

DHAKA SUNDAY MARCH 9, 2025

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 54

FALGUN 24, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RAMADAN 8, 1446 HIJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00



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Unyielding India
confront NZ in
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Tk 2.21cr extorted daily from city transport

Finds govt probe; sector now controlled
mostly by BNP-linked influentials

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ZYMA ISLAM

A staggering Tk 2.21 crore is extorted daily from 53 transport terminals and stands in Dhaka city. The figure goes up to Tk 66.3 crore and sometimes Tk 80 crore per month, a government probe has found.

The investigation by an intelligence agency done after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government also found that local influentials and political party leaders, especially those linked to the BNP, are involved in the extortion, according to sources in the Roads and Highways Department.

The report was submitted to the department on February 11.

During the Awami League rule, the party's leaders and activists had established a system of extortion, which apparently was risky as they used a "token" that left a paper trail. However, after the toppling of the AL regime, the system was taken over by locally influential people, especially leaders of the BNP and its front organisations, it said.

Currently, there are 95 types of terminals and stands, including for bus, truck, microbus, pickup, human haulier (Leguna), and autorickshaw, in the capital and surrounding areas. Of them, 66 terminals and stands are in the capital.

They include 37 Leguna stands, seven local bus stands, five pickup stands, four local and inter-district bus stands, four autorickshaw stands, three inter-district bus terminals, three CNG-run autorickshaw stands, two truck stands and one microbus stand.

The inquiry was conducted in 56 terminals and the agency found extortion taking place in 53 of them.

CONTROL SHIFTS

After August 5, 2024, the control of the transport sector changed hands, with BNP-aligned leaders taking over certain key posts of different owners' associations as well as terminals.

Khandaker Enayet Ullah, owner of Ena Paribahan, who was secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association for fourth time in a row, has been replaced by Cumilla (North) unit BNP Convener Saiful Islam.

Saiful was a two-time general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association during the previous BNP tenure.

On the other hand, Haji Alauddin, owner of Star Line Group and director of FBCCI, was elected president of the transport owners' organisation. He replaced Jatiya Party top leader Moshirul Rahman Ranga.

Alauddin has been involved with both Jatiya Party and Awami League, becoming the Feni municipality mayor in 2016 on AL ticket. Since then, he has turned his back on the Awami League, said sources in the transport department.

Both Ranga and Enayet Ullah are on the run since the political changeover.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, the most powerful organisation for transport workers, also saw similar changes in its leadership.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

- Tk 1.07cr extorted daily from Gabtoli, Sayedabad, Mohakhali terminals
- Tk 1.17cr extorted in the name of Transport Owners Association
- Tk 80 lakh extorted per day from local, inter-district bus stands
- Police mostly left out from the cuts since Aug 5
- Franchise-based mass transport proposed to stop extortion

CONSENSUS COMMISSION Critical issues picked for party feedback

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

To seek political parties' opinions, the National Consensus Commission has picked the "most crucial" proposals from a wide range of recommendations made by the reform commissions.

The parties will be able to give opinions on entire reports of the reform commissions, but their answers to questions from the Consensus Commission will steer the direction of the talks to be held afterwards.

"We definitely want to know their opinions on these matters to ensure the discussions proceed smoothly," Prof Ali Riaz, co-chairman of the Consensus Commission, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, a member of the Consensus Commission, said the questions are on the important proposals and the political parties naturally have their opinions on these issues.

"The perspectives of the political parties are crucial. We hope they will provide their responses," he added.

The Consensus Commission, headed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

DOCTORS AWAITING PROMOTIONS Govt creating 7,000 supernumerary posts

Protests postponed for now

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is set to create supernumerary posts to accommodate over 7,000 government doctors and medical college teachers who have been awaiting promotion.

structure to facilitate promotions or workforce adjustments. This practice is common in the administration, police, and foreign service cadres and has recently been introduced in a few other sectors.

This correspondent learned about



Of the proposed 7,122 posts, more than 550 are for professors, over 1,900 for associate professors, and the remainder for assistant professors.

The health ministry has already submitted a list of 3,033 specialised doctors to the public administration ministry for promotion through supernumerary posts. These doctors will receive promotions in addition to those already selected for vacant posts.

Of the proposed 7,122 supernumerary posts, more than 550 are for professors, over 1,900 for associate professors, and the remainder for assistant professors.

Supernumerary posts are temporary positions created outside the regular

the development from Prof Sayedur Rahman, special assistant to the chief adviser for the health ministry, as well as from ministry officials. Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) officials, and doctors' leaders.

The move follows years of pending promotions for over 7,000 doctors, leading a group of doctors to stage a work abstention yesterday. However, the doctors, under the banner of the BCS Health Cadre Specialists Doctors

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Security
guards can
now arrest
people

Says DMP boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private security personnel deployed in residential areas, markets and shopping malls will now serve as members of the "Auxiliary Police Force" with the authority to make arrests.

The initiative has been taken to enhance security during Ramadan and Eid shopping as many shopping centres will remain open late into the night, said SM Sazzat Ali, commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

"Since we have a limited number of police officers, I am exercising my authority under the Metropolitan Police Act to appoint private security personnel as part of the Auxiliary Police Force," he said at a media briefing.

The personnel will wear a designated band labelled 'Auxiliary Police Officer'

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

130 camps
to be set up
for women's
safety

Says Sharmeen
Murshid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has decided to establish 130 surveillance camps across the country, starting with Dhaka, to ensure the safety of women and children, Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmeen S Murshid said yesterday.

"The camps will involve [officials from] the home, social welfare, and women and children ministries, alongside guardians and activists of the July uprising."

She made the remarks while visiting an eight-year-old rape victim from Magura at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sharmeen further stated that the initiative aims to strengthen the role of the home ministry by equipping it with more information while also providing communities with a reliable support system.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The sky is overcast by the plumes of smoke from the brick kilns in the Fatullah area of Narayanganj. Most of these kilns burn wood, coal and other fossil fuel using traditional method, which creates more smoke and deteriorates the air quality. The photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

RAPE OF 8-YEAR-OLD Disturbing details emerge

Sister's father-in-law rapist,
family also had a hand, says
case filed yesterday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eight-year-old girl, who is now battling for her life in the capital's CMH, was raped by her sister's father-in-law when she was visiting their home in Magura, police said.

The sister's husband allegedly abetted the crime, they said, adding that the rapist's wife and elder son were also aware of the incident and later even attempted to kill the child to cover it up.

The victim's mother brought the allegations in a case filed with Magura Sadar Police Station yesterday.

The case was recorded under sections 9(4)(a) and 30 of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The victim's sister's father-in-law, husband, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law were made accused, and police have already arrested them.

"Primarily, we have learned that the victim's sister's father-in-law raped the girl, and the victim's brother-in-law assisted the father. We'll be able to give more details after further investigation," Belayet Hossain, additional deputy inspector general of Khulna Range, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the girl, whose condition is now critical, has been transferred to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for better treatment.

She was taken to CMH in an ICU ambulance from the DMCH around 5:00pm yesterday, DMCH Director Brig

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Bangladeshi firms partner with Starlink

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several Bangladeshi firms have partnered with Starlink to support the setup of ground earth stations in Bangladesh.

The firms have signed contracts with Starlink for collaboration as a team from the US telecommunications service provider is currently visiting Bangladesh.

The collaboration includes space allocation, construction support, and ongoing infrastructure maintenance.

The visit of the Starlink team helped Bangladeshi firms learn about some of Starlink's interest.

At some places, firms are providing support using their own properties, while at some locations, Starlink is considering the Hi-Tech Park property.

Discussions on locations and implementation details are ongoing, said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser.

Taiyeb hoped that Starlink would ensure reliable and high-speed internet in Bangladesh's cities, remote areas, northern regions, or coasts, free from the hassle of load shedding or natural disasters.

130 camps

FROM PAGE 1

"We have devised this strategy and will implement it nationwide, starting from Dhaka. These crimes must be stopped at any cost."

Expressing frustrations over a lack of safety for women and children, she said, "International Women's Day comes and goes, but nothing changes for women in this country. We're still failing to provide a safe environment for [even] children."

Adding that the camps would maintain strict surveillance, she said, "We must use all our strength to end this 'sick' society."

Adviser Sharmeen then questioned, "How can anyone lay a hand on a child who hasn't even become a woman yet? Has this country turned into a land of cowards? The men who assaulted an eight-year-old girl are roaming free -- what kind of masculinity is this?"

"Do you believe our society is in a healthy state? Do you think I can change this decaying system in just five[six]months? This child is fighting for her life, and even the doctors are unsure whether she will survive. But they are doing their best, and young men and women are protesting. I will do everything in my power to ensure justice for this child through the home and law ministries."

She also urged the media to play its role responsibly. "Doctors are doing their utmost. The media, too, has a responsibility. These incidents keep happening, and we must not let them continue. There is evidence, there are arrestees, and we will not let them escape justice."

36 members

FROM PAGE 12

terrorism act against the outfit's members.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed 17 operatives of the outfit on a five day remand for interrogation after Paltan Police Sub-Inspector Md Nurul Islam sought a 10 day remand.

The order was passed by the Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Masuma Rahman.

Earlier in the day, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) said in a statement that its Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit arrested four members of HT from Mohammadpur, Adabor and Uttarkhan areas.

The arrestees were identified as Md Helal Uddin, 45; Asaduzzaman Nur, 18; Tanin Sikder Shihab, 18; and Ahmed Nasif Karim alias Kabbo, 18.

The CTTC team conducted raids around 3:00am and detained them.

Over the past few days, the banned outfit had put up posters across the city urging people to join a "March for Khilafat".

In response, the DMP warned on Thursday that any activities under the banner of HT are punishable under anti-terrorism laws.

Under the Anti Terrorism Act 2009, any gathering, procession or promotional activities by proscribed groups is a criminal offence.

Asked whether the group's continued activities indicate an intelligence failure, DMP Commissioner SM Sazzal Ali said: "We have no such intelligence agency in the DMP."

When asked why the rally was not prevented despite the presence of the CTTC unit, Ali said: "CTTC is very active. They are making arrests. There is no intelligence failure. Dhaka has many allies, and anyone can put up posters in the dead of night."

About Friday's rally, he said: "We could disperse the gathering at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque gate, but as there were a large number of devotees, immediate action could have led to casualties. That's why we took a strategic approach and intervened when the rally moved towards the Paltan intersection."

DMP arrested 15 from the spot, four more last night and three others the day before, bringing the total to 22.

The operation is still ongoing.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and the women's cricket team of Bangladesh pose for a photo at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium during a ceremony titled Adamya Nari Puroshkar 2025 on the occasion of International Women's Day yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Tk 2.21cr extorted daily

FROM PAGE 1

Awami League Presidium Member Shahjahan Khan, once considered the unparalleled leader of the organisation, was replaced by Abdur Rahim Baksh Dudu. His former general secretary Osman Ali was replaced by Humayun Kabir Khan.

Dudu, who rose from operating truck fleets, is involved with local BNP politics, sources said.

Humayun, on the other hand, has a post in the BNP, according to his Facebook profile, serving as an assistant secretary for labour affairs.

A NEW SYSTEM

In the past, Awami League members used various tools such as tokens, receipts, and stickers for extortion. But the new extortions have introduced a novel method to avoid risks of detection.

"Extortion is now happening under the pretext of paying salaries for night guards, cleaners, and linemen, and transactions are happening using cash and bKash," the agency report reads.

Saiful Islam, the new secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association.

HOTSPOTS AND BENEFICIARIES

Three major inter-district bus terminals are located in the busiest areas of the capital -- Gabtoli, Sayedabad, and Mohakhali. There are 240 ticket counters in Gabtoli, 108 in Sayedabad, and 88 in Mohakhali.

As much as Tk 1.07 crore is extorted from these three terminals daily, while Tk 80 lakh is extorted from local and inter-district bus stands, the report reads.

In March last year, a research by Transparency International Bangladesh found that buses pay at least Tk 1,059 crore in illegal tolls and bribes every year across the country.

The TIB report found that a section of unscrupulous Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials and staffers, police officers, transport associations, staffers of city corporations and municipalities, and people affiliated with political parties are collecting tolls, he said.

The BNP leader also warned of tough action in case of allegations of extortion.

"I can tell you that there is no extortion in long haul, inter-district and inter city buses. But if there are any extortions in autorickshaw, CNG or cargo trucks, I cannot tell. I don't have any idea about those sectors," he said.

According to the agency report, out of the Tk 2.21 crore daily extortion, Tk 1.17 crore is extorted under the name of

Transport Owners' Association.

Huge amounts of money are being extorted under the pretext of collecting fees for city corporations, terminal authorities, expenditure of counters and terminals, fees of workers, linemen, cleaners and security guards. Proofs of II types of such payments were found by the agency.

It added that that goons are extorting money from long and medium haul buses, trucks, pickups and covered vans, microbuses, private cars, human haulier, CNG run autorickshaw and even rikshaw.

Transport Owners' Association.

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But surprisingly, the agency inquiry found police are mostly being left out this time. Currently, the extorted money is being distributed among political leadership, leaders of owners and workers associations, two parts of

the BNP.

Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said the government is trying to control extortions in the transport sector.

