



True extent of bad loans emerges

NPLs hit record Tk 3,45,765cr in 2024

MD MEHEDI HASAN

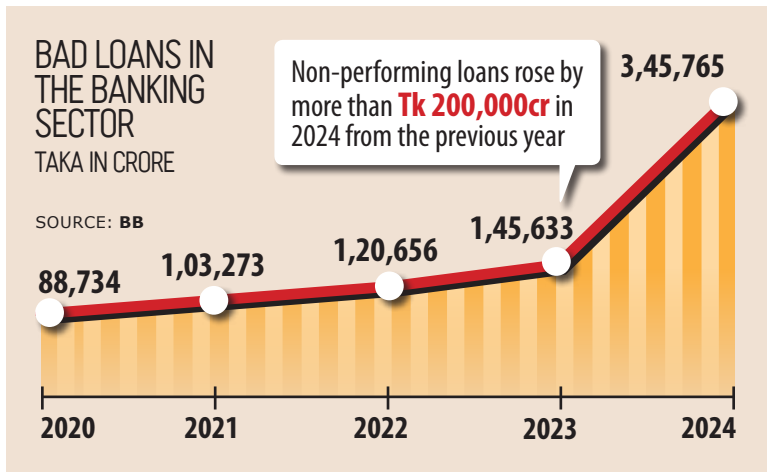
Defaulted loans in the country's banking sector reached a record Tk 3,45,765 crore at the end of 2024 as toxic loans increased sharply following the political changeover in August last year.

At the end of last year, total outstanding loans stood at Tk 17,11,402 crore, 20.20 percent of which have turned sour, according to the latest data from the Bangladesh Bank, which was released through a press conference for the first time.

However, distressed assets -- which include written-off loans, rescheduled loans and loans tied up in the Money Loan Court -- stood at Tk 6,68,598 crore.

At the end of September last year, bad loans stood at Tk 2,82,977 crore. In the following three months, the tally increased by Tk 60,788 crore.

This means defaulted loans increased by a staggering Tk 2,00,132 crore in 2024.



Defaulted loans have increased sharply since the political changeover, as the true picture of the sector, concealed during the Awami League government's 16-year regime, has now come to light, The Daily Star has learnt from bankers.

In a statement, the central bank said that defaulted loans increased due to a decline in new loan disbursements and loan renewals, as well as the rescheduling of the maturity period of term loans by the central bank.

Some loans became defaulted following central bank inspections and the vacating of court-issued stay orders related to loan classification.

Bad loans also increased due to the reclassification of rescheduled loans after non-payment of instalments, the statement added.

The growing trend of bad loans could not be arrested as those loans were concealed under the previous regime but have now come to light, said BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur at the press conference yesterday.

Mansur was appointed the central bank governor on August 13 last year.

Some large borrowers, including S Alam Group and Beximco Group, defaulted heavily after the Awami League's fall, pushing the total to an unprecedented level.

The defaulted loan ratio of state-run banks stood at 42.83 percent, while that of private sector banks was 15.60 percent, BB data showed.

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A ruckus over the launch of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad, led by several leaders of the Students Against Discrimination, at Dhaka University's Madhur Canteen yesterday. Private university students alleged that they have been sidelined in the new organisation and are seen trying to stop the press conference.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

GAS PRICE HIKE Protests, chaos at BERC hearing Businesses, consumer groups slam 'illogical' proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A public hearing organised by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) yesterday descended into chaos as business representatives and consumer rights activists strongly opposed a proposed hike in gas price.

The event, held at the capital's BIAM auditorium, saw protests, disruptions, and demands for a fresh hearing on how to lower gas prices instead.

Even before the hearing began, the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) staged a human chain, against the proposed hike. During the hearing, activists chanted slogans, repeatedly disrupting the proceedings.

They argued that raising gas prices would stifle new investment, hinder job creation, disrupt exports,

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Scuffle mars launch of new student org

Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad committee announced; private univ students protest exclusion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new student organisation named Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad was launched yesterday amid protests by private university students for exclusion despite their role in the July uprising.

Launched at Madhur Canteen of Dhaka University, this organisation, led by former leaders of the Students Against Discrimination (SAD), said it would operate independently based on its own agendas and would refrain from partisan politics.

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NEW POLITICAL PARTY Ex-Shibir leaders to stay away

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

With just a day remaining before the launch of the new political party by the 2024 uprising activists, former Islami Chhatra Shibir leaders in the Jatiya Nagorik Committee have withdrawn from the initiative to form the party amid discord over leadership positions.


Ali Ahsan Zonaid and Rafi Salman Rifat, former presidents of Shibir's Dhaka University unit and leaders of the Nagorik Committee, announced their decision not to join the party on Facebook yesterday.

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WE MOURN

Mr. Abdullah Al Noman


(May 31, 1945 - February 25, 2025)



Eminent politician and former Minister, **Mr. Abdullah Al Noman**, has passed away. (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiu'n). He was the elder brother of Mr. Abdullah Al Ahsan, Honorable Director of **Dhaka Bank**.

Mr. Noman served as a Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh from 1991 to 1996 and 2001 to 2006. Mr. Noman was a dedicated leader whose contributions to our nation will be remembered with deep respect. His unwavering commitment to public service has left an indelible mark on our society.

Dhaka Bank family extends its deepest condolences on his passing away and prays for the salvation of his departed soul. May Almighty Allah grant him Jannatul Ferdous. Ameen.



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‘Neither my family nor I bought any land, flat when I was in office’

Says former adviser Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam, who recently resigned from his role as the information adviser to the interim government, yesterday revealed that a little over Tk 10 lakh was deposited into his Sonali Bank account during his time in office.



In a Facebook post, Nahid explained that before assuming his advisory role, he did not have a bank account. To receive his government salary, he opened a savings account with Sonali Bank’s Ramna Corporate Branch on August 21, 2024.

Nahid made the post following speculations and rumours on social media about his fortune.

In his post, Nahid attached two photos containing the account statement with a breakdown of transactions from August 21, 2024,

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Operators have been collecting tolls manually at Dhaka Elevated Expressway’s Mohakhali ramp since the electronic toll plaza was destroyed during the 2024 mass uprising. With the debris still lying on one side, it may look like the ramp is closed. So, the toll collectors use a loudspeaker to announce that the ramp is open. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Digital law reforms hasty, lack transparency

Say six int’l rights orgs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six international human rights organisations have expressed concern over the lack of transparency and inclusive consultation with stakeholders in the Bangladesh interim government’s efforts to reform digital governance policies and regulatory frameworks.

In a joint statement released on February 25, Access Now, ARTICLE 19, Human Rights Watch, PEN International, Robert F Kennedy Human Rights, and the Tech Global Institute said the government’s “fast-tracked” approach mirrors the legislative tactics of the previous administrations.

The organisations warned that the Cyber Protection Ordinance, 2025 (CPO) and the Personal Data Protection Ordinance, 2025 (PDPO) fail to address deeper structural issues in cyberspace governance.

Instead of aligning with Bangladesh’s constitutional and international human rights obligations, the proposed laws contain vague and overly broad provisions. These could be misinterpreted, misused, and abused, particularly to suppress human rights defenders, journalists, and civil society groups.

The organisations also raised concerns about the absence of inclusive stakeholder engagement or an evidence-based legislative process by the Interim Government of Bangladesh when considering certain reforms.

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Scuffle mars launch of new student org

FROM PAGE 1

In a latenight development, private university students, who have long been alleging their exclusion from all post-August 5 platforms and committees, blocked Bangla Motor for an hour till 10:45pm to protest “attacks” on them earlier in the day by supporters of the newly formed organisation.

Demanding immediate dissolution of the committee, they said they would hold demonstrations across private universities today. If their demand is not met, they would go for a “Dhaka Blockade” programme on February 28, the day a new political party is to be launched by members of SAD and the Jatiya Nagorik Committee.

For now, the Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad will be led by a six-member central committee. There will also be a six-member DU unit.

The launch of the committee was slated for 3:00pm, but private university students showed up at the venue an hour later to protest their exclusion, stating they had been sidelined despite their significant role in the July uprising.

Around 5:15pm, when former SAD coordinator Abu Baker Majumder, now convener of the Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad, was announcing the new student body’s name and leadership, the private university students surrounded him before he could finish, and a scuffle broke out.

The demonstrators demanded the inclusion of Rifat Rashid, a DU student who was a July Movement coordinator, in the committee. He,

however, was already included in the leadership but not in the position he desired.

It is not yet known why private university students fought for a DU student’s position while protesting for their own recognition.



A student being beaten up near Mall Chattar on Dhaka University campus before the launch of the new student body Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Members of the new student body then brought out a procession from Madhur Canteen, but a clash ensued as they reached the Lecture Theatre building. Several private university students were injured.

Some were severely beaten up by members of the new group at Hakim

Chattar at around 6:00pm. At least two students had to be taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Tariqul Islam, a student of the University of Information Technology and Sciences, said, “We also played an important role in the uprising

the committee’s announcement seemed driven by other agendas, but discussions will be held to address legitimate concerns.”

Chhatra Sangsad “Education, Unity, Liberation” is the motto of the new student organisation.

The central committee will be as follows: Abu Baker Majumder, convener; Tawhid Mohammad Siam, senior joint convener; Zahid Ahsan, member secretary; Rifat Rashid, senior joint member secretary; Tahmid Al Muddassir Chowdhury, chief organiser; and Ashrefa Khatun spokesperson.

The DU unit will have Abdul Kader as convener; Limon Mahmud Hasan as senior joint convener; Mohir Alam as member secretary; Al Amin Sarker as senior joint member secretary; Hasib Al Islam as chief organiser; and Rafia Rehnuma Hridi as spokesperson. Abu Baker was also a member secretary of DU’s now dissolved Gonotantrik Chhatra Shakti, led by Akhter Hossen and Nahid Islam.

Notably, Hasib, a key coordinator of SAD, was served a show-cause notice for publicly stating that the July uprising would not have been possible without arson and police killings.

On the other hand, Al Amin Sarker, who also played an active role in the uprising, was a former leader of the now banned Chhatra League.

In 2022, it was reported that he was the deputy secretary for scholarships at DU’s Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall Chhatra League. However, he resigned from the post during the uprising.

Polls likely by end of this year

FROM PAGE 1

who called on him at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka.

Yunus also sought Germany’s help in implementing the reform initiatives taken by his government.

“We need all your support for the New Bangladesh. We are working hard to make the general election a success,” he said.

Praising the German people and its economy, Prof Yunus expressed Dhaka’s desire for a special

“We have close relations with Germany, but we want a different relationship – a special relationship – with Germany,” Yunus added.

relationship with Berlin to deepen trade and investment ties with Europe’s largest economy.

“We have close relations with Germany, but we want a different relationship – a special relationship – with Germany,” he added.

Zarah Bruhn, who is visiting Bangladesh to learn more about social businesses and microcredit, praised Prof Yunus’ leadership, stating that Bangladesh would prosper during his tenure.

“I am a big enthusiast of your work,” she said, adding that she is eager to launch social businesses in Germany.

The two also discussed the Three Zero Movement launched by Prof Yunus, social businesses, poverty reduction initiatives, and the future of welfare states.

Lamiya Morshed, senior secretary and head of SDG Affairs at the Bangladesh government, also attended the meeting.

True extent of bad loans emerges

FROM PAGE 1

Bad loans have increased sharply in some Shariah-based banks controlled by the controversial business conglomerate S Alam Group and in some other banks where Awami League-affiliated businesses had influence, said central bank officials.

Janata had the highest volume of bad loans in the banking sector at the end of last year: as much as 66.8 percent of the bank’s total outstanding loans have turned bad.

Of the Tk 67,300 crore of Janata’s defaulted loans, about Tk 23,000 crore is of Beximco’s, which were classified in the last quarter of 2024.

S Alam Group is another major defaulter, with its defaulted loans at Janata Bank reaching Tk 10,200 crore. It was followed by AnonTex Group (Tk 7,800 crore) and Crescent Group (Tk 3,800 crore).

Not only have bad loans increased, but loan disbursements also rose

sharply during the previous regime.

The focus should now be on recovering the money by selling collateral, said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank.

“We have to learn from previous mistakes and avoid repeating them. There must be a willingness to fix the banking sector as intention is the key factor. For that to happen, long-term reforms are needed,” he added.

Ensuring proper loan sanctioning, enforcing single borrower exposure limits, halting loan rescheduling and appointing administrators at troubled banks are necessary for the ailing sector, said Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, at a recent event.

She also emphasised protecting central bank independence, ending bank bailouts through recapitalisation and a licence freeze for new banks.

Protests, chaos at BERC hearing

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and severely impact the national economy.

After the hearing, BERC Chairman Jalal Ahmed assured attendees that all concerns would be taken into account before making a final decision.

BERC proposed increasing gas prices for new industries to Tk 75.72 per cubic meter, up from the current Tk 30. Existing industries would also be charged a higher rate if they exceeded their sanctioned gas load.

Earlier in the day, Petrobangla and six gas distribution companies presented separate but similar proposals, stating that industries with new gas connections would pay 50% of their bills at the existing rate and the remaining 50% at the proposed higher rate.

At the hearing, Prof M Shamsul Alam, CAB’s energy adviser, strongly criticised the proposal, calling it “against the public interest,” “illogical,” and “unacceptable.” He urged the authorities to reject it by Sunday to prevent mass protests.

“It is possible to lower gas prices by identifying the sectors from where the ousted government looted money and by reducing corruption in the sector,” he said. “A public hearing should be held on how to reduce gas prices instead.”

Business leaders and politicians also condemned the proposal.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, pointed out that the technical committee failed to assess the potential economic impact of the price hike. He demanded a separate hearing focused on price reduction strategies.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, blamed wrong policies and corruption for the crisis, arguing that a price hike was unjustified. “Businesses and industries are already struggling and there is no need to hike the gas price to add fuel to the fire,” he said.

Former Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and

Industry (FBCCI) president Mir Nasir Hossain called for an energy audit to determine the actual costs. “Even if we accept the price hike, who will guarantee uninterrupted gas supply?” he questioned.

Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez, president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries, said the economy had been in decline since the previous government forcibly increased gas prices, leading to reduced investments and a 35% drop in factory production capacity.

“The cost of importing fabric from India has become cheaper than producing cotton locally. Do we want to increase our dependence on India in this sector?” he asked.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the previous government raised gas prices by over 150% in one go, placing a massive financial burden on industries.

“As a result, a factory that used to pay Tk 2.1 crore per month in gas bills now pays Tk 5.25 crore,” he said, calling the decision “self-destructive” for Bangladesh’s industries.

Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), urged not to take steps that may jeopardise businesses here and aid the neighbouring countries.

“We are trapped in our investments here,” he said, demanding tax reductions and lower gas prices.

Other industry leaders echoed similar concerns. Bangladesh Steel Mills Association President Mohammad Jahangir Alam suggested aligning industrial gas prices with those charged to power plants.

Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Moynul Islam warned that higher gas prices could shut down ceramic industries, which rely heavily on gas.

“We need an uninterrupted gas supply before any price hike,” he urged.



Alexey Likhachev, director general of Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation of the Russian Federation, at a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: PID

ROOPPUR PLANT Yunus urges its quick completion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The test run of the \$12.65 billion Rooppur nuclear power plant will begin soon as Bangladesh's landmark project is on course for a timely completion, said a Rosatom delegation yesterday.

At present, the dry run of the project is going on, while the test run will commence soon, Alexey Likhachev, director general of Rosatom, told Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

A delegation of Rosatom called on Yunus at his official residence Jamuna, according to a press release from the Chief Adviser's Press Wing.

Likhachev shared updates on the project,

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Education system mirrors today's divided society

Rehman Sobhan tells discussion



There are now five different systems, with divisions even within Bangla-medium institutions. As a result, society has become increasingly fragmented and unequal.



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Improving the quality of education requires not just financial resources but also strong political and governance commitment, said eminent economist Rehman Sobhan yesterday.

He made the remarks at a programme titled "State of Education: Insights for the Future", organised by the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center in the capital.

Sobhan, also the chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue, highlighted disparities in Bangladesh's education systems, like the madrasas, English-

medium, and Bangla-medium institutions.

"There are now five different systems, with divisions even within Bangla-medium institutions. English-medium students often go to private universities. As a result, society has become increasingly fragmented and unequal," he said.

"The education system you are now getting today is a reflection of this divided society," he added.

He said the educational landscape has undergone significant changes, now shaped primarily by class and market forces. Discussions have emerged on how market dynamics increasingly

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Protesters injured in the July-August uprising gather outside the Chief Adviser's Office in Dhaka yesterday, demanding changes to the government's classification for compensating the injured. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



A DAY IN COURT

Of handcuffs and helmets

Salman, Anisul, Nuruzzaman brought to court for hearing

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

As Salman F Rahman was brought to a courtroom of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka from its lockup yesterday, his hands were cuffed behind his back.

Wearing a police helmet and bulletproof vest, Salman, former adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, was escorted from the lockup at 10:05am, flanked by officers.

Behind him, former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, also in a helmet and bulletproof vest, had one hand cuffed while the other rested on top, as he walked towards the courtroom.

Former law minister Anisul Huq and former social welfare minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed followed, with both of their hands cuffed behind their backs.

Further back, former deputy minister of environment and forests Abdullah Al

Islam Jakob walked with hands behind his back, but one hand being cuffed. Former Awami League lawmaker Haji Mohammad Salim, wearing a helmet and bulletproof vest, was similarly restrained while he walked.

Former social welfare minister Dipu Moni was also seen being escorted by two female police officers, as they held her hands.

At 10:08am, the accused were placed in the dock, and handcuffs were removed from Salman, Anisul, and Nuruzzaman.

Salman, appearing sombre, spoke briefly with his lawyer.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Sefatullah began the hearing at 10:22am on murder cases linked to the July uprising. By 10:35am, the session ended, and Salman, Anisul, and Nuruzzaman were handcuffed again in

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'Change the compensation classification' Demand injured protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of protesters injured in the July-August uprising yesterday gathered outside the Chief Adviser's Office in Dhaka and staged a sit-in to press home their three-point demand.

The sit-in began at Gate-1 of the Chief Adviser's Office at 11:00am, said Nazmul Jannat Shah, inspector (Investigation) at Tejgaon Police Station.

The protesters also announced to stage an all-night sit-in there.

They vowed not to leave until fulfillment of their demands, including: enacting a law to protect the injured and the families of martyrs of the uprising and establishing a 24/7 hotline for the injured; providing monthly allowances to affected individuals and increasing the "lump sum" payments for compensation, and reducing the current three-tier system to just two by abolishing Category C.

"The government's categorisation system is flawed. We have submitted a memorandum, urging the government to classify those who are unable to work under Category A, and those who can work under Category B, and abolish Category C," said Mohammad Masum, a student of Kabi Nazrul Government College.

"We also demand increasing the one-time payment for Category A from Tk 5 lakh, and a

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PRAYER TIMING						
FEBRUARY 27						
	Faazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN	5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30	
JAMAAAT	5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION						

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- ন্যূনতম ৬ মাস মেয়াদী
- যেকোন দিন যতবার ইচ্ছা টাকা জমাদানের সুবিধা
- কোন মাসে টাকা জমা দিতে না পারলেও কোন জরিমানা দিতে হবে না
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PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2025

Announcement for O & A Level Private and School Candidates

Criteria

Students who appeared for the following sessions & qualify for the award criteria will be eligible for the gala event. The schools following Cambridge Curriculum will be eligible to register for **October/November 2023, May/June 2024, October/November 2024** and schools following Edexcel Curriculum will be eligible to register for **October/November 2023, January 2024, May/June 2024, October/November 2024** sessions.

Last date of registration is 25th March 2025.

