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## Pledge made to build a 'second republic'

Uprising leaders launch National Citizen Party; 171-member committee formed

MASHFIQ MIZAN and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The young leaders behind the successful mass uprising against Sheikh Hasina officially launched the National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday, declaring their vision for a "second republic".

The thousands in attendance cheered as Nahid Islam, the convener of the newly formed party, vowed to reshape Bangladesh's political landscape at a rally to mark the launch on Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka.

He said that in this envisioned political order, the common people—and only the common people—will be the supreme source of power. He emphasised that the NCP's core mission is to dismantle constitutional autocracy and establish a robust democratic framework.

To achieve this, the party, styled Jatiya Nagorik Party in Bangla, demanded that the next national election be held for a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution.

Pledging sweeping reforms, the NCP vowed to rebuild political and economic institutions, combat corruption and nepotism, and prioritise inclusion, equity, and national sovereignty. In a rallying call to the people, the party urged citizens to unite in the struggle for democracy and

justice, promising a future where power truly belongs to the people.

This is the first time in Bangladesh's history that a political party has emerged directly from the heart of a mass uprising—led by the very youth who spearheaded it. Never before has a youth-driven party been founded with such momentum and public enthusiasm.

Nahid affirmed that the NCP will be a truly democratic, egalitarian, and people-centered political force.

Rejecting the influence of external political alignments, he said Bangladesh would never be divided again.

"There will be no room for pro-India or pro-Pakistan politics in Bangladesh: Nahid Islam

All political parties need to be united to rebuild Bangladesh: Sarjis Alam

We will bury dynastic rule: Hasnat Abdullah

attempts to weaken Bangladesh through divisive politics.

"From this stage today, we vow that Bangladesh will never be divided again."

With a shared belief that the day would mark the beginning of something new, students, activists, young professionals,

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A drone shot of the crowd at the rally marking the official launch of National Citizen Party on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital yesterday. The party is led by individuals who played key roles in protests that ended the Sheikh Hasina regime.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

What does a second republic mean?

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

In its first statement to the people, the National Citizen Party clearly declared a vision for a second republic in Bangladesh. Speaking at the party's inauguration, Nahid Islam, the top leader of the party read out the declaration which outlines the ideals and principles of his centrist party. But what is this second republic?

SEE PAGE 2 COL. 1

New constitution for new Bangladesh

Says NCP in its declaration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam delivered a speech after the formal announcement launching of National Citizen Party and the leaders of the party said the convener's speech is NCP's "declaration".

The following is an English translation of Nahid's speech.

In the context of the July 2024 uprising and under the leadership of the Students Against Discrimination and initiative of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, the students and masses of Bangladesh, hereby declare: We, the people of the Bengal delta, bear a rich and distinct culture shaped over a thousand years of historical evolution. After nearly 200 years of British colonial rule, the state of Pakistan was established in 1947 following a long struggle.

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 2

Explain how Hasina, others managed to flee  
BNP decides to demand from govt

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has decided to demand an explanation from the interim government regarding how Sheikh Hasina and her associates managed to flee Bangladesh after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5.

Party leaders criticised the delay in prosecuting and punishing identified

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## NAHID ISLAM

NCP CONVENER

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nahid Islam, a sociology graduate from Dhaka University, was one of the key organisers of the anti-discrimination student movement, which toppled the Sheikh Hasina regime.



## AKHTER HOSSEN

NCP MEMBER SECRETARY

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Akhter Hossen, a law graduate from Dhaka University, was one of the key organisers of the anti-discrimination student movement, which toppled the Sheikh Hasina regime.



Nahid was one of the student representatives within the interim government. He resigned from the advisory council on Tuesday to take on his new role.

Nahid became the member secretary of Ganotantrik Chhatra Shakti on October 3, 2023, which was a breakaway faction of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad led by Nurul Haque Nur.

Chhatra Shakti was dissolved on September 14, 2024, a week after the Jatiya Nagorik Committee was formed.

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## What does a second republic mean?

FROM PAGE 1

Second republic signifies transformation of the political system through democratic means, rewriting or reform of constitution and political institutions following a revolution or mass uprising.

The term "second republic" has been used in various countries to refer to a specific period in their political history, usually marking a transition from one form of political system or government to another, said political analysts, in their instant reaction regarding the new political party's call.

The new party led by July uprising leaders also envisions a constituent assembly.

A professor of government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, said the second republic indicates a revolution and the transformation of the political system through democratic means.

"It speaks of correcting the failures of the first republic through reformation and a new constitution, indicating a change in the political system and the entire political settlement," he said.

Dhaka University political science teacher Sabir Ahmed said the leaders of the new party perceive that although the people had established ownership of the state through the independence of 1971, they had lost it afterwards.

"The people regained their ownership through the mass uprising of 2024, and therefore they now want to declare a second republic," he said attempting to explain the new party's vision.

"The second republic brings about fundamental changes in the state, the political system, and institutions. The constitution can be rewritten or formed anew and political institutions can be reconstituted or reformed as well," he added.

Asked about constituent assembly, Al Masud Hasanuzzaman explained that it is elected for the sole purpose of writing a new constitution.

### TWO 'SECOND REPUBLICS'

The first French republic (1848-1852) after the French Revolution had given way to monarchy. The second French republic was established through the revolution of 1848 toppling the monarchy of King Louis Philippe.

The liberal hopes of establishing an enduring democratic regime were soon frustrated. In 1848 Louis-Napoléon (a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte) was elected president with a monarchist majority in the legislative assembly. This led to the enactment of conservative measures restricting voting rights and freedom of the press, giving the church increased control over education. Soon realizing that his power and future reelection were limited by the assembly's actions, Louis-Napoléon organized a coup d'état in 1851. Following a new constitution that reduced the assembly's power, and a plebiscite, Louis-Napoléon declared himself emperor Napoléon III in 1852. Louis-Napoléon, and thus the second empire was born.

France has so far had five republics with the last one founded in 1958.

Second Republic of Spain (1931-1939) emerged as King Alfonso XIII was forced to leave Spain after municipal elections showed massive support for republicanism. It led to the introduction of secular reforms, including separation of church and state. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) led to collapse of Second Republic and Francisco Franco established a dictatorship that lasted until 1975.

## Pledge made to build a 'second republic'

FROM PAGE 1

and ordinary citizens from across the country started arriving at the venue in the morning, with the NCP slated for an afternoon launch.

Many had travelled overnight. Their eyes were heavy with exhaustion but alight with anticipation. Most had come in groups, arms linked, voices filled with excitement.

"This is the change we fought for last year," said Imran Khan, a former Dhaka University student. "We want a political party that represents our generation."

By afternoon, the crowd swelled, spilling onto the streets surrounding the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. And amid the sea of people, one thing stood out—the red and green of the national flag. It was everywhere. Wrapped around foreheads, draped over shoulders, waving high above heads. From a distance, the gathering looked like a great tide of red and green, moving as one, a rhythmic wave of unity and hope.

"This flag is not just fabric. It carries our history, our struggle," said Nishat Rahman, a college student from Sirajganj, gripping her flag tightly.

Among the crowd was Abu Zar, who had left Terkhada, Khulna, at 2:00am

effective bureaucracy.

On foreign relations, he said, "We will maintain friendly ties, but without external prescriptions. Who enters the Ganabhaban or parliament will be decided by the people of Bangladesh—not by India."

Sarjis Alam, NCP's chief organiser (northern region), called for unity among all political parties to rebuild Bangladesh. "Sheikh Hasina destroyed the country's institutions—we must come together to restore them and ensure her trial," he said.

Warning against political monopolies, he added, "If major parties suppress smaller ones, another autocracy could emerge. Let's learn from Hasina's example."

Nowshir Ali, father of uprising martyr Jaber Ibrahim, demanded an end to the practice of using brutal and deadly force to suppress protests.

Expressing his support for the party, he said, "I stand firmly with them in building a new Bangladesh. I want my country to be safe in their hands."

Mim Akhtar, sister of July martyr Ismail Hossain Rabbi, announced the names of Nahid and Akhter Hossen as the NCP convenor and member

Abedin Shishir, Mohammad Muntasir Rahman, Gazi Salauddin Tanvir, Tamim Ahmed, and Tahsin Riaz.

Akhter said, "The youth envision a future Bangladesh governed under a new constitution. With that dream in mind, I conclude by demanding an election for a constituent assembly."

As the sun dipped below the horizon, the crowd showed no sign of dispersing. The flags kept waving, their red and green catching the glow of streetlights and stage floodlights. Voices rose in unison, carrying the dream of a new Bangladesh. The crowd erupted in thunderous chants and applause as Nahid, wrapping a national flag on his speech, began the introductory speech around 6:30pm.

"Finally, we reaffirm our commitment to building a just and equitable society. We firmly believe that the July 2024 mass uprising was not just a victory against a fascist regime—it was a pledge to shape our future," Nahid said.

"Let us stand together, hand in hand, to build a Bangladesh where every citizen's voice is heard, where justice prevails, and where the struggle for people's rights defines politics. A nation founded on equality and human dignity."



Leaders of the BNP, Jamaat, and other political parties at the rally for the launch of National Citizen Party.

PHOTO: STAR

to attend the event. "We could have watched this online, but some moments in history need to be lived in person," he said.

For many, it wasn't just a political event—it was personal.

Sayedeh Akhter, sister of uprising martyr Ahnaf Abir Ashrafullah—a Manarat University student shot dead by police in Ashulia on August 5—was present at the event.

"My brother answered the call of the very students who are forming this party today. I have great expectations from them. I hope they won't let his sacrifice go in vain and will work to build a Bangladesh free from discrimination and corruption," she said. Families of many other martyrs shared the same sentiment.

The unveiling ceremony officially began at 4:15pm with recitations from the holy Quran, Gita, Tripitaka, and Bible, followed by the national anthem. A minute's silence was then observed in memory of the martyrs of the July uprising. The central leadership of the party took the stage around 5:10pm.

Hasnat Abdullah, newly appointed chief organiser (southern region) of the NCP, vowed to end dynastic politics in Bangladesh.

"We will bury dynastic rule. Here, the son of a blacksmith or a potter can become prime minister—leadership will be based on merit."

He criticised the state's failure to build functional institutions, pledging that the NCP would establish an independent judiciary, police force, and

secretary.

Akhter, who is also the member secretary of the Jatiya Nagorik Committee, read out a partial organogram of the party.

Samanta Shermeen and Ariful Islam Adib were named senior joint convenors, while Tasnim Jara and Nahida Sarwar Niva were appointed senior joint members secretaries.

Nagorik Committee Convener Nasiruddin Patwary was made the chief coordinator, while Abdul Hannan Masud will serve as the joint coordinator.

Nusrat Tabassum, Monira Sharmin, Mahbub Alam, Sarwar Tushar, Advocate Mujahidul Islam Shahin, Tajnuva Zabin, Sultan Muhammad Zakaria, Atiq Mujahid, Ashraf Uddin Mahdi, Arpita Shyama Deba, Tanjil Mahmud, Anik Roy, Khaleda Saifullah, Javed Rasim, Ehtesham Haque, and Hasan Ali were made joint convenors.

Joint member secretaries of the 171-strong NCP committee are Abdullah Al Amin, Arif Sohail, Rashidul Islam Rifat, Mahin Sarkar, Mohammad Nizam Uddin, Akram Hossain, SM Saif Mustafiz, Saleh Uddin Sifat (attached to the office cell), Alauddin Muhammad, Farid Uddin, Mohammad Farhad Alam, Bhuiyan, Mohammad Miraj Mia, Lutfar Rahman, Mohammad Mainul Islam Tuhin, Mushfiqur Salehin, Zahidul Islam, Zahirul Islam Musa, Humayra Noor, Mushfiqur Rahman Juhan, Molla Mohammad Faruq Ehsan, Shagufta Bushra Bismah, Ahanaf Saeed Khan, Abu Saeed Mohammad Sujauddin, Mir Arshadul Haque, Faisal Mahmud Shant, Tarek Reza, Mashfiur Rahman, Zainal

"Now is the time—to dream anew, to forge a new path, and to build a new Bangladesh!" Nahid concluded.

Political leaders and diplomats present at the event included BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, Joint Secretary General Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie, Ganosamhati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonyade Saki, Khelafat Majlis General Secretary Jalaluddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Labour Party Chairman Mostafizur Rahman Iran, and Bangladesh Jamaat e Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar.

Also in attendance were Kamran Dangal, political counsellor of the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, and Kevin S Randell, the Vatican Ambassador to Bangladesh.

Other notable figures included Nagorik Oikya President Mahmudur Rahman Mannan, Helafat e Islam Nayeb-e-Ameer Ahmed Ali Kassemi, Islami Oikya Jote Secretary General Sakhawat Hossain Razi, Islami Andolon president member Nurul Islam Bulbul, Jamaat's Dhaka city south unit Nayeb e Ameer Ashraf Ali Akon, and Bikalpadhara Executive President Major (retd) Abdul Mannan.

The event was organised by the Jatiya Nagorik Committee and Students Against Discrimination—both offshoots of the student movement that toppled the Awami League regime. The organisers arranged medical teams, washroom facilities, and drinking water stations across the venue. A separate booth was allocated for women, while a place backstage was designated for VIPs.



As the National Citizen Party was launched yesterday at the capital's Manik Mia avenue, its top leaders raise their hands as a sign of success.

## Parties welcome NCP launch

Some congratulate, some apprehensive

MD ABBAS

Several political parties, including BNP, Jatiya Party, the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, Ganosamhati Andolon, and Islami Andolon Bangladesh, have welcomed the newly formed National Citizen Party (NCP), saying it has the potential to bring a shift in the country's political landscape.

Jatiya Party, however, claimed the new party had the "blessings of the interim government", while CPB warned that if any government affiliation was found within the NCP, the people would not accept it, which would be detrimental to its success.

Speaking to reporters at the capital's Manik Mia Avenue, where the NCP was formally launched, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi hoped the party would bring change and a new political dynamic to Bangladesh, offering a fresh perspective to the people.

"I hope the NCP will become a genuine political platform for the masses and that people will see it as nothing more than that."

"I hope the NCP will become a genuine political platform for the masses and that people will see it as nothing more than that."

- Ruhul Kabir Rizvi  
BNP Senior Joint Secretary General

"If any evidence of government affiliations comes up, the people will not accept them [NCP], and it will not be beneficial for the party either."

- Ruhul Hossain Prince  
CPB General Secretary

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Mia Golam Parwar told this newspaper that welcoming new political parties is the beauty of democracy.

"The formation of the NCP will play a positive role in advancing the country," he said, expressing hope that his party would engage with the NCP with mutual understanding.

Regarding the government's alleged support for the NCP, he said there was no clear evidence of such an affiliation so far.

Islami Andolon Bangladesh Secretary General Principal Hafiz Maulana Yunus Ahmad also congratulated the newly formed NCP, emphasising that a multi-party system is essential for democratic politics.

He said Bangladesh had developed a two-party system instead of a multi-party one, which had led to various political challenges in the country.

"The emergence of a new political party could serve as an alternative solution to this problem.... The formation of this youth-led political party brings hope to the nation."

Also congratulating the NCP, Zonyade Saki, chief coordinator of the Ganosamhati Andolon, hoped the party, which was formed by the masses, would remain deeply connected to the people.

"If the party has clear goals and is committed to recognising the struggles of the masses, it will be able to win over the people of the country."

# DHAKA

Govt publishes list of 1,401 'July Warriors'  
UNB NEWS, Dhaka

The government has published two separate gazettes listing 1,401 people classified as "July Warriors" under the "A" and "B" categories as recognition of their participation in the student-led uprising in July-August last year.

A total 493 people, who were severely injured, were listed under A category, according to a gazette signed by Deputy Secretary (Gazette) Haridas Thakur of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, issued on Thursday by order of the president.

In another gazette, 908 people who also sustained injuries during the uprising were listed under B category.

The documents detail the serial numbers, medical case IDs, names of the injured, their parents' names, permanent addresses, and respective divisions and districts.

Man killed, another hurt in Dhaka fire

STAR REPORT

A man was killed and another was injured in a fire at a building in Dhaka's New Eskaton area early yesterday.

The deceased, Abdul Malek Khan, 40, was an office assistant at BIAM Foundation, according to his relatives.

"We learned about the fire on the fourth floor of the 10-storey BIAM building around 3:30am, and two fire units doused it by 4:15am," said Nazim Uddin, senior station officer of Tejgaon Fire Station.

A preliminary investigation suggests the fire originated from an electrical short circuit, followed by an explosion, he added.

Md Faruk, a driver, is receiving treatment at the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery with 43 percent burns, said Dr Shaon Bin Rahman, the institute's resident surgeon.

Sub-inspector Moniruzzaman of Hatirjheel Police Station said both individuals were on the floor when the fire broke out, leaving them injured. They were rescued and rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where Malek was pronounced dead at around 6:45am.

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Thousands of book lovers, both young and old, flocked to the Suhrawardy Udyana and Bangla Academy one last time as the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela concluded yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 'Hope for a new dawn in country's politics'

People express optimism as youth-led National Citizen Party launched

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Manik Miah Avenue was abuzz with anticipation yesterday as the National Citizen Party (NCP) was officially launched.

The air buzzed with energy as people from all walks of life -- particularly students -- gathered to witness what many believe to be the birth of a new era in the political landscape of Bangladesh.

The launch of the party, formed by the youth-led movement Students Against Discrimination (SAD), quickly gained momentum, as enthusiastic supporters poured in from across the country, some travelling long distances to be part of what they deemed a historic moment.

Abdul Hannan, a college student from Halishahar, Chattogram, arrived with 27 others by bus. "I came here because I believe they will build a new Bangladesh, free from discrimination," he said.

Hannan was far from alone. Nine buses carried supporters from Chattogram, while Md Rakib Hossain, a university student from Khulna, journeyed with ten others.

"After the mass uprising, we have an unprecedented opportunity to build a better Bangladesh. I came all the way to support this party because they give us hope for change," he said.

The Daily Star talked with over 30 people at the avenue who gathered there to witness the



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

launch. They expressed optimism for a corruption-free and democratic Bangladesh.