"We are taking action whenever we get a complaint. BRTA too has started taking action. If those tasked with supervising this sector are involved in extortion, we will take action against them as well," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Contacted, BNP Standing Committee Member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku told The Daily Star yesterday, "Those involved in these activities were never part of the BNP's 16-year long movement. Despite clear directives from the party, anyone engaging themselves in such activities violating discipline cannot be considered part of the BNP."

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চুক্তি এ রিপোর্ট প্রমিটেড পাঠান
প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...

যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রোমটিয়াল গ্রহণ করলেই
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সাথে আরও আরও নিশ্চিত আত্মস্থীয় পুরুষ।

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Π



Various women's rights organisations held programmes, including procession, rally and human chain, at Central Shaheed Minar and in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, marking International Women's Day. The participants particularly demanded the interim government's attention towards handling the crisis in women's safety throughout the country in the recent weeks.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Equal rights for women a must
Say activists; systemic barriers hinder women's progress, says Prof Anu Muhammad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists at a rally yesterday urged the government to ensure law and order at any cost.

They also demanded equal opportunities for women, the withdrawal of reservations on two clauses of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the abolition of child marriage, and equal property rights for women.

The rally was organised by the Social Resistance Committee, a platform of 67 women's and human rights, and development organisations, at Dhaka Central Shaheed Minar, marking International Women's Day 2025.

Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, emphasised the ongoing struggles women face and called for unity to overcome these.

Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir highlighted the rise in sexual violence against women in public spaces and the lack of accountability for perpetrators.

Shahnaz Sumi, director of Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, pointed out that women, who make up half the population, are unsafe everywhere. She urged immediate government action to ensure their security.

Sahida Parvin Shikha, general secretary to the Trade Union Centre, stressed the need for strict legal action against perpetrators of violence against women.

Shakti Foundation Deputy Director Nilufra Begum voiced concern over the growing insecurity of women, criticising the culture of impunity for offenders.

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Six arrested over shooting gold trader in Banasree

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has arrested six suspects in connection with the gold heist and shooting of a jewellery trader in the capital's Banasree area on February 23.

Police recovered 4.9 tolas of gold, Tk 2,44 lakh from the sale of stolen gold, a 7.62mm revolver with four rounds of ammunition, and a motorcycle used in the robbery.

DMP Commissioner SM Sazzat Ali disclosed the details at a press briefing at the DMP media centre yesterday.

The arrestees are Md Kawsar, 31, Md Farhad, 64, Md Khalilur Rahman, 50, Md Suman, 30, Dulu Chowdhury, 43, and Aminul, 35.

Detectives apprehended

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'I draw inspiration from three women'
Says Tarique Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday called for equal opportunities, dignity, and security for all women in Bangladesh, drawing inspiration from the three most important women in his life -- his mother, wife, and daughter.

In a Facebook post marking International Women's Day, he reaffirmed BNP's commitment to women's empowerment and highlighted the party's initiatives to support women.

"The three most important people in my life are my mother, wife, and daughter -- three remarkable women. I have always wanted every opportunity, success, and happiness for them. I am sure many of you reading this can relate to the same feeling," Tarique wrote.

He stressed that young girls and women across Bangladesh must feel empowered and supported, enjoying the same dignity, security, and opportunities as men. "Just like the previous BNP governments led by Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman and Begum Khaleda Zia, we should all work tirelessly to create a just, tolerant, and respectful society that doesn't discriminate based on gender, race, or religion," he said.

Tarique emphasised that daughters should have equal opportunities as sons, be able to step outside their homes or use the internet without harassment,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SEE PAGE 4

Barguna's only govt-run fish hatchery closed for 20 years

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The only government-run fish hatchery in Barguna, located in Amtali upazila, has been closed for nearly 20 years.

As such, local fish farmers have been compelled to procure quality fish fry from distant areas including Khulna, Jashore, Bagerhat, and often fall prey to fraud and incur financial losses.

The fisheries department set up the fish hatchery in Amtali in 1991 at a cost of Tk 9.5 lakh. To facilitate its operations, an overhead water tank was installed, and four ponds were excavated for keeping fish fry. In the same year, brood fish were collected, and the hatchery started producing fish fry. Till 2004, the hatchery supplied approximately 9 million rohu and katla fish fry annually to local fish farmers.

In 2004, the hatchery ceased operations following a malfunction in the electric pump used to lift water to the overhead tank. Since then, no initiatives have been taken to resolve the issue and resume the



hatchery's operations.

Visiting the hatchery recently, this correspondent found its infrastructure in a state of neglect and dilapidated. The room housing the water pump is in ruins, while walls and ceiling are crumbling.

Local fish farmers have long been demanding the government steps to revive the hatchery to alleviate their struggles in procuring quality fish fry locally.

"Sourcing fish fry from as far as Khulna, Bagerhat and Jashore is difficult and expensive. Also, some

fry die during transporting those, escalating our costs and often resulting in losses. If the hatchery is reopened, it would be highly beneficial to us," said Saiful Shikdar, a local fish farmer.

Abdul Jalil Howlader, another fish farmer, echoed him.

Md Mohsin, district fisheries officer in Barguna, acknowledged the issue.

"We are currently in discussions with higher authorities to reconstruct the hatchery under a new project," he said.

Women's leadership Patient falls

FROM PAGE 3

the highest number, six DCs, is in Dhaka, followed by four in Rajshahi, and two each in Chattogram, Mymensingh, Rangpur, and Khulna. However, there are currently no female DCs in Barishal and Sylhet divisions.

In terms of female UNOs, Chattogram has the highest number, with 33, followed by Dhaka (32), Khulna (28), Rajshahi (25), Sylhet (13), Mymensingh (11), and Barishal and Rangpur (8 each).

Despite this progress, female officers continue to face challenges in leadership roles. Netrokona DC Banani Biswas said, "Serving as a DC is a challenge for both male and female officers, but as a woman, it's even more challenging. To tackle this, we need to improve the skills of women and also work towards changing the societal mindset."

Faizul Wasima Nahat, UNO of Kalmakanda upazila, Netrokona, shared her struggles, "As a female officer, I face double the challenges. People are still not accustomed to seeing women in the UNO's chair. Acceptance is different for

male officers. It's tougher for women in this role."

However, Farida Yesmin, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Public Works, offered a different perspective, saying that her experience as a former UNO was mostly positive.

"While working in the field, I received respect from most people, which made the pressure of the job more enjoyable. However, carrying out development work was difficult due to local vested interest groups. If one works with integrity and courage, no one belittles a female officer. On the contrary, the general public encourages her."

Women are also making their mark in the highest administrative roles. Zaheda Parveen, secretary (coordination and reforms) of the Cabinet Division, emphasised the role of family support in achieving success. "For a woman to be successful, the most important thing is family support. My parents raised me not as a girl, but as a child, which helped in my education and career development. Support from my husband was also crucial after marriage."

FROM PAGE 5

of the hospital's surgery department as no bed was found due to overcrowding. A bed was later managed for him, but it was right next to an opening on the corridor without wall or any protective barrier. As a result, while trying to lean on the back of his bed, he fell to the ground through the opening and died.

Witnesses said they heard a loud noise and then found Gani lying lifeless on the ground floor.

Kohinoor Begum, wife of the deceased, alleged, "My husband died due to the negligence of the hospital authority. They shouldn't have given him a bed in such a dangerous spot."

Dr Masud Parvez, director of the hospital, could not be reached for comment over phone.

Police said if the family files a complaint, they will take necessary action after investigation.

58pc want elections

FROM PAGE 3

information on candidates before deciding, while 33.9 percent were waiting to see how the political situation evolved. Uncertainty was notably higher among Gen Z voters, with 33.6 percent still undecided. Additionally, 33.77 percent of female respondents had yet to make up their minds, compared to 25.81 percent of males.

When asked about priorities for the interim government, 69.6 percent identified controlling price hikes as their top concern, followed by improving law and order (45.2 percent) and job creation (29.1 percent). Additionally, 21.8 percent stressed the need to reduce corruption in public services.

However, widespread dissatisfaction was evident in the survey results. A majority—55.05 percent—believed the interim government had failed to control price hikes, while 42.33 percent thought the issue had only been partially addressed.

Similarly, 58.2 percent felt the government had not met expectations in maintaining law and order, while 40.33 percent said the situation had improved slightly.

Despite discussions on institutional and constitutional reforms, only 9.3 percent of respondents prioritised political reform, and just 5.3 percent demanded constitutional changes.

Fahim Mashroor, CEO of BDJOBS, and Kazi Shahed H. Ferdous, country director of Innovation Consulting Bangladesh, also spoke at the event.

I draw

FROM PAGE 3

and freely express themselves without fear.

He also outlined BNP's initiatives, including the "family card" programme, SME loans for women entrepreneurs, and academic and vocational schemes for young girls.

Concluding with a call for collective action, he said: "Together, let's continue to champion women's economic empowerment, political participation, and personal aspirations."

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH

HIGH COURT DIVISION (Statutory Original Jurisdiction)

Company Matter No 260 of 2025

In the matter of An application under section 81(2) and 85(3) Read Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994, Gobind Kumar Biswas, Managing Director of One Piece Fashion Ltd. Reg No:- C-146853 having its Office at Address:- Plot-09, Road-05, Block-F, Basila Garden City, Mohammadpur, P.O: 1207, Dhaka.

...Versus-

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 1, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka....Respondents. Notice is hereby given that upon an application filed by the petitioner under Section 81(2)and 85(3) read with section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 for obtaining permission for Increase of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) OF One Piece Fashion Ltd. The Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh presided over by Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel was pleased to admit the same on 16.02.2025 and the said Hon'ble Court has fixed the matter for hearing on 20.03.2025.

If any one is interested to oppose the said application he may do so by an Advocate or in person Copy of the same may be obtained from the undersigned upon payment of prescribed fees.

Ripon Chandra Biswas, Advocate

Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Advocate, Membership No. 6059, Hall Room No. 1, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhaban, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000. Mobile: 01712052513.

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

Center of Excellence in Higher Education

TENDER NOTICE

Tender No. NSU/24-25-T08

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/ reputed organisations/ distributors/ business partners/ agents for supplying desktop computer, digital podium for North South University as described in the tender schedule.

Detail of the items are mentioned below:

Lot: 1- Core i5 desktop computer

Lot: 2- Digital podium

Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229 within the banking hour on all working days till March 23, 2025 by paying non-refundable amount of taka 1,000.00 (one thousand) in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of "North South University" along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **March 24, 2025 by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229

Phone: +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202

Email: procurement@northsouth.edu. Web: www.northsouth.edu

Six arrested over

FROM PAGE 3

them yesterday in multiple operations across Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Barishal, Pirojpur, and Madaripur.

A Targeted Attack The victim, Md Anwar Hossain (45), is a jeweller trader and owner of Alankar Jewellers in Rampura's Avenue Road-5.

On the night of 23 February, at around 10:45pm, Anwar was returning home after closing his shop, carrying 160 tolas of gold (worth approximately Tk 2.47 crore) and Tk one lakh in cash.

As he reached his rented home in Banasree's D Block, six to seven armed robbers on three motorcycles intercepted him at the gate. When he resisted their attempt to snatch his gold and money, they shot him multiple times, hitting his left knee and thigh.

The attackers also struck him with sharp weapons, causing severe injuries before fleeing with

the stolen valuables.

Anwar was initially taken to a local hospital in Rampura and later transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for advanced treatment.

His wife filed a case with Rampura Police Station the following day.

Addressing the press, Commissioner Sazzat Ali said, "This was a meticulously planned robbery. The gang held a preparatory meeting before carrying out the crime."

He added that DB teams worked relentlessly, analysing past robbery patterns, CCTV footage, and using technology to track the perpetrators.

"One suspect was first arrested in Barishal, and his confession led to further arrests," he said.

All six arrestees have a history of robbery and multiple cases against them.

"Legal proceedings are underway, and our crackdown on criminal networks will continue," the commissioner added.

Equal rights

FROM PAGE 3

Indigenous Women Network Coordinator Falguni Tripura emphasised that when any woman -- regardless of race, ethnicity, or social class -- faces violence, society must unite in protest without discrimination.

Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu said that while Bangladeshi women are progressing, marginalised and indigenous women continue to face discrimination.

The programme began with a protest song by Sanoora Jahan Nitu, followed by a dance performance by Mukta Thakur and her troupe. Following the speeches, Kazi Gulshan Ara Deepa read out a declaration consisting of 14 demands.

The event concluded with a protest rally from the Central Shaheed Minar to Jatiya Press Club.

Around 500 participants, including representatives from the Social Resistance Committee, journalists, and members of various organisations, attended the event.

Meanwhile, prominent economist Prof Anu Muhammad emphasised the need for greater female representation across various sectors during a discussion marking International Women's Day 2025.

The event, held at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in the capital yesterday, was organised by Nari Sanghati, commemorating their 20th anniversary.

The session, titled "The Aspiration for Women's Liberation: The Reality after the Mass Uprising", highlighted the pressing issues surrounding women's rights in Bangladesh. "Without the active

participation of women, there will be no real change in Bangladesh. Women's issues, including violence and discrimination, have long existed in our society, but the state has failed to take substantial action to address them. There is also growing concern that the interim government has not been adequately addressing these problems," said Anu Muhammad.

He further said that societal norms play a major role in perpetuating gender-based violence. "Boys are often raised with the idea that they hold authority over women, which contributes to gender inequality and violence. This mentality is nurtured in families and is a critical factor in the problem."

