game.

In the same game when Hridoy struggled to pick up singles and got dismissed while trying to make up for the dot balls with a boundary, New Zealand's brightest batting star, Rachin Ravindra, expertly dealt with the pressure after his side lost early wickets, found gaps in a packed off-side field against a charged-up Taskin Ahmed and Nahid Rana, and set up the chase for the Black Caps.

Tellingly, the two most experienced batters in Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad also departed the same way as Hridoy, showing exactly how the Tigers' batting is stuck in a loop of mediocrity.

Miraz finds solace, but what about Tigers?

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Rawalpindi

Bangladesh team manager Rabeed Imam reminded all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz to check the honours board at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday, as the latter was waiting to face the media in the Mixed Zone following their Champions Trophy game against New Zealand.

Miraz was quick to respond to that, leaving his seat to get a glimpse of his and his teammates' achievements at the venue.

Perhaps that was the type of escape even Miraz was waiting for, especially just minutes after Bangladesh's run in the Champions Trophy ended with a game in hand – following the five-wicket defeat against the Black Caps.

Rabeed showed Miraz his name on the honours board for a five-wicket haul he got during the second Test against hosts Pakistan in September last year. As Miraz glanced through, Rabeed reminded Miraz that he had written his name on the board with a pen – which had now turned into golden printed letters.

The effort that saw Miraz have his name on the honours board was during a historic series for Bangladesh when the Tigers had



white washed Pakistan 2-0 – the Tigers' first ever Test series win on Pakistan soil.

For a moment, Miraz probably was able to block out how their hopes of becoming winners of the Champions Trophy had fallen flat as he saw his and pacer Hasan Mahmud's names on that board.

Miraz moved on to the next board and found Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das' names on the board

for Test hundreds – the two other Bangladeshi who had hit centuries during that Pakistan tour.

"I had scored two 80s (77 in the first Test and 78 in the second) here. Otherwise, my name could also be there," Miraz regretted.

"We played extraordinary in that Test series. It was a massive achievement for Bangladesh," he added.

Miraz then threw a question to a few Bangladeshi journalists who were present during that time. "Why don't we have honours board in our country?" questioned the Bangladesh vice-captain.

It seemed as if Miraz took respite in the fond memories after yet another abysmal ICC event for Bangladesh.

It remains a question whether Miraz's urge to have honour boards in the country, probably at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, would be fulfilled. But before that, the question that needs an immediate answer is what can be done to bounce back from the type of cricket that Bangladesh have been playing in recent times, especially in major ICC events.



Afghans taking inspiration from World Cup win for England clash

AFP, Lahore

Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi warned England on Tuesday that memories of their famous 2023 World Cup win over the then holders gives them the confidence to pull off a Champions Trophy surprise.

Both teams need a win on Wednesday in Lahore to keep alive their hopes of reaching the semifinals in the 50-over tournament after losing their respective openers.

Afghanistan shocked England in 2023 when they humbled the defending world champions by 69 runs in New Delhi.

Afghanistan's rise in white-ball cricket has been rapid.

"We worked hard to achieve at this level and are ready to play



ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

every game in a positive way," Shahidi said on the eve of the pivotal Group B clash.

"We will take that confidence with us what happened in the 2023 World Cup. But at the same time, tomorrow is a new day and we will try our best to beat them again."

Afghanistan started the eight-nation Champions Trophy with a 107-run hammering by South Africa in Karachi.

Their bowlers took a beating in South Africa's impressive total of 315-6. In turn, Afghanistan were bowled out

for a meagre 208.

Shahidi, however, expects a much better show from his side at the Gaddafi Stadium and believes the Afghan spinners could be the difference.

"When we bat first that gives us more chance. At the same time in the last World Cup we beat teams batting second," Shahidi told reporters.

"The world knows we have quality spinners. Hopefully, we have some support for our spinners tomorrow."

England came under

pressure from British politicians to boycott Wednesday's game over the treatment of Afghan women by the ruling Taliban. The England and Wales Cricket Board resisted the demand but said they would not schedule a bilateral series against Afghanistan.

Shahidi batted away questions about it on the eve of the match.

"What we control is what we do on the ground, we don't worry what is happening off the ground," said Shahidi.

Afghanistan and England have faced each other only three times in ODIs, with England winning twice and Afghanistan securing a memorable 69-run victory in their last meeting in the format during the 2023 ODI World Cup in India.

Making their debut in the Champions Trophy, Afghanistan face England in the competition for the first time.

It is time for a major shake-up. We need to improve our system of domestic cricket so that we can produce quality cricketers, not ordinary ones.

Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram

"It is time for a major shake-up. We need to improve our system of domestic cricket so that we can produce quality cricketers, not ordinary ones."

A lack of competitiveness in domestic cricket and low-quality pitches have been blamed for not preparing players for the international stage.

The sport in Pakistan is also held back by frequent changes to the cricket board, coaching teams and selection panels, critics say.

Such changes are driven by politics and not merit, according to observers.

"I feel very despondent with the state of Pakistan cricket," former captain Rashid Latif told AFP.

"We have to follow merit and bring in professionals in the administration of the game and not people on a political basis," he added.

The early elimination stings for a country that had relished hosting its first major cricket tournament in 29 years, after significant improvements in security.

"We were thrilled that an international event had finally returned to our country, but the joy was short-lived," said 26-year-old Umar Siraj, a pharmacist in Rawalpindi.

Asma Batool, a 52-year-old housewife, underlined just what cricket means to people in Pakistan.

"Cricket is the only source of entertainment for our youth. Our nation finds solace in this game."

"The equation is pretty simple now, on to the next one against Afghanistan and if we win, we are locked into top four."

Australia captain Steve Smith after their Champions Trophy Group B game against South Africa in Rawalpindi was washed out yesterday.



Dipayan helps hosts beat Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

Dipayan Goldar made a brilliant raid in the last moment to help hosts Bangladesh kabaddi team go 2-1 up in the five-match kabaddi series against Nepal with a hard-fought 42-37 points victory in the third match at the Paltan Ground yesterday.

Bangladesh, who had comprehensively beaten the visitors in the first match before losing the second one, were close to facing another defeat against an improving Nepal side.

The visitors even once took the lead in the second half despite trailing the first half by 20-17 points.

Dipayan, however, won five crucial points from two raids including a 'lona', from which Nepal never recovered.

"Nepal are a really good with captain Ghanshyam Raka Magar, who is a brilliant player. None of our players can be compared to him, so we made mistakes because it was tough to catch him," Dipayan said after the match.

"We are hundred percent hopeful about winning the rest of the matches. We will improve with more international matches that we play in future," added man-of-the-match Goldar.



Jude Bellingham trains at Real Madrid's practice facilities on Tuesday ahead of tonight's Copa del Rey semifinal first-leg match against Real Sociedad at the Anoeta Stadium. The English forward, who is serving a two-match suspension in LaLiga, will probably play the entirety of this game as he is also suspended for the club's next Champions League assignment against Atletico Madrid.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID

Arteta vows not to give up on title race

REUTERS

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said his side will not give up on the Premier League title race despite slipping further behind leaders Liverpool after Saturday's loss to West Ham United, insisting the team have done well despite injuries and setbacks.

"We're not going to stop. Over my dead body," Arteta told reporters on Tuesday ahead of their midweek trip to third-placed Nottingham Forest.

Liverpool are 11 points above Arsenal, who have a game in hand.

With forwards Gabriel Jesus and

Kai Havertz out for the season and wingers Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Martinelli also sidelined with injuries, second-placed Arsenal face a hill to climb, with Liverpool being unbeaten in the league since September.

"If somebody tells you at the start of the season that you play five times with a red card, over half an hour in each of those games, and you have lost this amount of players... you're in the middle of the table at least," Arteta said.

"That's not the situation. So that tells you the resilience, resources, the ambition the team has."

Arteta said that in the 15 matches

prior to the loss to West Ham, Arsenal had won the exact same number of points as Liverpool.

"We got that defeat and on top of that, they win... it was a hard one to take," the former Arsenal midfielder said.

"The reality is, there's so many games to play. And you have to get back to it. And we have the levels, the consistency and the hunger to go again. And that's what we're going to do on Wednesday."

"At the end you have certain numbers you have to hit to win in this league and we have to hit that number if we're going to have any chance."

Butler's 'future Bangladesh' square off against UAE today

SPORTS REPORTER

After a gap of almost five months since the successful title defence of the SAFF Women's Championship in October last year, Bangladesh national women's team are set to play an international match as they take on hosts United Arab Emirates in one of two friendly matches in Dubai.

The match, that will get underway at 9:30pm (Bangladesh time), will however not feature the same group of players who had enthralled the country's football fans by winning their second successive SAFF title starting the campaign with a hard-fought draw against Pakistan. Instead, it will be an almost new group of players who will be fielded today, having made the pledge to prove themselves in absence of 18 rebel senior players.

Over last the three weeks, the rebel footballers drew all the attention after boycotting the team's training camp under English coach Peter Butler, who however silently worked with the new group of players alongside eight players who were part of the SAFF campaign.

