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theatres this
Eid?

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Trump's
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Teacher crisis plagues public med colleges

43pc posts lie vacant; colleges built during AL rule worse off

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Medical students' education is in a crisis as 43 percent posts for teachers in the government medical colleges are vacant.

Experts say this is a serious cause for concern and it puts the nation's healthcare system at stake.

The most critical gap is at the top level, where a staggering 65 percent of professor positions have not been filled. At mid-level, 45 percent posts for associate professor and 51 percent positions for assistant professor are lying vacant.

The government medical colleges can accommodate 5,380 students, according to the 2023-24 annual report of the Health Education Division.

At least four of the 37 government medical colleges have no professors at all while 18 others are limping along with only one to five professors at their disposal, according to data provided by the Directorate General of Medical Education (DGME) last month.

37 GOVT MEDICAL COLLEGES

POSITION	TOTAL POSTS	VACANT	%
Professor	877	567	65
Assoc Prof	1,634	735	45
Asst Prof	2,453	1,250	51
Curator	62	12	19
Lecturer	1,420	182	13
TOTAL	6,446	2,746	43

SOURCE: DGME

Medical education sector insiders have identified delays in promotions, a lack of faculty for eight basic subjects, complexity in determining seniority among cadre and non-cadre doctors, and the removal of many senior educators by making them Officers on Special Duty (OSD) after August 5.

Apart from compromising the education of future doctors, the crisis will further harm the country's already struggling healthcare system in the years to come, experts warn.

"The teacher shortage is hampering the quality of medical education, which will eventually have an adverse impact on the health sector," said Prof Rashid E Mahbub, a medical expert and former president of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA).

Medical students are being deprived of necessary guidance from teachers, he told The Daily Star.

The shortage of teachers has been there for a long time.

Students at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College in Barishal on February 17 went on strike for over a week demanding a solution to the shortage of teachers.

"We're not getting quality education since there are only six professors against 50 posts while 250 students are admitted in each batch," Arafat Rahman, a final-year MBBS student of the college, told our Barishal correspondent at that time.

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Holding polls
this year may
be difficult

Says Nahid citing
security concerns

REUTERS, Dhaka

National Citizen Party leader Nahid Islam said the interim government has been unable to fully ensure



public safety, and holding a general election this year will be difficult.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted last August in the wake of mass student-led protests. The interim government, headed by Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, said this month that the election could be held by the end of 2025.

"In the past seven

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Gas scarcity halves industrial production

ASIFUR RAHMAN and SUKANTA HALDER

Industrial users are counting 30 to 50 percent production losses for the last couple of months thanks to a gas shortage.

And despite a recent rise in supply through the national pipeline, the textile and spinning mills, and ceramic industries have continued to suffer as the bulk of the gas has been diverted to power production units to meet the growing electricity demand with summer nearing.

At present, the country is getting 2,850 million cubic feet of gas a day (mmcfd) after the addition of 200 mmcfd of imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Monday. The demand for gas is about 3,900 mmcfd, according to data from Petrobangla.

However, the imported LNG has been diverted to power plants. Gas supply to the power plants increased from 750 mmcfd to 900 mmcfd since last week, Petrobangla data shows.

The Daily Star talked to 10 industry owners or managers in Dhaka, Savar, Narayanganj, Tongi, Gazipur and Narshingdi and 20 residents of 15 areas of Dhaka city, all

of whom said they have been suffering due to low pressure of gas.

Production at Ashulia-based Little Star Spinning Mills slumped by more than 50 percent from its daily capacity of 12 tonnes of yarn due to the gas crisis over the last few

months, said its Chairman Md Khorshed Alam.

Spinning mills need gas to run the boilers for dyeing and printing fabrics. The boiler at Little Star needs 8 pounds per square inch (psi) pressure of gas, but it often drops to 1 to 1.2 psi during the day and to 2-3 psi after 10:00pm, according to Khorshed.

"I don't know when this problem will be resolved. We have been suffering from the gas crisis for almost a year now," he said.

The pressure of gas in most of the industries in Narsingdi remains 5-6 psi against the demand for 15 psi, said Momen Mollah, the immediate past president of the Narsingdi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

As a result, production decreased by almost 30 percent, he said, adding that they addressed the issue to the concerned

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"The power sector is getting the increased LNG supply, and production has increased. But other sectors will not get the benefit right now. It depends on more gas production and imports"

Petrobangla top official

HISTORIC MARCH 7



'A speech more notable for what wasn't said'

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

March 1971 was electric.

A campaign of many years had reached a crescendo. The people's aspirations were vindicated as their champions had won a comprehensive majority in the 1970 election, sweeping the erstwhile East Pakistan. The people feverishly waited for Mujib to take charge of the centre that would begin their emancipation. But the Pakistani rulers were stalling.

The air became thick with anger and frustrations that led to defiance

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JULY UPRISING Warning army not to engage made the difference

UN rights chief had told army it may lose peacekeeping missions otherwise

STAR DESK

During the July-August movement, the United Nations rights chief Volker Turk warned the army that if they got involved in the violence, then they would be banned from UN peacekeeping missions.

Turk, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, said this in an interview on BBC's HARDtalk programme on Wednesday.

"During July-August, there were massive demonstrations of students, they had enough of the previous government under Sheikh Hasina, there was massive repression happening," he told Sackur.

"The big hope for them was actually our voice, was my voice, and was also what we were able to do and we put the spotlight on the situation. And we actually gave the warning to the army that if they get involved, it means that they may not be allowed to be a troop-contributing country anymore," said Turk. "As a result, we saw changes."

He went on to say, "When Muhammad Yunus took over



Volker Turk



Motorcycles are illegally parked on the pavement of Gulshan Avenue, obstructing pedestrians. Such practices are quite common in the capital. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

STORY ON B1

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Exploring the richness of Dhakaiya Subbasi dialect

RBR

I thought that Urdu and Hindi were analogous to some extent -- a totally misread perspective, which changed when I did a bit of research on Dhakaiya people's vernacular or street dialect.

"We Dhakaiyas have two styles of speech that we converse in, one is an ancholik Dhakaiya Bangla and the other is Dhakai Sukhbhas, Subbasi or Khoshbas," says Akter Jahan, a writer who composes stories in her original Dhakai Sukhbhas dialect.

The real meaning of Sukhbhas, an Urdu word, is well-off or happily settled, and relates to the language spoken between the then locals and the overseas merchants, whose native languages were different. "Thus, Sukhbhas or Subbasi is a Bengali-influenced dialect known as Dhakaiya Urdu and Hindi, and is now spoken by the original residents of Dhakaiya community, and it is often mistaken for Urdu," Jahan clarifies.

The dynasty rule of invaders in Bengal led to the amalgamation of their original speaking tongue of Urdu, Sanskrit, a base of Hindi, Persian, Arabic, and Turkic loanwords to the dialect of Bengali. This made Hindustani an Indo-Aryan language, as a lingua franca or communication mode in the streets of old Dhaka.

The 65-year-old energetic, nature-loving matriarch was born and brought up and even married in Amligola Mahalla, near the Kella area. Prior to her retirement, she ran the family business of plastic industry with her husband. However, the retired couple now lives a tranquil life in Kathaltoli Pukur paar in Keraniganj. Surrounded by greenery, and in sync with nature, Akhtar Jahan is honing her writing skills.

Her mother was educated in Urdu and Persian, as was the medium in those years, but she was the first generation Dhakaiya who were schooled in Bangla.

"My buri ma or grandmother always sat us kids down in her courtyard for



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'kejcha kahani ashor' or storytelling sessions. Her vivid description in our Dhakaiya Subbasi language, with the precise tonal emphasis, gave our imagination wings. Our Dhakaiya culture is colourful and rich, we

have geets in our dialect for every celebration, be it wedding or bathtime," quips Akter's daughter Ishrat Jahan, adding that the stories of her great grandmother were not found in any fairytale books she read.

"I am trying to document our old stories in Subbasi language, or as we say Dhakai jobane boyan. Our kids are teased in school for the way they speak, and as a result, they shy away from the original dialect. I want the golod or mistake that our noya postan or new generations are making to be corrected. They should know their roots and social landscapes. If this

lingua franca is not documented, then it will be lost to time," Jahan shared.

Peheli or dha dha, which are riddles, kohut or proverbs, rhymes, and songs in Dhakaiya Subbasi tongue; were common practice in cultural gatherings at old Dhaka. Now, this sort of ashor or cultural session are lost.

Akhtar Jahan's short stories like "Din Badler Sedma", "Zendegir Bioscope", "Mohabbater Qissa", and "Fakarer Bolli" were published in reputed dailies and literary magazines.

"Akhtar Jahan's writing in this Dhakai regional language is not only a new addition to Bengali literature, but in her stories, we find a realistic picture of Dhaka society and culture in the post-independence period since the partition of the country," Ishrat adds.

"We as kids sang songs for the rain to stop and the sun to shine. We went around houses knocking on doors singing aloud and our neighbours gave us grains as favours, and we cooked community meals. Everything we did had a fun factor in it. Dhakaiya people are financially well off and love showdows and celebrations. We took aristocracy from the Mughals and trading as our career choice from the merchants. Being a Dhakaiya is something you cannot copy from TV serials or Bollywood movies. It is in our DNA," Akhtar Jahan says boldly.

MOB VIOLENCE Govt taking action against perpetrators Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said the government was taking legal action against mob violence whenever and wherever it occurred.

He urged citizens to remain calm, emphasising that law enforcement alone could not control every situation.

"Even the police have become victims of attacks. If people become agitated, it creates problems. It is not possible to control everything solely by force," he told

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Holding polls this year

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months, we all expected the policing system, law and order to be restored through short-term reforms. It has happened to an extent, but not up to our expectations," said Nahid.

"In the current law and order situation and policing system, I don't think it is possible to hold a national election," the 26-year-old said in his first interview as NCP head at his government provided villa in Dhaka.

Nahid, who was until recently an adviser to the interim government, is the first politician of significance to cast doubt on Yunus' timeframe for an election.

Political analysts believe his youth-led party could significantly reshape national politics, dominated for decades by Hasina's Awami League party and her rival, former prime minister Khaleda Zia's BNP.

Those parties have demanded early elections, arguing that power should be returned to a democratically elected government.

Nahid said the NCP, which was formed just last week, would be ready for the polls whenever they are held.

However, he added that before elections can be held, it would be crucial to reach a consensus on the so-called "Proclamation of the July Revolution" -- a charter that the interim government plans to prepare in consultations with political parties and student activists.

The document is intended to reflect the aspirations of the Bangladeshi people and honour the people who died in last year's violence. Student protesters dropped calls for changes to the constitution after the interim government said it would prepare the proclamation.

"If we can reach that consensus within a month, we can call for elections immediately. But if it takes more time, the election should be deferred," he added.

Many affluent people across Bangladesh are helping finance the party, said Nahid, adding that it will soon look to crowdfunding for a new office and creating a fund for the election.

Teacher crisis plagues public med colleges

FROM PAGE 1

According to the DGME, the college has 343 teacher posts, of which 206 posts or 60 percent are now vacant.

NEW INSTITUTIONS

The Awami League government had focused on establishing new medical colleges in various districts, but largely overlooked manpower issues, deepening the crisis, according to the sector insiders.

At least 23 medical colleges were established between 2008 and 2021, and the manpower crisis is particularly acute in the new institutions, DGME data shows.

These colleges have 252 professor posts, out of which 189 or 75 percent are vacant.

Among them, the Netrakona Medical College, Noakhali Medical College, Pabna Medical College, and Shaheed M Monsur Ali Medical College currently have no professors. Eighteen other medical colleges only have one to five professors.

They are Cox's Bazar Medical College, Jashore Medical College, Satkhira Medical College, Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam Medical College in Kishoreganj, Kushtia Medical College, Gopalganj Medical College, Shaheed Tajuddin Medical College in Gazipur, Tangail Medical College, Jamalpur Medical College, Manikganj Medical College, Patuakhali Medical College, Rangamati Medical College, Habiganj Medical College, Nilphamari Medical College, Naogaon Medical College, Magura Medical College, Chandpur Medical College, and Sunamganj Medical College.