He also pointed to religious education as a contributing factor to societal attitudes towards women.

Muhammad concluded by stressing the importance of women's presence in all sectors.

Dr Fatima Sultana Suvra, an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology, noted the deeply entrenched patriarchal structures in Bangladesh.

"Women's rights should not be seen as privileges, but as inherent entitlements that must be protected by the state," she said.

Reetu Sattar, an artist and cultural worker, said, "Moral policies are often used to suppress women and keep them marginalised."

Shyamoli Shil, president of Nari Sanghati, said, "Women are the most vulnerable group facing mob justice. The interim government must prioritise the safety of women in our society."

Dev projects worsen

FROM PAGE 5

Based on traffic counts in 2009, about 20,000-25,000 motorised vehicles, up to 40 percent of them trucks, used the highway daily. The number of motorised vehicles was expected to grow to at least 35,000 by 2020, with further increases anticipated by 2025 due to the city's expanding activities.

Speaking to The Daily Star, CMP Traffic North Zone Deputy Commissioner (DC) Joyful Abedin Tito said, "We have spoken to schools, colleges, markets, and hospital

authorities to ensure that traffic congestion remains at a tolerable level."

"The market authorities have been asked to arrange parking spaces for their customers so that buyers do not leave their vehicles on the roads, causing gridlocks," he added.

CMP West Division Deputy Commissioner Niskriti Chakma said footpath vendors and illegal battery-run rickshaws are significantly contributing to traffic congestion.

"Sometimes, untoward situations arise when we try to enforce the law against them," she said.

Office of the Kalai Pourashava District: Joypurhat

Memo No. KPS/Eng/2025/217

Tender Notice (e-GP)

Notice No:-04/2024-2025

Dated: 06-03-2025

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

Tender ID No.	Schemes/packages Name	Tender Document Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
1082268	Upgrading of RCC Road Package no-GPBMD/KALY /23		

CUMILLA HOSPITAL Patient falls from corridor to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Cumilla

A patient at Cumilla Medical College Hospital died after accidentally falling from the fourth floor's corridor to the ground on Friday night.

The incident occurred around 11:50pm.

"The deceased, Osman Gani, 47, a resident of Daulatpur village under Cumilla Sadar upazila, was undergoing treatment at the hospital's surgery ward," said Mohinul Islam, officer-in-charge of Cumilla Kotwali Model Police Station.

No complaint has been filed in this connection yet, said the OC.

According to the victim's family, Gani was admitted to the hospital a few days back for a surgery on his hand. He was undergoing treatment on the corridor

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

2 killed, four injured in road accidents

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Jamalpur

Two people were killed and four others injured in road accidents on Jamalpur-Mymensingh highway at Chanakanda in Jamalpur yesterday.

The deceased were identified as truck driver Jewel Akand Kalu, 45, and Shaon Islam of Seemarpur area of Bakshiganj upazila. Initially, the identities of the injured were not known immediately.

Jamalpur Fire Station Officer Rabiu Islam said truck driver Jewel Akand was cleaning his truck on the roadside when another truck crashed into his vehicle. He died on the spot, and three others were injured.

Meanwhile, a motorcycle crashed into another truck, killing biker Shaon Islam and injuring the other.

Police seized the two trucks. The injured were taken to a Jamalpur hospital.



Workers dropping cement, stones, and sand blocks around the pillars of the Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Bridge (Doarika Bridge). This initiative was taken due to the increased current along the Sugandha River on the Barishal-Dhaka highway. The photo was taken from the Babuganj upazila in Barishal yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Dev projects worsen Ctg traffic woes

FM MIZANUR RAHMAN

The residents of Chattogram have been enduring severe traffic congestion due to ongoing development projects by various organisations, including Chattogram Wasa and the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA).

Additionally, a large number of unregistered vehicles, including three wheelers and battery-run auto-rickshaws, have further strained the efforts of traffic police.

Chattogram Wasa is currently carrying out road digging and cutting as part of Package-1 of the Central Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) project, which is being implemented at a cost of Tk 2,627.93 crore.

South Korean company TAEYOUNG Engineering & Construction Limited, in collaboration with CWasa, is overseeing this project in different areas of the city.

Meanwhile, the CDA is constructing ramps for a 16.5 kilometre-long elevated

expressway connecting Lalkhan Bazar to Airport Road in the GEC area and Port Connecting Road, blocking a significant portion of the main roads.

Residents have been experiencing severe traffic congestion for months, with street hawkers and battery-run auto-rickshaws encroaching on busy

roads, further exacerbating the gridlocks during peak hours.

In response, a coordination meeting on traffic management was held at the Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) Headquarters, where several measures were discussed to mitigate congestion. Pedestrians and commuters have

complained that the construction of the elevated expressway ramp in front of BAWA School has narrowed the roads, leading to heavy congestion from GEC to the Wasa area. A similar situation prevails on the Port Connecting Road due to ramp construction. The deteriorating condition of roads has only added to the woes of thousands of commuters.

Additionally, sewerage-related roadworks by CWasa have damaged key roads in the city, including those in Agrabad, EPZ, Halishahar, and Arakan Road, leaving them in a dilapidated state.

Illegal parking on roads and footpath encroachment have further worsened the traffic situation, according to traffic officials.

A BRAC survey in 2015, citing BRTA data, reported that 11,321 trucks, 2,855 buses, 10,879 minibuses, 4,974 mini-trucks, 25,292 cars, 1,503 human haulers, 56,995 motorbikes, and 4,974 pick-ups operate on the city's streets daily.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



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5 girls raped

FROM PAGE 12
raped her last evening, alleged her father, who expressed helplessness in pursuing justice for his daughter. "I am a poor fish seller and my wife is physically challenged," he said.

Sub-Inspector Shamim Akhtar of Sreepur Police Station said locals rescued the victim and caught the accused after hearing her screams. After receiving information, police went to the spot and sent the victim to a hospital.

Arman also recorded a video of the incident, Shamim said, adding that police seized his phone.

Police found three "objectionable" videos on Arman's mobile phone which were shared on messaging apps.

Madrasa teacher Malek was detained last night for allegedly raping an eight-year-old student on March 6, Sreepur Police Station OC Joynal Abedin Mondal said.

Police said on March 8, when the victim's father Mubarak urged his daughter to go to the madrasa, his daughter

The girl's father said he came to know about the incident after his daughter refused to go to the madrasa, saying she was raped and threatened by the teacher.

In Munshiganj Sadar upazila, locals of Char Muktarpur area detained Mohammad Sekandor Ali Chokder, 65, from Tongibari

and handed him over to police on charges of raping two girls aged eight and 10.

The incident occurred on March 2, but it came to light on Friday night after one of the children disclosed the incident to her mother, who filed a case in this connection, police said.

The suspect allegedly lured the girls to a secluded location with food and balloons before raping them.

The children were sent to a hospital for medical examination, said Mohammad Saiful Alam, officer-in-charge of Munshiganj Sadar Police Station.

In Faridpur Sadar upazila, police arrested a 14-year-old boy in a case filed by a man on charges of raping his four-year-old daughter at a mahogany orchard on Friday night. When the girl screamed, passersby rescued her and stopped the boy from fleeing.

The incident occurred when the girl, along with her male friend and two younger brothers, went to the beach.

Mozibur Rahman, OC of Sitakunda Model Police Station, said they launched a raid to arrest the suspects.

In Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, police detained Mozammel Haque Manik, 50, an assistant teacher of a government primary school, on charges of attempting to rape a fifth grader at the institution during a private tuition class yesterday morning.

The girl was admitted to a government hospital for treatment. A doctor said she was traumatised and sick.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
office of the Upazila Engineer,
Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo no. 46.02.8988.000.14.001.25-169

Dated- 06-03-2025

Tender Notice No-05/2024-25 (LTM)

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

SL No.	Package No.	Tender ID No.	Publication Date	Tender Last Selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing (Date & Time)
01	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/01	1084323	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
02	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/02	1084324	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
03	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/03	1084325	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
04	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/04	1084326	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
05	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/05	1084327	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
06	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/06	1084328	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
07	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/07	1084329	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM
08	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sherp/2024-25/08	1084330	10-Mar-2025 10:00 AM	24-Mar-2025 12:00 PM	24-Mar-2025 2:00 PM

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in National e-GP portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration National e-GP System <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> is required. The fees for downloading the Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches upto 1.00 PM, 24/03/2025. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Arfin Perva)

Upazila Engineer

Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur.

Phone: 0931-61272

e-mail : up.sherp-s@lged.gov.bd

GD- 605

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তর

দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা ভবন

৯২-৯৩, মুক্তিবাচী বাঃ/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২

www.ddm.gov.bd

তারিখঃ ০৫-০৩-২০২৫

বেসরকারী আইনজীবী প্যানেল নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সরকারি দ্বারা রাজকোর্তে দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা ও আগ মন্ত্রণালয় এবং এর আওতাধীন দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তরের সকল মামলা পরিচালনায় বিজ্ঞ এটর্নি জেনারেল কর্তৃপক্ষ নিয়োজিত বিজ্ঞ সরকারী আইনজীবীকে সহায়তা প্রদানের নিমিত্ত মহামান সুপ্রিম কোর্টের আপ্লিক বিভাগ ও হাইকোর্ট বিভাগের মালামসামুহের জন্য ২(পৃষ্ঠা) জন, প্রাসাদিক ও প্রশাসনিক আপ্লিক প্রিন

GAZA REBUILDING Europe hails Arab plan

AFP, Berlin

Britain, France, Germany and Italy yesterday backed a proposal by Muslim-majority nations to rebuild Gaza as a "realistic path".

The counter proposal to US President Donald Trump's plan to take over Gaza and displace its residents "promises -- if implemented -- swift and sustainable improvement of the catastrophic living conditions for the Palestinians living in Gaza," the foreign ministers of the four countries said in a joint statement.

The 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at an emergency meeting in Saudi Arabia, on Saturday formally adopted a plan put forward by the Arab League.

The Egyptian-crafted plan, an alternative to Trump's widely condemned takeover, proposes to rebuild the Gaza Strip under the future administration of the Palestinian Authority.

Unlike the Trump plan, it aims to do so without displacing the territory's 2.4 million inhabitants, who have suffered 17 months of war.

The OIC, which represents the Muslim world, in a statement urged



"the international community and international and regional funding institutions to swiftly provide the necessary support for the plan".

The Egyptian proposal -- which does not outline a role for Hamas, which controls Gaza -- has already been rejected by both the US and Israel.

But the European foreign ministers said it "shows a realistic path to the reconstruction of Gaza".

"We are clear that Hamas must neither govern Gaza nor be a threat to Israel any more," they said in their statement.

"We commend the serious efforts of all involved stakeholders and appreciate the important signal the Arab states have sent by jointly developing this recovery and reconstruction plan," the statement added.

Ex-MP's house occupied, turned

FROM PAGE 12

Miste, originally from Tangail's Deldtar upazila, currently resides in a rented house in Tangail's Housing area. A year ago, she established an ashram for mentally ill individuals in a rented space in Santosh, Sadar upazila, under the name Al Mukaddas Foundation, they added.

Locals said the house belongs to Joaher Islam Joaher, former AL lawmaker for Tangail-8 and district AL general secretary. He and his family have been on the run since the AL government fell on August 5 last year, leaving the house abandoned.

Joaher is accused of orchestrating attacks on SAD activists during the July-August uprising. Several cases, including for murder, have been filed



People stare at overturned vehicles on a road following a heavy storm that hit Bahia Blanca, 600 km south of Buenos Aires, Argentina, yesterday. At least ten people died and more than 1,000 were evacuated in the Argentine port city of Bahia Blanca as torrential rains flooded homes and hospitals, destroyed roads and forced authorities to cut power.

PHOTO: AFP

532 Alawites killed by Syrian security forces, allies

AFP, Beirut

Syrian security forces deployed heavily in the Alawite heartland on the Mediterranean coast yesterday, after a war monitor reported that government and allied forces killed more than 500 civilians from the religious minority in recent days.

Residents of the region continued to report killings of civilians after deadly clashes broke out on Thursday between Syria's new authorities and gunmen loyal to toppled president Bashar al-Assad, himself an Alawite.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that "532 Alawite civilians were killed in the coastal regions of Syria and the Latakia mountains by security forces

and allied groups".

The Britain-based Observatory said they were killed in "executions" carried out by security personnel or pro-government fighters" and accompanied by "looting of homes and properties".

The civilian deaths brought the overall toll since Thursday to 745, after fighting killed 93 members of the new government's security forces and 120 pro-Assad fighters, according to the Observatory's figures.

The official SANA news agency reported that security forces had deployed to Latakia, as well as Jableh and Baniyas, to restore order. Baniyas resident Samir Haidar, 67, told AFP two of his brothers and his niece were killed by "armed groups" that entered people's homes, adding that there were "foreigners among them".

He managed to escape to a Sunni neighbourhood, but said: "If I had been five minutes late, I would have been killed... we were saved in the last minutes."

Though himself an Alawite, Haidar was part of the leftist opposition to the Assads and was imprisoned for more than a decade under their rule.

Defence ministry spokesman Hassan Abdul Ghani said the

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Defence ministry spokesman Hassan Abdul Ghani said the

security forces had "reimposed control" over areas that had seen attacks by Assad loyalists.

It is strictly forbidden to approach any home or attack anyone inside their homes," he added in a video posted by SANA.