Among the crowd stood 72-year-old Saima, a Liberation War veteran, who arrived at the rally with her daughter. "We are elderly now, but we came here to encourage the young generation," she said.

A former Dhaka University student during the Liberation War of 1971, Saima believes history is repeating itself.

"It was young people who led the Language Movement of 1952, the Liberation War of 1971, and now the movement that ended the fascist Hasina regime. Before we pass away, we want to witness the long-awaited change," she added.

Others also shared her sentiment.

Masud Rana, a businessman from Rajshahi, observed, "For too long, young people stayed away from politics. But through the July uprising, they freed this country from fascism. Now, I welcome students stepping up to take charge of our future and establish a healthy political culture by getting rid of corruption."

He emphasised that youth-led movements should remain independent and not be co-opted by traditional parties that have historically used student organisations for muscle power.

MA Yusuf, convener of the Bangladesh Workers, Employees, and Professionals Unity Coalition, attended the rally from Lakshimpur.

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## 'Interim govt failed to deliver justice for Taqi'

Allege speakers at seminar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Despite being in power for the last seven months, the interim government has yet to initiate legal proceedings in the case filed over the murder of Tanvir Muhammad Taqi in Narayanganj, said speakers at a rally yesterday.

They also alleged that ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina had deliberately stalled the investigation and trial for her own interests.

The Santras Nirmul Taqi Mancha organised the event at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city.

They said the Awami League-led government was ousted in August last year following a mass uprising, and a non-partisan interim government was formed, giving new hope for justice.

However, that did not happen, they added.



Speaking at the rally, Prof Anu

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## Curtain falls on boi mela

DIPAN NANDY

As the Ekushey Boi Mela drew to a close, an air of bittersweet nostalgia enveloped Suhrawardy Udyana and Bangla Academy. Thousands of book lovers, young and old, meandered through the colourful stalls, their hearts heavy with the impending farewell to the largest book fair.

Children clutched their parents' hands, eyes wide with wonder as they explored the vibrant displays alongside university students, couples, and the elderly, all united in their love for literature.

The final day saw a unique energy -- a blend of excitement for the new literary treasures discovered and a longing for a tradition that binds generations. "I'm a bit sad now that the book fair has ended. I wish it lasted a little longer," said Jannatul Mawa, a Dhaka University student.

A total of 708 publishers participated, embracing the theme "July Gono Obbhutthan: Natun Bangladesh Binirman," which echoed the spirit of resilience and renewal following the Awami League regime and the July uprising.

"The month went by too quick," said Shamima Sharmin, a student of Dhaka University yesterday evening.

Her friend, Manosh Chowdhury, added, "I bought five books so far. Two novels and three poetry books. It's still not enough."

Poetry once again took centre stage, maintaining its status as a staple of the fair. However, this year saw a noticeable decline in poetry sales, as readers gravitated towards novels, essays, and historical accounts of the Liberation War.

Monirul Huq, owner of Annanya, said, "Readers mostly

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1,021 detained in Dhaka in 4 days  
11,931 so far arrested across country in 'Devil Hunt'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a surge in crimes, law enforcers arrested 1,044 people across the country in the last 24 hours until yesterday afternoon, including 618 as part of "Operation Devil Hunt," according to the Police Headquarters.

With these latest arrests, the total number of people detained since the operation began on February 8 has reached 11,931.

Among those arrested yesterday, 786 were either accused or wanted in previous cases. Law enforcers also recovered a firearm, one cartridge, and eight sharp weapons during the operation.

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

An analysis of reports from several districts shows that many of the arrestees in the operation are members of Awami League and its affiliated organisations, facing charges in cases filed after the Hasina-led government fell on August 5.

Despite the operation, crimes such as mugging and robbery continue.

To improve security, the Law and Order Core Committee introduced nine initiatives on February 25, including joint task force operations in crime-prone areas involving the army, police, and BGB.

Police have also intensified their activities in the capital to ensure public safety and maintain law and order.

As part of this effort, integrated checkpoints

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Guests at the seventh edition of "Gunijan Sambardhana" (Honouring Eminent Personalities), organised by Bangla daily Bonik Barta and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies at a hotel in the capital yesterday. The event, which recognises distinguished personalities for their outstanding contributions to the nation, honoured Saifur Rahman posthumously for his role in shaping the country's economy.

PHOTO: COURTESY  
Saifur Rahman, a champion of market economy  
Say speakers at 'Gunijan Sambardhana' event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's economy was criminalised for many years, but it avoided total collapse due to key transformational steps taken by former finance minister Saifur Rahman, said Commerce Adviser SK Bashir Uddin yesterday.

He made the remarks while speaking at the seventh edition of "Gunijan Sambardhana", organised by Bangla daily Bonik Barta and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies at a city hotel.

The event, which recognises distinguished personalities for their outstanding contributions to the nation, honoured Saifur Rahman posthumously for his role in shaping the country's economy.

Saifur Rahman served as the commerce minister from 1976-1980, finance minister from 1980-1982, technocrat finance minister from 1991-1996, and finance and planning minister from 2001-2006.

He played a crucial role in developing the private sector and shaping economic policies, including the introduction of VAT, back-to-back LCs in the garment sector, and bonded warehouse facilities.

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**ILLEGAL SAND EXTRACTION**  
Journalist threatened, bike, camera vandalised  
OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Lalmirhat

A journalist received a death threat allegedly from some sand extractors in Lalmirhat's Aditmari upazila early yesterday when he took a video of illegal sand extraction from the Teesta river.

The sand extractors also vandalised his camera, motorcycle, wireless boom and headphones.

Mahfuzul Islam Bakul is Lalmirhat district correspondent of Channel 24 Television and Dainik Khaborer Kagoj.

Bakul filed a written complaint against nine people with Aditmari Police Station, said OC Ali Akbar of the police station.

Bakul said he received information from locals that a syndicate had been illegally extracting sand from the Teesta at night.

Based on it, he and his cameraman arrived at the Chandimari Kutirpar area around 1:30am. "The sand extractors attacked us and vandalised my camera, motorcycle, and other equipment. They also threatened to kill both me and my cameraman. Later, with the help of locals, we managed to escape."

OC Ali Akbar said they would look into the complaint.

**NU Bogura regional office launched**

**CITY DESK**

The Regional Center of the National University (NU) in Bogura was inaugurated yesterday.

National University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr ASM Amanullah inaugurated the regional office in the morning. Later, at an event centring the inauguration was held.

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**LEGAL NOTICE**  
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH  
HIGH COURT DIVISION  
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURIDITION)  
COMPANY MATTER NO. 218 OF 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF:** An application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of The Companies Act 1994.

-AND-

**IN THE MATTER OF:** Steel Enterprise Limited .....Petitioner

-Versus- The Registrar, Joint Stock Companies & Firms

.....Respondent.

Take notice that an application under Section 12 read with Section 13 of The Companies Act 1994 was moved before the High Court Division of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh for confirmation of alterations of object clauses in the Memorandum of Association of the petitioner company by Special Resolution adopted by the members of the petitioner company in the Extra Ordinary General Meeting held on 21.11.2024. Upon hearing, Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the application for hearing vide order dated 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.

Any one willing to oppose the said application, may appear before the Hon'ble Court either in person or through duly appointed Advocate. Copy of the application can be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary charges.

**MD. TAZUL ISLAM**  
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh  
Suite # 102 (1<sup>st</sup> Floor) Sharika Tower, 8, Shegunbagicha, Dhaka-1000  
Mobile: 01982366580

**We Remember**



20.09.33 - 1.3.2003

On his 22<sup>nd</sup> death anniversary today, we profoundly remember late **Matiur Rahman** - a Freedom Fighter, Founder & Chairman of Kisan Group, Former Cabinet Minister and former President of Dhaka Chamber of commerce & Industries.

Charity lunches will be served today at orphanage. Please pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Chondona, Robin, Shuvo & Amit  
&  
Members of Kisan Group  
mrahmanfamily@gmail.com

**Once**

FROM PAGE 5  
dilapidated condition.

The Sreemangal municipality alleged that the college authorities did not hand over the library building to the municipality when it relocated. As such, no steps could be taken to renovate the structure. Moreover, the college authorities earlier had demolished the rear boundary wall of the library and built an extended classroom, encroaching on the land of a children's park beside it.

A cyclone in April 2024 caused significant damage to the entire structure.

"The college authorities did not hand over the keys and other belongings when they left the building in 2020," said Zahirul Islam, executive engineer of Sreemangal municipality.

Contacted, Piyali Bhownik, acting principal of the college, claimed the college's activities were conducted in the library building with permission from the then municipal authorities. She, however, said there is no document in this regard.

Islam Uddin, UNO of Sreemangal, said there is a plan to establish a modern public library on the land. "We are working in this regard," he added.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
MARCH 1

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
AZAN 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00				

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**1,021 detained in Dhaka**

FROM PAGE 3  
dilapidated condition.

The arrestees include 15 robbers, 24 professional snatchers, five extortions, 12 thieves, 27 drug dealers, and 30 individuals with outstanding warrants.

In Dhaka, DMP and other law enforcement agencies arrested 228 suspected criminals, including robbers and muggers, in a crackdown against criminals in the capital on Thursday, said a DMP release.

With these arrests, the total number of detainees in Dhaka over the past four days has risen to 1,021.

According to the DMP's Crime Command and

work on the bridge over Barak river could be completed within 15 days, allowing construction to continue even during adverse weather conditions.

Contacted, Zahirul Islam, project implementation officer in the upazila, said he assumed his role only recently and did not have the contractor's contact information to reach out to them in this regard.

Control Center, 550 patrol teams have been deployed across 50 police stations in Dhaka to ensure security and smooth movement of the people of Dhaka Metropolitan City.

Additionally, 65 police checkpoints have been set up at key locations, with 20 more operated by the specialised police unit APBn alongside the DMP.

To further strengthen security, 14 patrol teams from the CTTC, 12 from the Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU), and 10 from the DMP and Rab are stationed in crime-prone areas of the city.

**Outsourced workers**

FROM PAGE 5  
programme on February 23.

Ashraful Alam, a leader of BCMCL's outsourced workers, said despite working at the mine for 15-20 years, they remain deprived of various benefits, including salary increments and festival bonuses, unlike their permanent counterparts.

The then Awami League

government in 2018 had issued a directive revoking essential benefits for outsourced workers, putting many temporary employees in financial distress, he alleged.

After the AI government's ouster, the outsourced workers staged protest in Dhaka, and received assurances from the then advisory council on wage disparity concerns.

However, since no steps have yet been taken to meet their demands, the workers resumed their protests, Ashraful added.

Contacted, Mohammad Sanaullah, general manager (Administration) of BCMCL, said the mine authority is awaiting directives from the government, while a court verdict in this regard is currently under review by the law ministry.

**Man killed, another hurt**

FROM PAGE 3

The fire and explosion reportedly occurred while Malek and Faruk were asleep.

Meanwhile, another fire, that raged through Shewrapara kitchen market in Dhaka early yesterday, gutted 61 shops including a shoe

showroom, according to the fire service.

Lima Khanam, duty officer at the fire service headquarters, told UNB that the fire erupted from an electric short circuit at a shop in the kitchen market near Shewrapara Metro Station on Begum Rokeya Sarani.

Firefighters managed to bring the blaze under control after 45 minutes and it was completely doused around 5:50am.

The fire damaged 51 kitchen shops, eight grocery stores, a Bata showroom and an electric shop, she added.

**Saifur Rahman**

FROM PAGE 3  
Highlighting Saifur Rahman's contributions, Bashir said his policies prevented an economic downturn immediately after a period of instability.

"The economy was on the verge of collapse, but his policies kept it running for years," he said. Bashir emphasised that the current government is working to rebuild the economy with a fair distribution of resources, preventing the rise of crony capitalism.

BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said Saifur worked for all sections of the society, maintaining a balance between business interests and the welfare of citizens. He focused on improving the lives of the marginalised, said Khasru, a former commerce minister.

Saifur focused on reducing dependency on foreign aid and mobilising internal resources, Khasru said.

Describing Saifur as "a champion of market economy, private sector development, and export led growth," Khasru said he had the ability to make tough decisions for economic transformation.

Power Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir

Khan said when autocratic governments leave power, they often deplete the country's treasury and foreign exchange reserves, a situation Bangladesh recently witnessed.

He credited Saifur for successfully managing the finance ministry in the 1990s under similar circumstances, calling him the best finance minister the country has seen.

Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed said he had not seen such a friendly and knowledgeable minister in his career as Saifur.

He said Saifur never interfered in the central bank's operations, which is rare for a political finance minister.

Former finance secretary Zakin Ahmed, BIDS acting Director General Kazi Iqbal, and Bonik Barta Editor Dewan Hanif Mahmud also spoke at the event.

Additionally, Planning and Education Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman, and Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow at CPD, shared their thoughts via video messages at the event.

Power Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir

**Hope for a new dawn**

FROM PAGE 3  
"No political party has truly been people-friendly. Leaders, once in power, deceive the public through unethical politics, voter suppression, and corruption. They amass billions of dollars through corruption and then syphon that money off to abroad. Then there is also revenge culture in politics. The result is the suffering of people and a dysfunctional state," he said.

For many attendees, this rally marked their first active participation in politics.

Rakib Fakir, a National University student from Savar, said, "Since becoming politically aware, I have only seen Sheikh Hasina in power. I never even had the chance to vote. We were disengaged, but not anymore. From now on, I will be involved in politics in support of the new party."

Delwar Hossain, who hailed from Narayanganj,

**Interim govt failed**

FROM PAGE 3  
Sagar Rumi, and Munia, as people have long awaited their resolution.

Accusing the previous government of sheltering Taqi's killers, particularly individuals linked to former MP Shamim Osman and his family, Rafiur Rabbi said, "The interim government's advisers initially spoke about the case, and Rab made some progress. They arrested six people, and one even gave a confessional statement before the court. But nothing has moved forward since then."

Rabi also recalled that

in 2014, a year after the murder, Rab announced that the investigation was nearly complete, and a draft charge sheet was prepared. However, the investigating authorities have yet to finalise and submit it to the court.

Taqi went missing after he left his Shaista Khan Road home in Narayanganj for Sudhijon Pathagar, a local library, around 4:00pm on March 6, 2013.

A day after his body was found, his A-level results were out, which showed he got the world's highest mark in physics in that exam, obtaining 297 out of 300.

**Curtain falls**

FROM PAGE 3  
bought novels, essays, and history books this year."

This year's fair was also fraught with challenges.

On February 7, during the first Shishu Prohro, the absence of Sisimpur disappointed little book lovers. Further controversies emerged, including an incident on February 10 when a group of people stormed the Sabysachi stall displaying books by Taslima Nasrin, leading to police intervention.

On February 15, another controversy erupted on social media over the closure of a stall selling sanitary pads. A letter to the government, while a court verdict in this regard is currently under review by the law ministry.

Amidst the challenges, new elements of the fair sparked interest among visitors. A notable addition was the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement stall, which featured literature and memorabilia related to mass uprisings.

As the sun set on the Boi Mela, a palpable sense of farewell washed over the fairgrounds. While the bittersweet nature of goodbyes lingered, there remained a glimmer of hope that this cherished tradition would continue to endure.

**Hills razed**

FROM PAGE 5  
"We do not know whether the contractor is using hill soil. Since red soil is being used, it might have been extracted by razing hills. We will send a letter to the contractor in this regard," he said.

Mohammad Asad, contractor of the project, claimed they had collected the soil from a subcontractor who extracted it from registered land, not from hills.

Md Shahinul Islam, range officer of Cox's Bazar South Forest Division (Ukhiya), said they received a complaint a few days ago and launched an investigation. "We found an area where small hills were razed. Further investigation is ongoing."



Many of the roads in the busy Bahaddarhat area in the port city remains under the clutches of vendors. Ongoing development work further complicates the situation. These factors together contribute to traffic congestion, making it difficult for residents to navigate the area. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



transporting goods and cattle, he added

Abhijit Dey, an engineer representing the contractor firm, attributed the delay to political instability.

Also, the contract includes construction of six bridges in different locations, so priority was given to areas with less developed communication, he added.

Abhijit, however, assured that primary

work on the bridge over Barak river could be completed within 15 days, allowing construction to continue even during adverse weather conditions.

Contacted, Zahirul Islam, project implementation officer in the upazila, said he assumed his role only recently and did not have the contractor's contact information to reach out to them in this regard.

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Contacted, Zahirul Islam, project implementation officer in the upazila, said he assumed his role only

## UKHIYA IN COX'S BAZAR

## Hills razed to supply soil for LGED roadwork

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has allegedly been using red soil from neighbouring hills for the construction of a one-kilometre road in Machkaria area of Cox's Bazar's Ukhia upazila over the past two weeks.

Locals claimed the razing of hills began around two weeks ago, with the soil being used for road construction in broad daylight. They alleged that state agencies concerned, including the Forest Department and the Department of Environment, have yet to take any action, while villagers face intimidation for speaking out against the irregularities.

"LGED razed some three to four hills and used the soil, worth around Tk 30 lakh, instead of sand for road construction, apparently to cut costs. The authorities concerned have ignored the environmental damage despite protests from locals," said Abdul Haque, member of Ward 6 under Rajapalong union.

HM Ershad, president of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Cox's Bazar chapter, said, "Hill soil is easily identifiable due to its red colour. LGED engineers and the contractor are colluding to embezzle money by using hill soil instead of sand."

Contacted, Md Rokonuzzaman Khan, upazila engineer of LGED in Ukhia, said the one-kilometre concrete road in Machkaria is being constructed at a cost of Tk 4 crore.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Hills being razed to supply soil for the construction of a one-kilometre road in Machkaria area of Cox's Bazar's Ukhia upazila. Locals claim the cutting of hills began around two weeks ago, with the soil being used for construction in broad daylight.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## 3 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and one was injured in road accidents in Lalmonirhat and Munshiganj districts yesterday.

In Lalmonirhat, a passenger bus of Navila Paribahan hit a motorcycle coming from the opposite direction near Swarnamati Bridge in Aditmari, leaving its rider dead and pillion critically injured.

Locals rushed the injured to Aditmari Upazila Health Complex. As her condition worsened, she was referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, but succumbed to her injuries on the way.