Only Mouda Medical College in Dhaka has 13 professors against 15 posts. All these medical colleges, except Noakhali, Cox's Bazar and Pabna medical college, were established

during the Awami League's rule. Three medical colleges were established in 2008 during the then caretaker government.

PROMOTIONS 'OVERDUE'

Ex-BMA president Prof Rashid said the government does not regularly promote teachers, which led to a massive backlog.

"They [authorities] don't hold meetings [for promotions] unless they are under pressure. As a result, teachers lose interest, and new doctors do not feel encouraged to take up teaching jobs," he said.

He recommended establishing a separate system to handle the recruitment and promotion of medical teachers.

The BCS Health Cadre Specialists Doctors Forum, a platform representing government doctors, including teachers at government medical colleges, has been protesting the delays in promotions.

On February 25, they announced a two-hour work abstention every day from March 8 if the government did not promote them. They threatened to go for an indefinite work abstention if their demands are not met by March 11.

Mirza Md Asaduzzaman, convener of the platform, said around 7,500 doctors across different grades, including medical college teachers, are awaiting promotions. There have been no promotions in some departments since 2017, according to him.

He pointed out that the number of seats for students at government medical colleges increased over the years, but not the number of teachers.

According to insiders, the teacher shortage is particularly severe on some basic subjects. In many cases, teachers from other departments or non-teacher doctors are called in to

teach these.

Anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pharmacology, microbiology, pathology, forensic medicine and community medicine are considered less attractive due to limited financial prospects and fewer job opportunities, they said.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS 'SOON'

Prof Nazmul Hosain, director general of the DGME, said the process of promotion was already slow before the uprising, but it came to a complete halt for some time.

The main reason behind the problem in promotions, he explained, is the complexity in determining seniority between cadre and non-cadre doctors.

Doctors are recruited under the cadre service and also under various projects and on an ad hoc basis, he noted.

"As this issue remains unresolved, meetings of the two committees responsible for promotions cannot be held," Prof Nazmul said.

However, a committee, led by the secretary of Health Education Division, is working to address the issue, said Prof Nazmul.

He said the process for promotion of teachers of around 20 subjects, which do not involve such complexities, has resumed. Efforts are being made to mitigate the teacher shortage by appointing teachers under "current charges".

Prof Nazmul said the authorities were identifying doctors with postgraduate degrees and are currently posted at upazila-level hospitals so that they can be reassigned to medical colleges to help address the teacher shortage.

"We look forward to some positive developments within a month or two," he told The Daily Star.

source of foreign loans for Bangladesh's infrastructure development.

China and Bangladesh are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations this year, and China wants to boost the relationship through various events.

Bangladesh joined China's Belt and Road Initiative, a global initiative of China to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI).

On several occasions, China has proposed Bangladesh join the Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative. Bangladesh, however, has yet to respond to the offers.

During the visit of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to China in early July last year, Bangladesh had sought Chinese support in the development of Bangladesh's southern region as the Padma Bridge has connected it to the rest of Bangladesh.

With the political changeover here, that initiative remains dormant.

Asked about Bangladesh's priorities during the bilateral meeting between Prof Yunus and Xi Jinping, a foreign ministry official said after attending the BFA, Prof Muhammad Yunus will fly to Beijing for the bilateral meeting with Xi Jinping, who visited Bangladesh in 2016.

The bilateral trade between Bangladesh and China is \$24 billion, with Bangladesh exporting less than \$1 billion a year. China is also a major

'A speech more notable for what wasn't said'

FROM PAGE 1

and protests by the time March had arrived. A non-cooperation movement was on in full swing and the army could not subdue it despite firing upon protesters. Bangabandhu was proving to be the de facto ruler of Bangladesh.

In this context, Mujib was set to take the podium at Dhaka's Race Course Maidan (currently Suhrawardy Udyana) on the 7th. Yahya Khan, the military chief and Pakistani president, had announced he would address the people the day before, on the 6th. The entire country was taut with tension. The diplomatic corps were abuzz with speculations while the army was on alert, ready to step in if Mujib went out of line.

A declassified memo of March 4, 1971, addressed to US President Nixon's national security adviser Henry Kissinger, said the situation in East Pakistan was "deteriorating".

Mujib seems to have virtually slammed the door on the possibility of East-West accommodation by categorically rejecting President Yahya's plan to hold a conference of the major political leaders on March 10, the cable reads.

Mujib has admitted to several foreign correspondents "off the record" that he will announce the equivalent to independence for East Pakistan on Sunday (March 7), said the memo which also noted that there were reports of forces being flown into Dacca. There was also troop movement from the West via

the ship.

All eyes were on the March 7 programme set to be addressed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Millions held their breath, waiting to see if Mujib would declare independence, breaking all ties with West Pakistan once and for all. Would this be the moment?

Then US consul general, Archer K Blood writes that it was common knowledge Mujib would outline his future course of action at the rally. Noting that Yahya's address was scheduled on the 6th, Blood writes in his book "The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh: Memoirs of an American Diplomat" that this "conjunction gave rise to much anxiety, hope and speculation in East Pakistan".

The key question debated was whether or not Mujib would use the occasion to declare the independence of Bangladesh, and, if so, how would the army react," he writes.

In his address, Yahya vowed to preserve the unity of Pakistan and announced that the national assembly would now meet on March 25.

Declassified minutes of a crucial meeting chaired by Kissinger in Washington on March 6 show it was agreed to discuss the situation with the British to see if they would take the lead to discourage Pakistan

from using force, if it should become necessary.

The meeting also instructed the Dhaka mission to say nothing and refer it to Washington if they were approached by Mujib to recognise a separate East Pakistan regime, according to the minutes of the meeting.

Meanwhile, Indian historian Srinath Raghavan in his book "1971: a global history of the creation of Bangladesh," writes that on March 6 evening, Yahya sent a telex for Mujib. "Please do not take any hasty decision. I will soon come to Dacca and discuss the details with you. I assure you that your aspirations and commitments to the people can be fully honoured. I have a scheme in mind which will more than satisfy your Six Points."

Yahya's immediate concern was to forestall a unilateral declaration of independence by Mujib, as rumours about it had flitted like bats in the press and political circles for several days. Such a declaration would be problematic both internally and externally, Raghavan writes. "On the one hand, the military was not yet fully geared up to quash dissent in the East. The troop reinforcement [that] began in late February was progressing slowly."

The option of declaring independence was discussed by the Awami League's working committee on March 6. The party's leaders knew that the students and younger cadre "strongly favoured such a declaration". Indeed, there was "little doubt" that anything short of independence would "not be acceptable" to the bulk of their following. Yet the leadership wanted to move cautiously. For one thing, such a declaration would provide the military just the "pretext" to use force, Raghavan observes.

Then commander of the 14th division in East Pakistan, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, recounts his version of those tumultuous days in his book "A Stranger In My Own Country".

He wrote that on the eve of March 7, two East Pakistani gentlemen met him, introducing themselves as Mujib's emissaries whom he cautioned strongly.

"I told the emissaries to inform Sheikh Mujib that, during his speech, I would have the army -- armed with guns and tanks -- standing by in the cantonment, ready to move immediately," he wrote.

In case Sheikh Mujib attacked the integrity of the country and proclaimed the unilateral declaration of independence, he would discharge his duty without hesitation and with all the power at his command. "I would have the army march in immediately with orders to wreck the meeting and, if necessary, raze Dhaka to the ground. I impressed upon the

emissaries that they should inform Sheikh Mujib that the consequences of indiscretion would be disastrous and the onus would be entirely on him. I advised Sheikh Mujib to keep the door open for further negotiations and avoid unnecessary bloodshed."

On the morning of March 7, the US ambassador to Pakistan, Joseph S. Farland, called on Mujib, writes Siddiq Salik who was then public relations officer of the Pakistan Army in Dhaka in his book "Witness to Surrender".

"GW Choudhury [former member of Pakistan cabinet from April 1969 to February 1971] tells us more about Farland's call on Mujib. He says, 'The US policy was made clear to Mujib by Ambassador Farland who advised him not to look towards Washington for any help for his secessionist game,'" Siddiq Salik writes.

The Dacca station of Radio Pakistan had made arrangements to broadcast the March 7 address live on its own initiative. The radio announcers were already speaking from the Race Course, telling the listeners about the unprecedented enthusiasm of the million-strong audience.

The headquarters of the chief martial law administrator intervened and directed Dacca to stop this "nonsense", remembers Salik. "I conveyed the orders to the radio station. The Bengali friend at the receiving end reacted sharply to the order. He said, 'If we can't broadcast the voice of seventy-five million people, we refuse to work.' With that, the station went off the air."

And it was against this backdrop that Mujib pronounced those immortal words in his booming baritone: "The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. The struggle this time is a struggle for

Army chief conferred presidential medal by CAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief of Army Staff General Waker Uz Zaman has been honoured with the presidential medal by Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadera in recognition of Bangladesh Army's contributions, particularly in the medical sector, to the country's development.

The army chief received the honour during his visit to the Central African Republic, according to a press release from the Inter-

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Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at a meeting with former US Ambassador to Bangladesh William B Milam and former American diplomat Jon Danilowicz at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

No one should take laws into their hands
Says Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and order situation in the country has not improved to the expected level, said National Citizen Party (NCP) Convener Nahid Islam.

Nahid said this while attending "Iftar for the Masses" event of NCP in the capital's Eskaton Garden Road area.

The police must be proactive. They should be allowed to do their job, and none of us should take the

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Set up info commission as constitutional body

Speakers say it will ensure permanent continuity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Establishing the Information Commission as an independent constitutional body is crucial to strengthening democracy through transparency, accountability, and good governance, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They emphasised that this would enable the commission to function autonomously and ensure transparency under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The speakers made the remarks at an event, titled "Effectiveness of the Information Commission and Amendments to the Right to Information Act," organised by the Right to Information Forum at the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) office in the capital.

In a statement, Hasibur Rahman, executive

"Previously, the commission was run by political loyalists. We hope this will not continue under the interim government."

Iftekharuzzaman
TIB Executive Director

director of Media Resource Development Initiative, said the Information Commission should have constitutional recognition for permanent continuity.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman questioned why the commission remains inactive under the interim government while other bodies, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Election Commission, have resumed operations.

"Previously, the commission was run by political loyalists. We hope this will not continue under the interim government," he said.

He stressed that individuals appointed to the commission should not have a history of opposing information disclosure. "Our top priority is the

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Interim govt to implement parts of July Charter

Rest by political govt, Yunus tells US diplomats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government will implement certain aspects of the July Charter, while the remaining reforms will be carried out by future political governments, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus said yesterday.

During a meeting with former US Ambassador to Bangladesh William B Milam and former American diplomat Jon Danilowicz at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka, Yunus said political parties would sign the July Charter once discussions on the reforms recommended by the six commissions conclude.

"The July Charter will guide us," he said.

Milam and Danilowicz, who serve as the president and executive director of the US-based non profit rights organisation "Right to Freedom", briefed Yunus on their work and plans to expand operations in Bangladesh to support the democratic transition.

Milam, who was the US envoy to Bangladesh in the early 1990s, praised the interim government's reform agenda. Danilowicz, a former deputy US ambassador to Dhaka, highlighted the need for positive narratives and serious measures to combat fake news and disinformation.

The hour-long meeting also covered Bangladesh-US relations, the Rohingya crisis, the impact of declining aid for Myanmar refugees, efforts to recover

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UP CHAIR'S BANK ACCOUNTS
Transactions worth Tk 14,000 crore!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has found 49 bank accounts linked to a former union parishad chairman, revealing approximately Tk 14,000 crore in questionable transactions, according to a top ACC official.

Lak Mia, former chairman of Brahamandi Union Parishad in Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila, has also amassed Tk 55.23 crore in assets during his time in office through the abuse of power, alleged the anti graft body.