The killings followed clashes sparked by the arrest of a wanted suspect in a predominantly Alawite village, the Observatory reported.

The monitor said there had been a "relative return to calm" in the region on Saturday, as the security forces deployed reinforcements.

A defence ministry source told SANA that troops had blocked roads leading to the coast to prevent "violations", without specifying who was committing them.



Disturbing details emerge

FROM PAGE 1

Gen Md Asaduzzaman said, adding that the child has been in critical condition from the beginning.

"Although she was under treatment at the DMCH, excessive presence of attendants was causing disruptions for other patients. Additionally, repeated interference from attendants was affecting the medical team's ability to provide proper care."

"Considering these factors, it was decided to transfer the child to CMH for better medical attention and management."

The DMCH had formed a four-member medical board to oversee her treatment, but doctors expressed little hope for her recovery.

"The injury to her neck is severe, and there are also injuries to her genitals. She was put on life support around 9:00pm on Friday. Doctors have almost given up hope," said Brig Gen Asaduzzaman.

Earlier on Wednesday, the child, a third grader, had gone to visit her elder sister's house in Magura town to spend Ramadan holidays. She was raped that night.

On Thursday morning, her sister's mother-in-law took her to a hospital, after which neighbours informed the child's parents, who live in a different upazila of Magura.

SISTER WASN'T SPARED EITHER
Speaking to reporters, the victim's elder sister alleged that she too had previously been subjected to attempted sexual assaults by her father-in-law, leading her to go back to her parents' house.

She alleged her family pressured her to return to her in-laws' house, disregarding her fears.

Quoting from the case statement,

through the media. No one from our movement is involved," he said. He also said that SAD would not take responsibility for any crimes committed in the name of their movement.

Asked, Tangail Sadar Police Station Officer in Charge Tanvir Ahmed said police have questioned Miste.

"She has refused to vacate the house. Authorities are assessing the next steps," he added.

Speaking over the phone, Joaher's daughter, Jakia Islam, said the house has remained vacant as most of her family members face legal charges.

"There is no rule of law and thus such chaos."

She further alleged that on February 6, Miste led a mob that vandalised and looted their house.

on Thursday.

There, the mother-in-law tried to mislead the doctors regarding what was wrong with the child, but when she realised the doctors figured what happened, she fled.

Md Alauddin, inspector (investigation) of the Magura Sadar Police Station, said, "We produced the four arrests in court yesterday [Friday] under section 54 [which means they were arrested under suspicion without any case filed]. However, today [yesterday] we're showing them arrested in a rape case filed by the victim's mother. We may interrogate the arrestees in remand."

Speaking to The Daily Star last night, the officer in charge of the station said they will take the four to court again today and seek remand.

'SHAME FOR THE NATION'

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday spoke with the victim's mother over the phone when a BNP delegation visited DMCH, reports UNB.

He assured the family the party would stand by them in their pursuit of justice.

Meanwhile, Akhter Hossain, member secretary of National Citizen Party, after visiting DMCH, said women are not safe anywhere -- be it workplaces, educational institutions, or even their own homes -- "a matter of great shame for the nation".

Calling on the public to take a stand, he said, "Any act of oppression against women, no matter how minor or severe, must be resisted."

He blamed the rise in sexual violence on the failure to ensure justice, saying, "Crimes like rape continue to increase because perpetrators do not face proper punishment. A fundamental reform of the judiciary is necessary."

However, as her condition kept

worsening, the sister's mother-in-law,

with the help of some neighbours, took

her to a local hospital around 10:30am

Recent attacks on women

FROM PAGE 1

said while speaking as the chief guest at a ceremony marking the International Women's Day at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The event honoured outstanding women with "Indomitable Women's Award-2025" for their significant contributions to various fields as part of government initiative to pay due respect and inspire them.

He said they will definitely confront the anti-women forces that are trying to raise their heads, along with all the people of the country.

He said there are still many people who, instead of standing by the side of oppressed women, look down on them with contempt.

"However, if we want to prevent violence against women, oppression of women, and build a discrimination-free, beautiful Bangladesh, there is no alternative but to stand by women and support them," he said.

Yunus urged men to come forward to establish the rightful place of women in the society.

"No matter how many obstacles we face, we will make the full use of the opportunity that history has given us. We will build a new Bangladesh. This is our promise," he said.

The CA said the girls of the country are playing an important role in their respective fields with great courage and they are contributing to the overall progress of the country, including politics and economy, by overcoming hundreds of obstacles. "We must be as vigilant now as we were in a war-like situation. Be extremely vigilant in protecting the safety of women and children.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis and Prof of Mass Communication and Journalism Prof Gitiara Nasreen spoke as special guests while Senior Secretary to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Mamitaj Ahmed, delivered welcome remarks.

A documentary was screened at the event. A cultural event was held highlighting the July uprising.

Take firm actions

FROM PAGE 2

Criticising the interim government, she said, "Today, I ask the current interim government -- why are women in the country being raped? Why are children being raped? During the past fascist regime, women were subjected to rape and oppression because there was a culture of impunity. But why are women still being raped on buses today? Why is there no action being taken? What is the government doing? The government cannot afford to be lenient."

Noting that women's participation in Chhatra Dal is falling, she said, "There are a few MPs now who were previously involved with Chhatra Dal. But why are there no female leaders in Chhatra Dal? This is a very difficult question. Women are not present in politics. During our time, there were some female students in the organisation, but now we no longer see female leaders. We need to increase female leadership. Women must be valued."

INTERNATIONAL

Myanmar junta chief says election to be held by January

AFP, Bangkok

Myanmar's junta chief said the country would hold an election in December or January, the first in the war-torn nation since the military staged a coup in 2021.

"We are planning to hold the election in December 2025 or ... by January 2026," General Min Aung Hlaing was quoted as saying in the state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar published yesterday.

The vote would be "free and fair" he said on Friday during a state visit to Belarus, adding that 53 political parties had "submitted their lists" to participate.

"We also invite observation teams from Belarus to come and observe" the slated election, he said during a meeting with Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko in Minsk.

The Myanmar military seized power in 2021, making unsubstantiated claims of massive electoral fraud in 2020 polls won resoundingly by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD).

It has since unleashed a bloody crackdown on dissent and as fighting ravages swathes of the country had repeatedly delayed plans for fresh polls that critics say will be neither free nor fair.

The junta is struggling to crush widespread opposition to its rule from ethnic rebel groups and pro-democracy "People's Defence Forces".

S Korea's impeached president released from detention

AFP, Seoul

Impeached South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was released from detention yesterday after a court voided his arrest on procedural grounds -- but he remains under investigation over his declaration of martial law.

The suspended president, who was detained in a dawn raid in January on insurrection charges over his December 3 attempt to subvert civilian rule, walked out of the detention centre smiling, before bowing deeply before a small crowd of cheering supporters.

"I bow my head in gratitude to the people of this nation," Yoon said in a statement released through his lawyers.

A court had cancelled his arrest warrant a day earlier on technical and legal grounds -- a decision that prosecutors probing Yoon called "unjust".

Yoon was freed after the prosecutors waived their right to appeal the court verdict, which specifically concerned technical details of his detention on criminal charges.

'Do not make us lose restraint'

FROM PAGE 12

"Even after the uprising, we see a small girl from Magura fighting for her life [after she was gangraped].... We also witnessed how a student at Dhaka University was forced to conform to a certain ideology regarding her dress."

NCP Joint Convener Nusrat Tabassum said, "We have never been able to celebrate International Women's Day with joy. Rape has become a daily occurrence.... One of the primary goals of our party is to ensure women's safety."

Jannatul Ferdous Shafa and Ameena Begum, both of whom lost their husbands during the mass uprising, spoke at the event.

Hasina, 14 others

FROM PAGE 12

Kabir Nanak, former member of parliament from Dhaka-13; Mirza Azam, former member of parliament from Jamalpur 3; AFM Bahauddin Nasim, former member of parliament from Dhaka-8; Brig Gen (retd) Muhammad Shamsul Alam, former commander, 44th Rifle Battalion; Lt Gen (retd) Molla Fazle Akbar, former DG of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence; Hasan Mahmud Khandaker, former DG of Rab; Abdul Kahar Akond, former police officer; Nur Mohammad, former inspector general of police; and Monirul Islam, former additional IGP.

The witnesses were asked to inform the commission within seven days when they want to testify.

It said they could testify via video conference as well.

Bangladeshi shot

FROM PAGE 12

the killing and demanded the return of Al Amin's body. The BGB also urged its Indian counterpart to detain any Bangladeshis involved in cross-border crimes and hand them over to the BGB instead of using lethal force.

The BGB assured that appropriate legal action would be taken against any Bangladeshis involved in such activities.

The BSF side stated that their personnel were compelled to open fire after "the smugglers attacked a BSF member and tried to snatch his weapon", Bodruddoza said.

The BSF assured that Al Amin's body would be returned to Bangladesh after completing the necessary formalities, he added.

HONOURING WOMEN LEADERS DRIVING CHANGE

The Daily Star and UNDP present the fifth edition of Nirbhoya, celebrating five extraordinary women who are leading transformation in their communities through resilience, innovation, and empowerment.



#ForAllWomenAndGirls.

A joint initiative by

The Daily Star



Tandra Mollik: Championing climate resilience in Bagerhat

Tandra Mollik, 28, from Bagerhat, has turned adversity into advocacy, empowering women in one of Bangladesh's most climate-vulnerable areas. Struggling with rising salinity and erratic weather, her family fell into deep poverty when her husband lost his job during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Identified as climate-vulnerable under the LoGIC project, Tandra received training and financial support, using it to launch climate-adaptive livelihoods such as sheep rearing and water-melon cultivation. But she didn't stop at securing her own future — she became a community advocate for climate resilience.

Engaging with civil society organizations and local government, she educates other women on sustainable farming, safe drinking water access, and disaster preparedness. A first responder during cyclones,



she ensures families reach shelters in time. Additionally, as a Community Clinic Support Committee member, she assists pregnant women and children in accessing health-care.

Recognizing her contributions, the local government provided her with a 3,000-litre rainwater harvesting system. Tandra's efforts exemplify how empowered individuals can uplift entire communities, making her not just a survivor of climate hardship, but a leader shaping a more resilient future.

Champa Chakma: Defender of justice in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Champa Chakma, a young leader from Rangamati's Longadu Union, is breaking barriers as a female Karbri (village chief) and an advocate for women's rights. As the organizing secretary of the CHT Female Headman Karbri Association, she fights against gender-based violence, child marriage, and social injustice.

Her most remarkable intervention was saving a 15-year-old girl from a forced marriage after a village tribunal's harsh ruling. Understanding the dangers of such decisions, she mobilized local authorities and successfully overturned the verdict. The girl was allowed to continue her education instead of being married off against her will.

Champa also leads anti-drug campaigns, ensuring youth in her community stay away from addiction. She



provides mediation in local disputes, fostering peaceful coexistence among different ethnic groups. "Change starts with action," she asserts. "We cannot wait for some-

one else to fix our problems." Through her leadership, Champa is not just a guardian of her people's rights but a mentor inspiring other women to take on leadership roles. Her work is redefining what it means to be a community leader in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Nazrul Islam Ritu: Breaking barriers with inclusive leadership

Nazrul Islam Ritu made history as the first elected chairperson from Bangladesh's hijra (third gender) community, transforming the Trilochanpur Union Parishad in Jhenaidah with inclusive leadership. Despite societal discrimination, Ritu has dedicated her life to uplifting marginalized groups, proving that representation in governance can drive meaningful change.

From a young age, Ritu experienced alienation due to her gender identity. Seeking acceptance, she joined a hijra community but maintained ties with her village, gradually becoming a trusted figure through social work. Her efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic, providing food and financial aid, strengthened this bond and ultimately led to her election.

Now, she serves all residents—regardless of gender or background—mediating disputes, ensuring community development, and advocating for equal rights. "I don't just represent my community," Ritu says. "I belong to everyone, and my priority is collective progress."

Ritu's leadership has been further bolstered by her involvement in the Activating Village Courts in Bangladesh (AVCB) Phase III Project, a joint initiative by the Government of



Bangladesh, the European Union, and UNDP. This project aims to enhance access to justice in rural areas by empowering local leaders like Ritu to effectively mediate disputes and ensure community development.

Her leadership has fostered harmony and

inspired others in the third-gender community to pursue public service. Her inclusion in the national school curriculum as a role model further cements her impact. Through resilience and dedication, Ritu has not only shattered barriers for hijra individuals but also set a precedent for a more inclusive society.

Rogina: A journey from survival to social impact

For Rogina, 34, from Paschim Balipara in Pirojpur, life was a cycle of hardship. Married off young due to poverty, she endured years of domestic abuse before finding her path to independence. Determined to secure a better life for her children, she started working, but financial struggles remained.

Her breakthrough came when she was selected for the SWAPNO Project, which provided a stable job and financial literacy training. With her earnings, she invested in livestock and small-scale fish farming, generating a sustainable income. But Rogina didn't stop there — she became a force for change in her community.

She now advocates for girls' education, collects and donates school supplies for underprivileged children, and supports families in



medical emergencies. Last winter, she gathered and distributed warm clothes to struggling families, ensuring no one in her village suffered in the cold.

"I know what it's like to feel hopeless," Rogina shares. "Now, I want to help others find their way out of hardship." Through resilience and generosity, she has transformed not just her own life but has become a pillar of support for her entire community.