The deceased are Ramjan Ali, 52, and his niece Khadija Tul Kobra, 25, both residents of Kaliganj upazila, said Ali Akbar, officer-in-charge of Aditmari Police Station.

Police seized the bus but its driver and helper managed to flee.

In Munshiganj, Hafizur Rahman, 30, a truck driver, and his helper Abul Kalam, 45, were fixing their truck's wheel on the roadside near the Padma Bridge toll plaza on Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in the morning, when another truck hit it from behind, leaving Hafizur dead on the spot and Abul injured.

The deceased Hafizur Rahman was from Satkhira, said OC Abdul Kader Zilani of Hasara Police Station.

## Man killed in elephant attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was killed in an elephant attack inside Chhunati Wildlife Sanctuary in Chattogram's Banskhali upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Abu Siddique, 45, of Puichhari union.

"Siddique went inside the sanctuary on Thursday morning to collect sungrass (a type of perennial grass used for roofing in rural areas), but didn't return home. Today [Friday], relatives and locals went to look for him, and found his body in a field around 10:00am," said Anisuzzaman Sheikh, forester of Jaldi Wildlife Range. He said no one can enter any reserve forest without permission.

"We provide financial compensation to victims of elephant attacks. However, there is no provision for compensation if an elephant attack occurs inside a sanctuary or reserve forest area," he said.

## RANGPUR MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

# Medical waste piles up amid disposal woes

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Rangpur Medical College Hospital has long been struggling with ensuring safe and effective disposal of medical waste, raising concerns over public health and the environment.

For the past five years, it has relied on a private organisation for medical waste disposal. However, the service has been largely inadequate.

The absence of a proper waste management system has resulted in the accumulation of hazardous waste within the hospital premises, posing health risks to visitors and patients alike.

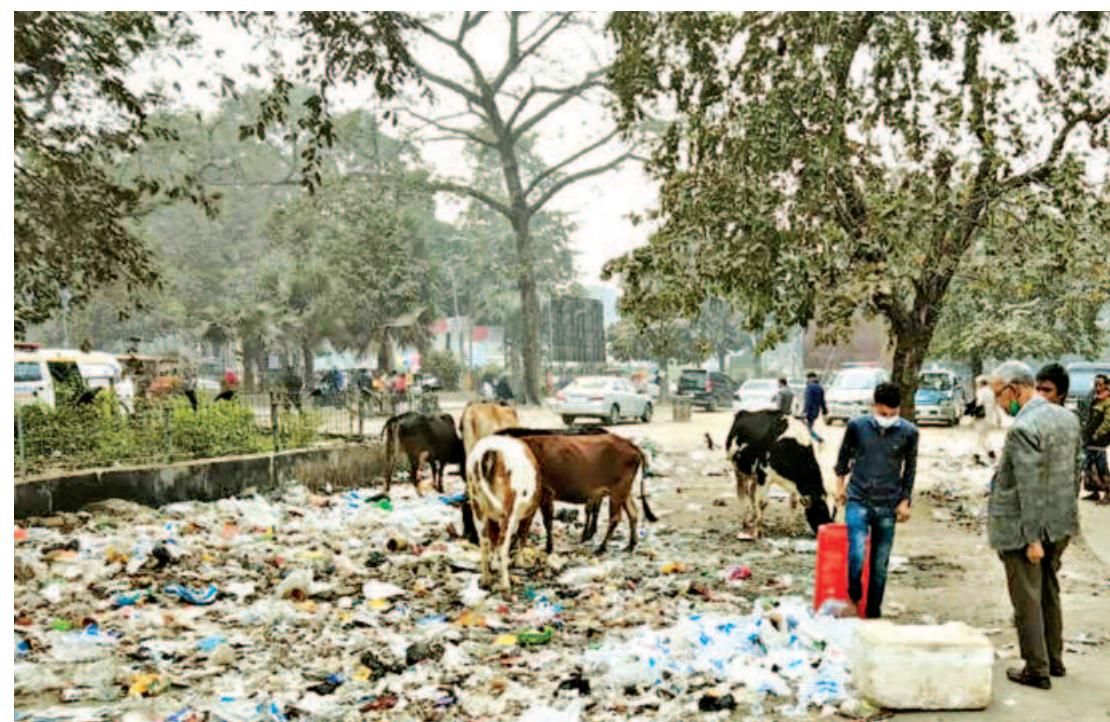
Adding to the crisis, the construction of a medical waste management plant at the hospital, intended to mitigate pollution and ensure safe disposal, has been halted due to strong opposition from locals.

According to the Health Engineering Department in Rangpur Division, the Tk 3.43 crore project was awarded to Jhenaidah-based contractor firm Gungun Enterprise through a tender process on May 8, 2024, with a one-year deadline for completion.

The proposed 5,500 square-foot plant was designed to include an office room, an autoclave and effluent treatment plant, a storage room, and a container washroom.

Saqib Ahmed, site engineer of the contractor firm, said workers cleared waste from the construction site and excavated the land for the building's foundation.

Necessary materials, including rods and cement, were also



stocked. However, due to resistance from locals, they were forced to halt the project, he added.

On September 15 last year, locals formally complained to the hospital director, arguing that the plant's location near the Bangladesh Medical Association building and adjacent residential areas posed health risks.

Additionally, they pointed out that the Department of Environment has yet to issue a location clearance certificate for the project.

Despite these concerns, healthcare experts stressed the urgent need for a proper waste management plant for RMCH.

Mohammad Istak Mahfuz, co-ordinator (Northern Zone) of Prism Bangladesh Foundation, which has been collecting medical waste from the hospital since 2020, said the hospital generates nearly 1.5 tonnes of waste daily, including 300 kilograms of hazardous waste.

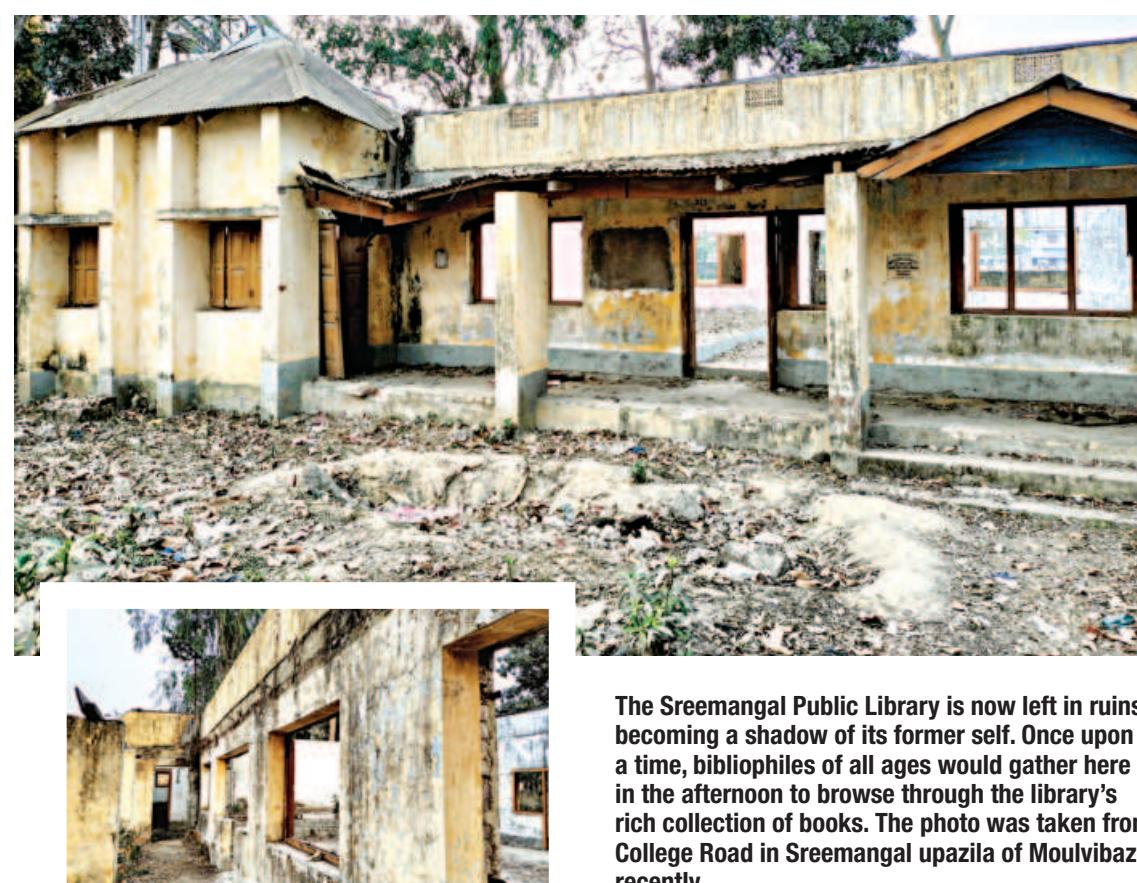
"Due to poor waste segregation, much of the hazardous waste gets mixed with general waste, leading to improper disposal," he said.

Health experts warned that without a sustainable waste disposal system, the accumulation and poor disposal of hazardous medical waste will increase the risk of infections, disease outbreaks, and groundwater contamination, and environmental degradation.

Contacted, Brigadier General Ashiqur Rahman, director of the hospital, said locals not only submitted a written complaint but also staged protests, threatening legal action if the plant's construction continued.

Dr ABM Mosiur Rahman, project director of the waste management plant, however, said the protesters were misguided.

"Similar waste management plants are being constructed at hospitals across the country. Some people have falsely linked these facilities to pollution risks, leading to unnecessary delays," he said.



The Sreemangal Public Library is now left in ruins, becoming a shadow of its former self. Once upon a time, bibliophiles of all ages would gather here in the afternoon to browse through the library's rich collection of books. The photo was taken from College Road in Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar recently.

PHOTO: STAR

## Two-month ban on hilsa fishing starts in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A two-month fishing ban will be enforced from today, impacting an 82-kilometre stretch across three rivers in ten upazilas of Barishal division. The ban, which has been in place since 2019, aims to protect juvenile hilsa (jatka), ensure safe breeding, and boost hilsa production.

The restriction will run from March 1 to April 30, covering the Meghna, Kalabazar, and Gojaria rivers in Barishal and Bhola districts. Affected upazilas include Hizla, Mehendiganj, and Barishal Sadar in Barishal, as well as all seven upazilas in Bhola district.

Ripon Kanti Ghosh, Barishal district fisheries officer, said, "The area is a crucial hilsa breeding zone. The ban is essential to protect juvenile fish and ensure increased production in the long run."

The ban will affect approximately 46,576 fishermen in the designated areas. While they will not receive separate compensation, all registered fishers are eligible for assistance under the government's Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme.

## Bhanga Police Station OC sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police has arrested Md Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Police Station in Faridpur, for allegations of crimes against humanity.

He was detained from Bhanga Police Station and later produced before International Crimes Tribunal-1, which ordered his formal arrest and sent him to jail.

Shailesh Chakma, additional superintendent of police in Faridpur, said Shafiqul was taken into custody. However, he did not disclose specific details regarding the case.

DB police from Dhaka picked up Shafiqul around 8:00pm on Thursday from Bhanga Police Station.

Shafiqul had assumed charge as OC of Bhanga Police Station on February 15, and his arrest came just 11 days later. Before this posting, he served as a DB inspector in Habiganj and later in Gazipur Metropolitan Police.

## SREEMANGAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

## Once a learning centre, now in ruins

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Located on College Road in Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar, the Sreemangal Public Library was once a centre for learning and a vibrant hub of knowledge seekers.

Bibliophiles of all ages used to gather in the library every afternoon, browsing through its collection of books of diverse genres and contents.

Now, the library is left in ruins and has become a haunted shadow of its former self.

The abandoned structure, including the walls, is crumbling. Its tin roof was ripped off during a cyclone last year. None of the doors, windows, and even cupboards that once housed numerous books are left anymore. The floor is also in a shabby state, with remnants of destruction scattered all over it.

"The library was once a cultural landmark in Sreemangal. Its present condition is deplorable," said Ismail Uddin, a senior journalist in Sreemangal.

According to locals, the library was

established on July 22, 1983, initially in a tin-shed room of the Sreemangal Municipality Office. In 1984, it relocated to a tin-shed building on 1.5 acres of Khas land allocated by the upazila administration on College Road.

Later, in 1993, the upazila administration transferred the land along with the tin shed building to the municipality, and the library was renamed as Sreemangal Municipality Auditorium and Library.

Till 2012, the library remained functional, before the then Moulvibazar 4 (Sreemangal-Kamalganj) lawmaker Md Abdus Shaheed took over and founded a college there in his name.

The Vice Principal Md Abdus Shaheed College closed the library's operations and used its tin-shed building to hold classes and administrative activities for eight years. In 2020, the college relocated to its own campus in Matiganj area of the upazila, leaving the library building in a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## S Sudan leaders fuelling violence, instability: UN

AFP, Juba

South Sudan's leaders are fuelling violence and instability in the young nation, a critical United Nations report said yesterday.

The oil-rich but impoverished country, which achieved independence in 2011, is plagued by frequent clashes and political infighting.

Clashes broke out earlier this month in two regions, killing civilians and wounding a peacekeeper, with Human Rights Watch recently noting an "alarming surge of violence".

## Shrine set on fire

FROM PAGE 12

a memorandum to the upazila nirbahi officer in this regard. Yesterday afternoon, hundreds of people gathered and marched to the shrine with lit torches, demanding a ban on the event that drew hundreds of devotees from across the country.

After a brief argument with people present at the shrine, the protesters went on a rampage.

At one point, they set fire to the shrine, stage, marquee, gate, and the tents.

After the vandals left, a devotee in tears said, "I have been attending this gathering for 21 years. We never faced such a situation. No unlawful activities take place here. A group is trying to stop the event for no reason."

Shahidul Islam Jinnah, the shrine's caretaker, said the district administration and police had given written permission for the Urs.

"We have been organising this event for years. Now they are threatening to demolish the shrine," he added.

Nazmul Haque, officer-in-charge of Ghioraghata Police Station, said police were trying to calm the situation.

An army team arrived at the site around 8:30pm and a fire service unit around 9:30pm.

"We are working to resolve the dispute through discussions with both parties," the OC said.

## Australia into semis

FROM PAGE 12

South Africa and Afghanistan have three points each. Afghanistan have already played their last game in the group phase while the Proteas will be taking on bottom-placed England today in Karachi.

If South Africa beat England, who have already been eliminated after losing both their games so far, the Proteas would reach the semifinal as Group B champions.

For Afghanistan to qualify, England will have to beat South Africa by at least 207 runs if they bat first and if they bat second, they will have to chase down the target within 11.1 overs, assuming a first innings total of 300 in both cases.

In yesterday's game, Sediqullah Atal scored 85 while Azmatullah Omarzai made 67 in Afghanistan's total of 273 all out in 50 overs at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Atal scored a 95-ball 85 with six fours and three sixes before Omarzai boosted the total at the end with a 63-ball 67 at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

Batting first after winning the toss in overcast conditions, Afghanistan lost opener Rahmantullah Gurbaz for nought in the first over to Spencer Johnson.

Ibrahim Zadran, hero of Afghanistan's win over England in the first match with the highest ever Champions trophy score of 177, added 67 for the second wicket with Atal before he fell for 22 to spinner Adam Zampa.

Atal and skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi (20) put on 68 for the fourth wicket before Australia fought back with four wickets for just 40 runs.

At 199-7 Afghanistan were in danger of being dismissed for a below-par total but Omarzai held the innings together, smashing five sixes, adding an invaluable 74 runs with the last three wickets. Ben Dwarshuis was the best Australian bowler with 3-47 while Zampa took 2-48 and Johnson finished with 2-49.

## Nahid Islam

FROM PAGE 2

At the height of the protests in July, Nahid was picked up by law enforcers and tortured until he lost consciousness. He was returned after a couple of days only to be picked up again when the protests gained even more momentum, this time along with five other fellow protesters, and detained at the headquarters of the Detective Branch of police.

In 2018, Nahid participated in the quota reform protests that shook the nation. At the time, he received threats from the university administration and teachers.

In 2019, he ran for the post of cultural secretary at Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) under Nurul-Rashed Faruk panel under the banner of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Songrokkhon Parishad.

He lost the election and later separated himself from the platform. Nahid was admitted to DU in 2016.



Palestinians and Hamas fighters attend a funeral procession for 40 civilians and Hamas members killed during the war with Israel, at the Shati camp for Palestinian refugees north of Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Explain how Hasina, others managed to flee

FROM PAGE 1

allies of the AL despite strong evidence and credible allegations of enforced disappearances and murders against them by domestic and international organisations.

Many of them were roaming freely, the BNP leaders alleged, seeking an explanation from the government.

The BNP made the decisions during its Thursday's extended meeting held near the parliament, attended by leaders from across the country. BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was the chief guest of the event presided over by acting chairman Tarique Rahman. Both joined virtually from London.

Hasina, the deposed prime minister, fled to India on August 5 following a student-led mass uprising. She is now facing over a hundred cases, including charges of murder, genocide, and crimes against humanity related to the deadly crackdown during the uprising.

BNP Standing Committee member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku said the

government must clearly explain to the public how Hasina and her associates fled the country.

"People are still very confused. The government should at least publish a white paper on the matter," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Blaming the government for its failure to maintain law and order, he said, "Nearly seven months have passed, and the public still does not know how many firearms have been recovered from Awami League leaders and activists. The government should take this issue seriously."

BNP leaders called for the government to take strong diplomatic and legal action against those who have fled and are allegedly conspiring against Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty, and stability from abroad.

The party has decided to demand action against the cohorts of the AL who are trying to destabilise the country, calling for the immediate withdrawal of all politically motivated cases filed by the previous

government and during the 2007-'08 caretaker administration.

The BNP proposed that all reform proposals possible before the national election be implemented immediately, while other reforms requiring legal or constitutional amendments be submitted to the House for approval after the polls.

The BNP reiterated that it is the responsibility of all democratically minded and patriotic citizens to support the interim government in ensuring a free, fair, and impartial national election.

The party emphasised that democracy can only be established through free polls where people can choose their representatives.

The people of Bangladesh have been deprived of this fundamental right for nearly a decade and a half, and no further delays are acceptable, said leaders.