On these grounds, he has been sued for accumulating wealth beyond known income sources, ACC Director General Md Akhtar Hossain told journalists yesterday.

According to the case statement, Lak Mia's total assets -- including movable and immovable properties -- are valued at Tk 58.70 crore, while his

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Lak Mia

We must return to democracy through polls

Fakhrul tells iftar gathering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country must swiftly return to democracy through a free and fair election, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

He said the people of Bangladesh deserve a future free from fear, oppression, and political uncertainty.

Speaking at an iftar event hosted by BNP in honour of diplomats at a hotel in Dhaka, Fakhrul read out a statement, highlighting the party's commitment to democratic governance and economic cooperation.

"We want to work closely with our partners to ensure the collective progress of our region through democracy and liberal trade partnerships," he said.

BNP looks forward to fostering stronger people-

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A worker spreads out large quantities of vermicelli (shemai) to dry on racks. With Eid less than a month away, demand for vermicelli is surging, prompting factories across the country to ramp up production. The photo was taken on Rajakhali Road in the port city yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Nine youths killed thru 'militant drama'
Says ICT prosecutor on 2016 'Jahaj Building' incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal's (ICT) prosecution yesterday said it has found primary evidence suggesting that nine youths were killed in Kallyanpur in 2016 after being falsely portrayed as militants.

ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said the incident aligns with crimes against humanity, as police allegedly detained the youths from different parts of the country, confined them to a flat in the "Jahaj Building" in Mirpur, and systematically killed them while staging a

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More trips, coaches and digital payment

Newly-appointed MD of DMTCL shares his plans for metro rail

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The metro rail authority is considering several measures to improve services and simplify the ticketing system as passenger numbers rise rapidly.

Increasing the number of daily trips and adding two more coaches to each train, if technically feasible, are now under consideration.

Discussions are also underway with banks and card service providers to simplify ticketing. Additionally, efforts are being made to expand the workforce and modify draft service rules for metro rail employees.

Faruque Ahmed, the newly appointed managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), shared these plans with The Daily Star on Wednesday.

Appointed last month, he is the first non-bureaucrat to lead the state-run company, which was established in June 2013.

A civil engineer with over 37 years of

"We are working to simplify the ticketing system. Discussions are ongoing with banks and credit card providers to enable access to metro services via debit and credit cards."

Faruque Ahmed



experience, Faruque, an expatriate in Australia, has spent 25 years working on transport infrastructure projects, mainly metro rail systems.

Currently, over four lakh people use the metro daily, and the number is growing.

"We are trying to reduce the headway [time between trips]," said Faruque Ahmed.

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Army chief conferred presidential medal

FROM PAGE 3
Services Public Relations (ISPR) yesterday.

He was briefed on the activities of Bangladeshi contingents and peacekeepers deployed under the UN peacekeeping mission in the CAR.

During his stay, Waker met Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Valentine Rugwabiza and Force Commander Lieutenant General Humphrey Nyone, and discussed Bangladesh's role in UN peacekeeping operations.

He also held a bilateral meeting with General Mamadou Zephirin, chief of the Central African Republic Armed

Forces (FACA), where the two sides stressed military cooperation and strengthening defence ties between the two countries.

As part of his visit, the army chief, alongside the CAR president, inaugurated the Touadéra Community Clinic, constructed by the Bangladesh Army to provide medical assistance to civilians under its peacekeeping mission.

Additionally, he visited Bangladeshi contingents stationed in Bangui and held a bilateral meeting with President Touadéra.

The army chief returned to Bangladesh yesterday after completing his visit, which began on March 3.

No one should take

FROM PAGE 3
law into our own hands," he said.

Nahid emphasised that everyone must practise peace, harmony, and tolerance and utilise this time to ensure the country's progress and prosperity.

"Throughout the month of Ramadan, the prices of essential commodities should remain under control, and ahead of Eid, people should be able to shop with ease.

Additionally, road safety must be ensured so that everyone can travel home safely for Eid. We expect the government to take the necessary steps to ensure this," he added.

"We will not hold any major programmes during Ramadan. Our primary focus will be on formulating our charter, our future plans, and our organisational activities.

Perhaps, after the month of Ramadan, our nationwide activities will officially start," he said.

Set up info commission as constitutional body

FROM PAGE 3
urgent reform of the commission. Based on our recommendations, the government should amend the law after consulting relevant stakeholders," he added.

He also suggested bringing political parties under the RTI Act, as all registered and licensed parliamentary bodies now fall under its jurisdiction.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shusashoner Jonno Nagarik (Shujan), said, "As the head of the Election System Reform Commission, we proposed bringing political parties under the RTI Act. If political parties are not held accountable through this act, there is a risk of repeating past incidents."

Shaeen Anam,

convener of RTI Forum Bangladesh and executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said, "The Information Commission has remained non-functional for months. The people in charge resigned, and no progress has been made ever since. Despite raising the issue repeatedly, the government's inaction is alarming."

She criticised political appointments within the commission and called for legal reforms to introduce checks and balances. "Like the Election Commission, the Information Commission should be a constitutional body to ensure accountability and transparency," she added.

She further said the commission's inactivity has discouraged people from seeking information.

"We need to be proactive in using the RTI Act. It is not just for journalists but for all citizens. We urge the government to reconstitute the Information Commission immediately and ensure that it is fully independent and functional," she added.

The RTI Forum proposed several amendments to the RTI Act 2009. One key suggestion was to remove the term "working days" from Section 9(1) – which currently requires designated officers to provide information within 20 working days – to allow for faster responses.

The forum also recommended renaming the commission as the "Information Commission, Bangladesh" and suggested modifications to ensure its functionality even when parliament is not in session.

They proposed including a judge nominated by the chair of the selection committee and a representative from the RTI Forum in the selection process during such times. Additionally, they called for clearer criteria for appointing the chief information commissioner and information commissioners, requiring at least 20 years of experience in a relevant government, judicial, autonomous, or private sector role.

They suggested filling vacancies within 45 days and aligning commissioners' salaries with those of Appellate Division and High Court judges, following the removal procedure of Supreme Court judges.

We must return

FROM PAGE 3
to people ties, he added.

He emphasised that Bangladesh's political fate must be decided by its people alone. "We expect our global friends and partners to respect the principles of non-interference, sovereignty, and peaceful resolution of disputes for our collective growth."

Fakhrul described the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government as a victory for pro democracy forces, stating that the July-August movement was not a sudden event but the culmination of years of struggle.

Among others, Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, Jugantor Editor Abdul Hye Sikder, Inqilab Editor ABM Bahauddin, bdnews24.com Chief Editor Toufique Khalidi, Kaler Kantha Editor Hasan Hafiz attended the event.

Top BNP leaders were also in attendance.

Nine youths

FROM PAGE 3

"militant drama".

Earlier in the day, the prosecution appealed to the tribunal to summon former IGP AKM Shahidul Haque, former DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia, and former deputy commissioner of Mirpur Division Jasim Uddin Mollah before the tribunal for questioning regarding the killings.

The tribunal granted the petition and ordered the authorities to produce the three police officers, who are already in custody in other cases, before the tribunal on March 24.

"The investigation agency has found initial evidence suggesting that the nine youths were systematically killed, and similar incidents occurred across the country," Tamim told journalists after the court proceedings.

The tribunal also directed the investigation agency to submit its final report on the incident by May 7.

Mosquito menace worsens in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Khulna city dwellers are grappling with a mosquito menace, enduring sleepless nights and disrupted daily routines as the mosquito population has surged recently.

The breeding season typically begins from mid February to late March, and residents have alleged that the Khulna City Corporation (KCC) authorities neglected mosquito control measures ahead of this period.

Residents of Bastuhara, Tutpara, Banda Bazar, Daulatpur, Khalishpur, Shibbari, Gallamari, Bosupara, and Muigunni, especially those living near ponds, bushes, waterbodies, and drains, have been facing swarms of mosquitoes infesting their homes from sunset until early morning.

Officials from KCC's conservancy department said 90 workers have been deployed to spray anti-mosquito oil around the clock, while over 400 cleaners are engaged in cleaning drains and bushes, which are common mosquito breeding grounds.

KCC is also implementing a Tk 823 crore project titled "Drainage System Development (Phase I)", which is expected to mitigate the mosquito menace in the future.

"The drains near our house have turned into mosquito breeding grounds. Swarms of mosquitoes enter our home as soon as the sun sets every day. It becomes extremely difficult to concentrate on studies amid this nuisance," said Farzana Akter, a student at Khulna



Government Girls' High School and a resident of the Pujakhola area under Ward 16.

Shafiqul Islam, a resident of the Sonadanga area, said, "My 12-year-old son was diagnosed with dengue last week and is still undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital."

Advocate Babul Hawlader, member secretary of Nagorik Samaj, a citizens' platform, said inadequate fogging operations across the city, irregular larvicide spraying, and unclean drainage systems have allowed mosquitoes to breed and surge in population, worsening the situation daily.

He urged the KCC authorities to take effective measures promptly.

Last year, Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) alone admitted 707 dengue patients, with five fatalities.

The total number of dengue and chikungunya patients in 2024 reached 1,333, resulting in 17 deaths. As of February 28 this year, 14 patients have been diagnosed with dengue, and two have died.

"With warmer days here, we have been receiving a steady influx of patients suffering from mosquito-borne diseases. If authorities fail to implement effective measures, the situation could spiral out of control," said Mizanur Rahman, assistant director of KMCH.

Md Abdul Aziz, chief waste management officer of KCC, said efforts are underway to control mosquito breeding. "We have intensified fogging operations. We are also spraying insecticides and black oil (80 percent diesel and 20 percent furnace oil) in drains and stagnant water sources to prevent mosquito breeding," he said.

More trips, coaches

FROM PAGE 3
services via debit and credit cards.

Talks are also underway with a mobile financial service to allow metro rail payments through the platform, said Faruque.

"We aim to introduce this service within two to three months," he added.

The managing director also mentioned efforts to restructure DMTCL's organogram and update employee service rules.

"We plan to include new wings such as research and development (R&D) and commercial operations," he said.

He also said DMTCL employees will not receive automatic promotions. "This is a company, and promotions will be based on performance," he added.

Interim govt to implement

FROM PAGE 3
billions of dollars allegedly stolen under the previous regime, and the CA's initiative to revitalise Saarc.

Regarding the upcoming election, Yunus said it could be held in December if political parties agree to a limited set of reforms before the vote. Otherwise, the elections would take place by June next year.

Dhaka South City Corporation

Office Of The Executive Engineer
Zone-02, Dhaka.