Kabita Banerjee: Financial empowerment in climate-affected Khulna

Living in flood-prone Hariharpur village in Khulna, Kabita Banerjee struggled for years alongside her husband, fishing for crabs in the Sundarbans to make ends meet. Frequent floods and rising salinity made agriculture impossible, forcing many to migrate. But Kabita chose to stay and fight for a better future.

With support from the LoGIC Project, she learned climate-adaptive livelihood skills. Her first attempt at crab farming failed due to floods, but she persisted. Equipped with digital financial literacy, she opened a mobile cash transfer hub, making banking services accessible to fellow villagers. Her success encouraged three other women to start their own businesses.

As head of the Ward No. 8 Climate and Livelihood Development Cooperative



Society, she now mentors 147 women on financial independence and savings. "Empowerment isn't just about surviving; it's about helping others thrive," she says.

Kabita's journey demonstrates how access to skills and technology can transform entire communities. Her work has not only secured her family's future but has also paved the way for women's financial inclusion in one of Bangladesh's most climate-vulnerable regions.

Our democracy needs women

Why are women so invisible in the political landscape?

Although the political landscape in Bangladesh has become more vibrant, with both old and new parties trying to woo the public with their promises, the scope of women's political participation continues to be quite poor. The dominance of men in politics and the absence of any structural changes to address gender discrimination, which excludes women from exercising their political agency, are major deterrents. Furthermore, the unrelenting rise of violence against women—from rape to online sexual harassment—has created an unsafe environment for all women in general, even more so for those with political aspirations.

According to the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS), nearly 12,000 women and girls faced torture and violence in the last five years. During that period, 1,089 women and girls were gang-raped, and 207 were murdered after sexual assault. At least 50 victims took their own lives due to the trauma they had endured. The latest incidents of moral policing, mob violence, and sexual harassment in public spaces targeting women, and the administration's ineffectual attempts to punish perpetrators, have created an even more insecure environment for them. Added to this is the vitriolic online sexual harassment of women, whether they are journalists, activists, political figures, or celebrities, all of which discourage women's participation in politics. And what is most disturbing is the perception of impunity due to the lack of enforcement of laws, which has emboldened perpetrators of violence against women.

We are encouraged by the fact that the new student parties have strong women leaders, although their numbers are still too few. These women face the daunting task of not only challenging the inherent male chauvinism of society but also making public appearances and raising their voices in an environment that is quite hostile towards women. The stark difference between women's presence during the July uprising protests and today's political rallies is telling.

The interim government must take stern measures to deter groups and individuals who believe they have a license to harass or attack women. Online harassers must also be brought to book. The government, through its law enforcement agencies, must create a safe environment for women in public spaces so that they can freely participate in politics—whether at protests, rallies, or simply walking in the streets without fear.

While security is a basic requirement for women's political participation, structural discrimination and tokenism are major barriers. During the Awami League's rule, women members of parliament were selected for their loyalty to the party rather than their leadership qualities. Without direct elections, the scope for developing effective women leaders was severely curtailed. The Electoral Reform Commission and the Constitution Reform Commission have proposed increasing the number of parliamentary reserve seats for women to 100 (from 50), with all seats filled through direct elections. This is bound to make a significant difference in the capabilities of women members of parliament. However, political parties must also honour the mandatory allocation of at least 33 percent of all committee positions to women—something that has been absent in major political parties. Bangladesh has much to gain from having more women politicians who earn their positions through merit rather than nepotism or dynastic politics.

No more cost and time overruns

Govt must quickly complete Rooppur and other important projects

It is encouraging that the government has prioritised the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project in its revised Annual Development Plan. The project has received the highest allocation for a single project in the revised ADP, as the government wants to make it operational as quickly as possible. After Rooppur, the Matarbari coal-fired power plant project has received the second highest allocation. Three other Jica-funded projects on Dhaka's transport system—MRT 6, MRT 1, and MRT 5—have also received large allocations in the revised ADP. However, the allocations for most other projects have been cut as their implementation have been slow or hampered due to political unrest in the country.

The timely completion of the Rooppur and Matarbari projects is crucial to meeting the country's growing energy demands. According to the original project proposal for Rooppur, Unit-1 of the power plant was supposed to go into operation in December 2022, Unit-2 in October 2023, and the entire project was scheduled for completion by December 31, 2025. However, implementation has been delayed for several reasons—with the government now wanting to complete it by December 2027. Reportedly, the total cost of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project is Tk 1,14,225 crore, with the majority financed by Russia. As of June last year, around Tk 75,000 crore had been spent from the total cost. In the revised ADP for FY25, the government approved Tk 2,16,000 crore for the project. Five other projects related to the electricity line, high-frequency telecommunications system, and water supply for the power plant also received an increased allocation.

The government must ensure that the funds are spent transparently, without corruption or irregularities. During the previous regime, excessive amounts were spent on purchasing furniture and other items for the officials and employees of the project, and the salaries fixed for them were also unusually high. We hope that such irregularities will not be repeated and that those involved in misconduct will be brought to book. This will set a precedent in a country where development projects are often mired in corruption.

Additionally, the government must ensure that this and other megaprojects do not cause any harm to the environment. Many of the country's megaprojects were undertaken by the previous government without conducting proper feasibility studies or obtaining the necessary environmental clearances. Going forward, we must move away from such poor practices. Finally, implementing these projects within the stipulated time and budget is crucial to preventing the misuse and waste of public funds.

EDITORIAL

Mob justice is not justice

The rule of law is the bedrock of any civilised nation



Abdulla Al Rafi
is a journalist.

ABDULLA AL RAFI

In a civilised society, justice must be dispensed through legal channels, not through the hands of an enraged mob. Yet in Bangladesh, mob justice remains an enduring stain on our social fabric, exposing the failures of law enforcement and the growing distrust in the judicial system. How much longer will we tolerate such barbarism? How many more lives must be lost before we say, "enough is enough?"

Mob justice—where a group of people takes the law into their own hands, often inflicting brutal violence or even death upon an accused individual—has become alarmingly common. The victims of these frenzied attacks are often not hardened criminals but mere suspects, caught in the unforgiving grip of public paranoia. A man accused of theft, a woman behaving "unusually," or even someone falsely rumoured to be a child abductor can become a target. In a country that aspires to uphold the rule of law, this is nothing short of a national disgrace.

Despite repeated calls for reform, the state has failed to take a firm stance against mob violence. The root of the problem lies in both inadequate law enforcement and an alarming lack of consequences. Perpetrators of mob lynchings often walk free because they are not seen as individual criminals but as part of an uncontrollable crowd. This impunity only emboldens others to do the same. If the justice system cannot ensure fair trials and lawful punishment, public confidence erodes, and mob rule takes over.

Recent incidents paint a terrifying picture. On March 3, two young men were lynched in Chattogram's Satkania after being suspected of robbery. No trial, no evidence—just swift, brutal execution at the hands of an enraged mob. A day earlier, in Char Fasson, Bhola, a man was subjected to unspeakable cruelty—his eyes gouged out and fingers severed—on mere suspicion of theft. On March 1, in Lalmatia, two young women were harassed and mobbed simply for smoking in public. These incidents are not isolated—they are part of a terrifying trend in which innocent people are assaulted, mutilated, and even killed without recourse to justice.



Worse still, even law enforcement officers are falling victim to mob violence. In Chattogram's Patenga on February 28, a police sub-inspector was viciously attacked by a mob at a checkpoint. A traffic sergeant was recently assaulted for simply trying to do his job. When those meant to uphold the law become victims of unchecked public rage, what hope is there for ordinary citizens?

This escalating crisis demands a firm, zero-tolerance approach. The state must abandon its defensive posture and launch an all-out war against mob violence. Half-hearted condemnations and reactive measures will not suffice. Instead, we need aggressive policy changes, decisive enforcement, and clear legal consequences.

First, the police and other security forces must regain control. Officers must be empowered to act decisively, without fear of backlash or political interference. Currently, law enforcement officials hesitate to intervene in mob violence,

fearing public anger or political repercussions. This must change. The government must send a clear message—those who participate in mob lynchings will face immediate arrest and prosecution.

Second, swift legal action must be taken against perpetrators. Bangladesh already has laws in place to prevent mob violence, yet these laws

Finally, the government must acknowledge that mob justice is symptomatic of a deeper crisis—a failing legal system that does not inspire public trust. Many people resort to mob violence because they believe criminals will otherwise go unpunished. Strengthening the judiciary, ensuring faster case resolutions, and eliminating

FILE VISUAL: STAR

corruption within law enforcement are critical to restoring public faith in the rule of law.

With the potential for mob violence increasing due to various reasons, the government must act now, deploying additional security forces to public spaces and making it clear that any form of vigilantism will be met with the full force of the law. If necessary, a special task force should be established, comprising the police, RAB, and military, to conduct joint operations aimed at dismantling criminal groups and preventing mob violence. Law enforcement must move from a passive to a proactive stance, ensuring that not a single instance of mob justice goes unchecked.

Enough is enough. We cannot allow our society to be governed by fear and chaos. The government must take decisive action, and we, as citizens, must demand nothing less than an end to this madness. The rule of law is the bedrock of any civilised nation—without it, we are lost.

Combating violence against women and adolescent girls

Gwyn Lewis is resident coordinator of the United Nations in Bangladesh.
Gitanjali Singh is representative of UN Women in Bangladesh.
Masaki Watabe is representative ad interim for UNFPA in Bangladesh.

GWYN LEWIS, GITANJALI SINGH and MASAKI WATABE

A woman's right to live a life free of violence is not a privilege—it is a fundamental human right. Yet, for millions of women and girls worldwide, including in Bangladesh, this right is routinely denied and remains out of reach. As one of the most pervasive human rights violations, violence against women and girls not only impedes their potential but also limits a nation's progress, growth, and stability. It is not just an individual tragedy, but a lived reality and a systemic crisis that weakens families, communities, and the society at large.

In Bangladesh, the scale of the problem demands urgent attention. Findings from the recent Violence Against Women Survey 2024 released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics reveal a sobering reality—70 percent of women have experienced at least one form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime, with 41 percent facing such violence in the past year alone.

The forms of intimate partner violence surveyed include physical, sexual, economic, and emotional violence, as well as controlling behaviours. Equally concerning is the prevalence of non-partner violence, which encompasses physical and sexual violence. About 16 percent of women reported experiencing non-partner

violence from relatives, neighbours, or strangers since the age of 15.

We must bear in mind that media reports are just the tip of the iceberg, as violence against women and girls is often silenced due to fear, stigma or lack of support systems. Service providers, civil society organisations, police, and health workers play a crucial role in responding to cases, yet their data only reflects incidents that are reported. The Violence Against Women Survey reveals a staggering 64 percent of survivors never share their experiences. Many believe it is a "normal" family matter. This silence is even more pronounced among older women, rural populations, and those facing multiple forms of discrimination. Data from service providers does not capture the scale of violence. The prevalence survey is the closest we can get to understanding the scale of violence against women.

The survey reveals that women in disaster-prone areas experience higher levels of violence than those in non-disaster-prone regions—74 percent of women in these areas have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime, compared to 68 percent in other parts of the country. The survey confirms what we have long recognised: the climate

crisis is not gender neutral. Disasters intensify existing inequalities, disrupt protection systems, and restrict women's and girls' access to essential services. With inadequate shelters and safety nets, women are at greater risk.

Furthermore, the survey reveals the intersectionality between gender and age, which deepens the vulnerabilities of adolescent girls. The data shows that married adolescent girls in Bangladesh experience disproportionately high levels of intimate partner violence in the last 12 months, making them the most affected age group. This is, unfortunately, linked to child marriage, which impacts nearly half of the girls in Bangladesh who are married before their 18th birthday. The adolescent girls are also highly vulnerable to non-partner violence.

One survey taker recalls being alarmed by the extent of violence experienced by older women. "Honestly, I didn't expect them to face violence at this stage of their lives," she said. However, her perspective quickly shifted as she interviewed many older survivors of violence, who perhaps never disclosed their experiences to anyone before.

Even when survivors do come forward, they encounter several challenges—from social judgments to financial costs. According to the survey, out-of-pocket expenses for legal and medical support likely deter women from pursuing justice or treatment. High healthcare costs, lengthy legal processes, and fear of family backlash all converge to keep survivors trapped in cycles of violence.

There is an urgent need to expand survivor-centred multi-sectoral services and break the culture of silence around violence against women. Greater awareness of toll-free hotlines—999 and 109—is crucial as current use is low. Survivors need to have timely, compassionate, and comprehensive access to the Essential Services Package, which includes health, social services, police, and justice sectors. It is equally important to address the root causes of violence against women and harmful practices by investing in women's and girls' empowerment, leadership, education, and economic opportunities along with actively engaging men and boys as allies.

Ending the pandemic of violence against women is not just a moral obligation—it is essential for the nation's sustainable development. There are signs of hope. We have seen communities rally to end violence against women, local councils promote safe spaces, and youth speaking up against violence. The momentum for change is here. It requires sustained collective efforts from government institutions, civil society, development partners, media, and local communities.

If more women and girls can safely engage in their communities, schools, and workplaces, Bangladesh will be stronger—both in fulfilling its gender equality commitments and realising the sustainable development goals (SDGs). This is very much within reach, only if we act decisively, collectively, and with urgency.