The BNP leaders urged the interim government to complete the necessary reforms and conduct the election as soon as possible.

They also expressed concerns over the rising prices of essentials and the worsening law and order situation in the country.

They accused certain business groups, allegedly benefiting from the previous government, of contributing to instability and called on all political parties and professional organisations within the anti-fascist movement to unite against their activities.

They also made the decision to seek a compilation of a list of individuals affected over the last 16 years, particularly during the July-August movement.

The leaders urged the government to provide state recognition, compensation for families of victims, and treatment and financial support for the injured.

They also instructed party members, activists, and affiliated organisations to remain active in their communities and engage with the public through people-centric programmes.

## Shilpakala DG hands in resignation letter after fiery speech

FROM PAGE 12

of obligation [on September 9]. It was my intention to bring financial stability and administrative order, allowing art to flourish within the academy's core principles.

"However, it's no longer possible for me to continue working here, and so I'm submitting my resignation letter to the secretary [of Shilpakala, Mohammed Wares Hossain] in front of you all."

He alleged financial mismanagement within the academy, claiming the administration treated allocated funds as "personal assets".

"My request for a Tk165crore budget was not fully met. If we [Shilpakala authorities] must repeatedly call upon the administration and still fail to establish a collaborative and peaceful working environment due to bureaucratic obstacles, I don't see

how I can effectively fulfill my role here.

"I've given this decision a lot of thought. It's now time for me to return to my own theatre work."

He expressed sincere thanks to the Shilpakala Academy staffers for their unwavering commitment in restoring the nation's artistic spirit after a tumultuous period.

He further voiced his concerns over restrictions on cultural expression, particularly the prohibition of the term "Adivasi" (indigenous communities).

"We were told that we can't even utter the word 'Adivasi'. As I step down today, I now utter this word and express my heartfelt wish that the Adivasis receive their rightful recognition, that they are free from all forms of oppression and can live

with the same rights and dignity as every other citizen of this country."

Jamil concluded his resignation speech with a broader call for social justice.

"I dream of a discrimination-free Bangladesh, a nation that upholds the ideals our martyrs sacrificed their lives for. We're losing sight of the spirit of the recent July movement, and I sincerely hope that Shilpakala Academy will work toward realising that vision in the future."

However, on the same stage, the Secretary of Shilpakala Academy, Mohammad Wares Hossain, said he does not have the authority to accept the resignation and that the responsibility lies with the cultural affairs ministry's secretary.

Md Mofidur Rahman, acting secretary of the ministry, told

Prothom Alo that he heard about the resignation but has not yet received the official letter that Jamil handed to Wares.

"I'll make further comments after receiving the letter."

Later, Jamil spoke to a crowd of theatre activists outside the Natyashala auditorium.

He said he would withdraw his resignation only if some conditions were met: Shilpakala Academy must be allowed to operate with complete autonomy and free from interference by the cultural affairs ministry, whose role should only be providing necessary legal counsel; the authorities must allocate necessary funds for the academy; and the Shilpakala Academy must have the right to use the term "Adivasi" when it needs or wants to.

Wholesaler Abul Kalam explained that the usual daily supply of lemons in the Karwan Bazar kitchen market is seven to eight lakh, but it has now dropped to four to five lakh.

"Usually demand for lemons increases during Ramadan, but its supply has dropped this time."

Kalam pointed out low rainfall as a factor behind reduced lemon yield. "The supply is already low, and some traders are stocking the sour fruit to inflate prices further."

Wholesale lemon prices have almost doubled, with four pieces of this sour fruit now selling at Tk 80-100, he said.

Interestingly, just a couple of months ago, lemon prices were at their lowest in years. The wholesale price went down to Tk 5-6 for four pieces of small and medium-sized lemons, said Kalam.

Now is the time to dream anew, to march forward, and build a new Bangladesh.

Therefore, let us all take an oath. Let us unite and move forward with unwavering determination in our struggle to establish the second republic.

The second republic is not an unattainable dream. It is our promise!

In a statement, the military said the Israeli air force "conducted an intelligence-based strike in the area of Hermon and eliminated the terrorist Mohammed Mahdi Ali Shaheen...

who had been coordinating terrorist transactions for the purchase of weapons".

It added that the slain militant had "recently been involved in transporting weapons from Syria to Lebanon".

## New constitution for new Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

However, the general people of this land did not attain freedom from exploitation and discrimination. Consequently, after 23 years of struggle, the people of this land waged the great Liberation War of 1971, sacrificing the lives of hundreds of thousands of martyrs to achieve an independent Bangladesh. But even after independence, the people of Bangladesh had to fight for democracy multiple times. In 1990, the students and the masses shed their blood to overthrow a military dictatorship.

However, even after more than five decades of independence, we have failed to establish a political settlement that ensures democracy, equality, human dignity, and social justice. Instead, over the past 15 years, the country has been subjected to a brutal fascist regime that recklessly weaponised state institutions to serve the ruling party's interests and destroyed democracy. Dissenting voices were silenced, and enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings became state policy, while widespread corruption and syphoning off money turned into a culture.

We strive to cultivate a political culture where unity prevails over division, justice replaces vengeance, and merit and competence triumph over dynastic politics at all levels of society and the state. There will be no place for corruption and nepotism in our politics.

In our second republic, the voices of the marginalised and disadvantaged communities will be brought into the mainstream. In our republic, the common people—and only the common people—will be the supreme

source of power. The robust protection of all their democratic and fundamental rights will be the core principle of our politics. We aim to build a pluralistic and prosperous society by preserving the nation's ethnic, social, gender, religious, and cultural values and diversity. Our republic will ensure strong protections against poverty, inequality, and the abuse of power. No segment of Bangladesh's population will be excluded or criminalised in our second republic. Instead, every citizen will be given equal importance, and their safety and security will be guaranteed.

Economically, we aim to establish a self-sufficient, equitable, and sustainable national economy through the proper integration of agriculture, service, and production sectors. Our economy will be sensitive to life, nature, and the environment. Wealth will not be concentrated in the hands of a select few; instead, the equitable redistribution of resources will be the core principle of our economic policies. We will take firm steps to regulate corporate syndicates and vested interests, safeguarding consumer and public welfare. We will position Bangladesh as a strong regional power through economic advancement, fostering regional cooperation and international partnerships. We will build a modern and sustainable economy prioritising science and technology and fostering an innovation-driven culture.

Finally, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to establishing a just and equal society. We strongly believe that the July 2024 mass uprising was not just a victory against a fascist regime but also a pledge to shape our future. Let us unite, hand in hand, to build a Bangladesh where every citizen's voice is heard, where the struggle for justice and human rights will be at the heart of politics, and where equality and human dignity will form the foundation of the state.

Now is the time to dream anew, to march forward, and build a new Bangladesh.

Therefore, let us all take an oath. Let us unite and move forward with unwavering determination in our struggle to establish the second republic.

The second republic is not an unattainable dream. It is our promise!

In a statement, the military said the Israeli air force "conducted an intelligence-based strike in the area of Hermon and eliminated the terrorist Mohammed Mahdi Ali Shaheen...

who had been coordinating terrorist transactions for the purchase of weapons".

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Lebanon

## Bomb kills six at Pak Islamic seminary Son of late Taliban doyen injured

REUTERS, Peshawar

A bomb blast at an Islamic seminary in northwestern Pakistan known as a historic training ground for the Afghan Taliban killed six worshippers during Friday prayers, police said yesterday.

Several others were wounded including the head of the religious school, Maulana Hamid-ul-Haq, son of the late Maulana Sami-ul-Haq, considered the father of the Taliban. Regional police officer Najeebur Rahman said Haq was in critical condition.

Tucked away in a Pakistani town off the main motorway to the Afghan border, Darul Uloom Haqqania university was the launch pad for the Taliban movement in the 1990s and is still often described as an incubator for radical Islamists.



In this handout photo taken and released yesterday by the Indian State Disaster Response Force, rescuers carry Border Roads Organisation workers after an avalanche near Mana village in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand state. Over 40 construction workers were missing, while 15 others were rescued after the avalanche in the Himalayan state following heavy snowfall.

PHOTO: AFP

## IMPACT OF US AID CUTS Millions of children already affected: UN

AFP, Geneva

The UN children's agency Unicef said yesterday that it was studying the impact of drastic US aid cuts, with millions of children already affected by the funding freeze imposed last month.

US President Donald Trump, on his first day back in office last month, demanded a 90-day freeze on all US foreign aid to give his administration time to review overseas spending, with an eye to gutting programmes not aligned with his "America First" agenda.

The State Department announced Wednesday that multi-year aid contracts were being slashed by 92 percent, in a bid to make around \$60 billion in savings in development and overseas

humanitarian programmes.

"We have received termination notices for Unicef grants, and they include humanitarian as well as development programming," the agency's spokesman James Elder said at a press conference in Geneva.

### Multi-year aid contracts were being slashed by 92 percent: state dept

"We continue to assess the impact of those termination notices on our programmes for children. But we already know that the initial pause has impacted programming for millions of children in roughly

half the countries that we work.

"Without urgent action, without funding, more children are going to suffer malnutrition. Fewer will have access to education, and preventable illnesses will claim more lives," he said.

"So it's very clear that reduction in any funding during these exceedingly difficult times for children is putting child lives at risk at a time when they need support more than ever."

The US has, until now, been by far the world's largest donor of humanitarian and development aid.

Geetanjali Narayan, Unicef's representative in Haiti, told the briefing that US aid was crucial to children's lives in the poorest country in the Caribbean.

## World agrees nature funding plan at UN talks

AFP, Rome

Nations cheered a last-gasp deal to map out funding to protect nature Thursday, breaking a deadlock at UN talks seen as a test for international cooperation in the face of geopolitical tensions.

Rich and developing countries hammered out a delicate compromise on raising and delivering the billions of dollars needed to protect species.

Delegates stood and clapped in an emotionally charged final meeting that saw key decisions adopted in the last day of negotiations at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome.

## Militia fighters surrender looted weapons in Manipur

AFP, New Delhi

Militia fighters from rival ethnic groups in India's conflict torn Manipur have surrendered scores of guns and other gear looted from security forces, police said yesterday, days after the state was placed under New Delhi's direct rule.

The Manipur police, in a series of posts on X yesterday, shared photos of hand grenades, pistols, rifles, helmets, bulletproof jackets and ammunition surrendered by ethnic militias from across the state.

At least 307 weapons were handed over in the last week, police said in a statement.

The "request for the surrender of looted and illegally held weapons and ammunition has yielded a positive response", it added.

"Such voluntary surrender of weapons

## TRUMP TARIFF THREATS India, EU commit to yr-end deadline for free trade pact

REUTERS, New Delhi

India and the European Union yesterday agreed to conclude a free trade deal by the end of the year, their first commitment to a deadline on talks that have been going for years, as they look to soften the effect of tariff increases from the United States.

The announcement was made by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, on a two day visit to India, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a joint press conference.

Both sides have for years been trying to strike a free trade pact, which would involve major concessions by India - one of the world's most protected markets. Talks for an India-EU free trade deal resumed in 2021 after having been stalled for eight years.

"We have prepared a blueprint for collaboration in the areas of trade, technology, investment, innovation, green growth, security, skilling and mobility," Modi said, adding officials have been asked to conclude the deal by the end of the year.

<p><b>Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA)</b> MRA Bhaban, F-14-D/1, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207</p>			
Date: 25/02/2025			
Ref: 53.04.0000.002.07.05.25-370			
Invitation for Tenders			
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH			
1	Ministry/Division	Financial Institution Division, Ministry of Finance,	
2	Agency	Microcredit Regulatory Authority	
3	Procuring Entity Name	Executive Vice Chairman, Microcredit Regulatory Authority	
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present	
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
6	Invitation for	Supply of Printer and Photocopier Toner and related other services for MRA	
7	Invitation Ref No & Date	53.04.0000.002.07.05.25-370, Date: 25/02/2025	
KEY INFORMATION			
8	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
9	Budget and Source of Funds	MRA Own Fund	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
10	Tender Lot:	Single	
11	Pre-Tender Meeting	Not held.	
12	Tender Purchase & Submit Place / Date / Time of	Microcredit Regulatory Authority MRA Bhaban, F-14-D/1, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.	Tender Last Selling Date & Time : 16/03/2025, Time: 03.00P.M
		Tender Closing Date & Time: 17/03/2025, Time: 12.00P.M	Tender Opening Date & Time: 17/03/2025, Time: 12.15 P.M
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
13	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	1) The minimum of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the supply of Toner and similar Goods and related services as Supplier shall be 03 (Three) years. 2) The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of Toner or similar Goods and related service of at least 02 (Two) contract(s) successfully completed within the last 03 (Three) years, with contract value of each contract at least BDT 15,00,000.00 (Fifteen Lac) Only for Government/ Semi-Government/ Autonomous organizations / Govt. controlled corporation/office/factory. Must submitted certificate against accomplishment the delivery from purchaser's/buyer's entitled officer. 3) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be 25 (Twenty five) Lacs.	
14	Brief Description of Goods & Related Services	The bidder has to complete the Tender as per the technical specifications mentioned in: Supply of Printer and Photocopier Toner and related other services for MRA	
	Item No.	Description of Item	Unit
	1	HP 76A Original LaserJet Black Toner	Nos
	2	HP 26A Original LaserJet Black Toner	Nos
	3	HP 79A Original LaserJet Black Toner	Nos
	4	HP 87A Original LaserJet Black Toner	Nos
	5	HP 215A Original LaserJet Black Toner	Nos
	6	HP 201A Original LaserJet Toner	Set (full)
	7	HP 415A Original LaserJet Black Toner	Nos
	8	HP 415A Original LaserJet Toner	Set (full)
	9	Toshiba T-2323c	Nos
	10	Toshiba T-5018c	Nos
15	Tender Security	The Tender Security: BDT 50,000.00 (Fifty thousand) only	
16	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	1,000/- (One Thousand ) Only (Application to be submitted for procurement of tender documents)	
17	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Professor Dr. Mohammed Helal Uddin Executive Vice-Chairman Microcredit Regulatory Authority MRA Bhaban, F-14-D/1 Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. Fax No: 8333257, e-mail: <a href="mailto:evc@mra.gov.bd">evc@mra.gov.bd</a>	
18	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings		

## UYGHUR DEPORTATIONS US issues Thailand security alert

AFP, Bangkok

The United States issued a security alert to its citizens in Thailand yesterday, warning of the possible risk of reprisal attacks after the kingdom deported dozens of Uyghurs to China.

The Thai government has suffered intense criticism from around the world for its decision to hand over at least 40 Uyghurs, who were flown by special plane to China's northwestern Xinjiang region on Thursday.

Beijing is accused of committing human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including the incarceration of around one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. It denies the allegations.



## LATEST TARIFF THREAT China accuses US of fentanyl 'blackmail'

REUTERS, Beijing

Beijing yesterday accused the United States of exerting "tariff pressure and blackmail" after President Donald Trump's latest threat to slap an extra duty of 10 percent on imports from China, citing a continued flow of fentanyl into the country.

The fresh China tariffs, in addition to a tariff of 10 percent levied on February 4, coincide with Wednesday's start of China's annual parliamentary meet.

Washington had "used the fentanyl issue to insist on tariff pressure and blackmail," foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a daily briefing.

"It has created a serious impact, pressure, coercion and threat to the dialogue and cooperation between the two sides in the field of drug control," Lin said of the tariffs, warning that they would backfire.

"Remarkable results have been achieved," he added, from China's anti-drug cooperation with the United States, saying China was the world's first country to officially control fentanyl-like substances.

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## NATIONAL CITIZEN PARTY

## The new kids on the political block



## BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza  
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

The new kids on the political block have a name: the National Citizen Party (NCP). After some test runs under the banners of Students Against Discrimination and Jatiya Nagorik Committee, the NCP represents "July's People" who ousted an authoritarian regime through a people's uprising. Thus, Generation Z's youthful exuberance translates into political power. However, history tells us that uprisings and revolutions are only the easy part; governing is the real challenge. The interim government includes three (minus one) student leaders who, I am sure, will attest to this truism.

NCP's emergence as a political entity promises change. If guided properly, the party can bring in a reformed democracy, ending years of political stagnation. For a country yet to properly earn the guiding principles of the Liberation War—equality, social justice, and human dignity—even after nearly 54 years of its independence, there is an overwhelming disillusionment with traditional political forces. The societal and cultural fault lines are responsible for occasional tremors. The eruption of July 2024 is symptomatic of a deep-rooted molten anxiety. Reconciliation and national unity are crucial, requiring negotiation of the contested narratives of identity, history, and ideology. Whether the NCP will look for national healing is not clear at this point.

Sarjis Alam, one of the chief organisers of NCP, asserts that their party aims to emphasise "citizenship" that transcends the limitations of being a Bangalee or Bangladeshi. This stated centric position, which they call pro-Bangladeshi, is vague and warrants further elaboration. The party grew out of the rejection of the established culture that conceptualises political loyalty as an allegiance to one of the dynasties that has a male heroic figure at its pivot. The "Bangalee" and "Bangladeshi" discourses are credited to two iconic male figures. Despite being ruled by female leaders, the country has never been able to transcend the legacies of its patriarchs. More than three decades of premiership held by female figures

as symbolic heirs have not presented women as transformative figures. Even the head of the interim government, known for his efforts in women's empowerment through microfinancing programmes, has struggled to create a substantial space for women in Bangladesh 2.0.

The composition of NCP is no different. The euphoria of July's achievements has started to wane as the harsh realities of politics have surfaced. The unity of the students is fractured by ideological rifts, political rivalries, and allegations of corruption. The new party has strategically detached itself from its rightist members, but not without suspicion. The common perception is that in the forthcoming national election, they might complement one another.

NCP and its allies came together through their opposition to a common adversary: the fallen regime of Awami League. The absence or shadowy presence of the deposed leadership has made ideological rifts within the orbit of the party both visible and pronounced. Different factions with varied political philosophies are now fighting for influence. For some, radical reforms are the logical consequence of an uprising. Others push for a rather moderate and incremental approach. All eyes will be on the NCP to see if our young ones have the ability to maintain solidarity and navigate the country's complex political landscape as well as the international spheres of influence.