Ref No: 46.207.014.24.02.141.2024

Dated: 06/03/2025

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Zone-2 Dhaka South City Corporation For the procurement of following package, which will be available at e-GP website from 05/03/2025 at 22:00

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Ref No & package No	Name of works	Last Selling date and Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	Re-Tender ID- 1075298 46.207.014.24.02.269.2025 Date- 14/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/W5/bmr	Renovation works of Road adjacent to Basabo Kadamtala Hafizia Madrasa under Zone-2 of Dhaka South City Corporation.	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 13:00
2	Tender ID- 1075299 46.207.014.24.02.277.2025 Date- 29/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/w02/sal	Development work of road and construction of drain at South Bantasee Block-F Road no-10/5, 10/6 & 10/8 under ward 02, zone 02 DSCC.	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 13:00
3	Tender ID- 1076538 46.207.014.24.02.270.2025 Date- 15/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/cut/ka/24-25	Repair Works of Road Cutting by different organization, institution and holding owners in different ward under DSCC zone-2 (Group-Ka), FY 2024-2025	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 14:00
4	Tender ID- 1076539 46.207.014.24.02.271.2025 Date- 15/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/cut/kha/24-25	Repair Works of Road Cutting by different organization, institution and holding owners in different ward under DSCC zone-2 (Group-Kha), FY 2024-2025	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 14:00
5	Tender ID- 1076544 46.207.014.24.02.272.2025 Date- 15/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/cut/ga/24-25	Repair Works of Road Cutting by different organization, institution and holding owners in different ward under DSCC zone-2 (Group-Ga), FY 2024-2025	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 14:00
6	Tender ID- 1076540 46.207.014.24.02.273.2025 Date- 15/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/cut/gha/24-25	Repair Works of Road Cutting by different organization, institution and holding owners in different ward under DSCC zone-2 (Group-Gha), FY 2024-2025	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 14:00
7	Tender ID- 1076542 46.207.014.24.02.274.2025 Date- 15/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/TC-1/24-25	Repair and maintenance of roads & physical infrastructure with logistics supply of Ward No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 under DSCC zone-2 through annual term contractor in the financial year 2024-2025.	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 14:00
8	Tender ID- 1076541 46.207.014.24.02.275.2025 Date- 15/01/2025 Package- egpdsec/z02/TC-2/24-25	Repair and maintenance of roads & physical infrastructure with logistics supply of Ward No. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 under DSCC zone-2 through annual term contractor in the financial year 2024-2025.	20-Mar-2025 12:00	20-Mar-2025 14:00

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

To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Ref No: 46.207.014.24.02.141.2024

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signed/
(Zahir Ahmed)
Executive Engineer
Zone -2 (Khilgaon)
Dhaka South City Corporation

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CITY

Owners of 54 illegal brick kilns fined Tk 2.16cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fined Tk 4 lakh each to the owners of 54 brick kilns in Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) for illegally running their operations.

During hearing of a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the HC also ordered the owners to deposit the money to this court in 30 days.

The brick kiln owners include Mohammad Waliullah, Mozammel Haque, Obaidul Kabir, Shamima Akhter, Gias Uddin, Enamul Haque, Nasir Ul Alam, Mohammad Islam, Biplob Kanti, Abdul Kader.

The HC bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice Sikder Mahmudur Razi also withdrew its earlier order that issued status quo on shutting down the operations of the 54 illegal brick kilns, writ petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star.

He said the owners have been running their illegal brick kilns by taking status quo orders from the HC even though there are several orders for shutting those down.

Following a petition filed by the owners, the HC on February 12 extended the order of status quo for six months, which the court withdrew yesterday.

Ctg councillor held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police arrested a fugitive Chattogram city ward councillor in Dhaka yesterday in several cases filed over the violence during the July uprising.

Jahurul Alam Jasim, councillor of ward-9, was held in Bashundhara Residential Area, said Mohammad Hossain Kabir, deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (West Division).

Jasim, also the joint convener of North Pahartali Ward Awami League, has been accused in several cases filed with Akbarshah Police Station and Double Mooring Police Station, he told The Daily Star.

Jasim has been accused of attacking and shooting protesters of the Students Against Discrimination and financially aiding their attackers.

In August 2022, the Department of Environment filed a case against Jasim and his wife Taslim Begum with Akbarshah Police Station for illegally cutting hills near the Lake City Residential Area.

Livelihoods, dreams reduced to ashes

Fire guts 35 shanties in Dhaka's Bhasantek slum



SHAIHEEN MOLLAH and RAJIB ISLAM

With her rickshaw-puller husband gone, survival became Renu Begum's only goal. Poverty forced her to leave Kishoreganj and move to Dhaka 25 years ago, clutching the hand of her seven-year-old son, Jahangir.

She found shelter in a slum in Bhasantek and worked as a day labourer in various sectors, slowly building a life with every hard-earned penny.

However, in 2019, her world was shattered when a fire tore through the slum, reducing everything she had built to ashes. Starting over again, she took out a loan, using her income along with a small contribution from her now-grown son, who works as a construction worker.

Over the years, she managed to buy two shanties in another slum nearby and rebuild her life. But disaster struck once more yesterday, as a fire ripped through the slum -- "Abuler Bost" -- in the capital's Bhasantek area, turning her home to ashes again.

"Our life has once again been reduced to nothing but ashes. How will we survive now?" cried Renu, now over 50.

She and her son had managed to save some belongings when the fire started, only to have them stolen when they stepped away for a moment.

Renu is now terrified, unable to repay the Tk 30,000 she still owes from her previous debt.

Like Renu, many others in the slum have similar stories of losing their homes and everything they owned. The fire gutted at least 35 shanties before five fire engines brought it under control around 12:30pm.

When this correspondent visited the slum in the afternoon, residents were



seen clearing the debris, some desperately searching through the ashes for valuables.

The slum was home to low-income workers -- garment workers, rickshaw pullers, hawkers, small shopkeepers, and house helps. Many were at work when the fire broke out, leaving them with nothing to save. No major casualties were reported.

Halima Begum and her family lost all 12 of their shanties in the fire. "The fire

has left us under the open sky. Decades of hard work, gone in the blink of an eye," she said.

Like Renu, Halima also suffered in the 2019 fire, but this time, all her family members have been left homeless.

Another resident, Swapna Begum, a tailor, lost everything. Her fridge, TV, bed, clothes, and money -- everything she had worked for -- vanished before her eyes.

When she heard people screaming "Fire!" she grabbed her only child and ran out. "Not just my savings and belongings; the fire destroyed my dream," she said.

"I took a loan of Tk 85,000 and bought clothes worth Tk 60,000 for my business before Eid. Now, the fire has burned not only the clothes but also the remaining Tk 25,000," she added.

Shafia Begum, wife of Abul Hossain, ran a small grocery shop with her daughters -- Papia Akter and Meghla Akter -- after Abul had been on the run since the political changeover in August.

The family used the shop's income to cover the educational expenses of the two girls, both college students, but the fire burned it down, destroying goods worth around Tk 5 lakh. "My house, my livelihood -- I have nothing left," Shafia said.

Fire officials said the cause of the fire is still unknown and that they will launch a probe to determine what started it.

Action if Hizb ut-Tahrir holds programmes Warns DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday said any activities with the banner of banned outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir are punishable under the anti-terrorism laws.

Hizb ut-Tahrir was banned by the Bangladesh government on October 22, 2009, considering it a threat to public security, said a DMP statement.

Under the Anti-Terrorism Act-2009, any form of gathering, procession, distribution of posters and leaflets, or promotional activities by banned outfits is a criminal offense.

If any banned outfit, including Hizb ut-Tahrir, attempts to hold meetings, rallies, or engage in any form of publicity, necessary legal action will be taken. The statement was issued by Muhammad Taleb Rahman PPM, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

GRAFT CASE

Tarique, Mamun acquitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday acquitted BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his close aide Gias Uddin Al Mamun from a money laundering case, in which they were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by the High Court.

The apex court also scrapped the HC verdict.

A four-member bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed delivered the judgement following an appeal filed by Mamun.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case in October 2009 with Cantonment Police Station against Tarique and Mamun on the charge of laundering Tk 20.41 crore to Singapore between 2003 and 2007.

Transactions worth

FROM PAGE 3

legal income amounts to Tk 3.46 crore. Moreover, between 1990 and 2024, Mahmuda's 14 bank accounts saw questionable transactions totalling Tk 461.17 crore.

Meanwhile, suspicions extend to Lak Mia's employee, Md Mohsin Molla, whose salary was only Tk 12,000 per month. Despite this, his 14 bank accounts recorded transactions amounting to Tk 10,322.76 crore.

The ACC has also filed a case against his wife, Mahmuda Begum, for allegedly possessing

13 stranded fishers rescued from the Bay

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Coastguards in Mongla has rescued 13 fishermen who had been stranded at sea for four days after their trawler's engine broke down in the Bay of Bengal.

The rescue operation was carried out on Wednesday afternoon, said Lt Commander Md Siamul Haq, media officer of the Coast Guard (Mongla Headquarters) yesterday.

"Around 2:00pm on Wednesday, we received a call through the 999 helpline, informing us that the fishing trawler MV Ma Babar Doa had been floating in the sea for the past four days due to engine failure," he said.

According to sources, the trawler had set sail from Patharghat in Barishal 12 days ago for a fishing expedition.



Hundreds of brick kiln workers demonstrated in front of the DC office in Khulna yesterday, protesting the recent shutdown of over 40 brick kilns. They warned that if these closures continue, thousands will lose their livelihoods. They demanded official recognition of brick kilns as an industry and urged the government to allow environment-friendly kilns to operate.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

4-yr-old boy killed by stepbrother

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A four-year-old boy was strangled to death allegedly by his stepbrother at Enuya village in Thakurgaon's Piroganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

Tajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Piroganj Police Station, told The Daily Star that the deceased Siam was left at home with his 14-year-old stepbrother as his mother had gone out for work.

When Siam's mother returned from work, she found both boys missing. Then she and the villagers began searching the area. At one stage, locals found the older boy at the nearby Futkibari Bazar in Dinajpur's Bochaganj.

Based on his statement, Siam's body was later found in a maize field. Police recovered the body around 5:30pm and sent it to the Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

The stepbrother was detained after he admitted to the killing during primary interrogation, OC Tajul said.

Supreme Court of Bangladesh

High Court Division

www.supremecourt.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No. 63/2024-25

Open Tendering Method (OTM)

Sl. No.	Tender/Proposal ID Reference No.	Name of works	Publication Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	1083001, e-GP/02-PMP-Road/Sher/2024-25	Re-Construction of Severely damaged & washed out road due to heavy Flash flood recently occurred at 8th (p) km & Rigid Pavement (Bazar portion) of Bougao-Nam-Natipgar Road (Z-4693) under Sherpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025	05-Mar-2025 10:00 08-Apr-2025 12:15		
2	1080540, e-GP/02-PMP-Road/Sher/2024-25	Periodic Maintenance Program Work of Nekala-Nalimbar-Nakupur Landport Road (N-402) at Ch. 11-000 to Ch. 28-000 km (Nakupur Land Port) Providing by DBS. Wearing Course and protective work under Sherpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	05-Mar-2025 10:00 10-Apr-2025 12:30		

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents can be deposited online through any bank's Branch as per tender notice.


(Ms. Meftahul Jannath)
 Assistant Registrar (Finance)
 Supreme Court of Bangladesh
 High Court Division, Dhaka
 Email: meftahulj@gmail.com

Memo No: 35/01/8900/470/06/400 25-315

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender/Proposal ID Reference No.	Name of works	Publication date & closing date
01	1080601, e-GP/02-PMP-Road/Sher/2024-25	Re-Construction of Severely damaged & washed out road due to heavy Flash flood recently occurred at 8th (p) km & Rigid Pavement (Bazar portion) of Bougao-Nam-Natipgar Road (Z-4693) under Sherpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025	05-Mar-2025 10:00 08-Apr-2025 12:15
02	1080540, e-GP/02-PMP-Road/Sher/2024-25	Periodic Maintenance Program Work of Nekala-Nalimbar-Nakupur Landport Road (N-402) at Ch. 11-000 to Ch. 28-000 km (Nakupur Land Port) Providing by DBS. Wearing Course and protective work under Sherpur Road Division during the year 2024-2025.	05-Mar-2025 10:00 10-Apr-2025 12:30

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Md. Shakil Islam

ID No. 602272

Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD-Sherpur Road Division, Sherpur

GD-585

GD-588

Coldplay to curate musical lineup for 2026 World Cup final halftime show



For the first time in history, the 2026 FIFA World Cup final will feature a Super Bowl-style halftime show, with Coldplay curating a lineup of artists.

The tournament, co-hosted by the USA, Canada, and Mexico, will conclude on July 19, 2026, at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino announced the news, stating that Coldplay's Chris Martin and band manager Phil Harvey will help select performers for the 15-minute break.

While pre-match performances are common at major football events, a half-time show at a World Cup final is unprecedented.

Robert Downey Jr immersed in Doctor Doom role for 'Avengers: Doomsday'

Robert Downey Jr is deeply involved in his return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), taking on the role of iconic villain Doctor Doom in *Avengers: Doomsday*.

Directors Joe and Anthony Russo revealed Downey's commitment, stating the actor has been actively contributing to his character's backstory and costume ideas. They praised Downey's dedication, noting his passion for developing "three-dimensional characters."