Hasina regime was uglier than fascism

S. R. OSMANI
is professor of economics at Ulster University in the UK.

S. R. OSMANI

The reference to "fascist" appears prominently in the Preamble proposed by the Constitution Reform Commission. I shall argue that there are good reasons for avoiding that reference.

The very first paragraph of the proposed Preamble asserts that "(we have) forged united resistance against autocratic and fascist rule in order to establish democracy." The second paragraph goes on to proclaim "the ideals of democracy and anti-discrimination that united (us) against fascist rule in 2024." It is obvious that, without naming names, the Preamble is referring to the "July uprising" against Sheikh Hasina's autocratic regime. The student leaders who valiantly led that mass uprising made frequent use of the words "fascism" and "fascist" while describing the regime they were fighting against, and not surprisingly these words soon came to permeate the entire popular discourse on the uprising. Evidently, in trying to reflect the spirit of "July uprising," the proposed Preamble also captured the most ubiquitous vocabulary that came into currency along with that spirit.

It is nonetheless a mistake for the Preamble to use that vocabulary. Two kinds of error are involved here—one conceptual and the other political. The conceptual error is that, strictly speaking, the term fascism

to argue, it amounts to watering down the ugliness and barbarity of the Hasina regime.

But let me begin with the conceptual error, from which the political error follows as a logical corollary. The root of the problem lies in an inadequate appreciation of what the idea of "fascism" actually stands for.

leading to disastrous military conflicts in Europe in the 20th century. Second, since individual persons are supposed to exist only to serve the interest of the collective called state, fascist rulers have found it fit to ruthlessly suppress all kinds of individual freedoms such as freedom of speech,

Secondly, the economic system was far from being state-controlled and inimical to private entrepreneurship. On the contrary, it was an utterly rotten case of crony capitalism in which Hasina's cronies were given a free hand to loot public resources for private gain. Apparently, then, the only

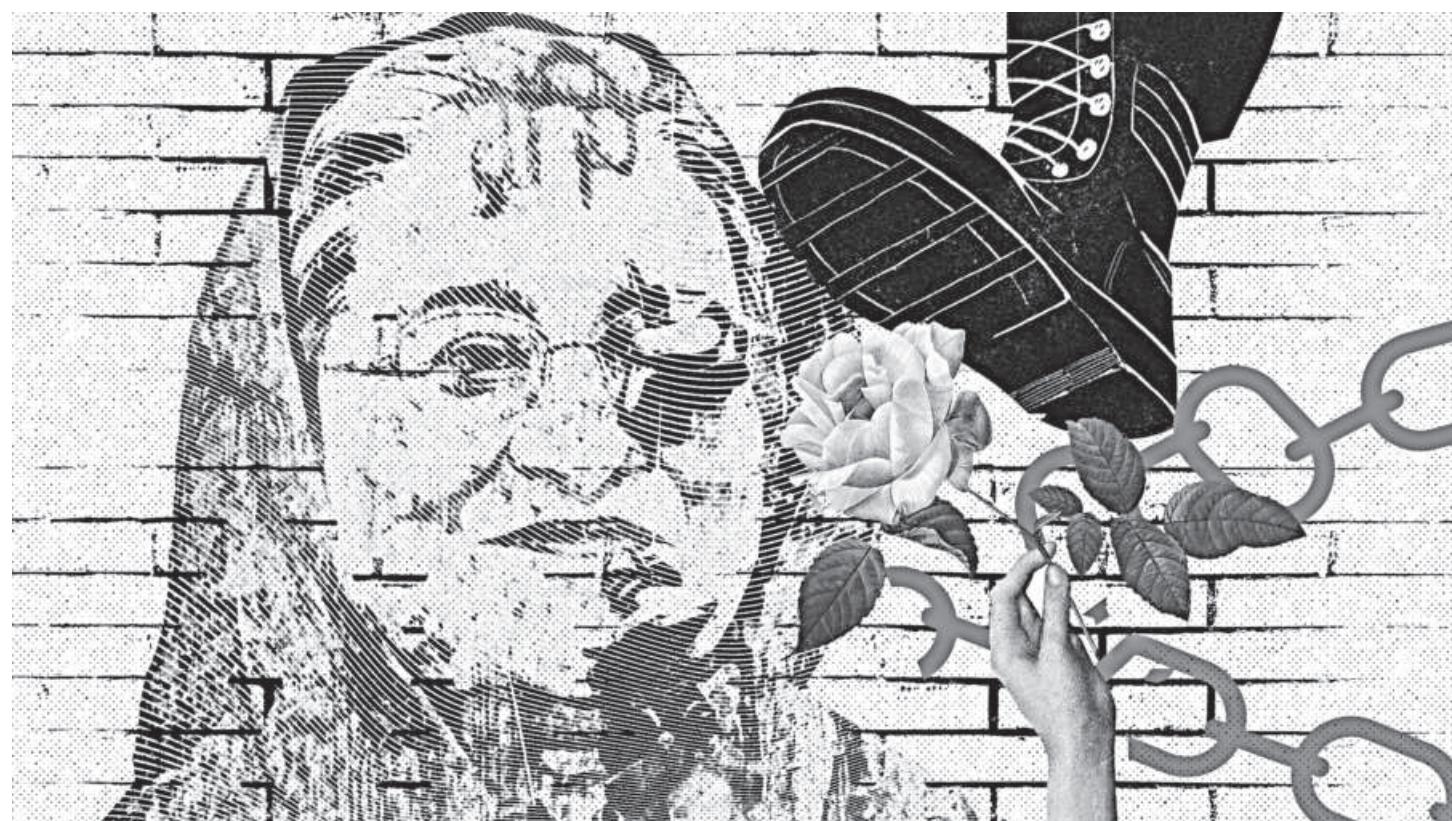
to ask: does this semantic issue really matter for practical purposes? What's the problem if we continue to use the word "fascism" in its popular meaning of "brutal authoritarianism" so long as everyone understands that this is what it means? This is where the matter of political error comes in.

Recall that fascist authoritarianism stems not from personal greed for power (although in some cases such greed may accentuate the brutality of fascist rule), but from an ideological reverence of the collective over the individual. There is thus an element of "selflessness" associated with the ideology of fascism—and this element can by default impart a degree of respectability to any regime described as fascist. True, it would only be a limited respectability since fascism has itself fallen into disrepute because of its association with militarism and suppression of individual freedoms. Nonetheless, its association with "selflessness" does leave room for a modicum of respectability, which a non-fascist authoritarian regime, based on selfish greed, cannot claim. So, if we describe Hasina's regime as fascist, then whether we intend it or not, we are implicitly giving the regime a veneer of respectability by suggesting that she was driven by a selfless political ideology rather than by purely selfish greed for power.

That's the political error. The student leaders might have thought that by describing Hasina's regime as fascist they were condemning it more strongly than they could by describing it simply as authoritarian or autocratic or tyrannical, but they failed to realise that they were actually doing the opposite.

I suspect the dynamics of language is such that brandishing of the terms fascism and fascist will continue to pervade the popular political discourse in Bangladesh, no matter who says what. Perhaps, one can live with that. The layperson may be excused for not appreciating the fact that not all authoritarian regimes are fascist. The students should have known better, but perhaps they may be excused too.

But the same cannot be said for the members of the Constitutional Reform Commission. The constitution of a nation is a sacred document—one that will be preserved for posterity. We must not allow its pages to be desecrated by the misuse of language that involves conceptual and political errors of grievous nature. We should, therefore, delete all references to fascism in this document and describe Sheikh Hasina's fallen regime for what it was—a brutally tyrannical autocratic regime built upon megalomania, selfishness, and unbridled greed for power.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

Like most other "isms" such as communism, nationalism, liberalism, conservatism, etc., fascism is essentially a political ideology, which has a distinct ideal—a conception about the kind of society worth striving for. The core of this ideal is the conviction that the objective of politics (in the broadest sense) should be to serve the interest of the "collective entity" of the state or the nation, as opposed to the interest of the "individual persons" who constitute the state. In other words, it is the "greatness" of the collectivity called state, rather than the "well-being" and "freedom" of individual persons, that is the supreme goal of all activities of a fascist regime.

This ideology leads inevitably to a number of pernicious consequences that have historically been responsible for giving fascism the bad name it has, rightly, acquired. First, in search of "greatness" of the state, fascist rulers have tended to engage in "militarism" and "expansionism,"

freedom to dissent, etc., so as to prevent anything that could be even remotely deemed to be subversive of the state. The same ideology also paves the way for rule by a "great" dictator, who is supposed to be a human embodiment of the "collective," and who usurps the responsibility of pursuing the greatness of the state, at whatever cost of the well-being and freedoms of individuals. On the economic front, the faith in the supremacy of the collective tends to create a highly regimented and state-controlled economic system, where private initiatives are viewed with deep suspicion. A fascist regime is thus characterised by the following features: inherently militaristic in its outward orientation, unashamedly authoritarian in its political system, and strictly regimented in its economic institutions.

It is now easy to see why the term fascism does not correctly describe Sheikh Hasina's regime. For one thing, her regime was not militaristic in its outward orientation.

similarity with fascism was the authoritarian political system, but there is a fundamental difference here, which is the main focus of my argument.

As noted above, authoritarianism of a fascist regime stems from a political ideology that eulogises the collective over the individual. In contrast, one can argue that Hasina did not have any ideology at all. It was her megalomania and an unquenchable thirst for personal power, rather than the interest of the "collective state," that motivated her brutality.

The gist of the matter is that while all fascist regimes are authoritarian, not all authoritarian regimes are fascist. An authoritarian regime can be called fascist only when it is driven by the political ideology of the supremacy of the collective over the individual. Hasina was not driven by any such ideology; hence, it's a mistake to use the term fascism to describe her regime.

At this point, one might be tempted

not a correct description of the oppression meted out by the last regime. And the political error is that by describing Hasina's regime as fascist, we are unwittingly granting it a somewhat elevated status it does not deserve. The latter error is more important for practical reasons, since, as I am going

to argue, it amounts to watering down the ugliness and barbarity of the Hasina regime.

Meanwhile, the very system that congratulates No Other Land refuses to screen it. Even online streaming platforms in the US have not shown interest, despite No Other Land being the highest-grossing Oscar-nominated documentary. Streaming giants that host countless war films and violent cinema spanning all genres remain silent. Netflix, which removed 24 Palestinian films from its archive in October 2024, has shown no interest. So, while the Academy basks in its "bravery," the film remains inaccessible to most American audiences.

First things first, this award didn't validate No Other Land—it validated the Oscars. Hollywood, once in a while, needs a moment like this to assure itself that it is inclusive, welcoming, and engaged with the world's pressing realities. From now on, the Academy can point to this moment with fervent glee. After all, I imagine nothing can be worse for the elite liberals than being dubbed complicit.

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Yuval told The New York Times in an interview published on February 19, "In the US, so many people are writing to us, 'How can we watch it?' So we decided to do the theatrical release independently, and it's now going to show in about 100 theatres in the US."

It also has to be pointed out that the documentary doesn't centre on a land where the impact of Israeli aggression is beyond measure. It breaks my heart to write this,

Nassar, said in a press conference on February 10.

In Basel's camera, the documentary shows the Israeli military coming to the village with demolition orders at regular intervals. They don't demolish the whole village in one go. They go one home at a time. This has been one of the settlers' strategies since the beginning. The purpose is to break the spirits and dignity of the people and make this