Cambridge

(6 A's or above for "O" level or IGCSE in one or two consecutive sessions)

(3 A's or above for "A" level in one or two consecutive sessions)

Edexcel

(Grading of "7" or above in 6 Subjects for IGCSE in one or two consecutive sessions)

(3 A's or above for IAL in one or two consecutive sessions)

Private Candidates

Private candidates are requested to submit their information at The Daily Star office to be recognized as awardees. Contact The Daily Star, 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215, till **25th March 2025, between 11:00 am and 4:30 pm (except on Fridays and Saturdays)**, with their **original** and a **photocopy** of the **Statement of Results or Certificates and 2 (two) passport-size photos**.

Please call this number at **+8801786111100** or email at **o.alevel.tds@gmail.com** before heading to the specified address.

Note

➔ School candidates are requested to contact their respective schools for registration.

➔ If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware, please pass on the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony.

Of handcuffs and helmets

FROM PAGE 3

the same manner before being taken back to lockup.

Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Omar Faruq Faruqi said he was unaware of any accused being brought to court with hands cuffed behind their backs. "No accused should be presented in court in such a manner."

Anisul and Mamun were placed on a three day remand each in a case over the death of Jihad Hossain, 23, in Jatrabari during the quota movement on July 19.

Anisul was placed on another three-day remand in a separate case over the death of Swetchhasebak Dal activist Wasim Sheikh, 38, in Jatrabari on July 18.

HAJI SALIM LOSES TEMPER

Sixty-six-year-old Haji Salim, who cannot speak, appeared distressed in the courtroom dock.

Three defence lawyers attempted to send him some messages, but he struggled to understand. Frustrated, he was seen losing his temper.

Salim's chief lawyer Pran Nath then handed him two written pages, after which Salim tried to convey a message through gestures.

Asked about the message, Pran Nath said Salim was informed that 10 acres of land, which he owns under the name of Madina Maritime near Payra Port in Patuakhali, were being acquired by the government.

"Salim is deeply frustrated as he is not receiving adequate facilities in prison. He struggles to communicate, and even when he tries, no one understands him clearly. We are working to ensure the facilities as much as possible within the court's approval," Pran Nath told The Daily Star.

No arrest in 3 days

FROM PAGE 5

over the lack of arrests, fearing the delay may reduce the chances of recovering the stolen gold.

His elder brother, Amir Hossain, said Anwar had been taking the gold home for security reasons for the last two months.

Meanwhile, jewellery traders, family members,

and locals staged a protest yesterday. Around 11:30am, members of Jewellery Owners Association from Khilgaon, Sabujbag and Rampura marched towards Rampura Police Station.

They issued a deadline for arrests by Saturday and threatened further protests in front of Jatiya Press Club on Monday.

Change the compensation

FROM PAGE 3

reassessment of the Tk 3 lakh compensation for Category B," he added.

The protesters argued that the current classification system "unjustly" places some

severely injured individuals in Category C, depriving them of financial assistance.

They also demanded a written response from the government regarding their demands.

Yunus urges

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emphasising that the construction work is progressing as planned, with multiple milestones having already been achieved.

During the discussions, Yunus laid emphasis on the timely completion of

the project with a view to meeting Bangladesh's growing energy needs.

Both sides discussed the merit of revising the Intergovernmental Credit Agreement (IGCA) by extending the credit utilisation period until the end of 2026.

Education system

FROM PAGE 3

influence the education system, determining choices for students, he added.

"The ruling class – those who run the country – have used money for politics and business, creating a new elite. This class has distanced itself from the Bangladeshi education system," he said.

Sobhan said there are problems in the governance of the educational system.

"Unless we view this issue in a broader social context, and unless we address the need to create a more egalitarian society, we won't make real progress. The growing inequality in our society is not being effectively tackled, and this is at the root of many of our educational problems. This is the unfortunate reality we face. It is only when all the key people have a stake in this system that you are going to see real progress taking place."

"Until then, we must continue to apply pressure to raise standards. But raising standards requires a revolution – not only in the education budget but also in the culture of governance and politics," Sobhan added.

Speaking as chief guest, Dr Bidhan Ranjan Roy Poddar, adviser to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, acknowledged flaws within government operations, including inefficiency, negligence, and corruption.

"The graffiti on walls reflects students' aspirations. A common theme among them is the call for reducing inequality. If I can contribute even slightly to improving primary education, it will be a step towards reducing social disparities," he said.

Prof Sharmind Neelormi of Economics at Jahangirnagar University emphasised the need for a

higher education budget but stressed proper fund utilisation.

Mostafizur Rahaman, deputy director of CAMPE, questioned, "Is today's education system fit for purpose?"

Education must align with market demands, especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which will create many job opportunities.

He called for higher taxation on top-income groups to fund education, arguing that the government often claims it lacks sufficient resources.

Dr Manzoor Ahmed, professor emeritus at BRAC University and convener of the Primary and Non-formal Education Consultation Committee, said, "We need to move away from the fragmented and ad hoc decision-making of the past, which was often dependent on the preferences of individual ministry officials."

He proposed forming a consultative committee with sector-specific subcommittees to guide a five-year education sector plan and a ten-year perspective plan, which should be used for consultation on key decision-making issues.

CAMPE Deputy Director Tapon Kumar Dash delivered the welcome speech, while Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury moderated the event.

Rabiul Islam, additional secretary (College Division) of the Secondary and Higher Education Department, attended as a special guest.

More than 150 participants, including students, parents, education experts, researchers, development partners, government officials, and teacher associations, attended the discussion.

10,570 held

FROM PAGE 5

The arrestees included 29 alleged robbers, 28 snatchers, six extortionists, 10 thieves, 19 drug dealers, and 45 people with outstanding warrants.

A total of 68 cases were filed, and legal action has been initiated against those arrested.

51 CAUGHT RED-HANDED
The Bangladesh Army, in coordination with Rab and

police, arrested 51 suspected criminals, including juvenile gang members, muggers and armed criminals, red-handed, said a release by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

This was part of ongoing efforts to ensure public safety and uphold the rule of law. The operations targeted areas like Mohammadpur, Adabor, Azimpur, and Uttara, among others.

CONVOCATION CORNER

BRACU holds 16th convocation



CITY DESK

BRAC University held its 16th convocation on Tuesday at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal, Dhaka.

A total of 4,829 students were

conferred upon degrees. Besides, two received chancellor's gold medals and 28 vice-chancellor's gold medals.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, adviser to the education ministry, and VC Prof Syed Ferhat Anwar spoke on the occasion.

Academy Award-winning filmmaker and journalist Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy was the convocation speaker. Chairperson of BRAC University's Board of Trustees Tamara Hasan Abed and the convocation committee chair Dr Sadia Hamid Kazi were also present.



22nd convocation of AIUB held

CITY DESK

The 22nd convocation ceremony of the American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) was held at its permanent campus in Kuril, Dhaka on Saturday, said a press release.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, adviser to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Science and Technology, presided over the event.

UGC chairman Prof Dr SMA Faiz attended as the special guest.

Prof Salimullah Khan was the convocation speaker.

6th convocation of BUBT

CITY DESK

Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) held its 6th convocation ceremony at the BCFC in Agargaon, Dhaka on Monday.

The event was presided over by Prof SMA Faiz, chairman of the University Grants Commission.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr ABM Shawkat Ali delivered the welcome address, while Md Shamsul Huda, chairman of the Board of Trustees, spoke about the university's progress.

Dr Syed Manzoorul Islam, professor emeritus at Dhaka University, was the convocation speaker.



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Legal Notice
In the Supreme Court of Bangladesh
High Court Division
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)
Company Matter No. 175 of 2025

Grind Tech Ltd. having the registered office at Sheltech Tower, 60 Sheikh Russel Square (New), 55 Lake Circus Kalabagan (Old), West Panthapath, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh represented by its Managing Director, Mr. Tanvir Ahmed. ... Petitioner

-VERSUS-

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, T.C.B Bhaban, I, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. ... Respondent

Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 for confirmation of the amendment to the Memorandum of Association of the company was moved in the High Court Division of Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner against The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, T.C.B. Bhaban, I, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. The Hon'ble Judge Ahmed Sohel has admitted said application on 10-02-2025 and directed the petitioner to file an affidavit in compliance on or before 06-03-2025. Any person interested in the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either by himself or through his agent or Advocate on or before 06-03-2025. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned upon payment of charges.

Md. Abdullah Al Mamun
Advocate
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Chamber # 5029 (Annex)
Supreme Court Bar Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
Mobile: +880 1780-336677

The First Private University with Permanent Government Charter
Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology
141-142 Love Road, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208
Phone : PABX 8870422 (Ext: 103 & 107); Website: www.aust.edu

FACULTY SEARCH
Applications are invited for the teaching posts in the following Departments/School:
1. Architecture, 2. Civil Engineering, 3. Computer Science and Engineering, 4. Electrical and Electronic Engineering, 5. Mechanical and Production Engineering (IPE & ME Discipline), 6 Arts and Sciences and 7. School of Business. **Details can be obtained from the website (www.aust.edu).**
All applicants including Professor and Associate Professor are requested to fill up the online form. Applicants for the position of Lecturer (Grade-II) to Assistant Professor are requested to download the online generated CV and send it to registrar@aust.edu. Please also send the hard copy of the online generated CV to the Registrar along with a full resume, copies of published articles/papers, two recent passport-size colored photographs and attested copies of all certificates, mark sheets/ transcripts, testimonials, etc.
For the post of **Professor and Associate Professor**, applicants are requested to submit 10 (ten) hard copies of their applications in the prescribed Application Form along with all certificates, mark sheets/ transcripts, testimonials, etc.
Last date of application is 13 March 2025.
Only shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview.

INNOVATION :: CREATION :: LEADERSHIP

Legal Notice
In the Supreme Court of Bangladesh
High Court Division
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)
Company Matter No. 198 of 2025

Transcom Distribution Company Limited, represented by its Managing Director, Ms. Simeen Rahman, having the registered office at Gulshan Tower (11th Floor), Plot No. 31, Road No. 53, Gulshan North C/A, Gulshan-02, Dhaka-1212. ... Petitioner

-Versus-

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, T.C.B Bhaban, I, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. ... Respondent

Notice is hereby given that an application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of the Companies Act, 1994 for confirmation of the amendment to the Memorandum of Association of the company was moved in the High Court Division of Supreme Court of Bangladesh by the petitioner against The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, T.C.B. Bhaban, I, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka. The Hon'ble Judge Ahmed Sohel has admitted said application on 10-02-2025 and directed the petitioner to file an affidavit in compliance on or before 10/03/2025. Any person interested in the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either by himself or through his agent or Advocate on or before 10/03/2025. A copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned upon payment of charges.

Md. Abdullah Al Mamun
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Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Chamber#5029(Annex),
Supreme Court Bar Building, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.
Mobile: +880 1780-336677

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital
Mohakhali, Dhaka


e-GP Tender Notice

Memo No-DNCC DCH/2024-2025/Tender/001 Date: 26/02/2025

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no Offline/Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>), for more details, please contact support desk contact numbers, e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Acting Director, DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital, Mohakhali, Dhaka for the Procurement of:

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time
1036341	Supply of MSR Medicine Non EDCL (Tablet Items) for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1037312	Supply of MSR Medicine Non EDCL (Injection Items) for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1037360	Supply of MSR Medicine Non EDCL (Syp. Items) for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1036283	Supply of MSR Medicine Non EDCL (Eye Drop+Suppository+Cream+Gel+Saline Items) for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1036271	Supply of MSR (Light Instrument)-1 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1036286	Supply of MSR (Light Instrument)-2 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1032764	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-1 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1033127	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-2 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1033104	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-3 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1033095	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-4 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1032861	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-5 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1033092	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-6 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1032797	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-7 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1033088	Supply of MSR (Reagent & X-Ray Film)-8 for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1031990	Supply of Cleaning Materials for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1031016	Supply of Others Monihary/Stationary for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1030670	Supply of Computer & Accessory for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1031822	Supply of Diet (Dry Ration) for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00
1031922	Supply of Diet (Fresh Ration) for 2024-25 FY	27 Feb 2025 10:00	23 March 2025 13:00	24 March 2025 13:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer, e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online on the dates stated above.


Colonel Tanvir Ahmed
Director
DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital
Mohakhali, Dhaka
Phone: 0241082277

GD-527

Do not take law into your own hands Urges home adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Home Adviser Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday urged all not to take the law into their own hands and called on the police to take a more proactive role in maintaining law and order nationwide.

He stressed the importance of law enforcement in ensuring public safety.

The adviser said this while speaking to reporters at an event in Savar.

He said law enforcers are working to prevent lawlessness. The adviser also said he himself patrolled the capital early in the morning to assess the law-and-order situation.

SC allows Azharul to appeal against death penalty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday allowed Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam to move an appeal before this court challenging his death penalty for crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

The apex court also fixed April 22 for the appeal hearing.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division, led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, passed the order after hearing a petition seeking a review of its earlier verdict that upheld the International Crimes Tribunal's (ICT) ruling sentencing Azharul to death.



Students of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (Kuet) vacate their residential halls yesterday morning following the university administration's directive. The decision, announced in an official notice on Tuesday, ordered the indefinite closure of all residential halls due to security concerns amid recent student protests. Academic activities will also remain suspended until further notice.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

10,570 held in 'Devil Hunt' since Feb 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four Union Parishad chairmen of Jamalpur, who also hold positions in the local Awami League, attended a law and order committee meeting in Melandaha upazila yesterday. Little did they know, their participation would take a dark twist.

As the monthly law and order meeting concluded, police arrested them from the upazila parishad building as part of the ongoing "Operation Devil Hunt", on charges of sabotage.

"They were arrested as part of Operation Devil Hunt for their role in attacks and sabotage against student and mass movements," said Jamalpur's Superintendent of

Police Syed Rafiqul Islam.

The arrestees are Shahadat Hossain Bhutto, chairman of Charbanipakuria Union Parishad, Mamunur Rashid Mamun, chairman of Fulkocha Union Parishad, Saidul Islam Litu, chairman of Ghosherpara Union Parishad and SM Sayedur Rahman, chairman of Shyampur Union Parishad.

All of them hold positions in local AL committees.

Till yesterday afternoon, the joint forces arrested 678 more people across the country in the past 24 hours, according to the Police Headquarters (PHQ).

With the latest arrests, the total number of people arrested in the operation since its launch on

February 8 has risen to 10,570.

Additionally, 1,012 others, who were either accused or wanted in previous cases, were also arrested across the country, in the past 24 hours till yesterday afternoon.

Analysing reports from some districts, this newspaper found that many of the arrestees are members of the AL and its associate bodies.

Many are accused in cases filed after the fall of the Hasina-led government on August 5.

289 HELD IN CRACKDOWN IN CAPITAL

In a 24-hour operation, Dhaka Metropolitan Police and other law enforcement agencies arrested 289 suspected criminals in the capital, said a DMP release.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

BANASREE ARMED ROBBERY

No arrest in 3 days

Locals, jewellery traders stage protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days after the armed robbery and shooting in Banasree, law enforcers have yet to arrest anyone, prompting protests by locals and jewellery traders demanding immediate action.

On Sunday night, armed robbers ambushed Anwar Hossain, 43, owner of Alankar Jewelers, on Road 7, Block D in Banasree.

They snatched his bag containing gold and cash, and stabbed and shot him when

he tried to resist.

Anwar is currently undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet and stab wounds.

His wife, Hosne Ara, filed a case with Rampura Police Station, naming six to seven unidentified criminals.

Inspector (Investigation) Moshikul Alam of Rampura Police Station said police are analysing CCTV footage and investigating possible leads.

Anwar's family expressed frustration

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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পূর্বাচল
(এসিয়ার হাউসিং সল্যুশন)
২০ বিঘা

৩০০ ফিট
(জেলসিটি সেন্টার ১৭ নং ব্লক ৩০০ ফিট)
২০ বিঘা

০১৮৪১৪১৩১২০, ০১৮৪১৪১৩১৭৭,
০১৭১৩৮৫৯২৯৯, ০১৭০৯৯২৪৩৪২
০১৭৩৩৩৮৫৮০৩, ০১৭৩৩৩৮৫৭৬৭
০১৩২২৮৫৪৫২৮

ক্ল ইকোনমি জোন
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Unmatched Location

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কুয়াকাটা
(সৌ-বীচ এবং জেটি সংলগ্ন)
১০০ বিঘা

কক্সবাজার
(মেরিন ড্রাইভ সংলগ্ন)
৬০ বিঘা

ROI UNCOMPROMISED

০১৮৪১৪১৩১২০
০১৭০৯৯২৪৩৪২, ০১৭১৩৮৫৯২৯৯
০১৭৩৩৩৮৫৭৬৭, ০১৩২২৮৫৪৫২৮

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२.३ भाष्यम्

২.৫ শারীরিক স্থান:

॥ ३ विविध कार्यः ॥


৪. নির্বাচন পদ্ধতি:

১৫. প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় প্রতি জেলায় নিয়োগযোগ্য প্রকৃত শূন্য পদে কোটার অনুকূলে সরকার কর্তৃক জারিকৃত বিদ্যমান কোটা পদ্ধতি (মেধা, মুক্তিযোদ্ধা, শহিদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও বীরসঙ্গর সন্তান; ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠী এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী ও তৃতীয় লিঙ্গের জন্য) অনুসরণ করে লিখিত এবং মনস্তাত্ত্বিক ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় প্রাপ্ত নম্বরের ভিত্তিতে মোছাক্রম অনযায়ী প্রার্থীদের প্রাথমিকভাবে নির্বাচন করা হবে;

৮. নিয়োগ ও চাকরির সুবিধাদি:

প্রার্থীদের নিম্নবর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময়ে স্ব-স্ব জেলার পুলিশ লাইন্স মাঠে উপস্থিত থাকতে হবে।

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মাদারীপুর, কিশোরগঞ্জ, রাঙ্গামাটি, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া, ঝিনাইদহ, নড়াইল, সিরাজগঞ্জ, চাঁপাইনবাবগঞ্জ, কুড়িগ্রাম, নুনাগঞ্জ, জামালপুর, ফরিদপুর, টাঙ্গাইল, কুমিল্লা, ঝাংগাহাড়ি, ঝুলনা	৬, ৭ ও ৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ০৮.০০ ঘটিকা	২৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা	৭ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা
সাতক্ষীরা, নওগাঁ, জয়পুরহাট, পঞ্চগড়, হবিগঞ্জ, নেত্রকোণা, ঢাকা, রাজবাড়ী, ফেনী, লক্ষ্মীপুর, হুয়াডাঙ্গা, বগুড়া, দিনাজপুর, সিলেট, ঝালকাঠি, পটুয়াখালী	১০, ১১ ও ১২ এপ্রিল, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ০৮.০০ ঘটিকা	৫ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা	১৫ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা
নারায়ণগঞ্জ, মুন্সীগঞ্জ, কক্সবাজার, মেহেরপুর, নাটোর, লালমনিরহাট, গাইবান্ধা, শেরপুর, ভোলা, বরগুনা, ময়মনসিংহ, গাজীপুর, শরীয়তপুর, মানিকগঞ্জ, গোপালগঞ্জ, বাবদরদান	১৬, ১৭ ও ১৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ০৮.০০ ঘটিকা	১৩ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা	২২ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা
নোয়াখালী, বামেরহাট, যশোর, রাজশাহী, ঠাকুরগাঁও, নীলফামারী, মৌলভীবাজার, নরসিংদী, চাঁদপুর, চট্টগ্রাম, কুষ্টিয়া, মাগুরা, পাবনা রংপুর, পিরোজপুর, বরিশাল	১৯, ২০ ও ২১ এপ্রিল, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ০৮.০০ ঘটিকা	২০ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা	২৯ মে, ২০২৫ খ্রি. ১০.০০ ঘটিকা


সারোয়ার মুর্শেদ শামীম, বিপিএম-সেবা
বিপি ৭৪০১০২০৭৯৩
অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি (রিজিষ্টার্ড অ্যান্ড ক্যারিয়ার প্ল্যানিং)-
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা

આપતિ કિ મ્હ, મ્હાત્રી એવં દાશવં જત્ય યા કાતા ધ્યાલજી શ્રદ્ધા પ્રમુત?



The Daily Star



How Can We Reduce Plastic's Impact on Food and Health Systems?