The film, set for release in May 2026, will be followed by *Avengers: Secret Wars* in 2027.



NEWS

Man accused of harassment granted bail

FROM PAGE 12
provision to withdraw it during the investigation process.

Meanwhile, the victim told the media that she had no legal representation in court.

Arnob was handed over to Shahbagh police by the DU authorities on Wednesday evening after he verbally harassed the student for not having her "scarf in the right place".

The student detailed the incident in a Facebook post, sharing a photo of Arnob.

The post read: "This man [Arnob] harassed me today [Wednesday] on my way from Shahbagh. He suddenly stopped me on the road and told me my clothing was 'inappropriate', among other things ... When I said I would call the proctor, he ran away."

Later that day, DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star, "Around 4:30pm, we received a complaint that one of our students had been harassed by our library's assistant bookbinder, Arnob. When some students brought him to my office, we questioned him and he admitted to the harassment. We then handed him over to the police."

POLICE STATION BESIEGED

Around 1:00am, a group of people calling themselves "Tawhid Janata" began gathering outside the police station.

They later forced their way inside, questioned the arrest, and demanded Arnob's release. Some members of the group live-streamed the incident from inside the duty officer's room. At one point, they approached the lock-up and broadcast a live interview with Arnob.

On-duty policemen attempted to prevent the group from entering, but they ignored the officers' orders.

At one point, a sub-inspector was heard telling the crowd that he had no legal authority to release or arrest anyone. The officer repeatedly requested them not to create a "mob" situation, but the crowd insisted they were "not a mob".

The agitators then took a copy of the First Information Report, which contained the victim's name, address and identity details, and shared its image

on social media.

In a video clip from the police station that surfaced on Facebook, one person is heard suggesting that a theft case should be filed against the complainant, while another said, "It should be a defamation case!"

One agitator said they had learned about the arrest after Taraweeh prayers and arrived at the station around midnight. He claimed Arnob had been arrested "unjustly" and vowed to stay until his release.

Another man alleged that police had forcibly obtained Arnob's statement.

In the early hours yesterday, an agitator named Ataur Rahman Bikrompuri told reporters they had spoken with law enforcers, who assured them Arnob would be released.

"They mentioned three things: first, his job would remain intact; second, releasing him immediately from the police station might create a negative impression, so he would be formally taken to court and a proper investigation report would be filed; and third, he would eventually be released," he said.

The agitators left the area around 9:30am and proceeded to the court where Arnob was taken.

Later, photos of Arnob being greeted with garlands, a turban, and the Holy Quran went viral on social media.

On Facebook, many criticised the celebratory display for an accused harasser.

Meanwhile, in an interview with Jamuna TV, the victim said: "I have been receiving hateful comments, rape threats, and death threats ... I'm extremely concerned for my safety and my family's wellbeing. I worry whether the state will provide enough security for me. I saw the accused being greeted with flowers, while I feel I have to cover my face if I leave the house. I doubt I can even leave my house like I used to, wearing normal clothes, ever again. What would be the point in continuing this case?"

The Daily Star was not able to independently contact the victim, despite repeated attempts.

DU LAW STUDENTS' STATEMENT

In a press release issued last evening, Dhaka University law students said, "It has already come to our attention that the police and university administration have encouraged the victim to withdraw the case. The university administration has, firstly, failed to provide security to its female students; secondly, it is obstructing the victim from obtaining justice; and thirdly, despite the confessional statement of the accused and other supporting evidence, it is attempting to retain him in his job."

"Protecting such disgraceful efforts, we demand a fair investigation and the permanent expulsion of the accused following its conclusion."

The students also warned that if the accused is allowed to remain in his position, they would immediately boycott all classes and exams.

They added, "From this moment onwards, Mostafa Asif Arnob is declared 'persona non grata' on the Dhaka University campus."

The DU administration, in the meantime, has formed a three-member probe committee regarding the incident.

While the accused staffer will remain suspended during the investigation, the committee will take further decisions based on the probe report, DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed told the media.

GNOTANTRIK CHHATRA SANGSAD

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Gnotantrik Chhatra Sangsad, the newly formed student organisation, last night suspended the membership of Kazi Mazharul Islam for spreading false information and inciting mob violence in connection with the incident, the student body said in a press release signed by its Member Secretary Zahid Ahsan.

The suspension follows a series of Facebook posts by Kazi Mazharul Islam on Wednesday night opposing Arnob's arrest.

Gnotantrik Chhatra Sangsad has also asked him to submit a show cause response within one working day to the convener, explaining why he should not be permanently expelled from the organisation.

Council, quoted him in statement.

"However, it is not possible for me to accept this award either. Through this press statement, I am making my decision clear," he stated.

He acknowledged the government's decision to confer the Swadhinata Padak on him and expressed his gratitude for the recognition.

Other proposals include putting a two-term limit on prime ministers, making a two-time elected prime minister ineligible for the presidency, and prohibiting the same person from simultaneously holding the positions of party chief, prime minister, and

leader of parliament. The creation of an upper house in parliament with 100 seats allocated proportionally, and offering the deputy speaker position to the opposition party have also been proposed.

Additionally, it has been suggested that a lower house of parliament be formed with 400 members, including 100 reserved seats for women who will be elected directly.

There is also a proposal to elect a nonpartisan, honest, competent, and reputable individual as president through a larger electoral college consisting of members of both houses of parliament and all local government representatives.

Other recommendations include holding local government polls before national elections, making the Election Commission accountable, and amending the International Crimes Tribunal Act and the Representation of the People Order to prevent individuals accused of crimes against humanity from contesting parliamentary elections.

After the fall of the Awami League regime in August last year, the interim government led by Prof Muhammad Yunus formed six reform commissions in early October, covering key areas

8 individuals likely to get Swadhinata Padak

FROM PAGE 12
Faahad, a Buet student tortured to death by members of the now-banned Chhatri League in 2019.

Among them, only Badruddin Umar is alive.

Cabinet Division sources say the list of nominees has been approved by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, and the

official announcement will be made soon. However, hours after the news broke that Badruddin Umar was among the awardees, he declined the award.

"Since 1973, I have been offered awards from various government and non-government organisations. However, I have never accepted any of them," Umar's party, Jatiya Mukti

Council, quoted him in statement.

"However, it is not possible for me to accept this award either. Through this press statement, I am making my decision clear," he stated.

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These six commissions published their final reports in February. Subsequently, the government formed the National Consensus Commission, headed by Prof Yunus and comprising the heads of the six reform commissions.

The Consensus Commission will come up with a charter based on the reform proposals that will gain political consensus.

EU leaders pledge

FROM PAGE 12
Zelensky thanked EU leaders for standing by Ukraine's side.

But decades of reliance on US protection, divergences on funding and on how France's nuclear deterrence could be used for Europe showed how difficult it would be for the EU to fill the void left by Washington after it froze military aid to Ukraine.

"We must ensure, with cool and wise heads, that US support is also guaranteed in the coming months and years, because Ukraine is also dependent on their support for its defence," Germany's outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz said.

Implementation through a constituent assembly, implementation through constitutional reform after election, or implementation through both a constituent assembly and a legislature. Additionally, a comment section has been provided next to each recommendation for the parties to express their views.

Monir Haider, special assistant (consensus) to the chief adviser, is coordinating this initiative.

Among the recommendations for which political parties' opinions have been sought are appointment of the chief election commission and election commissioners based on political consensus and transparency, enacting a law to clarify the responsibilities, powers, and accountability of the Election Commission, and establishing a permanent national constitutional council for appointing officials in all constitutional bodies, including the Election Commission.

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USAID FREEZE Hundreds of US diplomats join letter to Rubio in protest

REUTERS, Washington

Hundreds of diplomats at the State Department and US Agency for International Development have written a letter addressed to Secretary of State Marco Rubio protesting the dismantling of USAID, saying its demise would undermine US leadership and security and create a power vacuum which China and Russia could exploit.

In a cable expected to be filed with the department's internal "dissent channel," which allows diplomats to raise concerns about policy anonymously, the diplomats said the Trump administration's January 20 freeze on almost all foreign aid also endangers American diplomats and forces overseas while putting at risk the lives of millions abroad that depend on US assistance.

FUNDING CUTS French univ opens doors to US scientists

AFP, Marseille

A French university announced Wednesday it would welcome scientists from the United States working in areas threatened by funding cuts under President Donald Trump's administration.

Mass firings and sweeping cuts overseen by Trump's senior advisor Elon Musk in recent weeks have targeted research in a range of areas including climate and health.

In response, France's Aix-Marseille University announced a new programme to welcome scientists who "may feel threatened or hindered" in the United States and want "to continue their work in an environment conducive to innovation, excellence and academic freedom".

University president Eric Berton told AFP-TV that he would have preferred to not to have had to issue this "recruitment call".

"It is a real danger," he emphasised.



A Spanish Coast Guard vessel tows a fiberglass boat with migrants onboard to the port of Arguineguin on the island of Gran Canaria, Spain, on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump's threat to Gaza undermines truce

Says Hamas as US holds unprecedented direct talks for release of American hostages

AFP, Gaza City

Hamas said yesterday that Donald Trump's threats would encourage Israel to disregard the fragile ceasefire, after the US president said that unless hostages are freed, the people of Gaza would be "DEAD".

Trump's warning came hours after his administration revealed it held unprecedented direct talks with Hamas, which it proscribes as a "terrorist" group, focused on American hostages in Gaza.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office confirmed Israel was consulted and said in a statement that it "expressed its opinion" on the direct talks.

Trump said later he was "sending Israel everything it needs to finish the job" as his administration expedites billions of dollars in weapons.

"Release all of the Hostages now, not later, and immediately return all of the dead bodies of the people you murdered, or it is OVER for you," he wrote on his Truth Social platform after meeting freed hostages.

"This is your last warning! For

» **Trump said he was "sending Israel everything it needs to finish the job"**

» **Israel has halted the flow of goods, supplies into Gaza**

» **France, Britain, Germany jointly called the situation in Gaza "catastrophic"**

the leadership, now is the time to leave Gaza, while you still have a chance."

Trump also warned of repercussions for Gaza as a whole, where virtually the entire population has been displaced by Israel's relentless military campaign.

"To the People of Gaza: A beautiful Future awaits, but not if you hold Hostages. If you do, you are DEAD!"

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasim said Trump's words pushed Israel to disregard the terms of a ceasefire in place since January 19.

"These threats complicate matters regarding the ceasefire agreement and encourage the occupation to avoid implementing its terms," Qasim said in a statement, urging the United States to pressure Israel to enter the ceasefire's second phase.

Israel has ramped up its rhetoric and halted the flow of goods and supplies into Gaza.

"Hamas has indeed suffered a severe blow, but it has not yet been defeated. The mission is not yet accomplished," Israel's new military chief Eyal Zamir warned Wednesday.

Also on Wednesday, France, Britain and Germany jointly called the "catastrophic" and urged Israel to ensure the "unhindered" delivery of aid.

South Africa said Israel's restriction of aid into Gaza amounted to using starvation as a weapon of war.

Sudan files case against UAE at ICJ Argues the country is complicit in genocide

AFP, The Hague

Sudan has filed a case against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the International Court of Justice, arguing the UAE is complicit in genocide over its alleged support for Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Khartoum contends the UAE is "complicit in the genocide on the Masalit (community in Sudan) through its direction of and provision of extensive financial, political, and military support for the rebel RSF militia", the ICJ said yesterday.

The UAE has repeatedly denied supporting the RSF.

For nearly two years, the RSF and the regular army in Sudan have fought a devastating war that has killed tens of thousands and uprooted more than 12 million people. Famine has already been declared in parts of the country and is likely to spread.

Women's rights weakened in quarter of all countries: UN

AFP, United Nations

Women's rights regressed last year in a quarter of countries around the world, according to a report published by UN Women yesterday, due to factors ranging from climate change to democratic backsliding.