Another challenge for the NCP is its perceived association with the interim government. The established political parties, who have been running the oppositional marathon race for decades, find the NCP as the last runner to finish the race with their baton. The glory for NCP thus overshadows their long-anticipated political comeback. The atmosphere is a breeding ground for suspicion and resentment as former allies are turning into political adversaries.

Some have accused student leaders of monopolising the revolutionary narrative, highlighting their role while slighting the contributions of their peers. This perception

is both politically damaging and historically contentious. The apparent, initial exclusion of private university students from the central committee of the recently formed student organisation Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsads (BGCS) strengthened this perception, leading to scuffles between these students and BGCS supporters at the DU campus on Wednesday. Although later developments somewhat cleared the air, with the disclosure

people's mandate.

I don't want to discourage our young revolutionaries. They need time to strike roots and sprout shoots before they bloom and yield fruits. But if the maturity of their fruits is rushed chemically and artificially, their party is unlikely to be acceptable and sustainable in the long run. The party's high moral ground has already been tainted by some allegations of corruption and violence.

grew up with fast internet, instant food, instant messaging, and instant access to the information galaxy. They demand quick results and are notoriously unforgiving. They need to learn to deal with others with mutual respect.

To stay relevant, the party's manifesto must prioritise the country's expected demographic dividend. This involves the transformation of youthful energy into economic productivity.



The emergence of Jatiya Nagorik Party (National Citizen Party) as a political entity promises change.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

of the full 205-member committee including private university representation, the damage was already done. One hopes that, with time, these young leaders will have the maturity to adopt an inclusive narrative that recognises the contributions of all factions.

The new party will also have to respond to the grapevines that whisper conspiracy. The party will have to come clean about its funding source, especially after allegations about the paid agency of overseas actors or covert operatives of rightist political parties. We need a proper distance from the event to understand whether the revolutionary zeal of NCP was organically homegrown or strategically manufactured. The challenge for NCP is to prove that they are not a beneficiary of political crises or even conspiracies, but a transformative force advocating for the

Some of the accusations are likely political smears, while others seem genuine enough to raise concerns. For credibility's sake, the party must come clean, championing transparency and due diligence, and restore public trust.

Let's not forget: the NCP holds huge potential. Like the student-led movements of 1952, 1966, 1969, 1990, and 2018, the NCP's youthful leadership promises to offer an alternative to the entrenched political dynasties that have controlled our politics for decades. Their idea of anti-discrimination resonates with a generation that is logged onto social media and globalised interfaces. Then again, whether the Gen Z will be patient enough to work closely with other generations is a point to ponder. We already see the impatience and arrogance that have alienated some of the leaders. This is a generation that

We need education reform, vocational training, and digital literacy not only to fulfil their promise of equality and opportunity but also to solidify their support base among the youth.

To become a credible political force, the new party must learn from historical precedents and strategically address ideological rifts, corruption allegations, and political hostilities. Ultimately, the legacy of the new party will be determined by the nation it purports or helps to build, not by the regime it has overthrown. The country awaits a leadership that has integrity, vision, and inclusivity to change the course of Bangladeshi politics. Even if they don't succeed, at least they will have some exciting stories to share with their grandchildren about the time they nearly changed Bangladesh.

## Maximising energy efficiency is key to our industrial growth



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AFIA MUBASHIRI TIASHA

increasingly important for cooperation and trade.

Although energy efficiency has many advantages, several obstacles hinder its widespread use in the industrial sector of Bangladesh. Many industrial operators are unaware of the financial and environmental advantages of energy efficiency, and there is a lack of qualified workers to handle and deploy these technologies. Another major obstacle

with new laws or mandated guidelines meant to increase energy efficiency. In addition, a lack of knowledge about the advantages and opportunities accessible to organisations is a widespread obstacle to energy efficiency. A major gap still exists in the application of standardised frameworks for energy efficiency.

Governments worldwide understand the critical significance of energy-efficient technologies in combating climate change and decreasing industrial energy usage. Tax incentive schemes can encourage businesses to invest in energy-efficient equipment. Grants can fund projects that improve energy efficiency, encourage renewable energy integration, and develop novel technology with environmental benefits. Providing funding channels, incentives, and support systems helps reduce the initial investment burden. Mandatory energy efficiency targets encourage businesses to invest in technological upgrades, operational improvements, and environmentally friendly practices. International collaborations enable the exchange of knowledge and experiences, allowing countries to learn from one another's successes and failures in boosting energy efficiency.

Moreover, collaborative projects bring together experts from several countries, encouraging innovation and the development of cutting edge technology that improves energy efficiency and promotes waste reduction to help develop a more sustainable and environmentally conscious industrial landscape. Governments should foster a conducive environment for joint ventures, research collaborations, and knowledge-sharing. Also, increasing investment in research and development can address new technical problems and gaps, encourage innovation in energy-efficient technology, enhance existing solutions, and develop new techniques.

One of the key obstacles industries face is the high upfront costs associated with implementing energy-efficient technology. The swift development of energy-efficient technologies creates a knowledge gap since some industries do not have the expertise needed for successful deployment.

Existing infrastructures and legacy systems in industries may not readily integrate with newer, more energy-efficient technologies. Moreover, industries may be reluctant to comply



Although energy efficiency has many advantages, several obstacles hinder its widespread use in the industrial sector of Bangladesh. FILE VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

The need to tackle climate change necessitates an increase in energy efficiency. Global energy intensity has been declining annually since 2015, with significant implications for businesses, governments, consumers, and the environment. Energy security, climate change, and economic stability are more pressing than ever, and both developed and developing countries must take action to address these issues amid rising concerns over energy price volatility and the worldwide focus on reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

In developing countries, where energy consumption and the search for clean energy sources continue to grow, energy efficiency is becoming an increasingly important tool for both financial stability and energy security. Furthermore, in developing countries like Bangladesh, energy efficiency has emerged as a crucial component, owing to its commercial and industrial competitiveness and energy security advantages. In addition, the environmental benefits, such as lowering CO2 emissions, make it increasingly valuable.

In FY23, over 10.35 percent of Bangladesh's GDP was derived from its ready-made garment (RMG) industry. This sector employs millions of people and is the main driver of economic growth. Also, in terms of satisfying the increasing demand for environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards for international clients, energy efficiency is essential for Bangladesh's industries. For example, Bangladeshi garment manufacturers need to meet foreign consumers' requirements to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

However, the pattern of energy use in Bangladesh indicates a significant reliance on non-renewable resources. Recent data shows that the industrial sector alone is responsible for a large amount of the overall energy consumption, with textiles, clothing, and chemicals being the main

contributors. Collectively, the garment (15.4 percent), textile (12.4 percent), and chemical fertiliser (12.2 percent) sub-sectors account for over 40 percent of the total energy consumption of the industrial sector.

Given this high level of consumption, energy-saving strategies could significantly lower costs and improve these businesses' competitiveness globally. Limiting energy use in the industrial sector lowers operational costs, boosts economic efficiency, and frees up capital for growth and innovation.

Reducing CO2 emissions and other pollutants also encourages environmental responsibility and helps the country meet its environmental commitments under international agreements. By lowering dependency on foreign fuels and increasing energy efficiency, national energy security and stability can be improved. Effective energy use also boosts Bangladeshi products' competitiveness in the global market, where sustainability is

is the high upfront cost of energy-efficient technologies and the absence of financial incentives. Furthermore, energy performance requirements and incentive gaps persist, while enforcement of some laws to foster energy efficiency remains weak. Another barrier is the challenge for businesses to shift to modern energy-efficient systems without major investment and technical know-how, as many still cling to outdated equipment and manufacturing practices.

One of the key obstacles industries face is the high upfront costs associated with implementing energy-efficient technology. The swift development of energy-efficient technologies creates a knowledge gap since some industries do not have the expertise needed for successful deployment.

Existing infrastructures and legacy systems in industries may not readily integrate with newer, more energy-efficient technologies. Moreover, industries may be reluctant to comply

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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## 'Good teams score not just with boundaries'

Bangladesh's spin-bowling coach **Mushtaq Ahmed** is close to signing a two-year contract extension with the Tigers. The former Pakistan spin wizard left to be with his family in Lahore after Bangladesh's final ICC Champions Trophy group-stage fixture got washed out in Rawalpindi but had a chat with **The Daily Star's Samsul Arefin Khan** about Bangladesh's disappointing campaign in the global event and some of the factors that contributed to it. The excerpts are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS):** How disappointed are you about Bangladesh's Champions Trophy campaign?

**Mushtaq Ahmed (MA):** I am not disappointed really. Yes, we didn't win the matches but there were close matches. If we had 30-40 more runs in both the matches, then it could have been a different ball game.

**DS:** Bangladesh always have high expectations whenever they go into an ICC event. Do you feel it's justified?

**MA:** I think so, why not? If you see the Bangladeshi talents, the fast bowling, the spin department and the batting, they are ticking boxes in all the departments. But the most beautiful thing with the Bangladesh team is they are a young side that can challenge any team. You can see glimpses of that now.

Against India, we scored 220-230 runs and were almost challenging them. It was not an easy game. New Zealand also struggled against Bangladesh. If we had that run out, I mean ifs and buts always come in cricket. You can see the challenge was there. They just have to believe and learn a few things like how to rotate the strike in the middle overs, and how to get wickets in the middle overs.

**DS:** Teams are scoring 300-350 runs regularly, whereas Bangladesh are stuck in the 250-270 region. How much is it letting them down every game?

**MA:** I think getting [big] scores is very important. There is no denying that. I think the guys have been talking to each other and they have been very honest. They know this is the area they need to improve.

I believe they just need to get the hang of building partnerships and how to play the 50-over format. I think of 50-over cricket as mini-Test cricket. You have to understand the phases of the game. I think there are three to four phases in batting that they need to learn how to play in.

All the good teams, why do they get 300 runs? They score these runs not with boundaries but they score singles and doubles; they learn sweeps and reverse sweeps as well.

**DS:** Do you think the senior duo of Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim not performing had an impact on Bangladesh's results in the tournament?

**MA:** I think Mahmudullah and Mushi [Mushfiqur] have served the country for many many years. So, they have more responsibilities for sure.

When your senior players start scoring runs, it gives a lot of advantage to young

players. I think Mushi and Mahmudullah were key players for Bangladesh in this tournament but unfortunately, they couldn't deliver. They were very disappointed, to be honest. Both of them were very down after the game because they knew that they could've played differently.

**DS:** Do you see them in the 2027 World Cup as well?

**MA:** You can't close the door for anyone as long as they are fit. Obviously, the skills are there. If you are 37-39, it doesn't matter. Lots of players, within a similar age group, are playing international matches like Virat Kohli and Adil Rashid because they are really fit. I believe that you've got to prepare for the upcoming World Cup with the youngsters but you've also got to balance the side with senior players.

**DS:** Updates on your contract extension with the Tigers?

**MA:** I'm going to sign a two-year or three-year contract. I might have to work for 130-140 days and the Bangladesh Cricket Board will also determine the capacity of my work. I think my role will be to work with local spinners to build bench strength. I will be joining Bangladesh in their series against Pakistan in May.



**"We've obviously enjoyed the pitches in Pakistan and I think we've got a pretty well-balanced side to play in any conditions so hopefully we can continue to do that and adjust to what's in front of us."**

New Zealand all-rounder Michael Bracewell said ahead of their final Champions Trophy Group A game against India in Dubai tomorrow



## CWAB to employ fresh method to solve payment issues

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) has decided to include players from every division in the decision-making process while discussing salary-related issues with the board after a meeting with local players yesterday who had to accept lower payments for the recent edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) and the forthcoming Dhaka Premier League (DPL).

A few national team players had met with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed after he took charge to discuss BPL and had suggested that the tournament should be played even if the players have to accept a lower paycheck.

But this suggestion of theirs did not go down well with rest of the players in the domestic circuit as DPL clubs have also followed suit and offered significantly reduced contracts for players for the next edition, set to begin on March 3.

Yesterday, some 50-60 players, which included Tamim Iqbal, Anamul Haque Bijoy attended the meeting in Mirpur.

"Today [Friday] it was decided that in such issues, players from the second division through to the premier division will take part in the decision-making process and no one will individually handle such decisions," a cricketer who was in yesterday's meeting told **The Daily Star**.

CWAB has also appointed barrister Shihab Uddin Khan to represent the cricketers' in payment disputes.

CWAB has been without a president since Naimur Rahman Durjoy resigned after the fall of the Awami League regime. In the meeting, it was decided that a decision on elections will take place during the upcoming DPL, slated to begin on March 3.

## Oldest Test cricketer Ron Draper no more

AFP, Gqeberha



Ron Draper, who was the oldest living Test cricketer, has died in Gqeberha at the age of 98 years and 63 days, his family said Friday.

Draper died in a retirement home in Gqeberha on Tuesday. His death was confirmed by his son-in-law, Neil Thomson, on Friday.

Draper, a top-order batter and occasional wicketkeeper, played in two Test matches for South Africa against Australia in 1950.

One of his opponents, Neil Harvey, now becomes the oldest living Test player at the age of 96.

Both previous oldest Test cricketers were South Africans -- Norman Gordon, who died aged 103 in 2016, and John Watkins, who was 98 when he died in 2021.

Draper, who was born on 24 December 1926, made a century on first-class debut for Eastern Province against Orange Free State on his 19th birthday.

After making 86 for the province against the touring Australians in 1949/50, he was selected for the last two Tests against the tourists but scored only 25 runs in three innings.

Draper continued to play first-class cricket until 1959/60 and finished with a respectable average of 41.64. He also became the first to score two centuries in a match in South Africa's Currie Cup competition in 1952/53 season.

## Buttler quits as captain

Jos Buttler said on Friday he is to step down as England's limited-overs captain after a disastrous Champions Trophy campaign ended with them failing to reach the semifinals.

Buttler will step down from captaincy after their final Champions Trophy game against South Africa in Karachi today.

"I'm going to stand down as England captain, it's the right decision for me and the team," the 34-year-old said at a press conference. England failed to retain either their T20 and 50-over World Cup titles under Buttler's captaincy.

## Proteas wary of underperforming England

AFP, Karachi

South Africa coach Rob Walter said his team will be wary of an under-performing England, who have the ability to beat anyone on their day, when they meet in a key Champions Trophy match on Saturday.

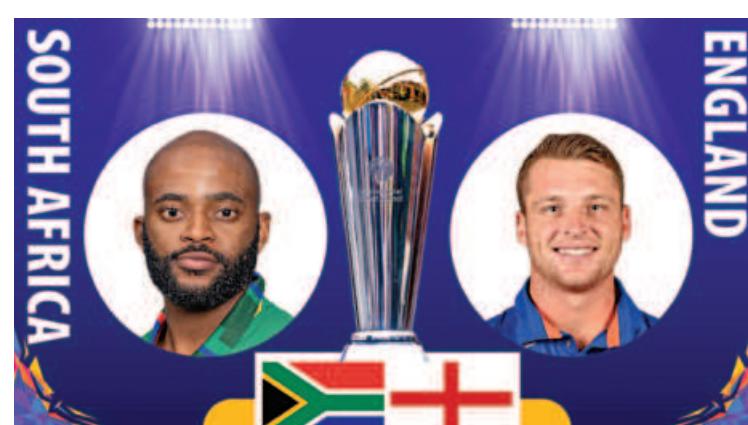
The sides face off in Karachi with South Africa still in contention to reach the semifinals of the 50-over tournament, while England are already out.

South Africa hammered Afghanistan in their opener, but their second match against Australia was washed out without a ball being bowled.

They now take on a wounded England whose captain Jos Buttler stepped down from white-ball captaincy yesterday.

"League cricket around the world, they do well, which should suggest that they're adaptable," Walter told reporters.

"If you look at the names on the sheet, I think there's some quality



players there, there's no doubt about that.

"Cricket can be fickle and sometimes that results in you losing."

"To ask if I'm surprised [by England's performance], as I said I think there's good cricketers that could turn out tomorrow and deliver an international standard performance," he added.

Buttler, who has been under pressure to relinquish the leadership of the white-ball team, was unable to replicate England's success as ODI and T20 captain since he led them to a T20 World Cup title in 2022.

England won only three of their nine matches as defending champions at the 50-over World Cup in India in 2023.

They faltered in the semifinal of last year's T20 World Cup and recently suffered a 3-0 ODI whitewash in India before the Champions Trophy.

Walter, meanwhile, said Proteas wicket-keeper-batter Heinrich Klaasen is set to return to the team after missing the opener due to an elbow injury.

Batting at number four, Klaasen has been the accumulator and aggressor for South Africa in white-ball cricket and remains key to their title goals.

"He's a super player, isn't he?" said Walter.

"And I think that you probably notice his strength also based on who the guys are around him that allow him to play that way."

"Obviously he's got a skill set at the moment that is right up there with the world's best, I think we all agree with that."

"And it's great to have him in your team because you know how destructive he can be."

## Hosts' exit deflates CT buzz in Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

Champions Trophy fever in Pakistan has plummeted after the hosts crashed out of the first major cricket event in the country in three decades without winning a game.

"It feels like attending a wedding where you don't know the bride or groom," said Kashan Khan, a medical student who watched Pakistan get beaten by New Zealand by 60 runs in the opening match in Karachi last week.

The defending champions then lost to great rivals India by six wickets to seal their fate, before their dead-rubber last group game against Bangladesh was washed out.

"Pakistan's poor performance has drained my enthusiasm. I don't care about watching other teams now," added Khan.

Pakistan's failure to advance beyond the group phase or even win a game was a huge letdown in a country that has been gradually returning to hosting international teams after years of militancy saw it marked as a no-go zone.

Outside Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, ticket-holders were seen trying to sell their unwanted seats ahead of Pakistan's match against Bangladesh, but there were no takers.

"I had three tickets but no one wanted to buy them," said Farooq Ali. "I even tried giving them away for free, but my friends weren't interested."

For many, the final on March 9 holds little appeal, particularly given it's location is still undecided.

Archrivals India refused to visit its neighbour and are playing all their matches in Dubai. India are into the semifinals and if they reach the title decider, the final will be moved from Lahore to Dubai. "If Pakistan isn't playing in it, why should we care?" asked Amna Mashadi, who watched the tournament on television.