Unilever Bangladesh Limited and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), in partnership with The Daily Star, organised a roundtable discussion titled 'Sustainable Plastic Solutions in Food and Health Systems' on 12 December 2024. Below is a summary of the discourse.



Rudaba Khondker,
Country Director,
National Nutrition
Services (NNS), Global
Alliance for Improved
Nutrition (GAIN)

In the post-COVID era of 2022, we commenced operations in five distinct markets—New Market, Bonolata Fresh Market, Islambagh Fresh Market, Mohakhali Fresh Market, and Mohammadpur Town Hall. These markets were chosen as they had been closed during the pandemic. As the livelihoods of many are deeply intertwined with commerce, it was imperative to re-establish a reliable bond between buyers and sellers to restore confidence and ensure compliance with essential health measures amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic.

While working in these markets, we prioritised enhancing human-centric elements, such as improving consumer purchasing patterns to boost their capacity for acquiring safe and healthy foods, ensuring sellers take responsibility for the quality and fair pricing of their goods, and promoting fair pricing practices in the markets. Observing the prevalent behaviour of consumers carrying products in multiple polythene bags, we introduced a strategy to segregate plastics and other types of waste, aiming to enhance waste management. In the Mohammadpur Town Hall Market and Mohakhali Market, we succeeded in achieving complete waste segregation. We approached Unilever Bangladesh to pilot a learning initiative targeting consumer behavior change for plastic reduction and work with wet market

positive behavioural changes, and implementing best practice technologies. In creating an enabling environment, key actions include enhancing infrastructure, community practices, interpersonal interactions, and establishing policy-regulatory frameworks for effective enforcement. Behaviour change is equally vital, yet often hampered by a lack of cognitive understanding about market maintenance—such as cleanliness and waste segregation—and the perception that these responsibilities do not lie with them, thus ignoring their impact on consumers.

During the COVID pandemic's onset, markets faced closure due to infection fears. In 2022, partnering with North City Corporation, we enhanced safety in kitchen markets, adding women's toilets, breastfeeding corners, and better flooring, while segregating plastic waste.

In April 2024, we launched a dedicated pilot project, For People & Planet: Resilient, Healthy & Sustainable Food & Environment Systems, in collaboration with Unilever Bangladesh to manage the plastics and polythene generated in markets. Our aim was to develop collaborative, sustainable solutions and set a successful example for Bangladesh.

Our project activities in these markets encompassed distributing dustbins to promote segregation of plastic waste and forming committees to address plastic pollution within wet market. All kitchen markets in Dhaka's two city corporations have elected market committees comprising 9 to 11 members. From these, we established a Plastic Pollution Eradicator Committee with five members from each market to oversee daily plastic collection and monitoring. These committee members were dedicated to supporting the daily collection of plastic waste and overseeing the process.

We provided capacity-building training to 250 vendors on waste segregation and management, personal health and hygiene, safe and



kg of plastic waste in Mohammadpur Town Hall Market, and our efforts are ongoing.

Through training and various campaigns, our sellers are now more aware of the harmful impacts of using plastic and polythene, significantly improving our waste management system. We have implemented separate disposal for organic and inorganic waste, and plastic is now sold to waste collectors, reducing litter in the market. These initiatives have heightened awareness among our sellers and buyers about responsible plastic use and disposal. While meetings and discussions are beneficial, what we urgently need are concrete laws to inspire the masses to adopt new pathways.



Shamim Ahmed,
President, Bangladesh
Plastic Goods
Manufacturers &
Exporters Association
(BPGMEA)

Plastic packaging is essential for preserving the quality packaged foods, extending shelf life, and ensuring food security. It is crucial to distinguish between plastic and pollution; our goal is to end plastic pollution, not the use of plastic itself. The complete elimination of plastic is neither feasible nor practical. Despite the polythene ban in 2002, its continued use underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the issue. Countries like Japan and the US use more plastic per capita but face less pollution due to long-standing awareness and effective plastic waste management.

Compared to other packaging materials, plastic has less environmental footprint and is a more practical and cost-effective solution for packaging items such as rice, fertilizer, iodised salt, and liquid milk. Additionally, hospitals rely heavily on plastic for medical equipment. Instead of targeting plastic, we must focus on reducing pollution and promoting sustainable practices.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is vital in promoting responsible use of plastic, circularity and waste management systems. Although we worked on EPR for months—incorporating inputs from the private sector and voluntary-based implementations, with yearly plans and rules for institutions (e.g., SMEs, multinationals)—progress has stalled. Incineration plants for waste treatment as end of life solution can help reduce waste volume while potentially generating energy, easing plastic-related pressures on Dhaka.



Shamima Akhter,
Director of Corporate
Affairs, Partnerships
and Communications,
Unilever Bangladesh
Limited

A World Bank assessment in Bangladesh identified thin, single-use polythene as one of the largest contributor to plastic pollution. These unbranded, lightweight bags, commonly sourced from wet markets and used widely in households, have persisted despite the 2002 ban. Our initiative with GAIN, therefore, focuses on reducing polythene use in wet markets, by engaging sellers, buyers and crating a better waste management practices. By combining behavior change targeting reduction with proper management, we have shown that change is possible.

Although not a groundbreaking initiative, our efforts have yielded results worth sharing with the nation. Wet markets and bazaars are critical hubs where collaborative efforts involving sellers, consumers, and businesses are essential to foster meaningful change in addressing this pressing issue. Responsible use and preventing plastic waste, particularly polybags, from ending up in landfills is a priority. While global plastic waste recycling rates are at 9%, Bangladesh's

share is 40%, which, though commendable, still leaves room for improvement. Much of this work is done by stakeholders in the informal sector and value chain formalization can give us further results.

Local government bodies, especially city corporations and relevant ministries, play a crucial role in this context. The city corporation regulates markets and enforces the Solid Waste Management Rule of 2021, which places primary responsibility for source segregation enactment. The Food Safety Act, which regulates the use of plastics in food packaging, also plays a significant role in plastic management. In this regard, the city corporation shall come forward and work with stakeholders proactively to enhance effective plastic waste management and promote sustainable practices.



Brig. General Imru-Al Quais,
Chief Health
Officer, Dhaka North
City Corporation

Under the City Corporation Act of 2009, Dhaka North City Corporation oversees 454 markets, with Mohammadpur Townhall and Mohakhali Bazaar standing out for their commendable waste management practices, particularly waste segregation at the source. An integrative approach involving the environment, waste management, and urban planning departments could effectively regulate, minimise, or even eliminate waste.

Focusing on source segregation is crucial in waste management. Recently, a project involving 1,000 households in Mirpur showed productive results when households took the initiative in waste segregation. However, when domestic workers handled waste, it often led to hazardous situations.

Dhaka North City Corporation generates approximately 4,200 tons of waste daily, with 10% being plastic. We manage to recycle about 3,500 tons, but the remaining 15% ends up in rivers and drainage systems. We currently manage 60 acres of landfill in Amin Bazar, with an additional 30 acres recently acquired for mixed waste management, jointly managed with China.

Single-use plastics, such as polyethylene bags and PET bottles, are often processed by the informal sector for resale. However, it remains unclear whether this recycling process is regulated or approved by the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) or the Environmental Department.

Continuous processes involving urban and rural societies are non-negotiable. While knowledge about plastic's negative repercussions is widespread, the challenge lies in practising what we preach.

Plastic buy-back schemes are validated methods in developed countries. Implementing such policies in Dhaka requires public-private partnerships to be effective, with companies initiating their own programmes. Allocating public dustbins is only the beginning; securing them thereafter requires substantial financial backing.



Dr. Md. Raknuzzaman,
Vice
Chancellor, Jamalpur
Science & Technology
University

I have developed three key models: 1) Attitudinal Dilemma Change (CAD), 2) Buy and Back (BB), and 3) Alternative Plastic Management (APM).

The Buy and Back (BB) policy includes a waste management fee in the product price. Customers receive three polyethylene bags—one each for plastic waste, cans, and kitchen waste—promoting proper disposal and sustainability.

Plastic production requires 13,000

particles of raw materials, and plastic-induced products routinely pollute air, soil, and water, often leading to crop failures. I coined the term "plastic masking" to describe the tendency of plastic to "mask" environmental damage.

Discussing plastic waste management within the sustainability framework—considering social, economic, environmental, and political dimensions—can sometimes reduce waste by creatively involving all stakeholders. A comprehensive approach can pave the way for more effective and sustainable waste management systems.



Dr. Ijaz Hossain,
Professor, BUET

Many countries have established efficient waste management systems. For instance, Japan and Singapore have achieved 100 percent collection of plastic waste, which is either incinerated or sent to landfills. While landfilling remains the standard practice globally, managing these sites presents significant challenges that require careful attention. Unfortunately, our current waste management approach is ineffective. Plastic waste is often scattered haphazardly, highlighting the urgent need for substantial improvements in our solid waste management system. Notably, several cities in India have made remarkable progress in addressing these issues.

Data indicates that in our region, less than 50 percent of waste is collected, leaving the remainder to decay in open spaces or along roadsides. Unlike organic waste, which decomposes, plastic does not—it is carried by the wind, exacerbating the problem. Whenever waste management fails, blanket bans are often imposed as a quick fix.

A critical issue is the insufficient number of dustbins for proper plastic disposal. At one point, Dhaka City installed dustbins throughout the city, but most have since disappeared. The government previously enacted effective regulations, such as mandating that plastic bags be at least 20 microns thick. However, rather than reinforcing these regulations, the government abruptly opted for an outright ban on plastic bags, disregarding alternative models like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which have been successful in other countries.



Rina Sinha, Consumer,
Mohammadpur Town
Hall Market

In 2024, I attended a campaign organised by Gain, where discussions centred on the harmful effects of plastic on health. This was an eye-opener for me, as I hadn't been aware of these issues before. They encouraged us to use cloth bags instead of plastic ones. Furthermore, a breastfeeding zone and a women's washroom were established in the market, making it much more comfortable. Now, I find the market a pleasant place to shop.



Md. Majharul Haque Babor, Vendor, Poultry,
Mohammadpur Town
Hall Market

I was working as an office secretary at the Gain Bangladesh and Unilever jointly organised a seminar on plastic waste management. During the seminar, a committee was formed, and I was appointed as its head. Together, we initiated a programme to reduce plastic waste in the market. As part of this initiative, we were provided with two types of dustbins—one for dry waste and another for wet waste. On average, I collect 17-18 kilograms of plastic daily, and the programme is still ongoing. I store the collected plastic in one place before selling it to waste buyers.



Md. Firoz Alam Swapon, President,
Mohakhali Wet Market

The transformation has been remarkable. With funding, the Mohammadpur and Mohakhali markets were renovated with tiled floors, and separate toilets were constructed for men and women, along with a breastfeeding room and handwashing facilities. Recently, they also provided bins for both dry and wet waste. A few days ago, a representative from the Environment Department met with us to discuss plastic management. We informed them that we had already initiated ongoing work on plastic recycling in collaboration with Green Bangladesh.



Kazi Israt Jahan Illin,
Youth Representative,
Student

As part of the initiative, we organised an exhibition to educate buyers about plastic recycling and its potential for reuse. Additionally, we conducted quizzes with buyers and sellers, offering small gifts as incentives. During these interactions, many participants expressed a reluctance to use plastic but emphasised the lack of viable alternatives.

Expanding initiatives like this to other urban and rural areas could significantly enhance public awareness of plastic waste. As a youth representative, I am committed to continuing my involvement in such initiatives and believe that other young people would also be eager to participate in these efforts.



S. M. Faysal, Public
Relations and Projects
Manager, Unilever
Bangladesh Limited

Unilever Bangladesh has been driving plastic waste management initiatives since 2020, and we believe the issue needs to be addressed through a circular economic model. Through our largest initiative in Chattogram, we have shown that plastic waste can be managed through public-private collaboration and citizen awareness. However, we also understand that low-value polythene is impacting our environment, and hence, such plastic use needs to be reduced and managed through wider stakeholder involvement. Our collaboration with GAIN has given us great hope and inspiration for the future.

However, it is to be noted that more such initiatives need to be continued as behavior change takes time. We expect the market committee will continue the good practices instilled through the project and continue advocating for plastic alternatives. At the same time, segregated waste collection is always critical for keeping plastic in the loop, and hence, City Corporations' active collaboration is important to strengthen solid waste management.



Ashek Mahfuz, PhD,
Portfolio Lead, Large
Scale Food Fortification
(LSFF) and Value Chain,
GAIN

Indeed, a certain percentage of the nation's plastic is recycled. Sustainable solutions point towards alternatives to plastic (e.g., paper, wood, jute), but at this juncture, utilising the material responsibly remains the most viable option.

Unilever's participation in this initiative is truly commendable and greatly appreciated by all of us. Local companies have become responsible stakeholders as well. Youth representatives and students must also contribute, as the dissemination of awareness and recycling are notable facets. The country's leading department stores may also play a role, such as offering free bags.



Tanjim Ferdous,
In-Charge, NGOs &
Foreign Missions,
Business Development
Department, The Daily
Star & Moderator

In Bangladesh, plastic waste from wet markets has become a significant challenge for our environment and public health. The main objectives of this discussion are to share lessons from the pilot project, develop collaboration among stakeholders, cultivate scaling strategies to expand to other markets, integrate nutrition and health aspects with climate action plans, reduce plastic waste, and improve food security through local, innovative solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Focus on eliminating or reducing the use of thin, single-use polythene bags, especially in wet markets.
- » Involve government agencies, businesses, and NGOs in sustainable plastic management initiatives to create a more unified approach.
- » Conduct awareness campaigns to educate both vendors and consumers about the harmful effects of plastic and promote responsible disposal.
- » Encourage the adoption of sustainable alternatives to plastic

- such as paper, jute, or cloth bags especially for packaging food items.
- » Develop comprehensive waste management strategies that include segregating and recycling plastics to ensure circularity.
- » Promote sustainable market practices that benefit both the environment and public health
- » Promote Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) by developing policies that hold manufacturers accountable for the lifecycle of their plastic products.

actors to build a plastic collection value chain to enhance food safety.

Three critical lessons emerged from this initiative. Firstly, a sustainable approach requires time and the collective involvement of all stakeholders, including businesses, consumers, and authorities. Secondly, collaboration among businesses, civil society, and other key players is essential. Thirdly, it is crucial to explore alternative avenues—such as public-private partnerships and expanding this pilot project to other markets—to bolster government efforts.



G.M. Reza Sumon,
Project Manager
& Lead, Workforce
Nutrition & Fresh
Market, Global Alliance
for Improved Nutrition
(GAIN)

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), a Swiss-based foundation established at the UN in 2002 to combat malnutrition, operates as an alliance through partnerships with governments, businesses, and the private sector to make healthier food choices more appealing, accessible, and affordable.

Foodborne diseases can have significant economic repercussions for individuals, food businesses, and even countries. According to the FAO, 85% of households in Dhaka procure their food from fresh markets. However, these markets pose a risk of spreading diseases due to contamination, as vegetable, meat, and fish markets often operate in close proximity. Ensuring food safety in traditional markets requires a focus on three areas: creating an enabling environment, fostering



Md. Lutfor Rahman Babul, President,
Mohammadpur Town
Hall Market

The complete elimination of polythene remains a challenge due to limited alternatives. Nonetheless, our sellers encourage consumers to bring fabric or jute bags from home. Over the last six months, we have collected 1,300

Trump floats \$5m ‘gold card’ as a route to US citizenship

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump unveiled plans Tuesday to sell new “gold card” residency permits for a price of \$5 million each -- and said Russian oligarchs may be eligible.

Trump said sales of the new visa, a high-price version of the traditional green card, would bring in job creators and could be used to reduce the US national deficit.

“We’re going to be selling a gold card. You have a green card, this is a gold card. We’re going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

The Republican president, who has made the deportation of millions of undocumented migrants a priority of his second term, said the new card would be a route to highly prized US citizenship.

“A lot of people are going to want to be in this country, and they’ll be able to work and provide jobs and build companies,” Trump said. “It’ll be people with money.”

Sales of the cards would start in about two weeks, Trump added.

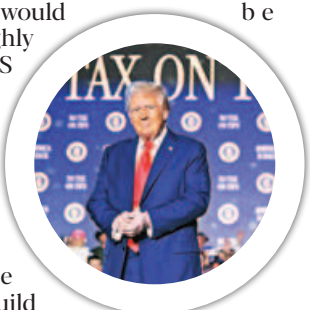
“We’ll be able to sell maybe a million of these cards. We have it all worked out from a legal standpoint,” Trump added.

The billionaire former real estate tycoon said that all applicants for the new gold cards would be carefully vetted.

But asked if wealthy Russians would also be able to apply, Trump said it was a possibility.

“Possibly. I know some Russian oligarchs that are very nice people. It’s possible,” Trump said. “They’re not as wealthy as they used to be. I think they can. I think they can afford \$5 million.”

A number of Russian oligarchs have been hit by western sanctions since Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine three years ago. Trump has caused shock in European capitals by suddenly opening negotiations with Russia to end the war, amid fears that he could be willing to sell Ukraine short.



People walk on building rubble at the Nur Shams camp for Palestinian refugees near Tulkarem, where Israeli forces allowed residents to retrieve belongings after reportedly issuing demolition notifications for several houses amid a weeks-long offensive in the occupied West Bank yesterday. The head of the UNRWA said more than 50 people, including children, have been reported killed since the Israeli forces’ operation started.

PHOTO: AFP

Hamas to hand over 4 Israeli hostages’ bodies

US says talks on track for 2nd phase of Gaza truce deal

AFP, Gaza City

Hamas said it would exchange the bodies of four Israeli hostages for more than 600 Palestinian prisoners today, capping the first phase of a Gaza ceasefire deal.

The United States said talks were on track for a second phase of the ceasefire deal that has largely held but whose complexity and long-drawn-out implementation have highlighted its fragility.

“Mediators have informed Hamas that the (hostage-prisoner) exchange will take place on Thursday [today]... Hamas and other resistance factions will hand over four bodies of Israeli captives, and in return, Israel will release more than 600 Palestinian detainees,” a Hamas official told AFP.

Another senior Hamas official said the “exchange will happen simultaneously”.

In Washington, US President Donald Trump’s top envoy on the Middle East said Israeli representatives were en route to talks on the next phase of the ceasefire deal.

“We’re making a lot of progress. Israel is sending a team right now as we speak,” Steve Witkoff told an event for the American Jewish Committee. “It’s either going to be in Doha or in Cairo, where negotiations will begin again with the Egyptians and the Qataris,” he said.

Israel has yet to confirm its release, and has not commented on whether it is sending a delegation to discuss the second phase of the truce. This first phase is supposed to end on Saturday, but negotiations planned for the rest of the process -- which were to begin in early February -- have not yet started.

Hamas has said it is ready to release “in one go” all the remaining hostages during the second phase.

Israeli army strikes military targets in Syria

Two people killed

AFP, Jerusalem

The Israeli army said it carried out air strikes targeting military sites containing weapons in southern Syria on Tuesday evening, just days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for demilitarising the area.

At least two people were killed by a strike on one of the sites, the headquarters of a military unit southwest of Damascus, a war monitor said.

“Over the past few hours, the IDF struck military targets in southern Syria including command centres,” the army said.

French police kill man holding knives

AFP, Paris

French police said officers killed a man holding a knife in each hand after he “threw himself” at them in the northeastern Paris suburbs yesterday.

At around 7:00 am (0600 GMT), police approached “a man sitting at a bus stop with a knife in each hand” in the town of Dugny, Paris police told AFP.

The man “threw himself at them, without saying a word”, they said.

One of the officers used an “electroshock weapon” without effect, they said.

Neither my family nor I

FROM PAGE 2

to February 26, 2025. The statement showed deposits of Tk 10,06,886 and withdrawals of Tk 9,96,188.

Nahid also clarified that neither he nor any of his family members, including his wife, mother, or father, bought any land or flats in Bangladesh during his time in office.

He added that his

secretary has Tk 36,028 in a bank account, but no property has been purchased by him or his family during his time in office.