"The weakening of democratic institutions has gone hand in hand with backlash on gender equality," the report said, adding that "anti-rights actors are actively undermining long-standing consensus on key women's rights issues."

"Almost one quarter of countries reported that backlash on gender equality is hampering implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action," the report continued, referring to the document from the 1995 World Conference on Women.

Indian credits

FROM PAGE 12

signed for 15 projects.

Of the 42 projects under the three LoCs, 14 have been completed at a cost of about \$410 million, or around 6 percent of the overall commitment under the first two credit deals.

According to the terms of the deals, all project-related materials must

be procured from India and all contractors and consultants must be hired from that country.

Mirana Mahrukh, additional secretary of ERD, and Suja K Menon, joint secretary of India's ministry of external affairs, led the meeting from their respective sides.

Warning army

FROM PAGE 1

as the new chief adviser of the interim administration, he asked me immediately, "can you send us a fact-finding mission to put a spotlight on the situation to investigate what was happening", which is what we did and it actually helped."

He also said that when he was in Bangladesh last November, he was thanked for his role.

"The students were so grateful for us taking a stand and for us speaking out and for us supporting them."

In the interview, Volker Turk discussed various conflicts around the world and their devastating impact on millions of lives. He raised concerns about the possibility of humanity sleepwalking into a dystopian future if these issues are not addressed.

The conversation touched on the importance of human rights, the role of international organisations, and the need for global cooperation to prevent further sufferings.

In Bangladesh, amid a raging mass uprising led by the students, the army held a meeting called "Officers Address" on August 3 last year. There, it reportedly agreed not to fire on citizens.

A press release by the Inter Services Public Relations had said, "Bangladesh Army will always stand by the people in their interests and in the state's needs."

Reuters has reported that the night before Sheikh

Hasina fled, the Chief of Army Staff General Wakaruz Zaman held a meeting with his generals and decided that troops would not open fire on civilians to enforce a curfew. The agency quoted two serving army officers with knowledge of the discussions.

In its fact-finding report released last month, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had mentioned that as many as 1,400 people have been killed during the July-August uprising that culminated into the ouster of the Hasina regime.

It said serious human rights violations and abuses committed by the security forces and armed Awami League supporters between July 15 and August 5 stemmed from a calculated effort to retain power at all costs.

The UN mission interviewed 230 witnesses for the purposes of preparing the report.

The report said, "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] has reasonable grounds to believe that these violations were carried out with the knowledge, coordination, and direction of the political leadership and senior security sector officials, in pursuance of a strategy to suppress the protests and related expressions of dissent."

Gas scarcity halves

FROM PAGE 1
authorities through various channels but no solution has been found.

"They said it would take more time to resolve the gas shortage," he added.

In fiscal 2024-25, the demand for gas for industries is 976 mmcfd, according to Petrobangla's projection.

However, they are getting 560,600 mmcfd on an average, said Petrobangla official, preferring anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with the media.

The ceramic industry is facing a severe crisis due to the ongoing gas shortage, said Irfan Uddin, general secretary of the Bangladesh Ceramic Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

The desired level of gas pressure at the factories is 15 psi, but they have been getting 2 to 5 psi or sometimes even less, he said.

Subsequently, the ceramic factories' daily production losses have crossed 50 percent, he said, adding that many ceramic companies have been compelled to halt

investment plans, while newly established factories remain non-operational due to the crisis.

Narayanganj is facing a similar situation, said Ahmedur Rahaman Tanu, director of the Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Instead of the required 15 psi, gas pressure often drops to 3 to 5 psi, and sometimes even zero, causing daily production losses of 30 to 40 percent, according to him.

Petrobangla Chairman Md Rezanur Rahman and Titas Gas Managing Director Shahnewaz Parvez could not be reached for comment.

However, a top official of Petrobangla said the government has given the highest priority to power generation.

The power sector is getting the increased LNG supply, and production has increased. But other sectors will not get the benefit right now. It depends on more gas production and imports," he added.

Household users are also

facing gas shortage before iftar, a harsh turn during Ramadan, the month of fasting.

Gas pressure drops around 4:00pm and remains low until iftar, said residents in Dhaka's Mirpur, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Ziggatola, Adabor, Khilgaon, Uttara, Banasree, Badda and areas in Old Dhaka.

As soon as the call to Maghrib prayer comes through the mosque loudspeakers, the gas pressure returns, said Shahnaz Rahmatullah, a resident of Banasree area.

During the day, the gas pressure remains stable, but it is not a convenient time to cook during Ramadan, she added.

Weak gas supply during iftar preparation means Lalbagh resident Shimu Rahman has to make do without homecooked items.

"We have no option but to go outside to get iftar," she said.

[Shaheen Mollah contributed to the report]

উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পর্যায়ে পঠিত শাখা

বাংলা ইংরেজি সাধারণ জ্ঞান

প্রত্যেক শাখার অন্য অল্পান্তরে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পর্যায়ের বিষয়াভিত্তিক পত্র

MCQ পদ্ধতিতে ১০০ নথরের ভর্তি পরীক্ষার ১০০টি প্রশ্নের উত্তর ০১ (এক) ঘটনা সময়ের মধ্যে দিতে হবে।

২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক (সমান) প্রেসিল ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সংশোধিত নথর বটেন পক্ষতি

জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

গাজীপুর-১৭০৮

২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক (সমান) প্রেসিল ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সংশোধিত নথর বটেন সম্পর্কিত জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ভর্তি বিষয়ক ওয়েবসাইটঃ (www.nu.ac.bd/admissions)

সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্মারক নং: ১০(২২৬)জাতী:বি:বি:জে:আকা:২০২৫/৩০৮৭, তারিখ: ২০/০১/২০২৫ এ প্রকাশিত ২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক (সমান) প্রেসিল ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সাথে অনুচ্ছেদ-০২ এবং ভর্তি নিদেশিকার অনুচ্ছেদ-০৬ এ বর্তিত পরীক্ষার শাখাভিত্তিক নথর বটেনে নিম্নরূপ সংশোধন আনা হচ্ছে। সংশোধিত নথর বটেনের ভিত্তিতে ২০২৪-২০২৫ শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ স্নাতক (সমান) প্রেসিল ভর্তি কার্যক্রমে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পর্যায়ে বিজ্ঞান, মানবিক ও ব্যবসায় শিক্ষা শাখার পিকার্ডারে জন্য আলাদাভাবে ১০০ নথরের MCQ পদ্ধতিতে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার গ্রহণ করা হবে।

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Police alone cannot take on violent mobs

Leaders and influencers too have a responsibility to restore rule of law

For any crime or breakdown in law and order, law enforcement is naturally the first to be held accountable. Police and other security forces now active on the ground must prevent and bring to book those involved in mugging, robbery, rape, extortion, etc. Curbing mob violence is also their responsibility. That such violence has reached an alarming state of late—with at least 119 people killed and 74 injured in 114 incidents since August—is largely due to weak policing. But placing sole attention or responsibility on the security forces risks overlooking the role played by other influential actors in the surge of crimes.

Those getting involved in mob violence, often fuelled by righteous indignation, are partly enabled by the support they receive from a section of social media influencers, the relative silence of political, social, and religious leaders, and the general instability in the country. If we analyse the pattern of some recent incidents—such as the hostile mobilisation around the Shahbagh police station demanding the release of an alleged harasser, or the alleged assault on two women at the Lalmatia area—the reigning mentality seems to support both rule of law and frequent exceptions to it, provided those aligned with the notion of justice of a certain majoritarian group in society. That the home adviser has survived the metaphorical guillotine (calls for his resignation) following his controversial remark on the latter incident is likely influenced by the right-wing support behind such incidents. This is further exacerbated by the lack of legal consequences for taking the law into one's own hands.

Of course, righteous indignation or frustration with inadequate judicial mechanisms is not the only motivation behind the formation of mobs. While previously the key reasons included suspicions of theft, robbery, or mugging, after the political changeover on August 5, there have been many opportunistic and politically motivated mobilisations as well. Think of the mob that stormed a Gulshan flat allegedly linked to Awami League leader HT Imam, over a rumour of a secret stash inside, or the two Iranians allegedly robbed of cash and mobile phones in Bashundhara Residential Area. And more often than not, such mobilisations led to brutal consequences. As well as deaths in the most unthinkable fashion, mob beatings often made for scary headlines—the eyes of a victim being gouged out in Bholi on March 2, two individuals being beaten and hung upside down in Dhaka's Uttara on February 27. The list goes on.

While the government insists that there is no room for mob justice or moral policing under the law, the fact is, its relative inaction has only served to embolden it. Its effect has transcended mob violence—with political violence, harassment of journalists, suppression of freedom of expression, and various other crimes being reported across the country. Under these charged circumstances, we urge all stakeholders of post-uprising Bangladesh to help restore rule of law. That means everyone doing their part as they should—police taking prompt and stern action, political parties restraining their unruly members, community/religious leaders discouraging mob formations, and social influencers sending a message of unity rather than divisions.

Food insecurity of Rohingyas alarming

WFP's food aid cuts may lead to a humanitarian disaster

The World Food Programme (WFP)'s decision to cut monthly food aid for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh from \$12.50 to just \$6 per person will have devastating consequences. Relief workers have long argued that even the \$12.50 allocation is insufficient. A previous round of cuts in 2023, reducing food rations to \$8 per month, led to a sharp rise in hunger and malnutrition, according to the UN. Within months, 90 percent of the camp population was "struggling to access an adequate diet," and 15 percent of children suffered from malnutrition—the highest recorded rate. As a result, the cut was later reversed.

Despite this reversal, relief officials maintain that the current meagre allocation is still inadequate for maintaining a nutritious diet. The WFP itself acknowledges that reducing rations below \$6 would "fall below the minimum survival level and fail to meet basic dietary needs." In other words, the new \$6 allocation represents the absolute bare minimum required for survival. How can the international community expect the Rohingya people to subsist on "the bare minimum" indefinitely?

With more than 1.1 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh entirely dependent on humanitarian aid, this drastic cut will put immense strain on families already struggling to meet basic needs. It will likely escalate tensions within the camps, potentially leading to increased violence, crime, and drug trafficking. As desperation grows, more Rohingyas may attempt to break out of the camps, increasing the risk of confrontations with locals. Clearly, this situation poses serious challenges for Bangladesh.

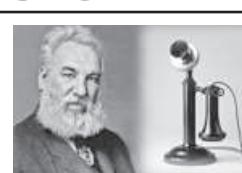
It remains unclear whether the WFP's decision was influenced by the Trump administration's termination of USAID funding worldwide, but such suspicions have been raised. When the decision was initially announced in January, emergency food aid was reportedly supposed to remain unaffected. It is therefore even more alarming that the UN has now opted to cut food rations for the Rohingya population.

Given the circumstances, the government must urgently develop a contingency plan. The reduction in rations will not only harm the Rohingya population but also risk fuelling unrest in the camps, which could spill over and impact local communities. These outcomes must be prevented at all costs. Therefore, the government should immediately engage the international community to secure funding commitments. The global community has a moral obligation to ensure that Rohingya refugees receive at least the minimum necessary to live a decent life and to support Bangladesh, which, despite its own challenges, has done everything possible to assist them.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

The telephone patented

On this day in 1876, Alexander Graham Bell received a patent for the telephone.



When power shifts but patterns remain



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H. M. NAZMUL ALAM

Groucho Marx once quipped, "Politics is the art of searching for problems, searching for them everywhere and finding fault with them." His words, laced with wit, expose a profound truth about governance: politics often becomes more about pointing fingers than about solving real problems. The very essence of leadership, which should be about forging progress and alleviating suffering, often degenerates into cycles of retribution. Nowhere is this more evident than in the developing world, including Bangladesh, where the transition of power is frequently hailed as a revolution but ultimately proves to be little more than a repetition of old patterns under new banners.