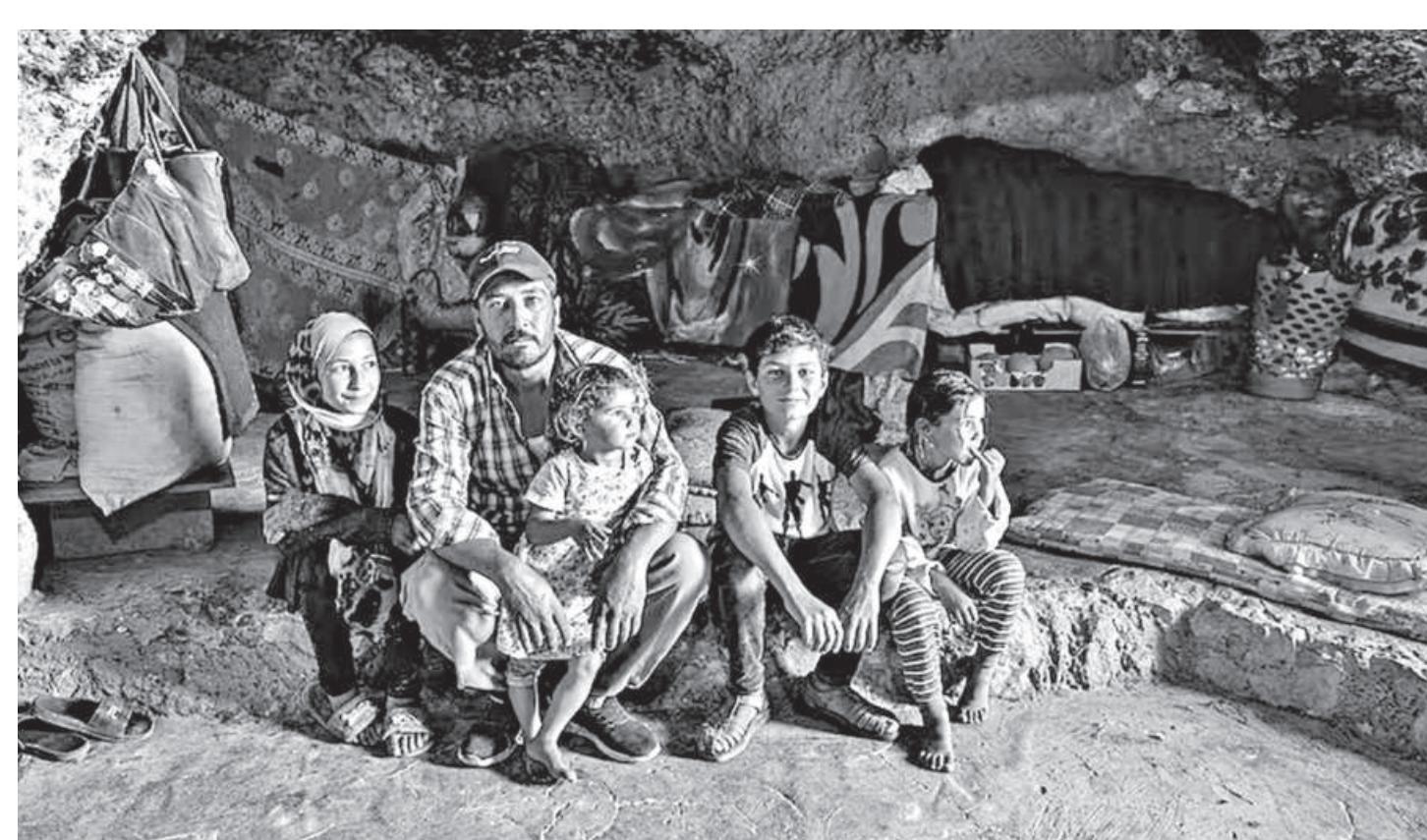
question, "Don't you have anywhere else to go?" a mother says, "I have no other land. It's our land." She is Basel's mother. When the Israeli military arrives in the middle of the night to arrest Basel, she says, "Go wear a warmer coat. It's cold"—like mothers do, you know? I know that mother; perhaps you do too. The mother, knowing that construction was forbidden and a school couldn't be built, came up with a brilliant idea. Women and

The trauma and pain of Masafer Yatta weren't enough to stop the destruction—but a seven-minute walk by Tony Blair was. Of course, once the aura of a British prime minister's walk wore off, the demolitions resumed.

This is not a film about history—this is happening right now. When No Other Land won the Berlinale, Berlin Mayor Kai Wegner said, "Anti-Semitism has no place in Berlin, and that also applies to the art scene," adding, "Berlin is firmly on Israel's side." I can no longer be astonished by the West—I cannot ask questions like, "How can anyone become anti-Semitic by just showing what's been happening?" I understand and have been educated: in Berlinale or the Oscars, the sense of morality is spectacle deep.

The Oscars have a long history of rewarding politically charged films while perfectly maintaining the status quo that these films often critique as the antagonist. When Marlon Brando won Best Actor in 1973, he chose Native American activist Sacheen Littlefeather to receive the award in his place. She was booted on stage while speaking against Hollywood's treatment of Indigenous peoples. Fifty years later, No Other Land is honoured. Ironically, nothing about "No Other Land" changed because of the documentary's Oscar win. The land in question remains contested, bulldozers remain on standby, and the world remains comfortable with a neatly packaged tragedy. The Academy, of course, will move on. It has done its job. It has awarded. It has absolved itself.

Just one last thing—the film was released months after the deadly Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel on October 7, 2023, which triggered Israel's renewed destruction of Gaza. At least 1,100 people were killed in the attacks in Israel, and about 240 people were taken captive. By the time a ceasefire took effect in Gaza on January 19, 2025, more than 48,000 Palestinians had been killed in the war. An estimated 13,000 additional people are buried under the rubble and presumed dead, according to Al Jazeera. Basel always sleeps with his shoes on—the army can come and drag anyone out of their home at any time. I am adamant and hold my feet to the ground. I have divorced my hope from reason, and what I dream is this—Basel sleeping without his shoes on.



A Palestinian family living in a cave after their house in Masafer Yatta was demolished by Israeli forces in 2022.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

but no matter how painful the situation of Masafer Yatta is, considering the rest of Palestine, it is one of the less impacted places by the Israeli occupation. The documentary is not about Khan Yunis, Rafah, or Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. It's not about Al-Mawasi, nor about Al-Zahraa, Al-Mughraqa, and Wadi Gaza—three towns now declared uninhabitable, as Al-Zahraa's mayor, Nidal

process "invisible" to the world. I guess Israeli authorities gradually learned how little the world chooses to see anyway.

They say these demolition orders are to make way for tank training and army barracks—where they will train more soldiers, who will then march into more homes with more demolition orders.

At one point in the documentary, to the

children, who are less likely to get arrested, would build during the day, while men would work only at night. That's how the school, Basel went to, was built.

I have to mention Tony Blair's seven-minute stroll here. When Blair visited Masafer Yatta, Israel later cancelled the demolition of schools and homes along the streets he walked. "This is a story of power," Basel says.



Menopause and memory: Study links symptoms to later cognitive decline

Menopause brings a range of physical and emotional changes, but new research suggests its impact may extend beyond immediate symptoms. A study published in PLOS One found that women who experience more menopausal symptoms may be at a higher risk of cognitive decline and behavioural impairments later in life—both considered early markers of dementia.

The study, led by Zahinoor Ismail of the University of Calgary, analysed data from 896 postmenopausal women participating in the CAN-PROTECT study. Participants, with an average age of 64.2 years, reported menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep disturbances, mood swings, and forgetfulness. Researchers found that a greater symptom burden was associated with poorer cognitive function and increased behavioural impairments in mid- to late life. Women with more symptoms had higher ECog II scores (indicating cognitive impairment) and MBI-C scores (suggesting behavioural changes).

While hormone therapy was not significantly linked to cognitive function, it was associated with fewer behavioural symptoms. Given that women face a threefold higher risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, understanding the long-term effects of menopause on brain health is crucial.

The authors emphasise the need for further research to confirm these findings, ideally through long-term studies that consider factors like age at menopause and surgical menopause. They conclude that greater menopausal symptom burden may signal a higher risk of later cognitive and behavioural decline, with oestrogen-based hormone therapy potentially offering some protection against behavioural symptoms.

Cancer can be avoided! It's not mere a genetic lottery

TAUFIQUR RAHMAN

The National Cancer Institute of America defines cancer as "a disease in which some of the body's cells grow uncontrollably and spread to other parts of the body." Major causes include genetic mutations, environmental factors, lifestyle choices, and infections. Experts now call it a lifestyle disease, which has reached epidemic levels in many countries.

In Bangladesh, diagnosis is limited, surveillance is inadequate, and treatment is expensive. In a highly polluted city like Dhaka, thousands likely have undiagnosed cancer. With unhealthy food and lifestyle habits, the disease may be far more prevalent than reported.

Common cancers in Bangladeshi women include breast, oral, stomach, tracheal, thyroid, ovarian, and cervical cancer. In men, tracheal, stomach, lung, oral, and esophageal cancers are more frequent. Bangladesh has 13–15 lakh cancer patients, with two lakh new cases annually. Cancer accounts for 10% of all deaths and ranks as the sixth leading cause of noncommunicable disease-related mortality. This number is likely underreported due to limited diagnosis and awareness, leading to delayed treatment.

The medical system treats cancer as a genetic lottery, yet genetics alone do not explain rising cancer rates. Over the past 50 years, our environment has changed a lot. Pollution, junk food, adulterated food, and unhealthy cooking habits have increased. Exposure to electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) from power lines, cell phones, Wi-Fi, and microwaves is another concern. EMFs disrupt cellular function, while microplastics, chronic stress, heavy metals, seed oils, artificial light, and poor metabolic health contribute to rising cancer rates. European studies have linked prolonged EMF exposure to an increased risk of leukaemia.

Cancer is not random. Our body creates and destroys cancer cells daily,



but the disease takes hold when the immune system is weakened by stress, poor sleep, and toxins. Bangladesh faces severe plastic pollution, with rivers and water sources contaminated. Formalin, commonly used in food preservation, releases formaldehyde gas, which is highly toxic. It can cause kidney failure, neurological damage, and even coma.

Preventing or managing cancer requires lifestyle changes. Natural ways to fight cancer include:

- Morning sunlight—30 minutes within an hour of waking.
- Quality animal protein—grass-fed meat twice daily.
- Organ meats—liver, heart, and kidney weekly.
- Raw dairy—unpasteurised milk and cheese.
- Oysters—6–8 weekly for zinc and minerals.
- Reduced EMF exposure—Aeroplane mode at night, turning off electronic devices.
- Proper sleep—In bed by 10 PM.
- Eliminate processed food—avoid

chips, chocolates, and soda.

Regular exercise reduces the risk of 13 types of cancer, including metabolic cancers. Even after diagnosis, exercise lowers the risk of death from breast, prostate, and colon cancer. A study in Cell Press found that exercise inhibits tumour growth by cutting off its blood supply. High fibre foods like lentils, chia seeds, avocados, oats, almonds, popcorn, apples, and broccoli help detoxify the body.

Small lifestyle changes can make a difference. Avoid short-distance rickshaw rides—walk instead. If worried about the sun, use an umbrella or sunscreen. Use stairs instead of elevators. Wear a mask to protect against air pollution. Avoid bottled juices and sodas, opting for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Cancer treatment is expensive, but prevention is cost-effective. Changing your environment and lifestyle can help fight cancer, manage its progression, and lead to a healthier life.

E-mail: taufwin@outlook.com

Instant stress busters: quick ways to relax

Feeling overwhelmed? You don't need hours to unwind—just a few minutes can make a big difference. Try these simple yet effective techniques to ease stress fast.

Calm your mind in 10 minutes

• **Chew gum**—Research suggests chewing gum for at least 10–15 minutes can help reduce anxiety, improve concentration, and promote relaxation.

• **Take a walk**—A short stroll can remove you from a stressful situation and trigger endorphins, your body's natural mood boosters.

• **Try yoga**—A few gentle poses can lower cortisol levels, slow your heart rate, and help you feel more at ease.

• **Practice mindfulness**—Stay present by focusing on your breathing, scanning your body, or mindfully engaging in small tasks like sipping water.

• **Write it down**—Jotting down your thoughts can help clear your mind and provide insight into your stress triggers.

• **Do 4-7-8 breathing**—Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7, and exhale for 8 to calm your nervous system and ease tension.

• **Tap away stress (EFT)**—Gently tapping specific points on your body while repeating affirmations can help release built-up stress.

• **Talk it out**—Expressing your feelings can improve your mood.

Deeper relaxation in 30 minutes

• **Exercise regularly**—Moving your body daily improves oxygen flow and helps build resilience against stress.

• **Take a warm bath**—Heat relaxes your muscles, increases circulation, and elevates your mood.

• **Declutter your space**—A tidy environment promotes mental clarity and reduces anxiety.

Incorporate these quick stress-relief techniques to feel the difference instantly!



Bangladeshi medical students shine at prestigious SCALPEL IV symposium in Barcelona

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Bangladesh has achieved a mentionable feat in the global medical community as two of its young medical students were invited to participate in the prestigious SCALPEL IV Symposium in Barcelona. Out of all the participants from Asia, only two were selected from Bangladesh: Rakibul Hossain Rafi, a final year student at Uttara Adhunik Medical College, and Muhtasim Islam, a final year student at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College. Their participation in this highly competitive event was a significant achievement. Held from February 15–17, 2025, at Campus del Mar, Pompeu Fabra University, the SCALPEL IV Symposium was a premier international event for aspiring surgeons.

This year's edition was particularly special as it marked the international version, attracting over 150 participants from various universities across Europe. The symposium provided a unique platform for students to explore the latest advancements in surgery through a range of engaging activities. The event featured expert-led conferences covering cutting edge topics such as vascular surgery, emergency surgery, uterine transposition, robotic surgery, bariatric surgery, and the role of women in surgery. These sessions allowed participants to gain valuable insights from renowned professionals in the field. Alongside the conferences, interactive workshops were conducted, offering hands-on experience in vascular surgery, cardiac surgery, ophthalmological techniques, orthopaedics, trauma surgery, gynaecology, and robotic surgery.

Beyond technical learning, the symposium also emphasised networking and collaboration, providing opportunities for students to connect with experienced doctors, residents, and fellow aspiring surgeons.

This exchange of knowledge and experiences fostered a sense of global community among those passionate about surgery. For Bangladesh, the selection of Rakibul Hossain Rafi and Muhtasim Islam at such a prestigious international event underscores the growing presence of Bangladeshi medical talent on the world stage.

Their participation reflects the dedication and potential of young medical professionals in the country, inspiring future generations to pursue excellence in surgical education and research. This achievement is a proud moment for Bangladesh, demonstrating that its medical students are not just keeping up with global advancements but are actively contributing to the field.

As these young professionals continue their journey, their experience at SCALPEL IV will undoubtedly serve as a stepping stone toward even greater contributions to medical science and surgery.

The hidden web of chronic diseases: A global health crisis

RAISA MEHIZABEEN

Chronic diseases are an undeniable reality, affecting millions worldwide. While often considered separately, conditions like osteoporosis, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, obesity, depression, and even COVID-19 are intricately linked. The key underlying factors—impaired glucose uptake, iron deficiency, and chronic inflammation—create a complex web of health risks.