Nahid said his financial records and those of his staff are open for public review. The information, he said, is verifiable under the Bangladesh Right to Information Act, 2009.

Digital law reforms

FROM PAGE 2

There were no clear justifications for changes between drafts, and earlier consultation outcomes were not disclosed.

Meanwhile, amendments to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulation Act, 2001 remain unpublished, preventing public review or feedback.

The rights groups raised concerns about privacy and free expression.


In the statement, they said the CPO would allow law enforcement to search any location without a warrant, based solely on suspicion of a cyber-offence such as hacking or a cyber-attack, both undefined in the law. The PDPO lacks privacy safeguards and grants broad exemptions to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, shielding them from accountability in data collection and handling.

Another issue is the

lack of clear definitions for terms like “classified personal data” in the PDPO, which is subject to cross-border transfer restrictions. Without precise definitions, these vague provisions could be used to target marginalised communities, silence political dissidents, and restrict independent journalism.

The organisations also urged Bangladesh to repeal the Cyber Security Act (CSA) and withdraw all cases filed under this law and its predecessors. They also called for stronger procedural safeguards, greater transparency in the law-making process, and alignment of digital governance reforms with international human rights standards.

They emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach to digital regulation, rather than rushed and fragmented legislation.



NCC Bank
with you always

NATIONAL CREDIT AND COMMERCE BANK PLC.
COMMON SERVICES DIVISION
Head Office: NCC Bank Bhaban, 13/1-2, Toyenbee Circular Road
Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, Phone: 223390053
PABX: 223381901-4, 223383981-2, Ext-117

NOTICE OF INVITING QUOTATIONS

Sealed quotations are hereby invited by National Credit and Commerce Bank PLC. (the Bank) from reputed Companies/local Agents/Suppliers/Authorized Distributors/Service Providers for the below mentioned requirements under the terms and conditions mentioned detail in the Request for Quotation (RFQ) documents.

Service Description	Price of the Tender document	Sale start date	Sale end date	Date and time for Tender Submission
Item 1: Request for Quotation of Supply, installation, implementation & configuration of Automated Teller Machine (ATM) to NCC Bank PLC.	Tk. 3,000/- (Taka Three Thousand) only in the form of Payment Order (non-refundable) favoring National Credit and Commerce Bank PLC. by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh	February 27, 2025	March 06, 2025	March 09, 2025 on/before 12:01 PM
Item 2: Request for Quotation of Supplying of Desktop PC (CPU+Monitor) & Printer to NCC Bank PLC.				

The schedule containing detailed Terms & Conditions may be collected from the Common Services Division, Level-5, NCC Bank PLC. Head Office, Dhaka and submit the same under sealed envelope to the Tender Box placed at Common Services Division (CSD). Manipulation or any kind of unusual approach or failure to submit offer within the stipulated time frame will be treated as “Disqualified” for the bidding. The Bank authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposal without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Vice President & Head of Common Services Division



RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited
RAK Tower (7th, 8th & 9th Floor), Plot # 1/A, Jasimuddin Avenue,
Sector # 3, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230

NOTICE OF THE 26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 26th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2025 at 11:00 am (Bangladesh Time). Pursuant to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission's Directives No. BSEC/CMRRCD/2009-193/08 dated March 10, 2021 and further BSEC Letter No. BSEC/ICAD/SRIC/2024/318/87 dated March 27, 2024; the AGM will be held virtually by using digital platform through the following link <https://agmbd.live/rak2025> to transact the following businesses:

AGENDA

- To receive, consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2024, together with the reports of the Auditor and the Directors.
- To declare dividend for the year ended 31 December 2024.
- To elect/re-elect Director(s) of the Company.
- To appoint/re-appoint Independent Director of the Company.
- To re-appoint the Managing Director of the Company.
- To appoint the Statutory Auditors of the Company for the year 2025 and fix their remuneration.
- To appoint the Compliance Auditors of the Company for the year 2025 for compliance certification on corporate governance and fix their remuneration.
- To approve of entering into contract for sale or purchase of goods and materials with Mohammed Trading amounting to 10% (ten percent) or above of the revenue for the immediate preceding financial year.
- To consider issuance of corporate guarantee covering credit facilities of RAK Power Pvt. Ltd. from Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC for an amount of BDT 393 mn for financing to purchase of two 4.3 MW gensets.



QR code for virtual AGM

Dhaka, Bangladesh
Date: February 27, 2025

By order of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
(Muhammad Shahidul Islam FCS)
Company Secretary

Notes:

- The shareholders whose name appeared in the Share/Depository Register as on the 'Record Date' (i.e. February 17, 2025), are eligible to participate in the 26th AGM and receive the dividend.
- The Board unanimously recommended dividend @ 10% in cash of the paid up capital of the Company for the year 2024.
- Mr. Abdallah Massaad will retire by rotation in the 26th AGM and being eligible, offer himself for re-election as director of the Company.
- Based on the recommendation by the NRC, the Company has obtained consent from BSEC for the appointment of Mr. Md. Obayed Ullah Al Masud as an Independent Director for a period of 3 (three) years and based on the recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, the Board proposed to re-appoint of Mr. Mohd. Shafiqul Azam as an Independent Director for a further 01 (one) more tenure (i.e. 03 years).
- Upon the recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, the Board proposed to re-appointment of Mr. SAK Ekramuzzaman as Managing Director of the Company for a further period of 3 (three) years with effect from 16th of March 2025.
- In order to comply with the BSEC notification No. BSEC/CMRRCD/2009-193/10/Admin/118 dated March 22, 2021; the Board of Directors has recommended to enter into contract for sale or purchase of goods and materials with Mohammed Trading [Owner is Managing Director of RAK Ceramics (Bangladesh) Limited] amounting to 10% (ten percent) or above of the revenue for the immediate preceding financial year subject to approval of the shareholders.
- Upon the recommendation of the Board, the Company proposed to issue a corporate guarantee in favor of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC on behalf of its subsidiary, RAK Power Pvt. Ltd., for a credit facility of BDT 393 million financing to purchase of two 4.3 MW gensets.
- A shareholder entitled to attend and vote at the AGM may appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her behalf (such a proxy shall be a shareholder of the Company). The Proxy Form, duly filled, signed and stamped of BDT 100/- must be sent through email to the Company at sharedepartment.bgd@rakceramics.com not later than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.
- As per Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission's Notification No. BSEC/CMRRCD/2006-158/208/Admin/81 dated 20 June 2018; soft copy of Annual Report of the Company along with Attendance Slip, Proxy Form and the notice will be forwarded to all the shareholders of their respective email address available with us. These will also be available on the Company's website at www.rakceramics.com/bangladesh. The shareholders may also collect the annual report of the Company from the Company's Share Department at Registered Office in person.
- Shareholders are requested to submit through mail to the Company at sharedepartment.bgd@rakceramics.com on or before March 12, 2025, their written option to receive dividend in the form available in Company's website www.rakceramics.com/bangladesh. If the shareholder fails to submit such option within the stipulated time, the dividend will be paid off as deemed appropriate by the Company.
- The concern stock broker, merchant banker and portfolio managers are requested to submit through mail to the Company at sharedepartment.bgd@rakceramics.com on or before March 12, 2025; the statement (Excel format) along with detail of their margin client or customer who has debit balance or margin loan, who are entitled to receive cash dividend of the Company for the year ended December 31, 2024. The statement should include shareholder's name, BO ID number, client-wise shareholding position, gross dividend receivable, applicable tax rate, net dividend receivable etc. along with the Consolidated Customers' Bank Account number, routing number and contact person.
- The shareholders will be able to submit their questions/comments and vote electronically 24 hours before commencement of the AGM and during the AGM. For logging in to the system, the shareholders need to put their 16 digit Beneficial Owner (BO) ID number and other credential as proof of their identity by visiting the link <https://tinyurl.com/rakagm2025>.
- Shareholders are requested to log in to the system prior to the meeting start time of 11:00 am (Bangladesh Time) on 22 March 2025. The webcast will start at 10:45 am on March 22, 2025. Please contact +8801730058055 and +8801730055355 for any technical difficulties in accessing the virtual meeting.
- Detail log in process has been sent through email to respective shareholder's mail ID available in their BO Account maintained with the Depository. The detailed procedures to participate in the virtual meeting along with link are also available in the Company's website www.rakceramics.com/bangladesh



ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (IUT)
A Subsidiary Organ of OIC



ADMISSION NOTICE
ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

APPLICATION DURATION 27th Feb. 2025 - 13th March 2025

BSc Engineering and BBA Programmes

- BSc in Mechanical Engineering (ME)
- BSc in Industrial and Production Engineering (IPE)
- BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE)
- BSc in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE)
- BSc in Software Engineering (SWE)
- BSc in Civil Engineering (CE)
- BBA in Technology Management (TM)

Eligibility

SSC/HSC or Equivalent

Minimum GPA 4.5 (both) SSC and HSC/Equivalent; A+ in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Minimum A in English in HSC O/A Level or Equivalent

O Level: At least B in any two subjects among Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry and minimum C grade in the remaining subject mentioned above. Minimum grade B in English.

A Level: Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry with Minimum grade A

Must have completed HSC or Equivalent in 2024 or 2023

Must have completed SSC or Equivalent in 2021 or later

ADMISSION TEST
(For BSc Engg. and BBA Programmes)
Friday, 2nd May 2025 at 10:30 AM

Only short-listed applicants will be allowed to sit for the admission test.

Postgraduate Programmes in Engineering

MSc / MEng / PhD

- Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Computer Science and Engineering
- Civil Engineering

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes in Technical Education

- BSCTE [3-Yrs]
- MSCTE
- PhD

Only short-listed applicants will be notified.

For eligibility visit admission website



Scan to Visit IUT Admission Website

Application Process : Apply through IUT admission website

For details of selection criteria, scholarship policy, number of seats and other information: visit the admission portal. admission.iutoic-dhaka.edu

46 killed in Sudan plane crash in residential area

10 people injured

AFP, Port Sudan

Forty-six people were killed when a Sudanese military transport plane crashed into a residential neighbourhood on the outskirts of Khartoum, the regional government said yesterday.

The Antonov aircraft went down on Tuesday night near Wadi Seidna air base, one of the army's largest military hubs in Omdurman, northwest of the capital.

A military source cited a technical malfunction as the cause of the crash, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment to the media.

A military source cited a technical malfunction as the cause of the crash

The army, which has been at war with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023, said the plane crashed during take-off, killing and injuring both military personnel and civilians.

"After a final tally, the number of martyrs reached 46, with 10 injured," the Khartoum regional government's media office said.

Witnesses described hearing a loud explosion and seeing several homes damaged in the area.



This handout photograph, taken and released by the Ukrainian Emergency Service yesterday, shows a Ukrainian rescuer putting out a fire in a building following a drone attack in Kriukivshchyna, Kyiv region.

PHOTO: AFP

TAIWAN'S SOUTHWEST COAST

China holds 'shooting' drills

Vows 'reunification' push; Taipei sends forces to keep watch

REUTERS, Taipei

China's military yesterday held "shooting training" off Taiwan's southwest coast in a move Taipei described as provocative and dangerous, while a senior Chinese leader vowed unswerving efforts to bring the island under Beijing's control.

Democratically governed Taiwan, which China views as its own territory, has repeatedly complained of Chinese military activities, including several rounds of full-scale war games during the past three years.

Shortly before 9:00 am, Taiwan's defence ministry said in a statement, it had detected 32 Chinese military aircraft carrying out a "joint combat readiness drill" with Chinese warships in the Taiwan Strait area.

"During this period it even blatantly violated international practice by setting up a drills area in waters about 40 nautical miles (74 km) off the coast ... without prior warning, claiming that it would carry out 'shooting training'," the ministry added.

Taiwan's major southwestern population centres of Kaohsiung and Pingtung are both home to important naval and air bases. Kaohsiung is also home to Taiwan's largest port, a busy hub for global shipping.

The exercises endanger the safety of international flights and shipping and are a "blatant provocation" to regional peace and stability, the ministry said, adding that it had dispatched its own forces to keep watch.

There was no immediate confirmation

from China that it was carrying out new drills around Taiwan and its defence ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

China's other recent military activity in the region, such as that off Australia's coast, are "proof that China is the only, and the greatest, threat to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific," Taiwan's ministry said.

China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its rule, and has denounced both President Lai Ching-te as a "separatist", and the United States for its support for Taiwan. Earlier yesterday, the ruling Communist Party's leader, Wang Huning, had called this week for greater effort in the cause of Chinese "reunification".

COVERAGE OF TRUMP

White House takes control of press pool

REUTERS, Washington

The White House said on Tuesday it would decide which media organisations participate in the press pool that covers the president, wresting control away from the group of journalists that has done so for decades.

Karoline Leavitt, President Donald Trump's spokeswoman, said that while traditional media organisations would still be allowed to cover the president, the administration plans to change who participates. The pool system allows select television, radio, wire, print and photojournalists to cover events in smaller spaces such as the Oval Office and share their reporting with the broader media.

The move follows the Trump administration's decision to bar the AP from being in the press pool because it has declined to refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America, the name Trump has assigned the body of water, or update its widely followed stylebook to reflect such a change.

"For decades, a group of D.C.-based journalists, the White House Correspondents' Association, has long dictated which journalists get to ask questions of the president of the United States in these most intimate spaces. Not anymore," Leavitt said at a news briefing.

DEFYING PEACE ENVOY

Bosnian Serb leader sentenced to one year in jail

REUTERS, Sarajevo

A Bosnia court yesterday sentenced Bosnian Serb separatist leader Milorad Dodik to one year in jail for defying orders of an international peace envoy.

Dodik, president of Bosnia's autonomous Serb Republic, was indicted in 2023 for signing laws that suspended rulings by the constitutional court and by international peace envoy Christian Schmidt.

Dodik has rejected the indictment as politically motivated. Under criminal law, Bosnians can pay a fine instead of facing jail time if the sentence is no more than one year.

The verdict could trigger a crisis in Bosnia, which suffered a bloody ethnic conflict in the 1990s and has since been split into two regions.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

'হে ঈমানদারগণ! তোমাদের উপর রোজা ফরজ করা হয়েছে, যেভাবে তোমাদের পূর্ববর্তীদের উপর ফরজ করা হয়েছিল, যেন তোমরা খোদাতীকর হও।' - আল কোরআন

PHP Family

সওগাতে রমজান
১৪৪৬ হিজরী ২০২৫ ঈসাবী

ঢাকা ও পার্শ্ববর্তী এলাকাসমূহের
সেহরী ও ইফতারের সময়সূচী

রহমতের ১০ দিন					মাগফিরাতের ১০ দিন					নাজাতের ১০ দিন				
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০২	০৩ মার্চ	সোম	৫-০৩	৬-০৩	১২	১৩ মার্চ	বৃহস্পতি	৪-৫৩	৬-০৭	২২	২৩ মার্চ	রবি	৪-৪৩	৬-১১
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০৪	০৫ মার্চ	বুধ	৫-০১	৬-০৪	১৪	১৫ মার্চ	শনি	৪-৫১	৬-০৮	২৪	২৫ মার্চ	মঙ্গল	৪-৪১	৬-১২
০৫	০৬ মার্চ	বৃহস্পতি	৫-০০	৬-০৪	১৫	১৬ মার্চ	রবি	৪-৫০	৬-০৮	২৫	২৬ মার্চ	বুধ	৪-৪০	৬-১২
০৬	০৭ মার্চ	শুক্র	৪-৫৯	৬-০৫	১৬	১৭ মার্চ	সোম	৪-৪৯	৬-০৯	২৬	২৭ মার্চ	বৃহস্পতি	৪-৩৯	৬-১৩
০৭	০৮ মার্চ	শনি	৪-৫৮	৬-০৫	১৭	১৮ মার্চ	মঙ্গল	৪-৪৮	৬-০৯	২৭	২৮ মার্চ	শুক্র	৪-৩৮	৬-১৩
০৮	০৯ মার্চ	রবি	৪-৫৭	৬-০৬	১৮	১৯ মার্চ	বুধ	৪-৪৭	৬-১০	২৮	২৯ মার্চ	শনি	৪-৩৬	৬-১৪
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১০	১১ মার্চ	মঙ্গল	৪-৫৫	৬-০৬	২০	২১ মার্চ	শুক্র	৪-৪৫	৬-১০	৩০	৩১ মার্চ	সোম	৪-৩৪	৬-১৫

রোজার নিয়্যত

নাওয়াইতু আ'ন আছুমা গাদাম্ মিন্ শাহুরি রমাছানাল্ মোবারক ফরদাল্ লাকা ইয়া আল্লাহ্ ফাতাক্বাক্বাল্ মিন্নি ইন্নাকা আন্থাছ্ ছামিউল্ আলীম।

ইফতারের দোয়া

আল্লাহুমা লাকা ছুমত্ ওয়া আ'লা রিজকিকা আফতারত্ বিরাহুমাতিকা ইয়া আরহামার রাহিমীন।

১ রমজান হতে ২৬ রমজান প্রতিদিন বিকাল ৪.৪০ মিনিটে চোখ রাখুন **৩২** এর পর্দায়

১ রমজান হতে ২৬ রমজান প্রতিদিন বিকাল ৫.২৫ মিনিটে চোখ রাখুন **২২** এর পর্দায়

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বাংলার বঙে বাংলা নামে

১ টি দেশ
৮ টি বিভাগ

৬,৫০০+ অংশগ্রহণকারী
২০,০০০+ বাংলায় রঙের নাম জমা

ভাষার চর্চা না থাকায় প্রতি দুই সপ্তাহে বিশ্বের বুক থেকে একটি করে ভাষা হারিয়ে যাচ্ছে। সময়ের সাথে হারিয়ে গেছে আমাদেরও অনেক রঙের বাংলা নাম। তাই ভাষার মাসে বাংলা ভাষার চর্চাকে সবখানে ছড়িয়ে, রঙের বাংলা পরিচয় ফিরিয়ে আনতে বার্জার উদ্যোগ নেয় "বাংলার বঙে বাংলা নামে" ক্যাম্পেইন, যেখানে দেশের ৮টি বিভাগ থেকে ৬,৫০০+ অংশগ্রহণকারী অনলাইনে অংশগ্রহণ করে। অসাধারণ ২০,০০০+ বাংলা রঙের নাম থেকে বিচারক প্যানেল, শিল্পী গৌতম চক্রবর্তী, চিত্রশিল্পী আলিসুজ্জামান, প্রফেসর শাহমাদ মইশান এবং গল্পকার ইশতিয়াক আহমেদ ৪৮টি বাংলা নাম চূড়ান্ত করেন।

এভাবেই প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্মে বাংলা ভাষার চর্চা হোক, ভাষা ছড়িয়ে যাক রঙে সবখানে!

ঢাকা	চট্টগ্রাম	সিলেট	ব্রাহ্মণসহী	রংপুর	বরিশাল	খুলনা	ময়মনসিংহ
● মাদুরী বেলগি ● শব্দশীল ● কদম পানি ● জেঁকুর ● নেতাজীভাষা ● জাতিমধুরী রঙ	● মধুকণ্ঠী সবুজ ● বাবুচর রঙ ● কন্দম্বা ● নাল শালুক ● রামদুলা ● আলফা লাল	● গীপুলা ● নিমগতা রঙ ● কটপিলিচা ● খল ফালা ● কামরু ● মলিন্দী	● রাত্রাবার ● গীপুলা ● শালুকী রং ● সুবর্ণিত হপুস ● দুর্ভ রঙ ● খালুকি	● কণ্ঠ গোলাপ ● ইন্দ্রনীল ● সন্ন্যাসবাদিলাস ● জগদীশ্বর কলস ● কামরু ● গোলাপী ধান	● পদ্মশীল ● কন্দম্বালাসি ● শব্দশীল ● বাবুচর ● কামরু ● কামরু	● পটলি রঙ ● খেলুপা ● শব্দশীল ● স্বর্ণ শালুক ● কামরু ● সজল রঙ	● কিকো গোলাপ ● জগদীশ্বর ● জল ● কামরু ● কামরু ● মাইট

বার্জার "বাংলার বঙে বাংলা নামে" ক্যাম্পেইনে অংশগ্রহণকারী

সবাইকে অসংখ্য ধন্যবাদ!