German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche warned of the dangers of becoming what one opposes. He wrote, "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster." Yet, in many postcolonial states, revenge politics has become an institutionalised practice. New regimes expend their energy correcting—or rather, avenging—the past, rather than envisioning the future. This inability to break free from the grip of history is why change, despite its grand proclamations, often remains an illusion.

History is replete with examples of political transitions that promised transformation but instead entrenched division. The French Revolution, which heralded *"liberté, égalité, fraternité,"* quickly descended into the Reign of Terror, where revolutionaries became executioners, and old injustices were replaced by new atrocities. The Russian Revolution overthrew the Tsarist autocracy, only to replace it with the oppressive Soviet regime under Joseph Stalin. In both cases, the so-called new orders proved as intolerant and repressive as their predecessors.

In modern developing nations, political turnovers occur under similar circumstances. A government falls, and its successor, instead of breaking the mould, simply reverses the roles of victim and oppressor. Those once persecuted now become the persecutors. Trumped-up cases are lodged, critics are silenced, and rhetoric of annihilation floods the airwaves. "Break them," "crush them," "set fire"—these slogans, once hurled

against the ousted regime, are now repurposed against the newly defeated opposition. But if the language remains the same, can we truly call it change?

A wise observer of history must ask: what differentiates genuine change from mere reshuffling? True transformation demands structural, ideological, and cultural shifts. Yet, most political transitions in the developing world focus on superficial alterations while leaving the fundamental issues untouched. Institutions remain weak, governance remains personalised, and power continues to be wielded as an

the pieces on the board without changing the game itself.

Hans Christian Andersen's timeless tale, "The Emperor's New Clothes," serves as an apt metaphor for the political deceptions of our time. In the story, swindlers convince a vain emperor that they have woven an extraordinary fabric that is invisible to fools. Fearing the label of stupidity, his courtiers and subjects pretend to admire his non-existent attire until a child, unburdened by fear, exclaims, "But he isn't wearing anything!"

This mirrors the political theatre in developing nations. Leaders proclaim unprecedented change, supporters applaud, and intellectuals, fearing repercussions, validate the illusion. Yet, for the common citizen suffering under the same corruption, intimidation, and inefficiency, the emperor remains as naked as ever.

Some leaders have defied this cycle. Nelson Mandela, upon leading South Africa out of apartheid, chose reconciliation over revenge. Unlike many leaders who succumb to the

temptation of political purges, prevent their recurrence.

If the developing world is to break free from this cycle, there must be a fundamental shift in how political change is understood and implemented. Rather than viewing transitions as opportunities for retribution, they must be seen as moments for institutional and cultural reformation. Strong institutions must be built to uphold the rule of law impartially, rather than serving as tools for political vendettas. Leaders must rise above personal grievances and cultivate an ethos of governance that prioritises national progress over partisan revenge. Citizens must demand accountability and refuse to be deceived by grandiose rhetoric. Political movements must focus on economic development, social harmony, and long-term policy solutions instead of short-term political gains. Only by ensuring these changes can a nation truly transform, rather than simply reshuffling the players while the game remains unchanged.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

instrument of personal vengeance rather than national progress.

Consider the Arab Spring. From Tunisia to Egypt, people demanded democracy, justice, and dignity. The initial euphoria of overthrowing dictators gave way to political chaos, military coups, and, in some cases, the return of authoritarian rule. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarak was toppled, Mohamed Morsi taking his place, only to be ousted by another authoritarian leader, Abdel Fattah el Sisi. The lesson? Revolutions or uprisings without structural reforms merely rearrange

temptation of political purges, Mandela understood that sustainable change required building bridges rather than burning them. Similarly, Germany, after the devastation of World War II, did not merely replace one ruling elite with another. It engaged in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—a conscious effort to come to terms with its past. Unlike many postcolonial states that continuously blame predecessors while repeating their mistakes, Germany systematically addressed its historical wrongs, building institutions that would

Change is not a word; it is an action. If one tyranny merely replaces another, if persecution merely shifts hands, if slogans remain the same, then the cycle has not been broken. As Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr said, "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*"—the more things change, the more they remain the same. The challenge for developing nations is not to merely replace rulers but to redefine leadership. Until then, we remain trapped in the emperor's illusion, clapping for invisible robes while reality stands stark naked before us.

The world is failing women and girls



Gitanjali Singh
is UN Women representative in
Bangladesh.

GITANJALI SINGH

The year 2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The world today is more equal for women and girls than ever before. However, 30 years after the adoption of this historical and visionary blueprint for gender equality, we find ourselves at a place where progress does not match the commitments made. In some areas, progress has stalled or even reversed, and we see an increasing pushback on women's rights and gender equality globally.

The 2024 United Nations Secretary-General's Report on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly highlights persistent gender inequalities, including gender-based violence, economic and social barriers, and limited representation in decision-making and leadership. Furthermore, it notes that increasing conflicts and crises significantly hold back progress for women and girls on all indicators of sustainable development. Moreover, women and girls who experience multiple forms of discrimination, including based on age, class, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, or migration status,

have made the least progress, in direct contradiction to the commitment to leave no one behind.

Commitments have not been matched by action, investments, or accountability. Looking ahead, transformative policies leading to accelerated change remain necessary. The report highlights cross-cutting priorities for action, including removing discriminatory laws, prioritising integrated approaches, ensuring adequate financing, increasing women's participation in decision-making, supporting women's rights organisations, transforming social norms, harnessing the potential of technology, and closing gender data gaps—all while ensuring no one is left behind.

In addition, the report highlights specific actions to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda, clustered under six key areas:

1. Inclusive development, decent work and well-being, focusing on care services, family leave provisions, labour rights and entitlements for informal workers, reducing labour market segregation and pay gaps, and decent work.

2. Poverty eradication, social protection, and social services, focusing on social protection and

public services, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-responsive technical and vocational education and training programmes, and sustainable financing for gender-responsive public services and social protection systems.

3. Freedom from violence, stigma, and stereotypes, focusing on women's access to justice, comprehensive and well-coordinated services for

5. Peaceful and inclusive societies, focusing on inclusive peace processes, prevention of gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health services, survivor-centred justice in conflict and crisis-affected settings, women's economic rights in the wake of conflicts and crises, and addressing the root causes of conflict, violence, and instability.

6. Environmental conservation, protection, and rehabilitation, focusing on gender-responsive environment and climate policies, gender-responsive infrastructure, full and equal participation of women in decision-making on natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and response, environmental governance, and climate action, and a regenerative economy.

The annual Commission on the Status of Women will hold its 69th session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on March 10-21, 2025 to review and appraise the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. A delegation from the Bangladesh government as well as civil society organisations will attend the session. Member states will adopt a political declaration on March 10.

We cannot afford to march backwards. To deliver on the promise of equality made to all women and girls in Beijing 30 years ago, we need zero violence, full and equal decision-making power, freedom from poverty, peace and security, climate justice, and a digital revolution. The time to act and push forward is now. A gender-equal world is within our control, should we choose it.

survivors, comprehensive, evidence-based, and long-term approaches to prevention, gender-responsive media and technology, norms of respect, non-discrimination, and equality, and ending impunity.

4. Participation, gender-responsive institutions and accountability, focusing on temporary special measures, national gender equality action plans, gender-responsive budgeting, safe and enabling environments for women's rights organisations and women human rights defenders, strong national machineries, eradicating discriminatory gender norms in political institutions, and eliminating violence against women in public life.



BANGLADESH BANK
Common Services Department-1
(Equipment Section)
Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
Website: www.bb.org.bd

Invitation for Tenders

BANGLADESH BANK, HEAD OFFICE, DHAKA

1	Ministry/Division	Not applicable			
2	Agency	Not applicable			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Bank			
4	Procuring Entity Code				
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6	Invitation for	The Procurement of 20 (Twenty) Pcs. Multimedia Projector for Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.			
7	Invitation Ref No	CSD(EQUIPMENT)69(6)/2025-80			
8	Date	05/03/2025			
KEY INFORMATION					
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
10	Budget and Source of Funds	Own Source			
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	Not applicable			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
12	Tender Publication Date	05/03/2025			
13	Tender Last Selling Date	Not applicable			
14	Tender Closing Date and Time	19/03/2025	03:00 PM		
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	19/03/2025	03:15 PM		
16	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address: Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka-1000.			
- Receiving Tender Document		BB website and Hard Copy of Tender Security			
- Opening Tender Document		Common Services Department-1, 6th Floor, Annex-2 Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka.			
17	-Pre-Tender Meeting	Yes			
	Date	12/03/2025			
	Time	11:30 AM			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
18	Brief Eligibility of Tenderer	Tenderers having 5 years overall business experience and minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least Two (2) contract(s) of similar nature successfully completed within the last Three (3) years			
19	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Supply, Installation, Commissioning of 20 (Twenty) Pcs. Multimedia Projector for Bangladesh Bank, Head Office			
20	Brief Description of Related Services	N/A			
21	Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks / Months from the date of contract signing
				90,000/- (Taka Ninety Thousand) (Pay Order Only)	8 weeks
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Swapan Kumar Goswami			
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director (CSD-1)			
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka,			
25	Contact details of Official-Inviting Tender	Tel: 9530148	Fax: 9530441	E-mail: swapan.goswami@bb.org.bd	
26	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings				

(Swapan Kumar Goswami)
Director(CSD-1)
Phone: 9530148,
E-mail: swapan.goswami@bb.org.bd

GD- 593

স্বত্ত: ডিসিপিঃ ৪৮/২০২৫-৬৮০

তারিখ: ০৬/০৩/২০২৫

ব্যাপ্তিক ও অধিক সেবা পেতে ইয়ারানিন শিকার হলে কিংবা
কেনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

'Mushfiqur's work ethic set him apart'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDY

Early yesterday morning, Mohannedan stars lined up to give Mushfiqur Rahim a guard of honour after the veteran batter announced his ODI retirement on social media the night before.

For Mushfiqur, there may have been some regret over how his ODI career ended. However, for his Mohannedan teammates, the moment was one of celebration.

Mushfiqur did not come out to bat against Rupganj Tigers yesterday in a game in which Mohannedan picked up their first win. He cut a cake at the end of the game with the likes of Tamim Iqbal, Mehedi Miraz, and others. He would leave the stadium right after the game, nonchalantly, in fact, for he only has a mind for the game, often to a fault.

Asked where Mushfiqur ranks as a batter, former Bangladesh skipper Habibul Bashar did not hesitate. "Top of the list," he said with a smile, as if the answer had been obvious before the question was even asked.

"The first thing we discussed about him was that he had sound technique. He's



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Neymar back for Brazil

REUTERS

Brazil have recalled Santos forward Neymar for this month's World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina after more than a year, the soccer federation announced on Thursday.

The 33-year-old sustained a knee injury in Brazil's World Cup qualifier against Uruguay in October 2023 and has struggled to get back to his best and secure a spot in the squad.

After a disappointing spell at Saudi Pro League side Al Hilal, Neymar returned to his boyhood club Santos in January, scoring three goals and providing three assists in seven matches which has caught the eye of Brazil coach Dorival Junior.



Neymar has 128 caps and a record 79 goals for his country, surpassing Pele's tally of 77.

He was part of Brazil's gold medal-winning squad at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games and also helped them finish runners-up to Argentina at the 2021 Copa America.

Brazil, who are fifth in the CONMEBOL table with 18 points from 12 games, host Colombia on March 21 and visit Argentina five days later. The top six qualify directly for the World Cup.

A nostalgic look at BANGLADESH HOCKEY

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Lahore

"Wait for a few minutes, I'll get him too," Shahbaz Ahmed, former Pakistan hockey great who is also known as the 'Maradona of hockey', said this after exchanging greetings with this reporter yesterday noon at the National Hockey Stadium in Lahore, and went inside to look for Tahir Zaman, another Pakistan hockey legend.

Shahbaz and Tahir are big names in Asian hockey, both winning bronze medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and the gold medal in the 1994 World Cup in Sydney for Pakistan.

The legendary duo also share a deep bond with Bangladesh as in the 90s, both of them represented Mohannedan in the Premier Division Hockey League and led them to hattrick league triumphs.