## New traditions but same old hospitality in modern Islamabad

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Islamabad

Since its foundation in the 1960s, Pakistan's capital Islamabad has always been a well-planned city, with separate zones for administration, educational and commercial institutions and residential areas -- unlike most major cities in the Indian sub-continent.

The infrastructure in Islamabad had always been top notch and has been further spruced up over time, and from the looks of it, the city's residents have also adopted new traditions with the changing of times.

While visiting tourist hubs like Shah Faisal Mosque and Pakistan Monument, and while roaming around the city's amusement parks, malls and cineplexes, this reporter saw many families out and about, enjoying themselves.

Similar scenes could be seen in restaurants as well, with people queuing up in front of top-billed eateries like TKR and Dome and also visiting the lesser-known restaurants to gorge on the many scrumptious traditional food items such as kebabs, halim, kabuli pulao, biryani, dum pukht and nihari.



To Sayeed Khan, a Pakistani businessman who lives in Brunei and has come to Islamabad to meet his family, seeing families and especially women in public spaces signified a significant social change.

"Earlier, people used to eat at home but now it is completely different. They like to eat outside with family and friends. Women didn't use to eat outside and it was considered a bad gesture. But now they are going out with family and friends," Sayeed said.

Tarek Mahmud, a Bangladeshi sports journalist from Prothom Alo who last visited the city during the Islamabad



SAFF Games in 2004, feels the city has adopted modernity without spoiling its beauty.

"I saw some skyscrapers, nice shopping malls and branded shops this time which is new compared to my last visit here in 2004... They have made changes without spoiling the beauty of the city. The roads are very clean. The transportation is also excellent," said Mahmud.

Amidst all the changes, one thing that has remained the same in Islamabad is its hospitality.

The people of Pakistan are known for their friendly nature and hospitality towards guests and from the experiences of this reporter who is visiting this part of the world for the first time to cover the ICC Champions Trophy, this reputation is more than justified.

From taxi drivers to hotel receptionists, salesmen in shops to the wait staff in restaurants, people in Islamabad are welcoming and are always willing to go the extra mile to help their guests.

The level of security in the city is palpable as the local law enforcement agencies have left no stone unturned to ensure there are no hitches.

These extra measures are not at all unwarranted, proved by the suicide bombing that took five lives yesterday in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, a northwestern region of the country. So far, there have not been any such incidents in the cities where the tournament is taking place and even though the locals are heartbroken by Pakistan's early exit, they have opened their hearts to make this a delightful experience for every guest who has made the trip for the tournament.

## Mourinho gets four-match suspension

AFP, Istanbul

Fenerbahce coach Jose Mourinho was handed a four-match ban and fined more than 40,000 euros by the Turkish football federation on Thursday for comments he made after an explosive Istanbul derby against Galatasaray.

After Monday's game ended in a 0-0 stalemate, the 62-year-old Mourinho said the home bench had been "jumping like monkeys".

He also reportedly repeated his criticism of Turkish referees.

Fenerbahce said that Mourinho's comments were taken out of context.

On Thursday the Turkish football federation (TFF) disciplinary council handed down a two-match suspension for his comments against the fourth referee and two additional matches for his blast at the Galatasaray bench. They were judged "contrary to sporting ethics".

Mourinho, whose team trail leaders Galatasaray by six points in the table, was also fined just over 42,000 euros.



Bangladesh players celebrate their 45-27 points victory in the fifth and final match of the five-match kabaddi series against Nepal which helped them to a 4-1 overall victory at the Outer Stadium in Paltan yesterday. Nepal, who won only the second match of the series, saw their star player Ghanshyam Roka Magar (bottom) adjudged the best raider of the series.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Beating Bangladesh a big achievement: Ghanshyam

Bangladesh defeated by Nepal 45-27 points in the final match of the five-match Test series yesterday, securing a 4-1 triumph. However, Nepal's historic victory over Bangladesh in the second match grabbed much focus, with the visiting team's captain Ghanshyam Roka Magar eventually becoming the best raider of the series. Ghanshyam had earlier played a key role in taking their country to the final of 2024 Bangabandhu Gold Cup Kabaddi, using his experience from the Indian Pro Kabaddi League where he played for Haryana Steelers. The youngster spoke to *The Daily Star's* Anisur Rahman about the just-concluded series and Nepal's rapidly-improving kabaddi team after the fifth match. Following are excerpts from the interview.

**The Daily Star (DS):** How would you describe the experience you gained in the five-match Test series against Bangladesh?



**Ghanshyam Roka Magar (GRM):** It has been a really good experience for us because we defeated Bangladesh for the first time. We performed well throughout the series. Beating Bangladesh for the first time in 20-25 years is a big achievement. Bangladesh also provided us with excellent facilities here, and we appreciate their efforts. We hope to use the experience gained here to perform better in the South Asian Games and the Asian Games in the coming days. However, we still need to improve and learn from our mistakes so that we can compete at a higher level.

**DS:** What went wrong in the last two matches after Nepal's strong performances in the second and third matches, including a victory in the second one?

**GRM:** Nothing went wrong. It was more

of a technical issue and a lack of team coordination, which prevented us from performing as expected.

**DS:** What is your response to your officials' allegations about poor umpiring?

**GRM:** It was only a technical issue.

**DS:** What, according to you, is the difference between Bangladesh and Nepal?

**GRM:** I think Bangladesh have more experienced players, while Nepal have a

younger team. The only difference, in my opinion, is experience.

**DS:** Some say Nepal's kabaddi team now revolves around you. How do you feel about such a compliment?

**GRM:** No, no. Kabaddi is a team sport, and you can't achieve anything alone without the support of your teammates. There is no such thing as leading Nepal single-handedly. I am just the captain of the Nepal kabaddi team, and I am happy with that role.

**DS:** Nepal introduced a franchise-based kabaddi league like the Indian Pro Kabaddi League this year. What impact has it had?

**GRM:** It was held in Nepal for the first time, and I think it is the second-biggest kabaddi league after the Indian Pro Kabaddi League. It has been a great opportunity for Nepalese kabaddi players and will help us improve in the coming days. We have set our sights on winning medals in the upcoming South Asian Games and Asian Games.

Ancelotti pleased with forwards' defensive efforts

REUTERS

Real Madrid's forwards have worked hard and defended well in recent weeks to turn the side into a more solid outfit, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Friday ahead of this weekend's LaLiga trip to Real Betis.

Real, who are in second place level on points with leaders Barcelona, have kept clean sheets in their last two matches.

"We have talked about it many times. Not just with Vinicius Jr, with everyone. And they agreed," the Italian told reporters.

"It has obviously changed in the last few games. Since the game against Atletico Madrid (on February 9), the defensive improvement has been evident..."

"Vinicius is helping a lot. It has changed the team a lot, because the strikers are working hard. The team is more solid."

Real face a tough test at Betis on Saturday, with the seventh-placed side coming into the match on the back of two consecutive wins.

The hosts will also have in-form winger Antony available after successfully appealing against the red card against Getafe. Ancelotti said he would not field a weakened team against Betis to keep the squad fresh for their Champions League tie against rivals Atletico on Tuesday.

## 'Spassky was an entire era for chess'

REUTERS

Russian chess grandmaster Boris Spassky has died at the age of 88, International chess federation (FIDE) general director Emil Sutovsky told Reuters on Thursday.

Spassky, who took French nationality in 1978, was the 10th World Chess Champion, holding the title from 1969-1972, when he lost it to American Bobby Fischer in Reykjavik in a contest later dubbed as the "Match of the Century".

During that match in the midst of the Cold War, which he lost 12.5-8.5 despite winning the first two games, Spassky showed great sportsmanship, applauding Fischer after losing the sixth game.

Former world champion Anatoly Karpov, who beat Spassky in the semi-finals of the Candidates tournament in 1974, paid a warm tribute.

"My idols in chess were Jose Capablanca and Boris Spassky. And when I managed to beat Spassky, it was the greatest of victories and, in a sense, defeating something inside me by beating my teacher," Karpov told state news agency RIA.

"For me, Boris Spassky was an entire era for chess. He became most famous, of course, for being the man who handed over the title to



Bobby Fischer.

"But he had chances to win that match. He may have lost by a wide margin, but when everything was in his favour, he let his chances slip away."

Spassky had been the oldest living world chess champion.

"A great personality has passed away, generations of chess players have studied and are studying his games and his work. This is a great loss for the country," Russian Chess Federation President Andrei Filatov told the TASS news agency.

Alexander Tkachev, executive director of the Russian Chess Federation, said Spassky's death was a huge loss for the world of chess.

"Boris Vasilevich lived in Moscow and was in contact with everyone close to him... I knew him in a different way than from books. It was always interesting to speak with him. He was a very interesting story-teller and it's hard for me to talk about him leaving us," Tkachev told RIA news agency.

Spassky represented France in three chess Olympiads in 1984, 1986 and 1988, and was seen playing in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris during the 1990s.

After his health deteriorated in the early 2000s, Spassky disappeared from Paris in August, 2012 before resurfacing in Moscow in October that year.

"It was my desire to return to Russia, because my time in France had run its course. It was time to start a new stage. I understood it was time to leave," he said at the time.

## Inter and Napoli clash in high-stakes showdown

REUTERS

Neither league leaders Inter Milan or second-placed Napoli are in the best of form ahead of what could be a season-defining spectacle when the two sides meet in a high-stakes Serie A clash on Saturday.

Inter recently snatched top spot from Napoli and are a point ahead of their title rivals with both sides having 12 games left to play.

Neither side, however, can claim to be at their peak ahead of the game in Naples, as a gruelling season begins to take its toll with injury lists expanding at a worrying rate.

Inter have won two of their last five league games, while Napoli, who are still adjusting to life without Khvicha Kvaratskhelia who left for Paris St Germain in January, are winless in their last four.

Napoli earned just three points from four matches in February, with key midfielder Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa sidelined due to a calf injury sustained in their recent loss to Como and winger David Neres recovering from a hamstring injury.

However, Inter are not without their own problems, particularly in defence, with Carlos Augusto, Matteo Darmian and midfielder Nicola Zalewski all sidelined due to recent injuries.

Veteran goalkeeper Yann Sommer is still recovering from a thumb operation and it remains

unclear if he will be fit to return.

Backup keeper Josep Martinez, touted as a future first choice, has already made his debut for the club and is likely to be called upon again.

Despite a turbulent period that saw Atalanta exit the Champions League and manager Gian Piero Gasperini announce he would not renew his contract, all while dealing with a spat with key striker Ademola Lookman, the Bergamo club have capitalised on Inter's and Napoli's inconsistent form to narrow the gap in the title race.

Atalanta have 54 points, three adrift of Inter, and with a home clash against second-from-bottom Venezia on Saturday, they have a prime opportunity to turn the Scudetto battle into a three-horse race.

Unlike their rivals, Atalanta have no new injury concerns and could field Serie A's top scorer, Mateo Retegui, with Lookman and Charles De Ketelaere providing support in attack.

At AC Milan, the momentum manager Sergio Conceicao built with his Italian Super Cup triumph in just his second match at the club appears to have waned.

Italian media report that he is under evaluation following a Champions League exit and back-to-back league defeats to Torino and Bologna. Sunday's home clash with Lazio could prove pivotal in shaping his future at the club.

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## Shilpakala DG hands in resignation letter after fiery speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

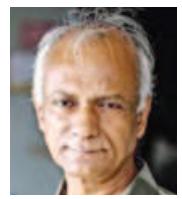
Noted theatre personality Syed Jamil Ahmed, in a surprise move, handed in his resignation as director general of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy yesterday, citing "bureaucratic challenges" and "restrictions on artistic expression".

He announced his resignation at the closing ceremony of the "Munier Chowdhury Prothom Jatiya Natya Utshab", organised by the BSA training department, where Jamil Ahmed attended as chief guest.

Jamil gave a fiery speech before the audience before informing them of his resignation.

"I accepted the position out of a sense of duty."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Syed Jamil Ahmed

## Shrine set on fire in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A shrine was vandalised and set on fire by a group of people in Ghiorghat, Dinajpur, yesterday.

Devotees at the Rohim Shah Baba Bhandari Mazar in the Singra area were preparing for their two-day annual Urs, scheduled to begin on March 2.

Urs is an Islamic function observed to commemorate the death anniversary of a saint.

Locals said a group of men calling themselves Sirat-e-Mustaqeem Parishad had been lobbying for a ban on the Urs, claiming that the event promoted un-Islamic activities like music, drugs, and other immoral acts.

On February 24, the group submitted

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Afghanistan's Azmatullah Omarzai smashes one over the cow corner as Australia wicketkeeper Josh Inglis looks on during their ICC Champions Trophy Group B fixture at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore yesterday. The all-rounder's 63-ball 67 propelled the Afghans to 273 all out in 50 overs, but the match was called off due to rain after Australia made 109 for one in 12.5 overs.

PHOTO: AFGHANISTAN CRICKET BOARD

## Australia into semis after Afghan match called off

AFP, *Lahore*

The all-important ICC Champions Trophy Group B match between Australia and Afghanistan in Lahore ended in a no result due to rain, sending Australia through to the semifinals while leaving Afghanistan's hopes of making it to the top four on the brink.

Australia, chasing 274 to win, were 109-1 after 12.5 overs with Travis Head and Steve Smith unbeaten on 59 off 40 and 19 off 22 respectively before rain halted play and did not allow it to resume.

With one point from the match, Australia edged South Africa and jumped to the top spot in Group B with four points in three games.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



US President Donald Trump and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky meet in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'Make a deal or we're out'

Trump slams Zelensky over not being 'thankful enough' at Oval Office meet, says Ukraine leader risking WWIII; Zelensky leaves without signing deal

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky clashed in an extraordinary shouting match in the Oval Office yesterday, leaving efforts to end the war with Russia hanging in the balance.

"You're either going to make a deal or we're out," a furious Trump told Zelensky, as a meeting that was meant to ease tensions over the sudden US outreach to Russia ended up inflaming them. "And if we're out, you'll fight it out and I don't think it's going to be pretty."

"You're gambling with the lives of millions of people. You're gambling with

World War Three, and what you're doing is very disrespectful to this country," Trump added.

Zelensky was at the White House to sign a deal on sharing Ukraine's mineral riches and discuss a peace deal with Russia, despite the US president recently branding his Ukrainian counterpart a dictator.

The meeting came after a week-long diplomatic dance that has also seen the leaders of France and Britain come to the White House to persuade Trump not to abandon Kyiv.

But tempers frayed after Vice President JD Vance said that "diplomacy" was needed to end the war. Zelensky

asked "what kind of diplomacy" and Vance then accused him of being "disrespectful" in the president's office.

"Mr president, with respect, I think it's disrespectful for you to come into the Oval Office to try to litigate this in front of the American media," Vance told Zelensky.

"Have you ever been to Ukraine that you say what problems we have?" Zelensky shot back.

"I've actually watched and seen the stories and I know that what happens is you bring people, you bring them on a propaganda tour," Vance continued.

"Mr president. Do you disagree that

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

## Democracy not safe until elected govt in office Says Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman believes the upcoming national election presents a crucial opportunity to build a safer Bangladesh for all, irrespective of religion and social class.

He said that until an elected government takes office, the country's democracy remains at risk as conspiracies to create instability persist despite the ouster of the autocratic regime.

Tarique made these remarks while virtually addressing the biennial conference of the central committee of the Sree Sree Jamastami Udjapan Parishad Bangladesh at JM Sen Hall in Chattogram city yesterday afternoon.

He sought support and cooperation from the Hindu community to help build a democratic election.

Reaffirming the party's commitment to equality, Tarique said that every citizen, regardless of ethnicity, religion, caste, belief, or non-belief, has equal rights under the BNP's policy.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



## Four lemons for Tk 120!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



With just a day remaining before Ramadan begins, lemon prices in the capital's kitchen markets have skyrocketed, frustrating consumers.

The retail prices of four lemons (one hali in Bangla) at Karwan Bazar kitchen market were between Tk 40 and Tk 120 yesterday, depending on the size and quality.

Four small-sized lemons were sold for Tk 40, up from Tk 20 a week ago, and medium-sized ones were at Tk 60, previously Tk 30.

Large lemons were available at prices ranging from Tk 80 to Tk 120 for four pieces. A week ago, the prices were between Tk 60 and Tk 80.

Md Nazir, a regular shopper, was surprised to find that four lemons cost Tk 120, up from Tk 70 just a week ago.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



## বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ

### বিদ্যুৎ, জ্বালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়

আসন্ন শ্রীম ও সেচ মৌসুম এবং পবিত্র রমজান মাসে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহের লক্ষ্যে পরিমিত ও সাশ্রয়ী বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারে সমানিত বিদ্যুৎ গ্রাহকগণের প্রতি আহ্বান

- সেচ পার্সে নিরবচ্ছিন্ন বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ নিশ্চিতের লক্ষ্যে রাত ১১ টা থেকে সকাল ৭ টা পর্যন্ত সেচ পার্স চালু রাখুন।
- বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি সাশ্রয়ী ব্যবহার নিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে ওয়েট এন্ড ড্রাই পদ্ধতিতে সেচ কাজ সম্পাদন করুন।
- লোডশেডিং এড়াতে এসির তাপমাত্রা ২৫ ডিজী সেলসিসিয়াস বা তার উপরে রাখুন।
- দোকান, শপিং মল, পেট্রোল পার্স ও সিএনজি স্টেশনে অতিরিক্ত বাতি ব্যবহারে বিরত থাকুন।
- অতিরিক্ত আলোকসজ্জা পরিহার করুন, বিদ্যুতের অপচয় রোধ করুন।
- কোন কারণে বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহে বিল ঘটলে দৈর্ঘ্য সহকারে অপেক্ষা করুন এবং কর্তৃপক্ষকে অবহিত করুন।
- বিদ্যুৎ সেবা প্রাপ্তিতে আপনার যে কোন অভিযোগ বা তথ্যের জন্য বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগের হটলাইন নম্বর ১৬৯৯৯ এ যোগাযোগ করুন।

বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ এবং অধিনস্থ সংস্থা/কোম্পানিসমূহের হটলাইন ও কন্ট্রোল রুমের ফোন নম্বর:

সংস্থা/কোম্পানির নাম	অনুসন্ধান হটলাইন নম্বর	কন্ট্রোল রুমের ফোন নম্বর
বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ	১৬৯৯৯	০২-৪৭১২০৩০৯, ০১৭৩৯-০০০২৯৩
বাংলাদেশ বিদ্যুৎ উন্নয়ন বোর্ড	১৬২০০	০১৭০৮-১৪৯৫০২, ০১৭০৮-১৪৯৫০৩
বাংলাদেশ পান্তি বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড	১৬৮৯৯	০২-৮৯০০৫৭৫, ০১৭৯২-৬২৩৪৬৭
ডিপিডিসি	১৬১১৬	--
ডেসকো	১৬১২০	--
মেসকো	১৬৬০৩	--
ওজোপাডিকো	১৬১১৭	০২-৪৭৭২৪৪৭২, ০১৭৫৫৬৮৭৮১

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

# Poisoning land and lives

## Illegal brick kilns take a toxic toll on Brahmanbaria

**Field visits to Suhilpur and Bakail villages under Sadar upazila, as well as various kilns in Sarail and Bijoynagar upazila, revealed that most of these unauthorised kilns are built on fertile farmland.**

MASUK HRIDOV, *Brahmanbaria*

Afarchan Begum, a 60-year-old resident of Balarampur village in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila, is grappling with respiratory issues attributed to toxic black smoke from nearby brick kilns.