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বার্জারের ফেসবুক পেইজে

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বাংলার বঙে বাংলা নামে

১ টি দেশ
৮ টি বিভাগ

৬,৫০০+ অংশগ্রহণকারী
২০,০০০+ বাংলায় রঙের নাম জমা

ভাষার চর্চা না থাকায় প্রতি দুই সপ্তাহে বিশ্বের বুক থেকে একটি করে ভাষা হারিয়ে যাচ্ছে। সময়ের সাথে হারিয়ে গেছে আমাদেরও অনেক রঙের বাংলা নাম। তাই ভাষার মাসে বাংলা ভাষার চর্চাকে সবখানে ছড়িয়ে, রঙের বাংলা পরিচয় ফিরিয়ে আনতে বার্জার উদ্যোগ নেয় "বাংলার বঙে বাংলা নামে" ক্যাম্পেইন, যেখানে দেশের ৮টি বিভাগ থেকে ৬,৫০০+ অংশগ্রহণকারী অনলাইনে অংশগ্রহণ করে। অসাধারণ ২০,০০০+ বাংলা রঙের নাম থেকে বিচারক প্যানেল, শিল্পী গৌতম চক্রবর্তী, চিত্রশিল্পী আলিসুজ্জামান, প্রফেসর শাহমাদ মইশান এবং গল্পকার ইশতিয়াক আহমেদ ৪৮টি বাংলা নাম চূড়ান্ত করেন।

এভাবেই প্রজন্ম থেকে প্রজন্মে বাংলা ভাষার চর্চা হোক, ভাষা ছড়িয়ে যাক রঙে সবখানে!

ঢাকা	চট্টগ্রাম	সিলেট	ব্রাহ্মণসহী	রংপুর	বরিশাল	খুলনা	ময়মনসিংহ
● মাদুরী বেলগি ● শব্দশীল ● কদম পানি ● জেঁকুর ● নেতাজীভাষা ● জাতিমধুরী রঙ	● মধুকণ্ঠী সবুজ ● বাবুচর রঙ ● কন্দম্বা ● নাল শালুক ● রামদুলা ● আলফা লাল	● গীপুলা ● নিমগতা রঙ ● কটপিলিচা ● খল ফালা ● কামরু ● মলিন্দী	● রাত্রাবার ● গীপুলা ● শালুকী রং ● সুবর্ণিত হপুস ● দুর্ভ রঙ ● খালুকি	● কণ্ঠ গোলাপ ● ইন্দ্রনীল ● সন্ন্যাসবাদিলাস ● জগদীশ্বর কলস ● কামরু ● গোলাপী ধান	● পদ্মশীল ● কন্দম্বালাসি ● শব্দশীল ● বাবুচর ● কামরু ● কামরু	● পটলি রঙ ● খেলুপা ● শব্দশীল ● স্বর্ণ শালুক ● কামরু ● সজল রঙ	● কিকো গোলাপ ● জগদীশ্বর ● জল ● কামরু ● কামরু ● মাইট

বার্জার "বাংলার বঙে বাংলা নামে" ক্যাম্পেইনে অংশগ্রহণকারী

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বার্জারের ফেসবুক পেইজে

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Russo Brothers tease epic return with ‘Avengers: Doomsday’ and ‘Avengers: Secret Wars’



During the global debut of Netflix's *The Electric State* at The Egyptian Theatre Hollywood in Los Angeles, its directors Joe and Anthony Russo spoke with Deadline about the highly anticipated Marvel films *Avengers: Doomsday* and *Avengers: Secret Wars*, which are set for release in 2026 and 2027, respectively.

Joe Russo confirmed, "We are currently shooting the movies in London—back-to-back. It's a lot of work, but exciting. The story will challenge both audiences and us, making it worth the effort."

Last year, MCU's Kevin Feige shocked fans by announcing Robert Downey Jr.'s dramatic return to the franchise to portray the infamous villain Doctor Doom.

Meanwhile, the Russo Brothers' *The Electric State*, starring Millie Bobby Brown, Pratt, and Ke Huy Quan, premieres on Netflix on March 14. It is based on Simon Stalenhag's sci-fi graphic novel.

Two action-adventure movies hit Star Cineplex

The latest instalment in the MCU, *Captain America: Brave New World* premiered internationally on February 14, generating immense buzz and dominating the box office. Now, Bangladeshi fans can catch it at Star Cineplex.

Captain America: Brave New World, the first superhero film of 2025, sees Sam Wilson fully embrace the mantle of Captain America. As the 35th MCU film, it delves into global tensions and the rising conflict over Tiamut Island.

The film introduces Red

Hulk to the MCU, with Harrison Ford taking over the role of Thunderbolt Ross from the late William Hurt. Directed by Julius Onah, it continues Sam Wilson's journey from *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* series.

On the other hand, the *My Hero Academia* anime franchise returns with its fourth film, *My Hero Academia: You're Next*. Directed by Tensai Okamura and based on Kōhei Horikoshi's hit manga, it promises another thrilling adventure for fans.



My work will speak for itself DIGHI

Actress Prarthana Fardin Dighi was replaced by Puja Chery in the film *Tagar* due to alleged "unprofessional behaviour," according to director Aalok Hasan.

Refuting the claims Dighi told local media, "I completely disagree with the accusation of being unprofessional."

She referenced her work in the upcoming film *Jongli* as evidence of her professionalism and noted that actor replacements are common in the film industry.

Dighi maintained a calm stance, respecting Aalok's decision while adding, "My work will speak for itself."

Moreover, the actress acknowledged a possible communication gap during her time in the United States but did not argue when informed about her dismissal from the project.



Gazi Mazharul Anwar's book released posthumously



The fifth volume of Gazi Mazharul Anwar's *Olpo Kothar Golpo Gaan* was launched at the Ekushey Book Fair on February 24.

Published by Bhashachitra, the launch event took place at Pavilion 17, featuring the late lyricist's wife, Zohra Gazi, and their children, Sarfaraz Anwar Upal and Dithi Anwar, unveiling the cover.

This book edition includes stories behind 50 songs and 200 song lyrics.

Dithi Anwar shared emotional reflections, recalling the first volume's launch in 2021, with her father present.

Anwar, who penned over 20,000 songs in his career, has three compositions listed among the top 20 Bengali songs in a BBC survey. He passed away on September 4, 2022.

‘Daagi’ wraps up filming, set for Eid release



After two months of filming, the Shihab Shaheen directorial *Daagi* starring Afran Nisho, has wrapped up filming. The director announced the completion of the project through a social media video, expressing his

excitement.

The film, co-produced by SVF, Alpha i Entertainment, and Chorki, is poised to be one of the most anticipated releases this Eid-ul-Fitr.

This marks Afran Nisho's second film, following his debut with *Surongo*. The film also features Tama Mirza along with Sunerah Binte Kamal and Rashed Mamun Apu.

Nisho shared his enthusiasm for the unconventional narrative of *Daagi* affirming, "I was intrigued by the script and I'm confident the audience will find it deeply engaging as well."

NEWS

Mahfuj Alam new info adviser

FROM PAGE 16

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday made the decision after Nahid resigned as adviser to posts, telecommunications, and information technology, as well as information and broadcasting.

Nahid stepped down from the advisory council on Tuesday, almost certainly to lead a new political party.

Following the portfolio redistribution, Prof Yunus will now oversee the posts, telecommunications, and ICT ministry, in addition to five other ministries.

Mahfuj, who graduated from

Dhaka University's law department, was the coordinator of the liaison committee of the Students Against Discrimination, which spearheaded a movement that toppled the Awami League-led government on August 5 last year.

He was appointed as the special assistant to the chief adviser with the status of secretary on August 28, about three weeks after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina.

Mahfuj was later made an adviser on November 10, and since then, he had been serving as an adviser without portfolio.

Ukraine can ‘forget about’ joining Nato

FROM PAGE 16

His comments about the deal and US visit came just after Russian artillery killed at least five people in Ukraine's war-battered east and a drone barrage claimed two more lives near Kyiv, including a Ukrainian journalist.

Discussions were fraught on the minerals deal, which would grant the United States preferential access to Ukrainian natural resources in exchange for US support.

Officials late on Tuesday said they had come to an agreement following protracted negotiations but Zelensky told reporters in Kyiv that more difficult work lay ahead.

future roadmap will be shaped by the speeches and recommendations of the invited grassroots leaders.

WHAT GRASSROOTS SAY

Zakir Hossain Bablu, convener of Mymensingh district BNP (south), said that after August 5, the party's top leadership would assess the current state of BNP's local politics by engaging with leaders and activists.

"In the extended meeting, our acting chairman, Tarique Rahman, will give important directives. We will implement his instructions at the grassroots level to strengthen the party's organisational activities.

"We will discuss the challenges we face in managing the party at the local level and suggest ways to make the organisation stronger," he said.

SM Shafiqul Alam Mona, president of Khulna metropolitan BNP, said they will discuss how to bolster the party's organisational activities ahead of the national election. "We will carry out whatever tasks we will be given from the extended meeting."

Abdul Quyum Chowdhury, president of Sylhet district BNP, said they would inform top leaders about the Sylhet BNP's role in the uprising and their efforts to strengthen the party.

"We will tell our leaders about the good and difficult parts of our work in the party, and they will guide us in this matter. After a long time, leaders and activists will have the scope to interact, which will be good for the party."

Narayanganj district BNP Convener, Mamun Mahmud, said, "We will share our problems and the current state of local politics directly with the party's acting chairman. The party high command will guide us on how politics will unfold in the coming days, which will be very helpful for us."

Interim govt has UN's full support

FROM PAGE 16

5, wrote, "I would like to reiterate the strong solidarity of the United Nations with Bangladesh and our support for the transition process under your leadership."

The letter, sent on February 25, was released by the chief adviser's press wing yesterday.

The UN chief said he gives his full support to the interim government, which is working to reform various sectors, including the judiciary, politics, administration, police, education, and health.

The letter came after Yunus wrote to him regarding the impact of the Rohingya crisis on Bangladesh and the region, as well as the worsening humanitarian situation in Rakhine.

The chief adviser's letter, which was sent on February 4, was handed over to Guterres by Khalilur Rahman, High Representative for the Rohingya Crisis and Priority Affairs, at a meeting in New York on February 7.

Earlier, on December 17, Bangladesh invited Guterres to visit and witness the country's ongoing transformation firsthand.

Meanwhile, the UN fact-finding mission on February 12 published its

report on the crimes against humanity committed from July 1 to August 15 last year, during and after the mass uprising.

As per Bangladesh's request, the UN will also organise a high-level conference on the Rohingya crisis later this year.

In his letter, Guterres committed to continuing to mobilise the international community to support Bangladesh as a host to the Rohingya refugees.

Bangladesh has been sheltering over a million Rohingyas, with more refugees fleeing Myanmar as the crisis there escalates.

"I share your concerns regarding the impact of the Rohingya crisis on Bangladesh and the region, as well as the worsening humanitarian situation in Rakhine," the UN chief wrote.

He added that he will continue to exercise his good offices, including through his Special Envoy on Myanmar, to work closely with regional actors, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and other stakeholders towards a political solution to the Myanmar crisis.

The efforts will include creating

conducive conditions in Rakhine for the safe and voluntary return of the Rohingyas.

Guterres also said he has requested his senior managers to provide guidance to the UN country teams in Bangladesh and Myanmar on how they can maximise humanitarian aid and livelihood support to communities in Rakhine.

The UN, he said, will prioritise engagement, including through the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, to enable safe, rapid, sustained, and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need in Rakhine and the rest of Myanmar.

Guterres hoped the high-level conference on the Rohingya Muslims and other Myanmar minorities will be an opportunity to prompt renewed global attention and contribute to developing a wider range of solutions for Rohingyas and other minorities.

"We await the agreed outcomes and plans for the conference, following Member State consultations, to understand how the United Nations system can best support the process," he wrote.

Bangladesh scores better

FROM PAGE 16

freedom declined around the world last year with authoritarians solidifying their grip, but South Asia led a series of bright spots.

According to the report, among 208 countries and territories, 60 experienced deteriorations in their political rights and civil liberties, and only 34 improved. El Salvador, Haiti, Kuwait, and Tunisia were the countries with the largest score declines for the year, while Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Syria recorded the largest gains.

Bangladesh's status is marked "Partly Free" this year. The status was the same last year with a score of 40.

The Freedom House report also mentioned that this year Bangladesh could be a bright spot for democracy as new leaders took office after the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League regime following a student-led mass uprising. It added that political reform will be a daunting task.

It also said further improvement will depend on how the government

pursues reforms, and whether they ensure individual freedoms and the rule of law are protected and expanded in the process.

"The ouster of Hasina's Awami League government swiftly eased long-standing state pressure on other political parties, the media, labour unions, judges, university students, and faculty members, causing Bangladesh to tie with Bhutan for the year's largest score improvement.

"But much remains to be done. The new government's agenda includes ambitious political, economic, and legal reforms. It aims to amend or redraft the constitution, ensure accountability for last year's violence as well as other human rights abuses, increase judicial independence, and reestablish anticorruption institutions," the report said.

The government is also facing demands to hold elections, reduce emerging religious tensions, stabilise the economy, and decide what to do about Hasina, who is now decrying the country's political situation from

neighbouring India, the report stated further.

Yana Gorokhovskaia, the co-author of the report, told AFP that it was the 19th consecutive year that freedom fell on a global level, but that 2024 was especially volatile due to the high number of elections.

"The big picture is that this was another year of the same trajectory of a global decline in freedom but because of all the elections, it was more dynamic than previous years," she said.

She said that both Bangladesh and Syria saw immediate improvements in civil liberties—but that it would be a longer road to see gains in political representation.

Meanwhile, the report elevated two countries to the status of "free"—Senegal, where the opposition triumphed after the outgoing president's attempt to delay elections was defeated, and Bhutan, the Himalayan kingdom which consolidated a transition to democracy with competitive polls.


8th Convocation

27 February 2025


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01766348518, 01632261081(Admission Purpose), E-mail : admission@seu.edu.bd



Congratulations Graduates



Message



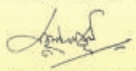
Chief Advisor
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

On the auspicious occasion of the 8th Convocation of Southeast University, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduates, parents, faculty members, and officials of this university.

The graduates are going to enter a new phase of life with this event. Certificates that they have achieved, entrusted with the responsibility of carrying forward the values that were at the heart of the historic July movement.

I expect that the graduates of Southeast University will be the responsible citizens of the coming era. They will focus on doing their ethical best, which will transform them into worthy human beings, a necessary trait to meet the demands of the current time. I am also optimistic that Southeast University will make every endeavour to realise the national vision of quality education through imparting necessary knowledge to the students and making them ready with required skills to serve the nation.

I wish this 8th Convocation a great success.



Professor Muhammad Yunus


Southeast University at a Glance

Situated in Tejgaon, the large campus of Southeast University (SEU) has 10 departments and houses more than 15,000 students under three schools: School of Science and Engineering (SSE), Southeast Business School (SBS), and School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS). Having started its journey in 2002, SEU has established itself as one of the leading private universities in Bangladesh. With more than 500 experienced faculty members, the university upholds its motto of "Meeting the Challenges of Time" and aims to provide up-to-date education, hands-on application, and research facilities to its students. SEU has always strived to provide higher education at an affordable cost, considering the economic conditions of the middle and lower-middle-income families in Bangladesh. SEU aims to deliver quality education and help students reach their highest capacities. SEU has implemented the global curriculum for all programs and update the syllabus based on the changing tides. SEU believes, excellence can only be earned through hard work and perseverance. Therefore, the university aims to transform students into hardworking and ethical humans who can contribute positively to society.


Vision
To obtain global recognition as a world-class university by providing excellent knowledge, skills, abilities, and research facilities so that students can develop their full intellectual, social and personal potential.

Mission
To ensure world-class education at an affordable cost and instil moral and ethical values among students.

- To provide higher education at an affordable cost, specially for students who belong to the middle and lower middle income families in Bangladesh.
- To impart world class education.
- To provide research facilities so that the students can develop their full intellectual, social and personal potentials.
- To provide knowledge, skills and abilities to transform human resource into human capital.
- To inculcate moral and ethical values among students.
- To prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



Message



Advisor
Ministry of Education
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

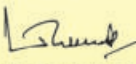
I am very glad to know that Southeast University is celebrating the convocation for the graduates. On this occasion, I extend my heartfelt felicitation and congratulate the graduating students on this significant landmark achievement. This Convocation is to celebrate years of hard work, dedication and unwavering pursuit of your knowledge.

Throughout this journey you encountered countless challenges, triumphs and transformative experiences. Through stimulating debates you collaborated with your peers from diverse backgrounds, you worked as a team; you shaped towards an ethical human being.


As you embark on the next level, whether continuing in further studies, beginning your professional career, or pursuing new ventures, remember that the education you've received here is more than just a degree, it's a cornerstone upon which you are going to build a fulfilling and impactful career. It's a tool to address professional challenges, foster your creativity to make a positive difference to the world.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every one of you. May you carry the torch of Southeast University with pride and may your future be filled with success, happiness and fulfillment.

I wish you all become an ethical human being, become a model for the future graduates and make a change.



Wahiduddin Mahmud



Message



Advisor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

It is a great honor and privilege to preside over the 8th Convocation of Southeast University, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduates, faculty members, and the entire university community. Today is a moment of celebration, reflection, and anticipation—a day that marks both an achievement and a new beginning.

Graduates, you stand on the threshold of a world that is changing faster than ever before. Your degree is not just a certificate of academic excellence but a key that unlocks countless possibilities. However, the true value of education goes beyond textbooks and classrooms. It lies in curiosity, resilience, and the ability to adapt, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to society. Knowledge is not a destination; it is a lifelong journey—one that requires an open mind, a compassionate heart, and an unwavering commitment to learning.

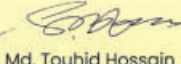
Southeast University has played a vital role in shaping your intellectual and personal growth, equipping you with the skills to navigate the complexities of the modern world. As you step forward, remember that success is not just measured by professional milestones but by the impact you create. Be problem-solvers, be visionaries, and above all, be individuals who lead with integrity and purpose.

We live in an era of extraordinary challenges and opportunities—climate change, technological revolutions, and global interconnectedness demand a new kind of leadership. Bangladesh stands at the crossroads of transformation, and you, as the next generation of thinkers and innovators, hold the power to shape its future. Embrace challenges, take risks, and never stop questioning the world around you.

To Southeast University, I commend your dedication to academic excellence, research, and innovation. I urge you to continue fostering an environment that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and sustainability—preparing students not just for jobs, but for meaningful contributions to society.

Graduates, as you embark on this new chapter, believe in your potential. Strive not just for success, but for significance. Carry forward the values of knowledge, service, and responsibility. The world and the country are waiting for your ideas, your passion, and your leadership.

Congratulations once again! May your journey ahead be filled with purpose, fulfillment, and boundless opportunities.



Md. Touhid Hossain



Message



Chairman
Board of Trustees
Southeast University Trust

It is an immense pleasure to witness this auspicious day of the 8th convocation of Southeast University. After many hurdles and difficulties, especially the July Uprising, and having the burden of martyrs on our shoulders, we finally are able to manifest all the youthful energy and arrange the important event of convocation after a gap of a few years. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the graduates who are going to be awarded degrees in this ceremony and start their journey in today's new world.

Southeast University commenced its journey in 2002 with a handful of students and today, with a satisfactory sense of achievement, I am pleased to announce that we have produced over 35,000 graduates in the last two decades. Our students have chosen different paths for themselves in multinational companies, NGOs, government and other private sectors. Also, many of our students are studying in different countries to pursue higher education to imprint in academia. It is also pertinent to say that many of the students are also successful in becoming entrepreneurs and creating job opportunities for others. I am led to believe that those who are graduating today will also follow a path of favorable outcomes as have their forerunners.