Even though Butler said the country's football fans should be realistic and pragmatic regarding where Bangladesh stand at the moment, players like Afidea Khandokar, Surma Jannat, Kohati Kisku, Swapna Rani, Shaheda Akter Ripa, Munki Akhter, Sauravi Akanda Prity and Yearzan Begum will be key to Butler's



'future Bangladesh.'

These players have proved themselves in different age group teams as well as in the senior team whenever they came on as substitutes while the new players will try to cement their places in the senior teams by performing well.

"There are many new players in the squad and it is a new experience for them as well and a rare opportunity for them and I discussed this matter with them. Coach Peter Butler also spoke about everything with the girls. It's been a friendly atmosphere and I am also motivated after talking to the team. We are really hopeful that they will really perform well and produce a good result," BFF's vice president Fahad Karim, who was accompanying the team, said in a video message from Dubai.

The only problem regarding preparation is that the team reached Dubai yesterday morning and got only one practice session before facing the hosts, who are 16 places ahead of Bangladesh in FIFA ranking.

CORPORATE BOOKING

Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will be reserved on 26th February (Wednesday), 2025 for Corporate Booking.

From 27th February (Thursday), 2025 Fantasy Kingdom and Water Kingdom will remain open for all.

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Nahid resigns to 'helm new party'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam yesterday resigned as the information adviser to almost certainly lead the upcoming new political party.

After submitting his resignation, the leader of the Students Against Discrimination said that his role outside the government and on the streets would be more significant to fulfilling the aspiration for democratic change and consolidating the strength of those who participated in the mass uprising.

"The companions who are out there also desire this. Therefore, I have submitted my resignation," said Nahid, who was the adviser for Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology and Information and Broadcasting.

"I have always tried to fulfil my responsibilities under your leadership despite various challenges. But in the current context, I feel that I should be present in the ranks of the people and students for the greater interest of the country and the nation," he said in his resignation to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Nahid's resignation came amid speculation that he might leave the cabinet to lead the new political party mainly consisting of July uprising activists.

The party is set to launch on February 28 at a grand rally on Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka. Nahid is expected to be the convenor of the new political party as its convener.

"Yes, I have a wish to participate in the new political



SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Army personnel check motorists, mostly motorcyclists, on Manik Mia Avenue late last night amid a recent spate of street crimes in the capital and other places.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NEW PARTY LAUNCH
Uprising leaders want rally of 3 lakh people

New student body to be floated today

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Participants of the July uprising are aiming for a massive turnout of 3 lakh people on Manik Mia Avenue this Friday for the official launching of their political party.

Members of the preparation committee, comprising over a hundred leaders from the Nagorik Committee and the Students Against Discrimination, are now contacting their grassroots units to achieve their target gathering.

Meanwhile, the new student body helmed by the coordinators of the Students Against Discrimination is set to be launched at Dhaka University's Madhur

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Abdullah Al Noman dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Former minister and BNP vice-chairman Abdullah Al Noman passed away yesterday.

He was 82.

The veteran politician fell ill at his Dharmundi home around 6:00am. He was rushed to Square Hospitals, where doctors declared him dead, said Shamsuddin Didar, BNP chairperson's media wing member.

Noman, who took part in the Liberation War, was involved in left politics before joining the BNP.

The BNP leader, who is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter, was scheduled to address a rally of Chattogram Uttar Zila BNP yesterday as the chief guest in Chattogram city's Kazir Dewri area. The event was postponed following his death, said Golam Akbar Khandakar, convener of Chattogram Uttar Zila BNP.

His first namaz-e-janaza was held in front of BNP's Nayapaltan central office around 5:00pm, where hundreds of BNP

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Weak banks may face closure

Says BB governor; Abdul Awal Mintoo irked by suggestion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur's comment that some ailing banks may face closure drew flak yesterday.

"We are trying to keep the troubled banks running, but not all of them will survive," he told a conference titled Recommendations by the Task Force on Re-strategising the Economy.

"We are trying, but it is difficult to keep some banks operational," Mansur said, adding, "We all know that the banks have been systematically looted."

A decision regarding the weak banks would soon be made in consultation with the government and other stakeholders, he said.

"Out of the 11 restructured banks, Islami Bank Bangladesh and United Commercial Bank have recovered and are performing well."

However, his remarks drew sharp criticism from BNP leader Abdul Awal Mintoo, chairman of National Bank, at the conference.

"I thank the government for appointing a knowledgeable person as the Governor of Bangladesh Bank. But he should talk less," Mintoo said. "As long as he keeps talking about shutting down banks, there will be no improvement in the sector."