During a recent conversation, she revealed that two kilns -- Banoful and Digital Brick Field -- are located adjacent to her village. The chimney of Banoful Brick Kiln is clearly visible from the village's only government primary school. The emissions from these kilns are ruining their homes and the environment.

The dust from the ash generated by brick burning accumulates on their houses, stunting the growth of local vegetation. "Mango blossoms wither, green coconuts fall prematurely, and crops such as lemons and perennial chillies no longer give any yield," Afarchan said.

Even livestock and poultry are frequently affected by the polluted air. During the peak brick-burning season, fine dust particles carried by the wind settle on residents' skin and belongings, many other villagers added.

Afarchan's plight resonates with hundreds of farmers across the villages of Shoshoi, Budhanti, Islampur, Shahbazpur, Chandura,

continue their operations without interference.

According to the Department of Environment (DoE), Brahmanbaria has 177 brick kilns, with 110 operating without licences. Many of these kilns are situated in prohibited zones near schools, markets, farmlands, residential areas, and riverbanks.

Rakibul Hasan, an inspector with the DoE, said owners of 18 brick kilns in the district are continuing production by filing writ petitions in the High Court.

"Despite being illegal, they have resorted to this tactic to exploit the legal system," he said.

Consequently, the DoE finds itself powerless to act against these kilns, even though they lack proper clearance, he added.

During a recent visit to Nazirabari village in Bijoynagar upazila, this correspondent witnessed that vast fields once used for cultivating paddy, mustard, and winter vegetables have now been overtaken by brick kilns.

Two kilns -- Messrs Digital Bricks and Banoful Brick -- have been set up side by side, occupying the entire field near a paved road built by the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) a few years ago.

While visiting Rajabariakandi village in Shahbazpur union under Sarail upazila, multiple brick kilns on



### KEY ISSUES

Brick kilns major polluter in Brahmanbaria

Respiratory issues plague residents near kilns

Agricultural productivity severely impacted

Many kilns operate without proper licences

Soil fertility diminishing from topsoil extraction

Authorities lack effective action against illegal kilns

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Enforce strict regulations against illegal kilns

Promote use of eco-friendly alternatives

Increase public awareness on dangers of brick kilns

Improve DoE monitoring, enforcement

Facilitate legal actions against non-compliant kiln owners

Conduct regular inspections of brick kilns in the area

legal action must be taken against these environmentally hazardous kilns. If no action is taken, the government officials involved must be held accountable. No illegal brick kiln should be allowed to operate at the cost of our environment."

Md Nasir Mia, member secretary of the Brahmanbaria district unit of the National Committee for the Protection of Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power, and Ports, said, "The fertility of agricultural land is concentrated in the top 12 to 20 inches of soil. When this upper layer is removed, the land becomes barren. A group of middlemen exploits impoverished farmers, luring them with incentives to sell topsoil.

"As a result, two to three feet of soil is excavated from farmlands for brick-making. This unregulated extraction not only reduces soil fertility but also severely disrupts agricultural production."

Experts also suggested adopting alternatives, such as the environment-friendly "hollow blocks", that will greatly reduce the dependence on bricks.

They said when the demand is down, these kilns will have little incentive to carry on with their devastating activity.

Therefore, what the authorities must do is increase the production of eco-friendly blocks while improving vigilance to prevent brick kilns from ravaging lands for topsoil.

Contacted, Azizul Haque, general secretary of the Brahmanbaria Brick Manufacturers' Association, defended the industry, stating, "Brick kilns are allowed to use soil for brick-making until 2025. After that, using soil for bricks will be prohibited. If kilns are abruptly shut down, people will suffer, and development will be hindered."

"The administration should adopt a balanced approach -- being lenient towards kilns causing minimal environmental harm while taking gradual action over the next three years against those causing significant damage," he added.

Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Didar Alam assured that the list of illegal brick kilns is being updated.

"Multiple operations have already been conducted to shut down these kilns, and some operations are still ongoing. Instructions have been given to various upazilas to take legal actions, including fines and other penalties, by conducting mobile courts against these illegal brick kilns according to the rules," he said.

and Rampur in Bijoynagar upazila.

Despite the severe consequences, brick burning has been a persistent issue in the area for almost two decades, often occurring without proper permissions.

Alarmingly, authorities have taken no effective action against the kilns, which continue to operate with impunity, alleged locals.

Locals report that some kiln owners openly admit to "managing" administration

both the north and south sides were observed, leaving residents struggling with respiratory illnesses.

Last year, approximately 50 acres of Boro paddy fields in Lopara village under Chuntha union were destroyed due to toxic gases from nearby brick kilns, said locals.

Field visits to Suhilpur and Bakail villages under Sadar upazila, as well as various kilns in Sarail and Bijoynagar upazila, revealed that most of these unauthorised kilns are built on fertile farmland.

Alarmingly, many are located close to residential areas and within just 500 metres of educational institutions. Despite the existing ban, at least 10 brick kilns have been constructed along the Dhaka-Sylhet highway, said officials.

The Jinan Brick Field, located along the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Chandura village under Bijoynagar upazila, is surrounded by agricultural land on three sides. Its short chimney emits black smoke during this season, scorching the upper leaves of adjacent rice plants.

Local residents complain that the transport of bricks and raw materials by trucks stirs up thick dust clouds, damaging crops and covering nearby homes in layers of fine particles. Almost all kilns emit hazardous black smoke, severely impacting plant life -- rice plants' upper leaves wither, mango blossoms shrivel, and trees' foliage burns.

Despite the severe environmental and economic consequences, local residents feel powerless against the influential kiln owners, who wield financial and political clout. While a few have attempted to resist,

they often find themselves unable to confront the brick kiln owners' money and muscle power.

Sachhu Miah, the owner of Banoful Bricks, which was established in 2009 in Nazirabari village, defended his operations.

He claimed, "We are operating the kiln by coordinating with the Department of Environment, union parishad, deputy commissioner, and upazila nirbahi officer offices."

"Although there have been discussions about making blocks as an alternative to bricks, it is not possible. Therefore, as long as there is public demand, we will continue to produce bricks," he said.

Meanwhile, environmental activists argue that despite years of legal violations, the DoE and district administration have failed to take significant action against brick kiln owners. They alleged that before each brick-making season, kiln owners engage in large-scale financial transactions to "manage" the authorities.

Sohel Rana Bhuiyan, a member of Tori Bangladesh -- Social Movement for River and Nature Protection -- said, "How can so many illegal brick kilns operate in a single district? Immediate



and Rampur in Bijoynagar upazila.

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ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

## POETRY

# There is a point to this, I think

FAIZA RAMIM

Here are a few things I learned in the one month we haven't spoken.

Metamorphosis, as you're aware, is a common occurrence in the entomological world. And I've been watching time lapses of insects, growing and dying.

Like how ladybugs go from little yellow buds on the tree to an empty shell to a natural death if they are lucky; or to a meal if they are not.

Changing so much and so eloquently, it's hard not to be envious.

When you can see the part of you, your old self discarded once and for all and never look back again,

don't you wish you could change like that? In their final form, the bright red color they finally assume makes it less appetizing to predators. (Much like humans)

The lacewings are tiny little bugs that drape the carcasses of their prey over them like a cape to camouflage themselves from larger insects.

The desert locusts when well-fed are solitary creatures. However, in case of scarce food, they bunch up together to search for leaves to survive.

There's a point to this. I think.

I think that you and I are too similar. And this kind of similarity shouldn't come so naturally.

I think we've met before. In a grocery line, or maybe our shoulders brushed while we got on a bus, maybe you helped me up with a change.

I'm bad with faces. But maybe we met, we touched, and through some form of psychometric miracle that I know nothing about, we exchanged parts of our souls.

Or maybe you found one of my old selves, shed off like dried skin and decided to keep it because you liked how it looked on you.

Maybe I killed you because you reminded me too much of myself and I am not too fond of myself.

And now I wear you, draped onto me like an omnipresent silhouette, for it still terrifies me to be seen.

I know there's a way of leaving without one of the two being dead, but I can't seem to figure it out.

In inanimate objects, in memories, the sea of the people I've lost looks like a war zone.

I thought I had learnt to tame this beast of solitude and be fine with the blood on my hands but it kept turning on me.

I had become so touch-starved that I clung onto every stranger with a kind smile like driftwood. And you were the only one this far away from the shore.

But you messed up, you got too comfortable.

To think that I wouldn't much rather swallow this log whole, and drown with its weight than to reach out to someone who isn't reaching back just as desperately.

I'm not sorry.

I'm not sorry that I only had room for tenderness in my life and I owed myself to not tolerate anything else. Not even once.

Don't you know why I owe myself that?

In a dream, God asked me What did I ever do, in this world, of love?

And I replied that I had, for the most part, not been cruel to anybody.

"That is not the answer to my question."

I remember waking up with wet around my eyes.

What was I talking about again? There was a point to this. I swear.

Anyway, what are you up to? Nowadays?

Don't answer that.

**Faiza Ramim** is in her final semester at IBA, University of Dhaka. When she's not increasing her Spotify minutes listening to *Car Seat Headrest*, she likes to write sad poems; or sometimes both simultaneously. Her new book *New Beginnings and Other Terrible Things* is out now.

## POETRY Titled 'Loss'

SNATA BASU

you pass by an old tree,  
an orb dislocates,  
the treasure of time has folded  
and joined hands with loss.  
no part is left to mourn in the sun of this  
madness;  
you look up and the root takes you by the  
shoulders,  
god is frozen in the lip of a fruit  
the tail of a leaf,  
malignant in the freeze is your terrible  
tragedy;  
you don't love anymore.  
you are frightened,  
your fear is slow.  
in the years of your becoming of you,  
nothing outlives the memory of what has  
been.  
you don't recognise yourself,  
everything is lost like a fish in Lethen  
space.  
you have mistaken truth for love again  
and given yourself up forever.

**Snata Basu** is a writer based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her poetry has appeared on numerous literary platforms including *The Opiate*, *Visual Verse: An Online Anthology of Art and Words*, and *Small World City*.

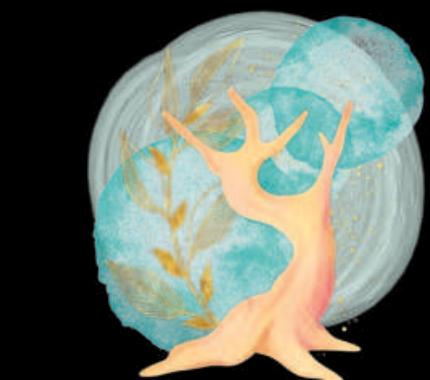


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

**The lacewings are tiny little bugs that drape the carcasses of their prey over them like a cape to camouflage themselves from larger insects.**

## POETRY

# This world is full of paper

RAIAN ABEDIN

After Stationery

Agha Shahid Ali, one day, through his words, filled this world with paper/write to me/so I resemble a dog with a neck like a question mark/striking through pages/writing to you/turning you into a god with every wreath made out of white sheets/at night I look past my window/moon like a bruise hoisted on the shoulder of onlookers/as they draw their curtains/resembling a poem/every poem resembles another/I spent years writing to you/I am 24 now/trying to grow hair on my face/the absurdity of it is that I admire my skin a little bit more/my heart lives inside the vanity of remembering the names of flowers/I could write them down for you/weave them together/it might resemble a poem/or it might be a desert, with large swathes of glass/and an oasis where they will sew our sternums together/and it will rain/do you remember the rain/I am still trying to find ways to describe its smell/my mother says it smells like my father/both of us cling on to words like they were humans/the entirety of a song is a small village/I do not belong there, in those songs/I create with reams of dark ink/I am the night sky/give me words, moon/write to me.

**Raian Abedin** is a poet, a student of Biochemistry, and a contributor to The Daily Star.

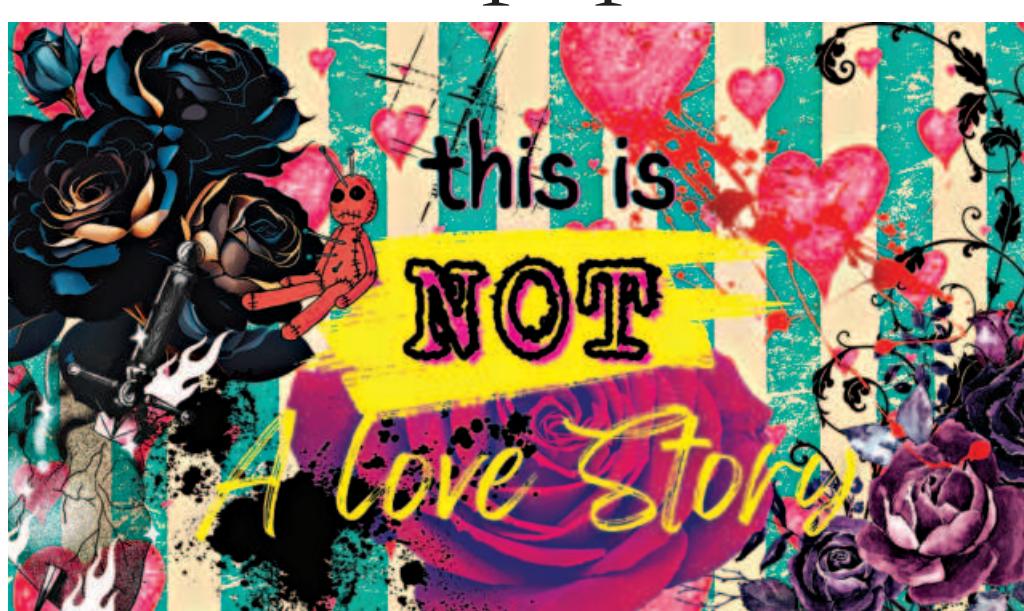


ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

## POETRY

# broken bridges don't burn

ree

when love ends where do we go, when your footprints are no longer flowers- but tar-and i leave poems unwritten-do not tell me about silver linings, i am made of rain-and i stop, i stop writing *hey how has it been* my love where do we go, when the path ahead is blocked - three buses face to face, 20 taka in my pocket and this keyless map do you think love ever ends? i box up my emotions in containers too small, spilling from my bag like bombs and i keep myself from looking back *i haven't*

*thought of you in days*  
i choose each turn with  
a  
careless flair, passing  
mirages  
each one sweeter than  
the last  
yet still missing the  
shade i search  
how do you grow a  
tree-when  
the only thing  
beneath is sand  
slippery and slowing  
it burns my feet  
i stopped writing long ago, the words  
like the sand, my  
thoughts-slipping  
through my fingers,  
disregarding  
any effort to grab  
onto something  
that save me



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

one grain could save me  
or break me  
out of this loveless stupor  
undo-  
undo?  
how shall i undo this? i never prepared  
for lightning to hit, my tree wasn't  
tall-i kept it pruned  
yet it burned  
i carry the coal with me, dropping  
pieces, like memory  
the hourglass trickles on  
i stopped writing long ago  
my surroundings bounded by the vast blank  
not even a rest stop, i have to  
move  
for reasons no longer clear to me  
my feet still carry on  
i haven't thought of you in days  
and maybe i have walked far enough

*ree* hates love stories bc things only work out in fiction, and never for them. their therapist thinks it's bc of anxiety but *ree* is just plain jealous.

## POETRY Moving forward

SHAERAH SHAMAEL SIDDIQUI

January, unbearably long and tiring.

But days will pass and blend with one another,

Swamped with work and sometimes wishing there was more to do,

Maybe it's an act, maybe it's true.

One day and it's February, not that soul crushing.

You are doing better.

You'd want to see what's next moving forward.

I hope you fight with your mother when you have a migraine,

I hope there's a holiud ceremony playing item songs right beside your building.

When you look for the tufnif, you remember it stayed with me.

I hope you wonder if time has even passed yet.

**Shaerah Shamael Siddiqui** is a poet hoping to find the right words for her pretty journals and ugly feelings.

## Sighs, ember and lies.

SAFAYAT SUMON

Pebbles strewn pavement  
Keep drawing me back,  
Like the putrid smell of Love and Dead  
That has been reeking like a never-ending proletariat loop,  
Whistle like a wheeze of rustic chest  
Which left back thousand nights of sleepless sighs,  
Now mooring a deep-seated ember and lies,  
And bellowing those sighs  
Around the neck  
Before the dawn  
At the dusk  
And during the long stretching journey  
From my door to bed.  
Poetry: Sighs, ember and lies.

**Safayat Sumon** is a security professional guarding his fantasy world made up with poetry, pun, and fiction.



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

DESIGN:  
MAISHA SYEDA

## SHARMIN JOYA

A shy and introverted boy from Chattogram embarked on a journey to Dhaka, embracing a new chapter of self-discovery. Today, Zulfiqer Noori Angel—known by his moniker Angel Noor—has become a name to watch out for in Bangladesh's entertainment industry. Noor is making waves as a singer songwriter, composer, and actor, seamlessly blending his talents across multiple disciplines.