Today's outcome is a result of the altruistic approach of the members of the Board of Trustees, as a humanitarian service for the society and the country. Southeast University not only strives to offer quality education but also offers modern infrastructures in the classrooms of the new and permanent campus providing an environment to help the students to master their skills to meet the challenges of modern times with vigor and confidence.


With great contentment and gratification, I again would like to congratulate today's graduates who earned their degrees successfully. I wish them luck and urge them to maintain the connection with their respective departments, and their Alma Mater as a whole. In the future, I also urge them to reinforce Southeast University to help it reach its goals in every possible way.




Rezaul Karim

Board of Trustees

Chairman Mr. Rezaul Karim	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none">Advocate Niaz AhmedMr. Zahirul HaqueAdvocate Kazi Md. Nurul AminMr. Mohammad Helal MiahDr. Mohammad NawazMr. Md. Reazuddin AnsariMr. Md. Nasimul Alam Chowdhury	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Capt. Md. Irshad AliMrs. Shirin AkhterMr. Md. Abdul WahabMr. Ishiaque AhmedMr. Touseef Mashrurul KarimMs. Tazkia Labeeba KarimMr. Azmat Niaz
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Message



Vice Chancellor
Southeast University

All praise to the Almighty for creating the opportunity to hold the 8th convocation of Southeast University on February 27, 2025. Alhamdulillah! It gives me an immense pleasure to celebrate the efforts of the graduates supported by the faculty and administration of Southeast University and the Trustees on the day of the 8th Convocation.

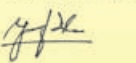
Since its inception in 2002, the vision and the mission of the University have been to enable students to meet the demands of an ever challenging and quickly evolving world. I am happy to share with you that Southeast University is building its reputation of being one of the top private universities of the country. Southeast University is committed to providing quality education and aims to establish this university as a World Class university by 2030.

On this day, I would also like to congratulate the parents and guardians for their sacrifices and belief in the potential of their children. This day is a celebration of your unwavering support and encouragement.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated faculty members whose commitment to teaching, research, and mentoring have been instrumental in shaping the students' academic and personal growth. I also acknowledge the tireless efforts of the staff, whose contributions behind the scenes ensure the seamless functioning of this institution.

From this day onward, as a part of the Alumni of Southeast University, you have included yourself into a distinguished global community of 35,000+ students who have graduated from Southeast University. Your efforts in the future will not only reflect your personal determination and capabilities but will also enhance the reputation of this institution. I urge you to remain connected with your alma mater, and to actively contribute to its growth, and also inspire future generations coming to Southeast University.

In conclusion, let me once again congratulate you on this remarkable achievement. May this convocation mark the beginning of a journey filled with purpose, fulfillment, and success that reflects your authentic self.




Prof. Yusuf Mahbubul Islam, PhD

CHANCELLOR'S GOLD MEDAL AWARD


 <p>Md. Touhid Hossain ID: 201900000000 B.Sc. in Textile Engg., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201700000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2017 Completion: Summer 2020 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201800000000 BBA, 4th Batch Enrollment: Summer 2018 Completion: Summer 2021 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201800000004 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Summer 2018 Completion: Summer 2021 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000004 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Summer 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>
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VICE CHANCELLOR'S GOLD MEDAL AWARD

 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>	 <p>Md. Rezaul Karim ID: 201900000000 B. Pharm., 3rd Batch Enrollment: Spring 2019 Completion: Summer 2022 CGPA: 4.32</p>
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Message



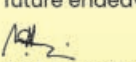
Pro Vice Chancellor
Southeast University

It is a matter of great elation to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduates on the occasion of this 8th convocation ceremony. This day signifies the culmination of your hard work, perseverance, and dedication, and it marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in your lives.

Graduation is both the accomplishment and the beginning of a journey that holds infinite possibilities. As you step into the wider world, you will encounter challenges that require courage, determination, and ethical decision-making. The values ingrained in you at Southeast University will be your guiding light as you strive to create a positive impact on different walks of your upcoming avenues.

This milestone is not just a reflection of your academic accomplishments but also of your personal growth. Southeast University has fostered critical thinking, adaptability, resilience and all the essential qualities for you thriving in today's dynamic and interconnected world. I urge you to continue learning, questioning, and innovating as you move forward in your professional and personal endeavors.

I extend my best wishes to the graduates for success in their future endeavors.



Prof. M. Mofazzal Hossain, PhD

SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS	Number of Graduates from 2019 to 2023
Southeast Business School (SBS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor of Business AdministrationMaster of Business AdministrationMaster of Business Administration (Executive)	Under Graduates 6,371
School of Science and Engineering (SSE) <ul style="list-style-type: none">ArchitectureComputer Science & EngineeringElectrical and Electronic EngineeringPharmacyTextile Engineering	Graduates 2,645
School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">LLB • LL.MBA in English • MA in EnglishBA in Bangla • MA in BanglaBSS in Economics • MDS	Number of Graduates Attending 8th Convocation Under Graduates 1,438 Graduates 484

Ensure fair contest for govt contracts

We must break monopolistic stranglehold on public procurement

The monopolistic control over government procurement is something that we often talk about. A recent study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) now reveals that over the past 12 years, 17 percent of all government tenders had only one bidder. This means public contracts were awarded without competitive price bidding among multiple participants, violating the government's own policies. While public procurement is among the most corruption-prone sectors globally, in Bangladesh, according to TIB, corruption in this sector has spiralled out of control.

For example, between 2012 and 2025, 27 percent of all bids had only two or three bidders. Additionally, more than 44 percent of tenders were issued under the "limited tendering method," which is intended for cases where goods, services, or works are available from only a small number of suppliers. Since the launch of the e-GP system in 2011, the top 10 contracting ministries have accounted for about 92 percent of the total expenditure of Tk 596,921 crore. However, larger contracts have remained outside the e-GP framework, making them even more susceptible to corruption.

At the Road Transport and Highways Division, just 11 percent of all contractors were awarded 93.55 percent of the Tk 82,506 crore spent by the department between 2015 and 2025. The concentration is even more extreme among the top 1 percent of contractors, who control 72.9 percent of the market. Similarly, at the Ministry of Water Resources, around 9 percent of contractors hold 91.5 percent of the total project value, with 38 contractors controlling a 30.9 percent market share. At the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, only 7.45 percent of contractors dominate 71 percent of the market.

A similar pattern is seen across other ministries, highlighting the extent of monopolisation that has taken root under past regimes. This, in turn, has fuelled inequality, as a select group of favoured companies have repeatedly secured projects without competitive bidding or proper oversight. It is one of the reasons why government projects in Bangladesh tend to be so costly, despite often being of subpar quality.

TIB has found that the companies dominating government procurement often change with shifts in leadership at local governments or ministries. This suggests that the procurement system does not function based on the competitiveness of bids, the quality of a company's work, or its market reputation, but rather according to the whims of those in power. This raises serious concerns about conflicts of interest and corruption.

Given the circumstances, the interim government must undertake a comprehensive overhaul of the procurement system to ensure independent oversight, greater transparency, and mechanisms for external scrutiny. The government should also introduce market share caps for individual contractors and joint ventures. Breaking the monopolistic cycle will encourage not only the establishment of more firms but also greater competition, thereby improving the quality of public projects.

Sajek fire a wake-up call for tourism sector

There must be proper safety measures in all tourist destinations

Our hearts go out to the victims of the devastating fire that ravaged Rangamati's Sajek Valley, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. According to estimates given by the district administration, the fire—which broke out around 1:00pm on Monday—gutted about 98 establishments, including 36 resorts and cottages, 35 houses, 20 stationary shops, and seven restaurants. Business owners estimate the total damage to be around Tk 100 crore, including Tk 30 crore lost in tourism-related destruction alone. While the scale of the fire has caught many by surprise, preliminary investigations reveal glaring lapses that make such a tragedy seem all but inevitable.

According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, the fire, which burned uncontrollably for hours, was exacerbated by the lack of a fire station nearby. By the time fire service units from Dighinala, Khagrachhari, Rangamati, and other far-flung areas arrived, the damage was already extensive. The water crisis in Sajek also hampered firefighting efforts by locals. There were other factors responsible for the devastation. For example, most structures in Sajek are built of wood and bamboo, making them highly flammable. The uncontrolled expansion of resorts and cottages without proper regulations also created a densely packed environment where fire could spread rapidly. Moreover, none of Sajek's estimated 126 resorts and cottages had fire extinguishers, nor had there ever been a fire drill in the area.

The question is, how could such a popular spot develop without having any fire safety measure in place? Why didn't the local administration and fire service department enforce necessary measures, even after similar fires broke out in Sajek in 2017, 2021, and 2023? While the lack of fire and building safety is a threat that extends to all of Bangladesh—especially urban and industrial settings where fire incidents are a common occurrence—the Sajek episode should serve as a wake-up call for the tourism authorities and entrepreneurs. We need sustainable tourism that prioritises safety, not unplanned expansion that compromises it.

The immediate priority, however, is to ensure the victims are properly compensated and helped in rebuilding efforts. At the same time, steps must be taken to prevent fires in the future. The establishment of a fire station in Sajek or nearby areas has become crucial. Also, given the water shortage in hilly regions, every resort and cottage there should be mandated to have fire extinguishers and other essential firefighting equipment. All this must be done as part of a strict regulatory framework for tourism infrastructure development.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Chile struck by earthquake and tsunami

On this day in 2010, a magnitude 8.8 earthquake struck Chile, causing widespread damage and triggering a tsunami that devastated coastal areas. It was the most powerful earthquake to strike the western South American region since 1960.

JAISHANKAR'S REMARKS ON BANGLADESH

A deeper understanding is necessary

THE OVERTON WINDOW



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ERESH OMAR JAMAL

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar recently made some strong remarks about Bangladesh at the Delhi University Literature Festival. Here are some key excerpts from his speech, "Things happened there last year, all of you are aware of it... for us what is very troubling, there are two aspects of it... the spate of attacks on the minorities... it is something which impacts our thinking and... we have to speak up about... they have to make up their mind what kind of relationship they want with us. Because every day, somebody in Bangladesh, who is in the interim government... if they stand up and blame India for everything, and some of the things in the reports are ridiculous... I think this is a decision also that they have to make. About what kind of relationship they want."

"We have sent a very clear signal, okay we are a neighbour, we would like for things to calm down... But we would obviously not like to see the messaging and... signalling which is continuously hostile in a way to India."

Let's start from the very beginning—about what happened in Bangladesh last year. In July-August, a mass uprising erupted against Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government. During the protests, approximately 1,500 students, workers, and citizens lost their lives, while around 20,000 others were injured. A United Nations Fact-Finding Mission reported, "The prime minister herself told security force officials to kill protesters to quell the protests and specifically demanded 'arrest the ringleaders of the protests, the troublemakers, kill them and hide their bodies.'"

Despite these serious allegations, Indian officials and some segments of its media have barely mentioned these facts. They have hardly acknowledged that Sheikh Hasina and numerous other Awami League leaders—whom India has sheltered—stand accused of mass murder. If Mr Jaishankar and other Indian officials are truly aware of what happened in Bangladesh, why this omission?

On the issue of minority attacks, this newspaper, along with other media outlets as well as the interim government itself, have acknowledged

and reported on incidents of attacks on minorities after the Awami League's unceremonious ouster. Many of these attacks occurred on August 5-8, when the country totally lacked law enforcement services. A number of minority community members—including Hindu Bangladeshis—were attacked, but some of them were attacked because of their political affiliation with the Awami League and the resentment among people towards the former ruling party.

While this context helps explain the attacks, it does not excuse them. The interim government has repeatedly stated that even a single attack on a member of a minority community is unacceptable.

However, segments of the Indian media have been caught exaggerating reports. And the extent of falsification even extended to presenting events in India as occurring in Bangladesh.

In fact, if we consider how some segments of the Indian media, social media, and commentators on other platforms have covered Bangladesh over the past six months, it has been nothing short of an information war against Bangladesh.

Indian government officials, too, have harped on this matter, with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banarjee even suggesting that India should seek the deployment of UN peacekeeping forces in Bangladesh—raising concerns about Bangladesh's sovereignty.

What about the rights of minorities in India, though? Since 2014, leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have made many openly hostile remarks against Muslims. Some examples include:

- On May 14, 2014, BJP leader Giriraj Singh said, "Is it not true that people involved in terror activities belong to a particular religion?"
- On September 14, 2014, MP Sakshi Maharaj claimed, "Terrorism is being taught in madrassas."
- In March 2016, BJP leader and Union Minister Anant Kumar Hegde stated, "As long as Islam exists, there will be terrorism. Until we uproot Islam, we cannot eliminate terrorism."
- On February 6, 2018, MP Vinay

Katiyar declared, "Muslims should not stay in this country. They have partitioned the country based on population. So why are they still here? They should go to Bangladesh or Pakistan... They have no business being in India."

And these are only a few examples. On August 14, 2024, Human Rights Watch reported that since March 2024, of the 173 speeches delivered by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 110 contained Islamophobic remarks. Yet, Bangladesh has rarely issued statements of concern about minorities in India, treating these issues as the latter country's internal affairs. Notably, India rarely expressed similar concerns about minority rights during Hasina's tenure, despite similar incidents occurring, leading to some deaths and many injuries. Since Hasina's fall, however, India appears to have taken a different approach



India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar
FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

towards Bangladesh. This raises questions about the sincerity of these recent concerns from India.

Mr Jaishankar has said India has sent a very clear signal that it wants things to "calm down," but it does not want to see hostile messaging from members of the Bangladesh government. Such restraints, however, should be mutual.

In light of that, it is important to mention that BJP leaders have repeatedly accused Bangladeshis of trying to take over the "rightful land" of Indians, referring to them as "Jihadis," "infiltrators," and "termites," who should be identified and drowned in the Bay of Bengal. Do

these remarks not come off as hostile?

And what about BJP leader Dilip Ghosh's comment in December 2024—months after the interim government took office—that Bangladesh's forces are no match for India and that Bangladesh's political leaders should "think carefully" about the ongoing turmoil? Was that a friendly message?

Moreover, the continued killings of Bangladeshis by Indian border forces, despite repeated promises of zero border killings, sends more contradictory signals. So does India's failure to share the water of Teesta River with Bangladesh, despite previous assurances.

India should understand that Bangladesh has a legitimate right to feel aggrieved by these and other unresolved matters. And the Indian government should be willing to listen to these grievances instead of ignoring them.

The Bangladesh government, similarly, should listen carefully to the legitimate concerns raised by India. In this case, for example, Mr Jaishankar's point of not sending hostile signals should be taken seriously by the Bangladesh government.

There are two other important lessons that Bangladesh should draw from this situation. First, for years, India engaged only with one political party in Bangladesh—Sheikh Hasina's Awami League—and treated it as the sole representative of the country. Bangladesh must not make the same mistake. India is a vast, diverse nation. The majority of its people, if they truly understood the oppressive nature of Hasina's regime, would likely sympathise with the Bangladeshi people.

Even if there are groups in India we disagree with, we must continue to engage with the broader Indian population. This will benefit both nations.

Second, we must realise that there is no place for ego in foreign policy. Some Bangladeshi commentators have suggested that India's reaction to Hasina's ouster is driven by bruised egos—because India lost a pliant ally and failed to predict the changing political landscape. But foreign policy must not be driven by ego or emotion—and this also applies to us. It should be rooted in pragmatism, common sense, and mutual benefit.

And so, if Bangladesh and India truly want a stable relationship, and we believe they do, both sides must acknowledge their shortcomings and address each other's concerns with sincerity.

Why children's voices matter



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UPASHANA SALAM

As part of a study on play, two groups of children were asked to practise solving jigsaw puzzles. One group was given a choice of additional puzzles on the floor besides those on the table, with no adult intervention. The other group was informed that there were puzzles they needed to solve, with an adult present, but no interaction occurred. Both groups were given 10 minutes to complete the puzzles and then asked to solve them again. Which group do you think performed better?

The study's first group was free to choose their puzzles, had no adult presence, and could decide where to solve them. Thus, they identified the setting as a playful environment, which gave them the freedom to try new ways to address a problem. The second group, on the other hand, perceived the setting as non-playful due to the adult presence and the site that was dictated to them (the table, in this case). Regarding performance, all children improved after practice, but the playful group went beyond the immediate results. Children practising in the playful environment showed enhanced purposeful creativity, problem-solving skills, persistence, focus, engagement, well-being, and metacognition, i.e.

the ability to monitor, control, and reflect on learning and processing information.

But how does one define play? Justine Howard, associate professor in child research at Swansea University and a developmental and educational psychologist specialising in play, describes play as a "process or cycle characterised by children adopting a playful psychological state or approach to a task." Put simply, play is defined by the players themselves. Therefore, the question is: what puts them in a playful psychological state?

Howard illustrates this with a teacher playing with preschool students pretending to drive a bus. When the teacher joined in, asking about the destination, fare, and change for 50 pence, the children gradually lost interest. Although the teacher intended to integrate learning, the children felt she had taken over their activity. Children view activities as playful when they feel they have choice and control (over when, where, with whom, what, and for how long they play), regardless of age and context.

In a study, Howard and her colleagues asked children aged three to six to pose for pictures while

engaging in activities like reading, solving puzzles, or group work. In different classrooms, children played a game where they sorted pictures into "play" and "not play" categories by posting them in labelled letterboxes. After sorting, the children explained their choices. They generally did not consider an activity playful if it was done at a table or if an adult was present. Smiling faces in the pictures were more likely to be seen as play. Activities with books and numbers were less likely to be considered play, while outdoor activities were perceived as more playful than indoor ones.

An interesting observation from the study was how children used cues to determine how they would approach an activity. For example, placing a box of Legos on the table or a floor is essentially the same, but children view the activity as play when it's on the floor. Choice also plays a significant role; activities are labelled as play when perceived as voluntary.

Howard compares a child learning in a playful environment to an archer with a quiver full of arrows. When children feel confident and secure, they have many opportunities to hit the target. If they miss, they might even adjust the target, demonstrating innovative problem-solving in a relaxed, choice-driven environment. In a playful state, children are more willing to experiment and take risks. Howard explains, "A small change in their environment and the cues that they are exposed to can have such an impact on children's psychological state that they do much better on the task as opposed to when they are not

given that agency."

Conversely, when that agency is taken away, children have fewer arrows in the quiver and they feel like their opportunities are limited. They are more afraid to take risks and think of innovative ways to address a challenge. Thus, they are more likely to continue with an incorrect action rather than think about it creatively and are less likely to be deliberative or purposeful with their problem-solving. Their behavioural thresholds are heightened and they become more aware of what they "cannot" do, leading to more rigidity in their actions.

In playful environments, children can retry activities without judgement, building identity and self-confidence. This low-threat environment is why play—a low-cost, sustainable to support children's mental health and well-being—is so important for every child's development. It reduces their fear, protects their self-esteem, helping them with increased emotional and physical perseverance.

Perceptions of play are embedded in cultural practices. Parents in Bangladesh generally struggle to acknowledge even teacher-led play as an acceptable teaching tool. The more knowledge we have about play and the more evidence there is on its importance, the more convinced parents are likely to be about its impact on children's development. Children obviously have to learn to do certain things at certain ages when it comes to mainstream education but through play, we can help that learning be more effective by helping them feel safe, make mistakes, and grow within their learning environment.

CO2 mineralisation can help curb pollution in Bangladesh

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Bangladesh's industrial boom has propelled economic growth, but at what cost? Rivers that once sustained communities, such as the Buriganga and Shitalakkhya, are now some of the most polluted in the country. Industrial waste, textile dye effluents, heavy metals, and untreated sewage have turned these rivers into toxic cesspools, posing serious threats to public health and biodiversity. The Buriganga alone absorbs 21,600 cubic metres of toxic waste daily, mainly from tanneries, textile mills, and chemical factories, according to a study presented at the IICSD conference in 2015. With no robust wastewater treatment infrastructure, the challenge of industrial pollution looms large. However, an emerging technology called CO2 mineralisation offers a game-changing solution that not only captures industrial CO2 emissions but also neutralises harmful contaminants before they reach our lives.