A little while passed and soon Shahbaz came out with Tahir from the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) office, which is also inside the stadium premises, and then the conversations flowed.

"Tahir and I played exactly three years in Bangladesh and we really enjoyed our time there. Bangladeshi public loved us and they love our hockey. It was an incredible experience, it was unforgettable," said the 56-year-old Shahbaz.

Shahbaz and Tahir arrived in Dhaka as Olympic medallists and World Cup winners and their sheer presence created a buzz around hockey at the time with people coming to the stadium just to watch them play.

But those days of excitement are now a distant memory and both Shahbaz and Tahir were saddened by the sorry state of Bangladesh's hockey right now.

"Bangladesh's hockey system remains the same. I don't think you people have improved a lot...For a game like hockey, which isn't a big game in your country, you will need consistency. If players know that he can't go aboard to play



in any major tournament, he won't be motivated. When a young player isn't motivated, he can't perform well," said Shahbaz, who is also the secretary general of the PHF.

Meanwhile, Tahir, who is also the head coach of the Pakistan's national men's hockey team, claimed that inconsistency in administration and financial drawbacks are the main problems plaguing hockey in both Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"If we can have consistency in our processes, it will allow us to do some good work for hockey in Bangladesh and Pakistan," Tahir said.

"For example, suppose you are in the position to find a solution to a problem. I'm not there, I'm at the other side but I have the solution to the problem. But, it's you who will have to make the decision. So if we can be on the same page and do our work, then things can be solved.

"One of the major hurdles I would say is that we don't have a strong sustainable financial system in our country. Hockey has become a very expensive game now. You can't play hockey unless you have shoes worth USD 150, good quality hockey sticks cost more than USD 300, goalkeeping gear is nearing USD 5000.

So, we have to have a very sustainable financial model to run the game."

Tahir also spoke about how sudden changes in administration has affected hockey's development in both Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"Even in your country, inconsistency is there. For six months or one year, one guy is running the affairs and suddenly there is a change and someone else comes in. And he is there with a new programme and new manager. And the previous programme gets thrown into the dustbin. Then, you have to start again. Who suffers because of this, the players. How can we expect them to do their best when their learning and development process keeps getting interrupted," he added.

Shabaz could only express their disappointment at the ground reality and could not foresee better days ahead.

"I feel really disappointed and broken down when I see the current standard. It's not just the players' fault, the government is at fault too as they are not investing enough in hockey."

"If you don't invest enough, don't give central contracts, don't pay the coaches and don't give them jobs, who will play hockey?"

most importantly, worked incredibly hard. Talent was there, but it's his hard work that set him apart."

Bashar is not the only one to point out Mushfiqur's dedication. Faruque Ahmed, the current Bangladesh Cricket Board president and the former selector who brought Mushfiqur to the national side, also highlighted the cricketer's "work ethic" in a press release yesterday, expressing gratitude towards the batter.

In a testament to his hard work, Mushfiqur scored 4,714 runs -- nearly 60 percent of his career total -- at an average of over 43 and a strike rate of above 84 in the 134 ODIs between 2011 and 2020. It was during this purple patch that he earned the nickname "Mr. Dependable."

Along with the rest four of Bangladesh's 'Big Five' -- Tamim Iqbal, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, and Mahmudullah Riyad -- Mushfiqur was able to take Bangladesh to a new height. Though he will no longer don the red and green in ODIs, the hope remains that the 37-year-old will continue showcasing his class in Test cricket.



Raphinha leads 10-man Barca to victory

Raphinha struck a second-half winner to give Barcelona a lion-hearted 1-0 victory at Benfica on Wednesday as they overcame a red card for Pau Cubarsi early in the game to steal an advantage in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie. Cubarsi was given a straight red card for a last-man foul on Vangelis Pavlidis in the 22nd minute. However, Raphinha's 61st-minute strike proved enough for Barca to walk out with a win.



Kane double sinks Leverkusen

Bayern Munich's Harry Kane scored in each half to guide his team to a 3-0 victory over 10-man Bayer Leverkusen in their Champions League round of 16 first-leg match on Wednesday. Jamal Musiala scored the other goal for the Bavarians, who earned their first victory in the last seven matches against Xabi Alonso's Leverkusen and will take a significant advantage into next week's return leg.

Ravindra's rise puts Black Caps future in safe hands

AGENCIES

Kane Williamson has long been the cornerstone of New Zealand cricket, a player who thrives under pressure and consistently delivers when his team needs him the most.

However, against South Africa in the second Champion Trophy semifinal in Lahore on Wednesday, he found himself in an unfamiliar position—outscored in a partnership. As he and Rachin Ravindra stitched together a crucial 164-run stand for the second wicket, it was the younger batter who led the charge, scoring 82 to Williamson's 80.

This does not signal the end of Williamson's reign—far from it.

The Kiwi maestro has notched up two centuries in his last six ODIs and a magnificent 156 in his most recent Test outing. Yet, with the ever-evolving nature of international cricket and



the increasing lure of franchise leagues, Williamson may soon find himself weighing up his future, particularly in the white-ball format.

For New Zealand, the emergence of Ravindra as a formidable top-order batter has been a revelation. Initially introduced as an all-rounder batting at No. 7, his transition up the order

has cemented his place as one of the Black Caps' premier batters. His performances on the biggest stages have been nothing short of spectacular—three World Cup centuries and two more in the ongoing Champions Trophy. No other New Zealander in history has achieved such a feat.

The numbers speak volumes. Legends like Ross Taylor, Brendon McCullum, Martin Guptill, Stephen Fleming, and Martin Crowe all trail behind the 25-year-old in major tournament hundreds. Ravindra's rise has not gone unnoticed, especially by Williamson himself.

"He's an incredibly special talent," Williamson said. "It's always great to bat with him. He plays with such freedom and puts the team first. There were moments where things got tough, but we kept each other focused. He's gifted, confident, and knows exactly what he wants to do. We've seen it so many times, and he's done it again."



'Lucky' Liverpool edge PSG

Liverpool boss Arne Slot admitted his team had been extremely fortunate in their 1-0 win away to PSG in their Champions League last 16 first leg on Wednesday. "If we had a draw over here, we would have already been the lucky one," Slot said after the game. PSG dominated the first leg of the heavyweight last-16 tie, but Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker was in inspired form, and the visitors snatched an unlikely victory to take back to Anfield for the return as substitute Harvey Elliott scored in the 87th minute.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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8 individuals likely to get Swadhinata Padak

Badruddin Umar declines award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering eight individuals for the Swadhinata Padak 2025 (Independence Award), the highest civilian honour, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the country.

The Cabinet Division will soon announce the official list, a senior government source told The Daily Star yesterday.

The individuals under consideration include the commander-in-chief of the Liberation War General MAG Osmani; eminent scientist professor Jamal Nazrul Islam; BRAC founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed; researcher, writer, and intellectual Badruddin Umar; poet Al Mahmud; pop legend Azam Khan; renowned sculptor Noverta Ahmed, who is one of the key designers of the Central Shaheed Minar; and Abrar

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



THE WILD & WISE

A flock of greylag geese gliding across the waters of Tangar Haor in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila. This majestic waterfowl, widespread across Europe and Asia, is often considered the wild ancestor of domesticated geese. Recognisable by its large size, orange-pink bill and delicately patterned grey-brown plumage, greylags breed in wetlands, lakes and marshes, often nesting in reed beds or on small islands. In Bangladesh, they are rare but have been spotted in Tangar and Hakaluki haors, arriving from Siberia and Central Asia during winter. Unlike many geese, greylags form strong pair bonds, often staying with one mate for life. They are also highly intelligent -- not only do they recognise family members after long migrations, but they also remember human faces and interactions!

PHOTO: MOSABBER HOSSAIN



CONSENSUS COMMISSION Parties asked to give opinions on reforms

Spreadsheet handed to them with March 13 as deadline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission has sent a letter to political parties, seeking their opinions on key recommendations made by six reform commissions.

The parties have been requested to submit their feedback in a spreadsheet attached to the letter by March 13.

After receiving their responses, the commission will sit with each political party separately. Prof Ali Riaz, vice-chairman of the National Consensus Commission, told The Daily Star last night.

The letter signed by Prof Riaz contains a tabular format summary of the key recommendations of the six reform commissions, according to sources.

The parties have been asked to provide feedback on two aspects for each recommendation.

The first aspect is whether they agree with the recommendation.

They have been given three options: "Agree", "Disagree", and "Partially Agree". Each party must select one of these options to express their stance.

The second aspect is their opinion on the timeline and method of implementation of each recommendation.

There are six options to choose from: implementation through an ordinance before election, implementation through a referendum before election, implementation through a referendum during the election,

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After receiving their responses, the commission will sit with each political party separately.

DU INCIDENT Man accused of harassment granted bail

Victim gets threats after personal details released on social media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mostafa Asif Arnob, a 25-year-old bookbinder at the DU library, who was arrested for harassing a female student in public, was released on bail yesterday, hours after being taken into custody.

Early yesterday, a group of people identifying themselves as "Tawhidi Janata" besieged the capital's Shahbagh Police Station for around eight hours from 1:00am, demanding his release.

Toufique Hasan, sub-inspector at the police station and the investigation officer in the case, presented Arnob before a Dhaka court with a forwarding report in the morning. Metropolitan Magistrate Mehra Mahbub subsequently ordered his release on bail.

According to the forwarding report, the complainant had submitted an application to the station's officer-in-charge, requesting the withdrawal of the case. In the application, she also stated that she had no objection to Arnob's bail and that he had already apologised, the investigation officer said.

However, legal experts have pointed out that once a case is registered at a police station, there is no legal

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

As a result, the meeting has decided to cut short the funds.

After further discussions, it will be decided by how much the LoCs will be rationalised and which projects would get the chop.

No contracts were signed between the two countries for at least 22 projects involving \$4 billion.

Polls between December and next March

Yunus tells BBC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in an interview with BBC published yesterday said the election would be held between December 2025 and March next year, depending on how quickly the government could institute reforms necessary for free and fair elections.

"If reforms can be done as quickly as we wish, then December would be the time that we would hold elections. If you have a longer version of reforms, then we may need a few more months," he said.



During the interview, Yunus admitted feeling "dazzled" when asked to assume leadership following the ouster of Sheikh Hasina.

He stressed that law and order, alongside economic recovery, remain his government's top priorities.

"It is a shattered economy, a devastated economy," he said.

"It feels as if a tornado has hit for the last 16 years, and we are picking up the pieces."

About law and order, Yunus claimed the situation has improved since last year's violent protests. However, many in Dhaka argue that security has not been fully restored.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

EU leaders pledge to stand by Zelensky

Vow to spend more on defence after US military aid freeze for Ukraine

REUTERS, Brussels

European leaders yesterday said they would stand by Ukraine and spend more on defence in a world upended by Donald Trump's reversal of US policies.

"Europe must take up this challenge, this arms race. And it must win it," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said as he arrived at the summit in Brussels.

"Europe as a whole is truly capable of winning any military, financial, economic confrontation with Russia - we are simply stronger," Tusk said.

Many EU leaders hailed the European Commission's proposals this week to give them fiscal flexibility on defence spending, and to jointly borrow up to 150 billion euros (\$160 billion) to lend to EU governments to spend on their militaries.

"We are here to defend Ukraine," the chairman of the meeting Antonio Costa said as he and European Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen, both smiling broadly, warmly welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in sharp contrast with the clash between Trump and Zelensky in the Oval Office last week.

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Relatives and friends of Ukrainian prisoners of war hold placards during a demonstration in front of the US embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, yesterday to bring attention to the fate of Ukrainian prisoners of war and ensure their inclusion in any deal to stop the conflict with Russia.

When power shifts but patterns remain

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PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 7

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:00 12:30 4:30 6:05 7:30

JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:20 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR

6 7 6:05

7 8 4:58 6:05

8 9 4:57 6:06

PHOTO: AFP