Acknowledging the financial challenges facing National Bank, Mintoo added, "It is unwise to keep saying the weak banks will be closed. If you plan to shut down banks, why not shut down the entire economy?"

He further questioned the central bank governor's stance on printing out taka: "He always says he won't print more taka to give to the banks. Do we even know how much has already been printed or how much should be printed in relation to the GDP?"

Monzur Hossain, a member of the Task Force on Re-strategising the Economy, said the unbridled printing of money and the single-digit interest rate on lending have contributed to

Govt beefs up security on streets

CA's Press Wing says checkpoints, patrols increased

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To improve security and stability, the Law and Order Core Committee has taken nine key initiatives, including operations in targetted locations, crime-prone areas, and areas suspected of harbouring criminals by a joint task force comprising members of the army, various police units, and the BGB.

The Chief Adviser's Press Wing announced the decisions in a press release yesterday, stating that they were made during a high-level meeting on Monday, presided over by Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.

Law enforcement agencies will increase the number of checkpoints in key locations across the capital, with additional patrol teams being deployed. To further strengthen security, the Bangladesh Navy will introduce an additional patrol unit on key roads,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

UKRAINE VOTE AT UN Russia praises 'more balanced' US position

Talks up mineral trade opportunities with Washington

AFP, Moscow

The Kremlin yesterday praised Washington's "balanced position" after the US voted with Russia at the United Nations to avoid condemnation of Moscow's campaign against Ukraine.

The United States sided with Russia in two votes in New York on Monday, signalling a seismic shift as US president Donald Trump stakes out a drastically new position on Ukraine.

"The US is taking a much more balanced position which is really aimed at trying to resolve the Ukraine conflict. We welcome this," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Peskov said comments from European leaders "do not signal balance", adding: "But, perhaps, as a result of contacts between the Europeans and the Americans, somehow Europe will gravitate towards greater balance".

The Kremlin also said that it sees potential for

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

SUSPECTED MUGGERS
Mobs beat one dead, injure 2 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young man was killed and two others brutally beaten up on suspicion of being muggers in separate mob-lasted incidents in Gazipur's Tongi and Dhaka's Uttara last night.

In Gazipur's Tongi, a youth was beaten to death on suspicion of being a mugger in the Mashimpur area of Tongi, Gazipur.

The incident took place around 10:30pm. Police are yet to identify the deceased.

Faridul Islam, officer-in-charge of the Tongi East Police Station, told The Daily Star, "We are trying to verify the youth's identity by matching his fingerprints with the national database with the help of the CID crime scene unit."

Quoting locals, Faridul said a mob caught the youth near Tongi Station Road around 7:30pm, while he was allegedly trying to snatch a phone. The mob chased him.

"The youth took shelter in an alley. The angry locals

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Aus-SA match washed out BD-Pak under threat too

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN
from Rawalpindi

The Champions Trophy Group B fixture between Australia and South Africa in Rawalpindi was abandoned without a ball bowled on Tuesday due to persistent rain.

Both teams have won their opening matches - South Africa beating Afghanistan by 107 runs and Australia winning by five wickets against England. However, South Africa top the pool on net run-rate.

England and Afghanistan meet in Lahore today, with the top two teams in each group advancing to the semifinals.

The same venue, meanwhile, is scheduled to host Bangladesh's last Group A match against hosts Pakistan on Thursday - a dead rubber after both teams lost their opening



Students of Begum Badrunnesa Government Girls' College at a rally near Raju Bhaskar on Dhaka University campus demanding punishment of rapists and sex offenders.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

\$29M USAID FUNDING US president's claim incorrect: Dismislab

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dismislab, an independent online verification and research platform, has said US President Donald Trump's claim regarding the \$29 million USAID funding is incorrect, and the Department of Government Efficiency's statement is misleading.

"The \$29 million did not go to a two-person Bangladeshi firm. Instead, the Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL) project was implemented by Democracy International (DI), a US-registered organisation with ongoing projects and staff in various countries," said Dismislab in a report yesterday.

"Furthermore, canceling the project did not result in the entire \$29 million being saved, as was falsely claimed."

The platform came up with the report after Trump's claim last Friday that \$29 million USAID fund landed with an obscure firm that he said was "a little outfit" with just two employees in Bangladesh.

At another event in Maryland on Saturday, Trump again accused the agency of funneling \$29 million to prop up a "radical left communist" in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said he will raise the issue with the US authorities during his visit to Washington in April this year.

According to the Dismislab, the SPL project launched in 2017 aimed to enhance political party skills, improve engagement between political parties and the public, and reduce political violence.

In Bangladesh, the organisation has carried out at least 12 projects, and records from the SPL project list five

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6