CO2 mineralisation is a form of carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS) that converts captured CO2 into stable carbonates through reactions with alkaline industrial byproducts like cement kiln dust, steel slag, and fly ash. This process permanently stores CO2 in solid form, preventing it from re-entering the atmosphere, while also neutralising harmful contaminants in industrial wastewater. The result is a dual benefit: reducing emissions and mitigating water pollution.

Globally, companies like Holcim, CarbonCure, and Carbon Clean are pioneering large-scale CO2 mineralisation projects. These initiatives have demonstrated that the technology is not only effective, but also economically viable. Bangladesh has already explored carbon credit markets, selling 2.53 million carbon credits worth \$16.25 million since 2006. Integrating CO2 mineralisation into its industrial zones could unlock both environmental and financial rewards for the country.

The textile and tannery industries, which drive much of Bangladesh's economy, are also among the biggest sources of pollution. In areas like Hazaribagh and Savar in Dhaka, leather processing releases highly toxic substances, including chromium, sulphides, and acids, directly into the Buriganga River.

water pollution. This aligns with successful global initiatives like CarbonCure's concrete technology, which injects CO2 into concrete mixtures to enhance durability while reducing emissions.

CO2 mineralisation not only cleans wastewater but also repurposes industrial

Adopting this method in Bangladesh could significantly reduce the cement industry's carbon footprint and address the country's growing industrial waste problem.

One of the biggest concerns surrounding CO2 mineralisation is its high initial cost. However, Bangladesh can offset these costs

pilot projects and full-scale implementation. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) could also facilitate financing the transition. Beyond financial incentives, repurposing industrial byproducts into construction-grade materials could create new revenue streams for businesses, reduce dependency on imported building materials, and promote sustainable infrastructure development.

The environmental and social benefits of CO2 mineralisation are equally compelling. Restoring cleaner rivers would improve public health by reducing exposure to toxic pollutants. Fishermen, farmers, and communities that rely on these waterways would regain access to cleaner water sources, improving livelihoods. The reduced carbon footprint of major industries would contribute to Bangladesh's climate commitments, helping the country emerge as a leader in sustainable industrial practices.

Unfortunately, despite its enormous potential, CO2 mineralisation in Bangladesh faces several obstacles. The high initial investment required for implementation, coupled with a lack of supportive policy frameworks, hinders its adoption. Additionally, many industries remain unaware of the economic and environmental benefits of this technology, creating a gap in awareness and willingness to invest. However, the landscape is shifting. The Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) and international initiatives like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) are potential sources of financing that could help bridge the cost gap. Furthermore, the growing global interest in carbon trading markets could provide the financial incentives needed to encourage industries to integrate CO2 mineralisation into their waste management strategies. Countries like Norway and the Netherlands have already established carbon trading programmes, proving that emissions reductions can be monetised. If Bangladesh follows a similar path, it could turn CO2 reduction into an economic asset while simultaneously improving its environmental footprint.

Bangladesh's industrial success does not have to come at the expense of environmental health. CO2 mineralisation offers a revolutionary approach to transform pollution into progress, providing a pathway to cleaner rivers, reduced carbon emissions, and new economic opportunities. Technology exists and funding mechanisms are within reach. The only question that remains is: how soon will Bangladesh take action?



FILE PHOTO: STAR

Once a vital lifeline for Dhaka, the Buriganga River now faces severe pollution from chemical waste, medical disposal, and plastic debris.

CO2 mineralisation can neutralise these hazardous chemicals by introducing CO2-reactive alkaline materials that convert them into non-leachable, harmless compounds, preventing further contamination. A similar approach can be applied to wastewater from textile dyeing, which is often laden with sulphates, phosphates, and heavy metals. Through CO2-induced precipitation, these toxic substances can be removed before they are discharged, significantly reducing

waste into valuable materials. Bangladesh's cement and steel factories generate large amounts of slag, fly ash, and kiln dust, all of which can store CO2 permanently. Instead of accumulating hazardous waste, these materials can be converted into carbonate-rich products, providing a sustainable alternative to traditional construction materials. This approach is used in Canada, where captured CO2 is infused into concrete, strengthening the materials while permanently sequestering carbon.

by leveraging its carbon credit market, which has already shown success in renewable energy projects. Incorporating CO2 mineralisation into its industries could generate millions of dollars annually from carbon offset sales under mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Additionally, international climate finance, including grants from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and loans from the World Bank, could provide the funding necessary for

RESOLVING THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

Does Bangladesh need to shift gear?

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Recent developments in Myanmar, tensions at the Bangladesh-Myanmar and Bangladesh-India borders, and even the return of Donald Trump as president in the US have dramatically affected geopolitics in the South Asian region. While 64,718 Rohingya entered Bangladesh in 2024, according to the foreign ministry, and they continue to enter Bangladesh in small groups every day, according to the Rohingya living in the camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh needs to shift gear from talking about repatriation and start focusing on finding ways to stop the influx.

Based on the recent domestic political changes in Bangladesh, as well as the global changes, some questions arise in this regard. For one, when there is no instance of strict border closure in the past, can we hope that Bangladesh will be able to stop the (ir)regular small- and large-scale influxes of the Rohingya people? Also, since the country has not been able to successfully repatriate the Rohingya after the 2017 exodus, is it considering better alternatives to repatriation? While the foreign ministry considers the Arakan Army (AA) as a “non-state actor,” Bangladesh has, on occasions, been in contact with the AA. Has the government done enough homework on how to engage with the AA, if necessary?

The Awami League government did not focus on formulating the country's own legal instruments, such as a national policy, regarding the Rohingya issue. What about the interim government? Has it started developing a national refugee policy or a national policy for the Rohingya? With the emergence of “Arakan” in Rakhine, now controlled by the Arakan Army, have all the stakeholders in Bangladesh reached a consensus on what strategies to adopt to deal with the situation? Indeed, questions abound. However, at present,

it is important to understand the motives and motivations of the AA.

Strangely, a fake message claiming AA asked Bangladesh for help was circulated by some individuals without realising the damages it might cause. Some speculate that the supply

The Awami League government did not focus on formulating the country's own legal instruments, such as a national policy, regarding the Rohingya issue. What about the interim government? Has it started developing a national refugee policy or a national policy for the Rohingya? With the emergence of “Arakan” in Rakhine, now controlled by the Arakan Army, have all the stakeholders in Bangladesh reached a consensus on what strategies to adopt to deal with the situation?

chain for AA's daily essentials may be linked to Bangladesh. The Myanmar junta may cut the internal supply chain anytime. Relying completely on India for a long time is surely not prudent because of the costs involved with it. This may make AA somewhat dependent on Bangladesh. Yet, because of their strength in arms and planning, they have reasons to create a fearful and threatening environment at the

Bangladesh-Myanmar border, which is now under their control.

But at the same time, it is necessary to have experts and others study the nature of AA and its background characteristics to deal with them.

Let's consider the AA's statement, “We recognise the human rights and citizen rights of the Rohingyas” (by Maj Gen Twan Mrat Naing). It may seem quite promising, but the fact is, in less than three years after making this statement in an interview with Bangladeshi journalists, they appeared before the Rohingya people in Rakhine as an equally brutal entity as the Tatmadaw. As a result, the 2024 influx took place.

Despite the negative sides, AA knows that it may have to rely on Bangladesh to maintain the supply chain for their survival. In the past, Bangladesh failed to seize this opportunity to start negotiations on the Rohingya issue. Will it now leap into action, or keep waiting for “the right time” to raise the issue? Realistically, there is no such thing as “the right time” when it comes to the situation of refugees like the Rohingya. It is all about protecting the human rights of over a million stateless people and saving Bangladesh from irreparable social, economic, and environmental damage.

It is not difficult to understand that the Rohingya issue may destabilise the entire region of South Asia. This is known to the global community as well. But we must remember, all superpowers, no matter how friendly they are with Bangladesh, have their investments in Myanmar. China and India have their own geopolitical and geo-economic interests in Rakhine, which dictate their policies for the region. Regional platforms may also remain passive. And the UN has so far been ineffective at doing anything to help Bangladesh resolve the crisis. So what other options are available to us?

There does not seem to be any practical alternative to meeting the AA with a strategic agenda. Engaging with a non-state actor is not an endorsement. And engaging with the AA may not even be enough to break the stalemate. It alone does not guarantee success. Engaging with other national, regional, and international actors simultaneously is necessary to bring the AA to the negotiating table.

কালবৈশাখী/দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ায় বিশেষ নৌ সতর্কীকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কালবৈশাখী মৌসুম আসন্ন। এ মৌসুমে নৌযান দুর্ঘটনার আশংকা বেশি। দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ার মৌসুমে নিরাপদ নৌপরিবহন ব্যবস্থা নিশ্চিতকরণ এবং নৌদুর্ঘটনা পরিহারের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নরূপ অতিরিক্ত সতর্কতা অবলম্বনের জন্য বিআইডব্লিউটিএ'র পক্ষ থেকে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের প্রতি নিম্নরূপ সতর্কতা অবলম্বনের জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

যাত্রীদের প্রতি :

- আবহাওয়ার পূর্বাভাস জেনে যাত্রা করুন। দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ায় লক্ষ্যে যাত্রা করবেন না;
- দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়া দেখা দিলে আপনার যাত্রা বাতিল করুন। কোন অবস্থায় জীবনের ঝুঁকি নেবেন না;
- পশ্চিমবঙ্গে হঠাৎ দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়া শুরু হলে লক্ষ্যে এদিক সেদিক ছুটাছুটি করবেন না; ছুটাছুটি করলে লক্ষ্য ভারসাম্যহীন হয়। এরূপ সময়ে শান্তভাবে পরিস্থিতি মোকাবেলা করুন এবং জীবন রক্ষাকারী সরঞ্জামাদি হাতের নাগালে রেখে মহান সৃষ্টিকর্তাকে শ্রবণ করুন।

চালকদের প্রতি :

- কালবৈশাখী/দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ায় লক্ষ্য পরিচালনা করবেন না। বন্দর/ঘাটে অবস্থানকালে কালবৈশাখী/দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ার সম্মুখীন হলে আবহাওয়া সম্পূর্ণ বিপদমুক্ত না হওয়া পর্যন্ত লক্ষ্য নিয়ে বন্দর/ঘাট ত্যাগ করবেন না;
- লক্ষ্যে রেডিও, মোবাইল ফোন রাখুন এবং নিরামিত আবহাওয়া বার্তা শুুনুন। আবহাওয়া সংকেত জেনে আবহাওয়া সংক্রান্ত প্রচলিত বিধি-বিধান মেনে লক্ষ্য পরিচালনা করুন;
- পথিমধ্যে কালবৈশাখী/দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ার সম্মুখীন হলে কিংবা বিপদের আশংকা দেখা দিলে দ্রুত লক্ষ্য নিরাপদ আশ্রয়ে সরিয়ে নিন;
- যাত্রীদের বসার স্থানে মালামাল রাখলে লক্ষ্যের ভারসাম্যতা ফুটন হয়। তাই যাত্রীদের বসার স্থানে মালামাল না রেখে হ্যাচে মালামাল রাখুন এবং যাত্রার পূর্বে হ্যাচ কভার পানি রোধক করে সম্পূর্ণরূপে বন্ধ রেখে লক্ষ্য পরিচালনা করুন;
- লক্ষ্যে পর্যাপ্ত জীবন রক্ষাকারী সরঞ্জামাদি মজুদ রাখুন এবং এগুলো যাত্রীদের হাতের নাগালে রাখুন।

মালিকদের প্রতি :

- যাত্রী সাধারণের জান-মালের নিরাপত্তা বিধান করা আপনার নৈতিক দায়িত্ব। তাই উপযুক্ত সনদধারী এবং নির্ধারিত সংখ্যক মাস্টার/সারে ও ড্রাইভার দ্বারা নৌযান পরিচালনা করুন;
- বন্দর/ঘাটে অবস্থান কালে কালবৈশাখী/দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ার সম্মুখীন হলে আবহাওয়া সম্পূর্ণ বিপদমুক্ত না হওয়া পর্যন্ত মাস্টারকে লক্ষ্য নিয়ে ঘাট/বন্দর ত্যাগ করার অনুমতি দেবেন না;
- প্রতিটি লক্ষ্যে রেডিও, মোবাইল ফোন এবং পর্যাপ্ত জীবন রক্ষাকারী সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ করুন। দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ায় নৌযানের মাস্টারের সাথে পুনঃপুনঃ যোগাযোগ রক্ষা করে সার্বিক বিষয় কঠোরভাবে মনিটর করবেন।

সাধারণ নির্দেশনাবলী :

- লক্ষ্যের নাবিক/স্টাকগণকে অনুরূপভাবে মাস্ক পরিধান ও স্বাস্থ্য বিধি মেনে নৌযানে দায়িত্ব পালন করতে হবে এবং বিপদের মুহুর্তে যাত্রীগণ যাতে সহজে তাদের নিকট হতে সেবা নিতে পারে তজ্জ্বা সকল নাবিক/স্টাককে নির্ধারিত পোশাক পরিধান করতে হবে।

জরুরী প্রয়োজনে যোগাযোগ :

- বিআইডব্লিউটিএ'র কলসেন্টার নম্বর ১৬১১৩।
- কালবৈশাখী মৌসুমে/দুর্যোগপূর্ণ আবহাওয়ার সূত্রে ও নিরাপদ নৌপরিবহন ব্যবস্থা নিশ্চিত করণে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের সহযোগিতা কামনা করা হচ্ছে।



বিআইডব্লিউটিএ

প্রব্রমণ নদীর সাথে

GD-524

ESSAY

BETWEEN TRADITION AND TABOO: The arranged marriage trope in Bangla dark romance literature

The arranged marriage trope in dark romance frequently serves as a clash between traditional values and contemporary desires. Traditionally perceived as a means of securing familial alliances, arranged marriage takes on a different dimension in dark romance—becoming a battleground for power struggles, forbidden desires, and intense emotional conflict. This tension resonates strongly in South Asian contexts, where marriage is often seen as a duty rather than a personal choice.

NAZMUS SADAT
Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and does not endorse or condone any form of abuse or exploitation.

In a packed room at Bookworm Bangladesh on January 11, 2025, an unusual literary discussion unfolded, marking a significant shift in Bangladesh's conservative literary landscape. The event, "Trigger Warning: Dark Romance", organised by Sister Library in collaboration with Bookworm Bangladesh and Star Books and Literature, brought together diverse voices to explore the emerging world of dark romance literature.

While the panel—featuring dark romance author Shanjida Nushrath Ali; Dr Nazia Manzoor, Editor of Star Books and Literature and Chair of the Department of English and Modern Languages, NSU; Dr. Kaiser Huq, academic, translator, and poet; and literary critic Shahriar Shaams—explored various aspects of the genre, one particular element stood out: the transformation of traditional arranged marriage narratives in contemporary dark romance.

Unlike traditional romance, dark romance delves into themes of obsession, coercion, and psychological danger, often blurring the lines of consent and exploring morally ambiguous characters. Erotica, on the other hand, centers on intimacy and desire. While it may share elements with erotica's focus on intimacy and desire, dark romance distinguishes itself through its complex narrative structures and moral ambiguity. This evolution in romantic fiction is finding a growing audience in Bangladesh, as noted by Bookworm's owner, Amina Rahman, during the event. This growing appetite signals a shift in reader preferences, with many seeking narratives that push boundaries.

In this evolving landscape, authors like Shanjida Nushrath Ali are pushing the limits of mainstream fiction by introducing bold themes previously unexplored. Except for a handful of examples like Humayun Azad's *Pak Sar Jamin Sad Bad* (Agamee Prakashani, 2004), which actually somewhat had dark romance and erotic elements, historically, Bangladeshi eroticism has existed largely in the underground choti genre—short, mostly explicit fiction often circulated informally. However, unlike choti, which prioritises physical encounters over storytelling, dark romance incorporates psychological depth, intricate power dynamics. Choti often focuses solely on physical encounters, frequently lacking the character development and narrative sophistication found in dark



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

romance. This difference is crucial, as dark romance uses its exploration of desire and power to delve into complex emotional landscapes.

During the panel discussion, Dr Manzoor highlighted a crucial aspect: "The reason why dark romance draws you is because it often deals with female desire. When women want to take control of their desire, and it is in the shape of darkness, what stories can you find then?"

The arranged marriage trope in dark romance frequently serves as a clash between traditional values and contemporary desires. Traditionally perceived as a means of securing familial alliances, arranged marriage takes on a different dimension in dark romance—becoming a battleground for power struggles, forbidden desires, and intense emotional conflict. This tension resonates strongly in South Asian contexts, where marriage is often seen as a duty rather than a personal choice. While not dark romance per se, Humayun Ahmed's work often explores the psychological impact of forced relationships and the suppression of individual desire in traditional marriages. For example, in *Shonkhonil Karagar* (Khan Brothers, 1973), the character of Bilkis, though betrothed in an arranged marriage, harbours a deep longing for a different life and love. While not explicitly erotic, the undercurrent of her repressed desires hints at the psychological complexities that arranged marriages can entail. Similarly, Selina Hossain's *Hangor Nodi Grenade* (Anannya Prokashoni, 2003) portrays the complex power dynamics within arranged marriages through Jamila, showing how women

in such setups often navigate complex emotional landscapes, hinting at both resilience and suppressed desires, even in dire circumstances like wartime. These examples, though from mainstream literature, illustrate the existing tension between tradition and individual agency, coercion, power imbalance, and emotional conflict—tensions that dark romance explores more explicitly.

A hallmark of dark romance is the presence of dominant, often morally grey heroes. In arranged marriage narratives, this translates to a protagonist bound—willingly or unwillingly—to a powerful, often dangerous partner. This fuels stories of coercion, psychological tension, and reluctant attraction. For example, Cora Reilly's *Bound by Honor* (2014) explores an arranged marriage in the mafia, blending themes of loyalty, passion, and danger. These narratives often begin with mistrust but evolve into dark, intense love—a defining element of the genre.

The forced proximity inherent in an arranged marriage setting often fuels the slow-burn passion characteristic of dark romance. The genre thrives on tension, drawing characters together by obligation while simultaneously forcing them to resist their growing attraction. This push and pull between duty and desire amplifies the emotional stakes, creating a compelling narrative dynamic. For example, a dominant hero might initially exert control, but the heroine's resistance can lead to a gradual shift in the power balance, adding another layer of complexity to their evolving relationship. This forced proximity psychological interplay is

evident in novels like *The Kiss Thief* (2019) by L.J. Shen, where the protagonist initially resists her arranged marriage, only to find herself entangled in a complex web of power, control, and reluctant attraction. The gradual shift in power dynamics and the deepening emotional stakes are what make dark romance distinct from both traditional romance and pure erotica.

Bangladesh, too, has a complex relationship with erotic literature which sometimes reflects a broader cultural tension between tradition and modernity; explicit discussions of desire, consent, and power have remained largely absent in mainstream fiction. This lack of representation created a gap between reality and literature, as themes of passion and coercion were often softened or ignored altogether. This self-censorship in mainstream fiction revealed not just literary boundaries, but deeper societal resistance to confronting these themes openly and sometimes with consequences.

The recent emergence of dark romance, however, represents a potential shift, not just in foreign literature but also in Bangladeshi literature, welcoming discussions on previously taboo topics. The panel discussion at Bookworm Bangladesh also emphasised the need for open dialogue around these narratives—not as a means of sensationalising them, but to acknowledge the realities of power imbalances and emotional complexity in relationships. Without addressing these themes, literature risks failing to fully capture the depth of human experience.