Noor first captured attention with his soulful cover songs, but it was his original release *Jodi Abar* last year that paved his place in the hearts of the Bangladeshi youth. "I never imagined my song would resonate with people. I sing from my heart, and perhaps that sincerity connects with my audience," he shared with The Daily Star.

Noor's musical journey began unexpectedly while he was pursuing his studies in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at North South University. A member of the North South University Shangskritik Shongothon (NSUSS), he confessed, "I am not a trained singer. I discovered my voice during my university years, and it was my friends who encouraged me."

With his unique curly hair and unconventional look, Noor soon found himself in front of the camera. Director Adnan Al Rajeev cast him in a television commercial, marking his on-screen debut. From there, he ventured into

was a learning experience beyond just acting. Their approach to life and their expertise has helped me develop a deeper philosophy that helps me move forward in life," said Noor, who played Nasir Uddin Khan's son in *Boli*.

Despite his rising fame, Noor's journey has been far from straightforward. Determined to be financially independent, he took up tuition jobs to support his education. It wasn't an easy journey, as the artiste lost his mother at a very young age. His uphill battle included facing his family's disapproval. "I grew up with my grandmother, who is probably my only unconditional supporter. The rest of them don't like the fact that I am in the showbiz industry. Many a time, I felt really alone and wanted to give up."

Thankfully, he did not—his talent has subsequently crossed the Bangladeshi border. His cover of *Ghodey Pe Sawaar* from the film *Qala* led to an opportunity in a film from Tamil Nadu. Additionally, his cover of *Pasoori* was recognised as the best fan-made cover from South Asia by Coke Studio Pakistan.

The rising star will be starring in four films this year—two Bangladeshi projects, including one directed by Tanveer Hossain Probal, and two Indian films, one from Tamil Nadu and another from Kolkata. "I have a significant fanbase in Kolkata, and that's how I was approached for these projects," he shared.

Beyond acting, he remains deeply

**Recently, to the surprise of their fans, famed Indian singer Arijit Singh shared Noor's 'Jodi Abar' through his official X handle and quoted, "What a song." Noor replied to the musician with unbelievable glee.**

television and eventually landed roles in television projects, followed by the web series *Mobaroknama* and eventually the silver screen venture *Boli*.

His performance in *Boli* earned him widespread acclaim. The film, directed by Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury, not only impressed critics but also became Bangladesh's official submission for the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards. It won the New Currents category at the 28th Busan International Film Festival.

Noor shared how actors Mosharraf Karim (*Mobaroknama*) and Nasir Uddin Khan (*Boli*) influenced his acting career. "Working with them

engaged with music. His band, *Angel Noor and Friends*, is actively performing on-stage. Additionally, six of his compositions will be featured in upcoming television projects for Eid. His second original track, *Til*, is set for release during Eid, followed by a full album post-festival.

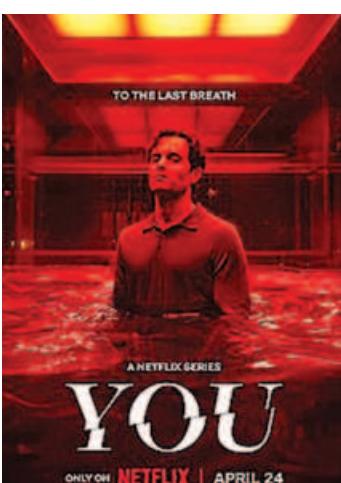
Despite his growing fame, Angel Noor remains humbly philosophical. "If I never get another acting offer, or if people stop listening to my music, I won't have any regrets. I never chased these things—they came to me naturally. I am simply going with the flow, letting life take me where it will," he said.

# Angel's voice, FIGHTER'S GRIT



PHOTO: ZIAUDDIN SHIPLU

## NETFLIX YOU



## APPLE TV+ Dope Thief



## DISNEY+ Daredevil: Born Again



## CHORKI GHUMPORI



## BINGE NEEL SUKH



## WHAT'S PLAYING

# BAD DREAMS

by Teddy Swims

Teddy Swims' latest single, *Bad Dreams*, from his recent album *I've Tried Everything but Therapy* (Part 2), is a soulful pop-rock anthem that dives into the haunting experiences of insomnia and emotional turmoil. The song masterfully blends warm piano melodies, steady drums, and rich vocal harmonies, paying tribute to classic soul with echoes of Motown and Stax Records.

Produced by Julian Bunetta, Matt Zara, and John Ryan, *Bad Dreams* navigates themes of heartache, insomnia, and internal chaos, connecting deeply with listeners who share similar emotional struggles.

Swims' powerful, expressive vocals perfectly capture a sense of longing and introspection, elevating the track into an emotional anthem.

Accompanied by a surreal and visually captivating music video, *Bad Dreams* treats listeners to both sonic comfort and emotional resonance.



## 1-MINUTE REVIEW

# 'The Gorge': A gripping drama of love and conflict

*The Gorge*, a Scott Derrickson film, explores the familiar genre territory of his other films like *The Black Phone* and *Doctor Strange*, with some light, enjoyable moments.

Set during the Covid era, it follows Miles Teller's character, Levi, a soldier for hire, who unexpectedly spends a year alone in a watchtower. After a brief exchange with his predecessor (Sope Dirisu), Levi learns his job is to guard against whatever might emerge from the gorge, humorously likening it to guarding the gates of hell.

Early in Levi's year-long assignment, he spots Drasa, his Lithuanian counterpart played by Anya Taylor-Joy, across the gorge. Though their duties are split by country, the plot's focus shifts to their attraction. They break the rules, exchanging messages like characters from early 2000s films. Predictably, their neglect of duty leads to complications, and they soon find themselves under siege.

The film, despite its video game-like appearance, is original and feels like a *Resident Evil* sequel. Zach Dean's screenplay offers a fresh take on two sociopathic killers' bond, blending dark humour with emotional depth to create a brooding exploration of love and torment.



## OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



### 'Shohure Sur'

Today (March 1) | 7pm onwards  
Jatra Biroti



### 'Cartoon o Meme-er Rajniti'

March 6-9 | 11am-3pm  
Zahir Raihan Auditorium,  
Jahangirnagar University



### Late Night Comedy Show

March 14 | 11:59pm-1pm  
Naveed's Comedy Club, Gulshan-2

## STYLE STATEMENT

# NUSRAT IMROSE TISHA

The beloved actress Nusrat Imrose Tisha resembled a blushing pink blossom during Mehazabien Chowdhury and Adnan Al Rajeev's wedding reception, which took place on February 24. The wedding event that made headlines throughout the week saw the presence of several industry bigwigs dressed to the nines.

As she posted photos from the reception across her social media accounts, fans couldn't help but gush over Tisha's look in the comment sections. She chose an organza saree in blush pink, subtly embroidered with silver flowery designs.

She elevated the overall look with a neatly done braided updo. For jewellery, she opted for sparkling silver earrings paired with a *tikli*, perfectly balancing the complimentary hues of silver and blush pink. Her funky sunglasses made for the perfect day-time wedding accessory.





# THE CHANGING FACE OF KHLGAON

From sleepy suburb to a hotspot for business, dining and lifestyle

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

#### MD ABU TALHA SARKER

Picture a street with more than 300 eateries, lined with customers waiting in long queues to secure a table at their favourite spots, where a coffee can cost from Tk 80 to Tk 300.

The hustle and bustle of these cafes and restaurants is matched equally by the surrounding area, home to lifestyle outlets and educational institutions.

You may be thinking that such a hotspot for businesses is likely located in an upscale neighbourhood, perhaps Gulshan, Uttara or Dhanmondi.

can observe the rapid growth and diversification of Khilgaon's business scene. There are about 25,000 restaurants in Dhaka, with thousands having sprouted up over the past decade to cater to the demand for hygienic food among city dwellers.

On a broader scale, there are 4.81 lakh restaurants across the country employing about 30 lakh people, according to the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association (BROA).

About two crore people are either directly or indirectly linked to industry, as per BROA data.



identity. Mahtab Uddin, chief barista at Apon Coffee House, shared his perspective on the cafe's success, saying, "Apon Coffee House has set a standard for the restaurant business in this area. Many other businesses have followed in our footsteps, but the competition is fierce. Some have done well, while others have struggled to keep up with rising operational costs."

Alongside western cuisine, local delicacies also abound.

Harvargarh Mor, just a stone's throw from the Khilgaon flyover, is known as "biryani para" due to concentration of eateries that offer the popular dish. Among them, Mukta Biriani Ghar stands as the oldest, with its history going back 30 years.

Saidur Rahman Bappi, proprietor of Mukta Biriani Ghar, shared that they started their business with dishes like 'gorur chap', slabs of marinated meat that are fried, chicken biryani and slow-cooked beef and goat liver.

"We later expanded our menu to include kacchi biryani, tehari, and mutton khichuri. We also prepare

Currently, there are over 19 educational institutions in the area.

"I've witnessed the area's growth firsthand," he said, adding that the real transformation began about 10 years ago with the establishment of educational institutions. "What was once a quiet residential neighborhood with only a few schools and colleges has now become home to a wide range of educational institutions."

This expansion of educational opportunities in Khilgaon has attracted a large student population.

Additionally, global cosmetics brands like Herlan, Flormar, and Moon's Gallery have opened outlets in the area.

Tahira Binte Zaman often visits the Herlan outlet with her friends. She shared that she enjoys shopping, having coffee, and more at this location.

"It's been great to have a place like this for shopping and hanging out. We come here with no particular reason, just to enjoy ourselves," said Zaman, a second-year student at Habibullah Bahar College in Shantinagar.

Lamiya Jannat, a staff member at

growth of Khilgaon has not come without its challenges. One significant issue is the rising cost of rent and operational expenses. As businesses in the area have flourished, so too have the costs associated with running a commercial establishment.

Business owners in Khilgaon are feeling the impact of soaring rent prices and rising security deposits. Some businesses, including those that were once staples in the area, have been forced to adapt their business models or relocate to more affordable locations.

Md Abdus Salam, owner of "Karim Books and Stationery," which he recently transformed into "Karim Live Bakery," shared his experience.

"I've been in this area for over 30 years. The business landscape has changed significantly. Rent prices have increased, and many businesses have had to adapt to survive. We had to change our business model to stay competitive."

The high cost of rent has forced many business owners to either downsize or switch to more profitable ventures.

For instance, a former bookshop near Khilgaon's main road was replaced by a bakery, a more sustainable option given the rising rent and changing customer needs. Pointing to a building that once housed Faizur Rahman School, Salam explained that the owners previously received Tk 3 lakh in rent from the school, but now they are getting Tk 4 lakh per floor.

Businesses like Cielo Rooftop, Kuddos Fun, Elysian Cafe, Skinologic Laser & Aesthetic Centre and others have taken over food outlets in the area. High inflation and political instability have also negatively impacted businesses, with inflation showing few signs of relief.

In January this year, inflation reached 9.94 down from 10.89 percent, driven by soaring food prices, particularly for rice and vegetables, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Imran Hassan, secretary general of the BROA, said no restaurant in the Khilgaon zone is a member of the association. They carry on their own course of action, he added.

Zakaria, chairman of the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority, said none of the restaurant hubs in Dhaka are monitored separately. However, they have plans to establish a green zone, under which they will provide training to restaurant staff on food safety and include them in a monitoring system.

Mohammed Alim Akhter Khan, director general of the Directorate of National Consumers' Right Protection, said they conduct regular drives so that the consumers' interests are not affected.

Raids have also been conducted in Khilgaon zone at different times in the past. If anyone complains, an operation is conducted, he added.

After raids, restaurants found guilty are fined and checked through follow-ups, he continued.

Many banks establish their branches and ATM booths to ensure that customers can carry out financial transactions smoothly and securely. An official from Dhaka Bank PLC mentioned that around 13 branches of various banks are located in the area. For those without branches, ATM booths have been installed to facilitate easier transactions.

Khilgaon's transformation from a quiet residential neighbourhood to a thriving business hub is a testament to the dynamic changes happening in Dhaka. With its growing population of students, young professionals, and families, Khilgaon has become a center of commerce, education, and entertainment.



**The presence of part-time workers, especially students, is another important factor in Khilgaon's business boom. Many young people balance their studies with part-time jobs, helping to meet the growing demand of the coffee shop and restaurant culture.**

But this is the reality of Shaheed Baki Sarak, which stretches along the heart of Khilgaon, a locality in the eastern part of Dhaka that was little more than a modest suburb.

One person who could testify to this transformation is Iktedar Uddin Akib, a final-year student of Bengali literature at Dhaka College.

Akib's and his family have lived in Khilgaon since 1989, witnessing the neighbourhood's significant evolution firsthand. In those days, the idea that he would be able to pop over to a popular franchise such as KFC was little more than a fantasy. But now, he regularly takes his beloved uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins to prominent coffee shops or restaurants in the area.

Akib, who balances his studies with a part-time tutoring gig while also helping his father manage business, finally settled upon one of the more popular haunts in Khilgaon, PizzaBurg.

This simple anecdote not only highlights not only Akib's personal experience, but also reflects the broader changes in the socio-economic landscape in the area.

At PizzaBurg, Akib's family was seated and quickly began sipping on coffee. After settling in, Akib – who is also quite the social media enthusiast – took the chance to snap a few pictures with his siblings at the restaurant's photo corner, creatively decorated with a variety of colorful flowers.

"We often come here with friends to have coffee," the 23-year-old said.

He also mentioned that he often enjoys pizza. "When I eat pizza, I prefer it with white sauce. It's my favourite. I prefer it much more than red sauce," he added.

"Everyone, especially my nani, really enjoyed the pizza," he continued. "She is definitely looking forward to coming back."

This small, family-oriented outing serves as a lens through which we

In Khilgaon, around 8,000 to 9,000 people are employed by such businesses, with PizzaBurg being just one example.

According to Abdullah Al Noman, head cashier at PizzaBurg's Khilgaon branch, the restaurant can seat up to 100 customers, making it a popular destination for locals and out-of-towners alike.

The venue frequently hosts social events, including get-togethers, engagement parties, birthday celebrations, and family reunions, highlighting the central role of such establishments in the social fabric of the neighbourhood.

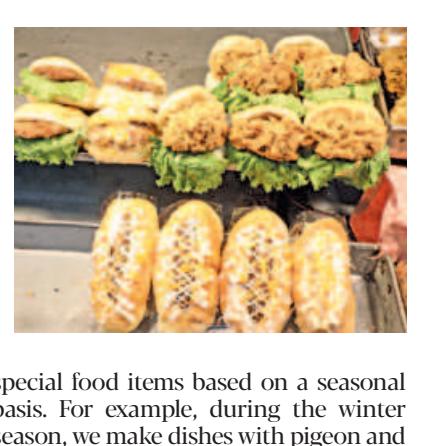
The presence of part-time workers, especially students, is another important factor in Khilgaon's business boom. Many young people balance their studies with part-time jobs, helping to meet the growing demand of the coffee shop and restaurant culture.

Among these workers are Rifat Rahman Gazi, a BBA student at the University of Information Technology and Sciences (UIT), Ajanta Ema, who studies at Tejgaon College, and Rifaz Rashid, who is pursuing studies at the Independent University of Bangladesh.

They serve as members of the waitstaff, with Rashid acting as the team leader. Gazi, who has been working at PizzaBurg for nearly two years, expressed his satisfaction with his job, saying, "It's a great group to work with alongside my studies. I enjoy being here, and I feel it's a great learning experience."

Such trends are not isolated to PizzaBurg, with other popular eateries like Apon Coffee House, Domino's Pizza, Kacchi Bhai, Kebab Station, BFC, KFC, Secret Recipe, Herfy, Cielo, also becoming central to the area's business ecosystem.

Apon Coffee House, a pioneering cafe that opened in 2006, is another local establishment that has become an integral part of Khilgaon's evolving



special food items based on a seasonal basis. For example, during the winter season, we make dishes with pigeon and duck meat," he said.

But restaurants and cafes are not the only businesses thriving in Khilgaon. Lifestyle outlets such as fashion stores and beauty salons have also proliferated, adding to the area's economic vitality.

For example, Sailor, a popular clothing store, has witnessed strong sales growth. Ahmed Sumon, a BBA student from Barishal who works as a sales manager at Sailor's Khilgaon branch, explained, "We're preparing for summer season, as winter season is about to finish."

"Customers buy jackets, hoodies, and other winter wear. We will pull winter wear off our shelves soon. The summer stock has just arrived. We're expecting a surge in sales in summer," he added.

These are not only places to enjoy a meal or a shopping spree, but also social spaces where students and young people can gather, study, or unwind after a long day of classes. This is indicative of the changing lifestyle in Khilgaon, where a younger, more dynamic population is driving the demand for modern retail and hospitality services.

Md Helal Uddin, proprietor of Islam Brothers, which has been in the area for nearly 30-35 years, said the presence of educational institutions was a key factor in Khilgaon's transformation.

Moon's Gallery, noted that the outlet experiences a high customer footfall.

Md Giasuddin, a local resident and owner of Gias Vila in Chowdhurypara, recalled that the area once featured cement shops, pharmacies, sawmills, grocery stores, bike workshops, and makeshift tea stalls along the road.

"It was home to garment workers and low-ranking officials. Stretching from Khilgaon and Malibagh to Badda via Rampura, the area was lined with garment factories, with Dragon Garments and XI Garments being the most prominent."

For example, Dragon Garments, an 18-story building, employed thousands of workers. However, over time, these factories have relocated to the industrial belt areas of Gazipur, Savar, Ashulia, Mawna, Konabari, Mymensingh, Bhulta, Rupganj, and Narayanganj.

The arrival of renowned developers then completely transformed the housing landscape, prompting affluent families to move to the area.

Roquibul Hasan, a former captain of the Bangladesh national cricket team and head of the international umpire panel in Bangladesh, purchased an apartment in the area 20 years ago, when development was just beginning.

"The development today surprises me," he said. "Now, I don't need to go elsewhere for coffee with family, friends, and beloved ones." However, the rapid