How does dark romance fit into Bangladeshi literature? Can arranged

marriage narratives in dark romance bridge the gap between tradition and modernity? These are complex questions. Dr Kaiser Huq, a notable voice in contemporary Bangladeshi literature, observed that genres like dark romance challenge traditional literary boundaries, offering fresh perspectives on social structures and relationships. This observation is the key. Dark romance, by its very nature, pushes against established norms, forcing a re-examination of traditional power dynamics within relationships. For instance, the arranged marriage trope, when explored through the lens of dark romance, can expose the underlying power imbalances inherent in such arrangements. It can also explore the often-unspoken desires and frustrations of individuals trapped within these structures. Therefore, dark romance, while controversial, has the potential to offer critical commentary on traditional practices, prompting important conversations about consent, agency, and the evolving nature of relationships in modern society. It can bridge the gap by exploring the unspoken undercurrents of tradition, bringing them to the forefront in a way that sparks dialogue and challenges conventional thinking.

Yet, the persistent taboo surrounding dark romance in Bangladeshi literature reflects a broader cultural reluctance to engage with themes of desire, power, and agency—particularly within the context of traditional institutions like arranged marriage. But as evidenced by the growing readership of both translated dark romance works and emerging Bangladeshi online fiction, there is a clear appetite for narratives that challenge these boundaries. As Bangladeshi literature embraces bolder storytelling, will local authors rise to the challenge of reinterpreting this trope for a South Asian audience? As mentioned, since the demand is there—perhaps all that's needed is a writer willing to take the plunge. The potential for this transformation rests with a new generation of writers, poised to redefine both the genre and the landscape of Bangladeshi literature. This growing openness to host such conversations, combined with the rising generation of writers who are increasingly willing to explore these themes, points to an exciting evolution in Bangladeshi literature—one that might finally bridge the gap between traditional storytelling and contemporary desires.

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EVENT REPORT

Celebrating diversity and language at “BHASHA UTSHOB 2025”

BASHIRAH TAHREEMA

Gulshan Society held a two-day language festival at the Gulshan Lake Park, curated by Sadaf Saaz and Jatrik. The event took place over the weekend of 21-22 February that saw discussion panels, original musical performances, and poetry recitations, surrounded by an array of book stalls and food courts.

The opening ceremony began with a poetry recitation celebrating our different languages. Many talented poets of different ethnicities bared their souls to the audience with original pieces of poetry in English, Manipuri, and Garo language based both on the Language Movement of 1952 and their personal experiences with their language. After hearing from poets Adrita Zaima Islam, Mithun Raksam, and Maibam Sadhon, the event followed with a panel discussing "Language of Resistance" with artist and curator Shehzad Chowdhury, artist Dhruvani Mahbub, and Assistant Professor at the Department of

Bangla at Dhaka University and author Rafat Alam, moderated by Nazia Manzoor, the Editor of Star Books and Literature, *The Daily Star*, and Assistant Professor and Chair of the Department of English and Modern Languages at North South University.

Nazia Manzoor prompted the conversation by asking "Can art itself be a form of resistance?" to which Dhruvani Mahbub replied "I think art itself is a resistance. Rebellious is its nature. We artists will always strive and fail to find happiness because we are always protesting against unfairness caused by people in power." She continued, "However, I believe, I am alive and I am capable



of love and that is also an expression of art." She ended by saying "We all owe something to each other, as artists, as humans, as Bangalis and that is love."

The event followed with a discussion, "Crafts and confessions: A deconstruction of flash fiction" led by Sabrina Fatma Ahmed

and Abak Hussain, founder and director of Talespeople respectively, discussing the flexibility of approaching flash fiction as a writer and the inauthenticity of AI writing. They also spoke of the lack of individuality and intimacy in AI writing, reassuring how humans will never be short of stories to tell.

In addition, another conversational panel followed, "Other Tongues: Immersed In Translation" with Kaiser Haq, Rifat Munim, Mojaffor Hossain, Srabonti Datta, and Noora Shamsi Bahar discussing the diversity of different languages in our culture and the importance of engaging in translated works. The panel challenged the overrated notion of prioritising English literature while emphasising the need to embrace translated works by authors from diverse backgrounds.

During the event, attendees explored the wide variety of books and food stalls. Next, a riveting hour 'Jiboner Saathe Golpokotha' with Shayan was followed by the all-female indigenous band, F minor, who entranced the audience with singing in different languages of Bangladesh, and covers of songs inspired by the language movement. There were then recitations of classic Bangla poetry by veterans Dahlia Ahmed and Shimul Mustapha, and the day ended with the book launch *Da Vinci Club*, a thriller by

Mohammad Nizamuddin.

On the final day, 22 February, several more panels were held throughout the day, including an inspiring 'In their own words' panel. One of the most interactive sessions was "The Art of Reading and Writing", featuring Farah Ghuznavi, author of the book *Fragments of Riversong* (Daily Star Books, 2013). She encouraged the aspiring writers in the audience to draft out their ideas as much as possible and emphasised the importance of building a relationship of respect and familiarity with readers. Following this, an insightful discussion was held on fiction writing with author Saad Z Hossain discussing struggles of storytelling in politically sensitive climates. The event concluded with an engaging performance by Warda Ashraf.

Bashirah Tahreema is a poet chasing a life in STEM where her dream is to live in a falling apart castle in a forest that is probably cursed, and watch reruns of *Modern Family* forever.

‘Pride’ at stake as rain threat looms in Rawalpindi

This is the first time Bangladesh and Pakistan will meet in the ICC Champions Trophy.

Bangladesh have five victories to their name against Pakistan in ODIs. Pakistan, on the other hand, boast 34 wins against the Tigers in 39 overall meetings, including three victories in their last three encounters in ICC tournaments.

Bangladesh have never beaten Pakistan in Pakistan in ODIs. Pakistan have a 12-0 home record against Bangladesh in ODIs. The Tigers, however, have won two ODIs in the country, with both wins coming in Asia Cup contests (against the UAE in 2008 and against Afghanistan in 2023, respectively).

Mahmudullah Riyad has featured in most Bangladesh-Pakistan contests, playing in 20 encounters between the two sides, but the right-handed batter averages 23.80 and strikes it at 59.40 against this particular opposition.

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN *from Rawalpindi*

It appears that interest has waned in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, and its twin city, Rawalpindi, as fans turn their backs on today's ICC Champions' Trophy Group A clash between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The outcome of the match at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium will have no impact on the tournament after the two teams lost their opening games.

Ever since defending champions Pakistan lost to India in Dubai, most city dwellers have appeared reluctant to engage in conversation about their team's match against Bangladesh.

Among those who purchased tickets, confusion reigns; some are rethinking their plans while others, still eager to watch the game, are anxious about the unfavourable weather that has already caused the abandonment of the Group B match between South Africa and Australia.

The past two days have seen gloomy skies over the city, and forecasts indicate that the Bangladesh-Pakistan match may be similarly affected, with rain looming on the horizon.

The adverse weather led to the cancellation of Bangladesh's practice session under floodlights yesterday, while Pakistan managed only a few drills and a light football session.

During yesterday's pre-match press conference, Bangladesh's senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin claimed that although their chances of



qualification are over, they will try to win the match against Pakistan, which could be a "turning point" for their cricket.

Once considered a formidable team in the 50-over format, Bangladesh have not been enjoying a good run in the ODIs in recent years. Since the ICC World Cup 2023 in India, Bangladesh have played 23 ODIs, winning only six, with victories

against Sri Lanka (3), New Zealand (1), and Afghanistan (2).

"If you consider the future of the tournament, we have nothing to gain. But if our boys can play well, it will give us a good direction. I hope we shouldn't repeat the mistakes we made in our first two games. There is always room for improvement in every match," Salahuddin told reporters in Rawalpindi yesterday.

"You can't predict when you will gain confidence or when your moment can change. Every match is important for each player. If they perform well, it can be a big boost for them.

"This match can also be a turning point for our cricket," said Salahuddin, adding that he feels there is no room for experimentation in ICC events, while they will aim to reduce the number of dot balls in today's match.

Meanwhile, during Pakistan's press conference, their head coach Aaqib Javed claimed that the home side want to play for "pride" if the weather permits them to take the field against Bangladesh.

"Every game is played for pride, so we want to leave a mark on Thursday," said Javed.



BOLD AFGHANS leave England in ruins

AFP, Lahore

Opener Ibrahim Zadran's 177 and five wickets by Azmatullah Omarzai helped Afghanistan knock England out of the Champions Trophy with a thrilling eight-run victory yesterday.

Afghanistan posted 325-7 in a virtual knockout tie in Lahore and then bowled out England for 317 in 49.5 overs to stay alive in the race for a semi-final place while England went down as the third team to be eliminated in the eight-nation tournament after hosts Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Joe Root's 120 went in vain as England lost regular wickets to lose their second straight ODI to the Afghans after their shock defeat in the 2023 World Cup in India.

Ibrahim Zadran's knock is one of the greatest knocks I've seen in history.

Former England captain NASSER HUSSAIN

Needing 13 off the last six balls with one wicket in hand, pace bowler Omarzai kept calm to give away just four runs and dismiss Adil Rashid.

Electing to bat, Afghanistan soon slipped to 37-3 inside nine overs before Zadran pulled the innings together with a fourth-wicket partnership of 103 with skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi (40).

Zadran later added 111 for the sixth wicket with Mohammad Nabi, who hit 40 in 24 balls after Omarzai quick-fired a 31-ball 41. Zadran, 23, took the England bowling apart and went past his previous ODI best of 162 in his 146-ball knock laced with 12 fours and six sixes.

He not only broke his own record for Afghanistan's highest individual ODI score but also a tournament record, days after Ben Duckett's 165 in England's opening loss to Australia.

"I think it was one of the best ODI innings I have ever seen," said Shahidi.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY CORNER

India slammed for one-venue 'farce'

Former cricketers and pundits have slammed India's "undeniable" advantage of playing all their Champions Trophy matches in Dubai, while the other seven teams have to shuttle between three venues in Pakistan, and the UAE.

'Looks like he's here on vacation':

Wasim Akram on Mahmudullah

Pakistan legend Wasim Akram also imparted his advice about how Bangladesh should move on from veterans and bring on young blood. "They've brought guys like Mahmudullah [Riyad] and Mushfiqur Rahim who are 39 and 37 years old. Prepare young players for white ball cricket and let these veterans play red ball if they want to do it. White ball cricket is about fearlessness."

Klaasen fit again after shaking off elbow issue

South Africa batsman Heinrich Klaasen has recovered from an elbow injury that kept him out of their Champions Trophy opener against Afghanistan, skipper Temba Bavuma said. The Proteas were unsure if Klaasen would have been available to face Australia in their second match in Rawalpindi on Tuesday but the game was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to rain.

Ravindra keen to play against India in dead rubber

Rachin Ravindra has no desire to sit out New Zealand's dead rubber against India after returning to the side with a rousing century against Bangladesh at the Champions Trophy. With New Zealand already qualified for the semi-finals, selectors have the luxury of resting players for the final group match against India in Dubai on Sunday.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website*

Bangladesh batting stuck in archaic groove

NABID YEASIN

"Ben Duckett cost them [England] the game... scored too slow, mate... they should have got to at least 380," former South Africa batter Herschelle Gibbs said about Duckett's innings after England lost their Champions Trophy opener against Australia in Lahore last Saturday, despite posting 351 for eight -- the highest total in the competition's history -- only for Australia to chase it down with five wickets and 15 balls to spare.

The fact that Duckett's 143-ball 165 was deemed "too slow" speaks volumes about how the demands of modern cricket have changed.

And this is where Bangladesh cricket appears to have lost the plot. Their approach to ODIs not only reflects a lack of understanding of the game's current demands but also highlights their inability to adapt to a sport that has become increasingly fast-paced over the past decade, regardless of format.

The Tigers entered the Champions Trophy with hopes of winning the championship but have already been eliminated after suffering comprehensive defeats in both of their matches, against India and New Zealand.

Bangladesh have played a total of 340 dot balls in the two matches in the Champions Trophy so far -- the most by any team in the competition.

However, it is not the fact that 56.67 per cent of the overall deliveries faced by the Tigers have resulted in non-scoring shots that weighed Najmul Hossain Shanto and his team down. More importantly, modern cricket demands the ability to make up for the dots in a way that renders them insignificant in the broader

picture -- New Zealand set the prime example when they posted 320 runs in their 60-run victory over hosts Pakistan in the tournament opener despite playing 140 dot balls, just 19 fewer than what Bangladesh had when they managed only 228 against India.

In the 11 ODIs they have played over the past 12 months, Bangladesh have batted first on eight occasions but could only cross the 300-run mark just once -- and even then, it was in a losing cause against the West Indies in St Kitts in December 2024.

All seven other teams participating in the Champions

Trophy played more than 10 matches during the same period and reached the 300-run threshold at least twice. England, the pioneers of the 'Bazball' style of aggressive cricket, made north of 300 the most times -- on six occasions.

These numbers reveal a clear shift in ODI strategy, a transformation that began over a decade ago.

The old tactic of keeping wickets in hand for a late flourish is no longer viable. The ODI format, reinvigorated by the innovation of T20 and T10 cricket, now demands scoring at an even greater pace than Duckett's strike rate of 115.38 when the pitch, conditions, and match situation allow for it.

At a time when innings like Duckett's are criticised for not being aggressive enough, Towhid Hridoy's 118-ball 100 (against India) and captain Shanto's 110-ball 77 (against New Zealand) are bound to go unnoticed.

Hence, a team that continues to repeat such outdated patterns of play is inevitably bound to be cast aside -- just as former India batter Virender Sehwag outright dismissed any chance of the Tigers winning against India.



ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

Weakened Bangladesh fall 3-1 to UAE

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team suffered a 3-1 defeat to hosts UAE in the first of two FIFA friendly matches in Dubai yesterday.

Bangladesh, sans 18 senior players and comprising mostly U-20 players, fielded a second string side against an experienced UAE side, possessing a few European-origin players.

Peter Butler's charges could hold UAE for 18 minutes before Elizabeth Forshaw broke the deadlock. Ten minutes later, Georgia Gibson doubled the lead against a new-look Bangladesh, who might have been under pressure to deliver in their first international match since last year's triumph in the SAFF Women's Championship.

However, Bangladesh hit back in the 35th minute when defender-cum-captain Afeida Khandokar converted from the spot.

After resumption, the visitors tried to level the margin, but it was again Gibson who made it 3-1 to ensure UAE's victory over Bangladesh in the maiden affair between the two senior sides.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh claim kabaddi series against Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh secured the five-match kabaddi test series against Nepal with a match to spare, defeating the visitors 49-24 in the fourth fixture in Dhaka yesterday.

At the Outer Stadium Palton ground, the home side dominated from the outset and led 31-18 at halftime.

The start of the second half gave rise to a controversial umpire decision that awarded Bangladesh points after a completed raid in Nepalese territory. Nepal's appeal for a review remained unsuccessful before play resumed after a 10-minute delay.

Bangladesh's captain-cum-raider Mizanur Rahman was adjudged Player of the Match. The fifth and final match is scheduled for Friday.

Morsalin included in 30-man camp despite lawsuit

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national football team's manager Amer Khan has said that there is no reason to exclude Sheikh Morsalin from the squad after a case was filed today against the Bashundhara Kings forward over demand of dowry.

Morsalin's wife Senjuti Binte Sohel filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court in the afternoon.

According to the complaint, Senjuti got married with Morsalin on November 29 last year with a dower worth Tk 10 lakh. A few days after the marriage, Morsalin demanded a dowry of Tk 20 lakh from her to buy a car. At one stage, Senjuti was subjected to psychological pressure and torture, the complaint added.

When brought to the notice, national team manager Amer said: "There is no ground to exclude him from the squad until and unless allegations against him are proven in the court of justice. Cases can be filed against anyone, but it doesn't mean he is guilty."

Earlier in the day, head coach Javier Cabrera trimmed his original 38-member squad to 30 members including Morsalin for their preparation camp in Saudi Arabia ahead of Asian Cup Qualifiers tie against India on March 25.

The Spanish coach had on Feb 9



announced the 38-member initial squad by drafting in four new faces as well as three Abahani defenders. However, only one Abahani defender -- Shakil Hossain -- found himself in the 30-member squad.

Out of the four new faces, goalkeeper Shakib Al Hasan and midfielder Jahid Hasan Shanto were dropped while experienced

campaigners like goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico, defenders Yeasin Khan, Mehedi Hasan and Murad Hasan and young forwards Rabbi Hossain Rahul and Rafiqul Islam were also not considered for the Saudi camp, which is scheduled for February 5 to 17.

The 30-member squad also includes Sheffield United midfielder Hamza Choudhury and Italy-based teenager Fahamedul Islam.

While Amer said that Fahamedul is expected to join the Saudi camp, he said that Hamza will join the team on March 18.

"We will get a couple of training sessions in Dhaka after returning from Saudi Arabia and we are expecting Hamza to reach Dhaka on March 18 to join training sessions before flying out for India," said the former national footballer.

The team management is also planning to play two practice matches in Saudi Arabia, subject to the availability of teams in Saudi Arabia.

The 30 selected players have been asked to report to Amer on Thursday and training will get underway the following day.

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Today, we proudly present **“REFORM & REBUILD”** the fifth and final instalment of our special supplement series. This edition brings you a compelling collection of interviews and articles on the reform efforts reshaping Bangladesh in the aftermath of the July Uprising. **Don't miss out—grab your free copy from your hawkker today!**



Afghanistan all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai celebrates after taking the final England wicket, sealing an eight-run win in their Champions Trophy Group B fixture in Lahore yesterday. Omarzai's five wickets helped bundle out England for 317 after his 41 runs and Ibrahim Zadran's 177 had propelled them to 325-7.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Interim govt has UN's full support

Guterres tells CA; will visit on March 13-16

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in a letter to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, has reaffirmed his solidarity and support for the transition process under the chief adviser's leadership.

Guterres, who is set to visit Bangladesh, from March 13 to 16, for the first time since the political changeover on August



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POLLS CANDIDATES, STRATEGY

BNP meet today to seek info from grassroots

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP is holding an extended meeting today to gather opinions of its grassroots about possible election candidates and its polls strategy.

The party's future direction will be prepared by grassroots leaders, sources said.

Senior leaders also said that this extended meeting has been called to evaluate their movements on the streets over the last 17 years.

They said that they will get an idea from the statements of grassroots leaders about the potential candidates for the election, their popularity, and their connection with the leaders, and activists in their respective constituencies.

Party high-ups said that nominations for the next parliamentary polls will be given to the candidates who were in the movements and contributed to the party.

“The main feature of this extended meeting will be the

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Mahfuj Alam new info adviser



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Adviser Mahfuj Alam has been given the portfolio of the information ministry to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Nahid Islam.

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Ukraine can ‘forget about’ joining Nato

Says Trump; Zelensky insists on ‘security guarantees’ ahead of Washington visit

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday brushed aside Ukraine's aspirations to join Nato, again repeating Russia's stance that the issue caused the three-year-old war.

“Nato -- you can forget about,” Trump said when asked about a potential deal to end the war. “I think that's probably the reason

the whole thing started.”

His statement came despite President Volodymyr Zelensky softening his stance on signing an accord on rare minerals.

He said he hopes to visit Washington this week to meet Trump and discuss future US support for Ukraine.

Zelensky, who has come under mounting pressure from US officials to sign an accord

on rare minerals, told reporters -- including from AFP -- that Ukrainian and US officials were working to confirm a meeting with Trump in Washington tomorrow.

He later told a press conference that he will immediately follow the trip with talks with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and other European leaders in Britain at the weekend.

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Bangladesh scores better in freedom index

Says Washington-based research group

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh scored 45 out of 100 in the Global Freedom Score, gaining five points over last year, according to Washington-based pro-democracy research group Freedom House.

In its annual “Freedom in the World” report, the Freedom House said

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QUL KHWANI

We deeply mourn the sad demise of Dr A.M.M. Shawkat Ali, retired secretary and former Advisor to the caretaker government. Innalillahe wa inna elaehe rajeun. He passed away early morning, on February 23, at United Hospital. His Qul Khwani will be held on Friday, February 28, baad Asr at Gulshan Society Mosque (Road 63). All relatives, well wishers and friends are requested to attend and pray for the departed soul.

Farida Shawkat & Family

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