The complexity of chronic diseases: Modern healthcare tends to treat diseases individually—hypertension with blood pressure medication, diabetes with insulin, and osteoporosis with calcium. However, these conditions share common metabolic roots. Insulin resistance, a hallmark of type 2 diabetes, also contributes to cardiovascular disease, obesity, and even Alzheimer's. Chronic inflammation fuels depression, NAFLD, and numerous other disorders, demonstrating the systemic nature of these diseases.

The role of glucose uptake and iron deficiency: Impaired glucose uptake due to insulin resistance or inflammation affects everything from brain function to immune health, increasing risks for Alzheimer's, depression, and cardiovascular disease. Iron deficiency further complicates matters, leading to anemia, worsening osteoporosis, hypertension, and metabolic disorders like NAFLD. The liver's role in iron metabolism makes iron depletion a contributing factor to fatty liver disease, which is becoming a global epidemic.

COVID-19 and chronic diseases: The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of individuals with chronic conditions. Obesity,

diabetes, and cardiovascular disease increased the risk of severe COVID-19 complications. The virus itself disrupted glucose metabolism, triggered inflammation, and led to iron dysregulation, accelerating chronic disease progression. Long COVID symptoms, such as fatigue and brain fog, reflect underlying metabolic disturbances, highlighting the lasting impact of the virus on global health.

Obesity, depression, and the vicious cycle: Obesity and depression, often seen as separate conditions, share biological pathways involving inflammation and metabolic dysfunction. Obesity-induced inflammation disrupts neurotransmitter balance, increasing depression risk, while stress and hormonal disturbances from depression promote unhealthy eating



habits. This creates a cycle that fuels further metabolic and psychological issues.

The overlooked link between hypertension and osteoporosis: Hypertension, a major cardiovascular risk factor, also affects bone health. It accelerates calcium loss through urine, weakening bones over time. Chronic inflammation and oxidative stress further contribute to osteoporosis, highlighting the unexpected connections between these diseases.

NAFLD—the silent epidemic: NAFLD, caused by excessive fat accumulation in the liver, is now the most common chronic liver disease worldwide. It is not just a liver condition but a systemic issue that exacerbates insulin resistance, cardiovascular disease, and chronic inflammation, making it a central player in this disease network.

Breaking the chain: A holistic approach

Given the interconnected nature of chronic diseases, an integrated healthcare approach is crucial:

Dietary interventions: Anti-inflammatory, fiber-rich diets like the Mediterranean or DASH diet can improve glucose metabolism and overall health.

Physical activity: Regular exercise enhances insulin sensitivity, reduces inflammation, and supports mental health. Resistance training preserves bone density, while cardiovascular exercise benefits heart health.

Mental health support: Addressing stress and depression through therapy, mindfulness, and social support can break the cycle of declining mental and physical health.

Early screening and integrated care: Routine check-ups and interdisciplinary care from nutritionists, endocrinologists, cardiologists, and mental health professionals can improve outcomes.

To combat chronic diseases effectively, we must move beyond isolated treatments and adopt a systemic approach. Recognizing the interconnectedness of these conditions will allow for better prevention, management, and a healthier future.

The writer is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisameh20@gmail.com

How mental health affects self-confidence in thinking

A new study published in PLOS Mental Health found that people with anxiety and depression often doubt themselves, while those with compulsive behaviours (like obsessive-compulsive disorder) tend to be overconfident in their thinking.

Researchers studied how well people judge their own memory and perception. They discovered that those with anxiety and depression were less confident in their abilities, even when they performed well. On the other hand, people with compulsive tendencies were often too sure of their decisions, even when they made



mistakes. The study also found that these confidence patterns exist at different levels. Some people struggle with confidence

in specific tasks, like remembering details, while others have a more general lack of self-trust, affecting their overall self-esteem.

Understanding these thinking patterns could help improve mental health treatments. By helping people recognise and adjust their confidence levels, therapists might be able to reduce anxiety, depression, or compulsive behaviours.

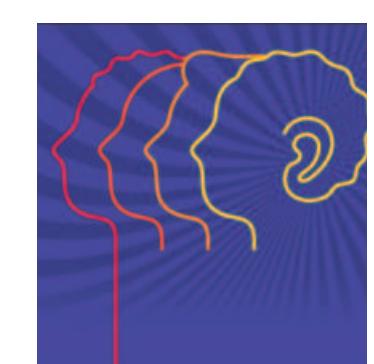
In short, the way we think about our own thinking—called metacognition—affects our mental well-being. Learning to balance confidence could be key to improving mental health.

CHANGING MINDSETS:

Empower yourself to make ear and hearing care a reality for all!

World Hearing Day 2025, celebrated on March 3rd, emphasises the theme, "Changing mindsets: Empower yourself to make ear and hearing care a reality for all." This campaign encourages individuals of all ages to prioritise their ear and hearing health. It builds on the 2024 focus by urging people to protect their hearing from loud noises, regularly check their hearing, and use hearing aids when necessary.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) aims to shift attitudes towards hearing health, motivating people to adopt healthier habits that prevent hearing loss. The campaign also highlights the importance of supporting those who are already living



with hearing loss, fostering an inclusive approach to hearing health.

Key initiatives for 2025 included the launch of the WHO-ITU Global Standard for Safe Listening in video games and sports, as well as a school module on smart listening designed for inclusion in educational curricula. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to create a culture of safe listening and to empower individuals to take control of their hearing health for life.

Source: World Health Organisation



NZ aim to make it three in three

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Dubai

Before a final, it's natural for teams to look for positive omens, something to boost the confidence of the players before they step onto the field to vie for the trophy.

For New Zealand, having India as opponents in the final of the ICC Champions Trophy in Dubai today is the biggest positive omen of all as against them the Black Caps are undefeated in ICC event finals.

The Kiwis have so far won two major ICC tournaments – ICC Knockout Trophy, currently known as Champions Trophy, in 2000 in Kenya and the ICC Test Championship in 2021 in England. And in both of those finals, they battled against India.

New Zealand have also reached the final of four other ICC events – 2009 Champions Trophy, 2015 ICC World Cup, 2019 World Cup and 2021 ICC T20 World Cup – but they ended up on the losing side against different opponents in all of them.

Before attending the practice session, New Zealand skipper Mitchell

Santner attended the pre-match press conference yesterday where this reporter reminded him of their spotless record in finals against India and asked him if it would aid them psychologically in today's final.

"I mean, hopefully we will be the third time lucky," Santner answered The Daily Star reporter.

"I think India will be a challenge tomorrow [Sunday]. They have been playing some really good cricket. They understand these conditions very well but we also have been playing decently," he said, adding that they know what to expect from the Dubai surface after facing India here a few days ago in a group-stage match which they lost by 44 runs.

"Obviously, having a run against India here a few days ago helped us out in understanding the conditions a bit better. But it's a knockout game and whoever turns up on the day, could take the trophy. "We know that it might be a different surface or it might play exactly the same. We need to be ready and adaptable for what's coming," he concluded.



H2H

India lead New Zealand 61-50 in ODIs, with one tie and seven no-results. India have dominated recently, winning the last six matches after a prior 4-0 New Zealand streak.

In ICC events, the rivalry is dead even at 6-6, with a 5-5 split in World Cups and 1-1 in the Champions Trophy. India, however, have won the last three meetings.

New Zealand hold the edge in ICC knockout matches, leading 3-1, including victory in the 2000 Champions Trophy final.

In the UAE, India have won five of six matches against New Zealand, including their last encounter in this tournament. Their only previous clash at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium (DICS) also saw India triumph. Also, India -- who have the chance to claim a record third Champions Trophy -- are yet to lose an ODI at DICS in 10 matches.

I guess finals cricket is different, but for us what we have been doing to get us to this point has been good.

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner



All of these guys have made an impact whenever they've got an opportunity and that gives us a lot of confidence [in the final].

India captain Rohit Sharma



It was a great atmosphere in the last game and I'm sure it'll be a good one again... [It's] an exciting opportunity for us.

New Zealand batter Kane Williamson



We know we're a good one-day side... The hunger, the commitment and the eagerness to try and do something special for the country is always there.

India coach Gautam Gambhir

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Dubai

In less than a year, India will be aiming for another global title when they face fellow former champions New Zealand in a highly anticipated Champions Trophy final at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in UAE today.

India's most recent major title came last year when they won the T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies, marking their first world title since the 2013 Champions Trophy.

However, in the 50-over format, India have struggled in recent years. Despite reaching at least the semifinals in all four major 50-over tournaments since 2013 -- three World Cups and one

Champions Trophy -- they have failed to clinch the trophy.

"Once you get one title, it breaks the jinx. Winning the title [in 2024] doesn't make us less hungry but more balanced to win the next one," said India's vice-captain Shubman Gill in yesterday's pre-final press conference.

The Champions Trophy, however, is a different story. India have a solid record in the tournament, reaching the final in four out of eight events and winning the title twice -- in 2002 (as co-winners with Sri Lanka) and in 2013.

This year, India are the only unbeaten team in the tournament, having won all four of their matches, including a victory over New Zealand in their final group

game. Yet, Gill and Co will remember the heartbreaking defeat to Australia in the 2023 World Cup final following a winning streak of ten matches.

India's campaign this time has not been without controversy, with criticism for playing all matches in Dubai due to political tensions with Pakistan, while other teams split matches between Pakistan and the UAE.

The wickets in Dubai have proven challenging for high scores. India's 267 runs in the first semifinal, chasing down Australia's total, remains the highest team total in the tournament. The final will be played on the same wicket where India faced Pakistan in February, which also failed to produce a run-fest.

"I don't think the wicket will behave differently," Gill added, confident in the current Indian batting line-up, which he believes is the best he has ever been part of.

Meanwhile, New Zealand, regular finalists in recent ICC events, are targeting their first major title since the 2000 edition of the Champions Trophy. They have reached their fourth final since 2015, having won all but one of their group-stage games, including a clinical semifinal victory over South Africa.

With both sides in form and hungry for success, the final promises to be a thrilling contest that could pave the way for future triumphs.

Unyielding India confront spirited Kiwis

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Dubai

Champions Trophy -- they have failed to clinch the trophy.

"Once you get one title, it breaks the jinx. Winning the title [in 2024] doesn't make us less hungry but more balanced to win the next one," said India's vice-captain Shubman Gill in yesterday's pre-final press conference.

The Champions Trophy, however, is a different story. India have a solid record in the tournament, reaching the final in four out of eight events and winning the title twice -- in 2002 (as co-winners with Sri Lanka) and in 2013.

This year, India are the only unbeaten team in the tournament, having won all four of their matches, including a victory over New Zealand in their final group

game. Yet, Gill and Co will remember the heartbreaking defeat to Australia in the 2023 World Cup final following a winning streak of ten matches.

India's campaign this time has not been without controversy, with criticism for playing all matches in Dubai due to political tensions with Pakistan, while other teams split matches between Pakistan and the UAE.

The wickets in Dubai have proven challenging for high scores. India's 267 runs in the first semifinal, chasing down Australia's total, remains the highest team total in the tournament. The final will be played on the same wicket where India faced Pakistan in February, which also failed to produce a run-fest.

"I don't think the wicket will behave differently," Gill added, confident in the current Indian batting line-up, which he believes is the best he has ever been part of.

Meanwhile, New Zealand, regular finalists in recent ICC events, are targeting their first major title since the 2000 edition of the Champions Trophy. They have reached their fourth final since 2015, having won all but one of their group-stage games, including a clinical semifinal victory over South Africa.

With both sides in form and hungry for success, the final promises to be a thrilling contest that could pave the way for future triumphs.

ANISUR RAHMAN

The club football culture of a country largely determines its strength on the global stage -- a pattern evident in the most successful national teams worldwide.

In this regard, Bangladesh lags far behind, and one major reason could be the way the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) manages its top-flight league, the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

The lack of professionalism among football clubs in Bangladesh is nothing new. Most clubs don't have their own stadiums, proper training facilities that provide year-round access to players, and structured youth programs.

Amid these challenges, the BFF seems to be adding to the struggles of BPL clubs as it has suspended the country's professional football league for seven weeks to accommodate the upcoming international fixture of the Bangladesh national football team.

To make room for the national team's preparations for the Asian Cup Qualifier against India on March 25, the BPL has been halted until April 10, right after the completion of the league's 10th round on February 22.

The motive behind this lengthy break appears to be financial.

"BFF runs with financial help from FIFA. One of FIFA's guidelines states

that if a country's professional league lasts for six months, the federation will receive USD 50,000. Instead of protecting the clubs, the BFF is chasing that allocation," said Brothers Union manager Amer Khan.

This timeline makes it clear why the BFF imposed such a lengthy mid-season break, despite clubs requesting

November 29 last year and, according to the schedule, will conclude on May 29 this year -- precisely six months.

This timeline makes it clear why the BFF imposed such a lengthy mid-season break, despite clubs requesting

club premises.

"We are really struggling to keep the camp running because of Mohammedan's financial situation. So, we released all players after our last match and plan to resume training on March 16," said head coach Alfaz Ahmed.

Meanwhile, at Abahani's club tent in Dhanmondi, training resumed last Tuesday, maintaining a lively atmosphere. However, financially, the club faces the same difficulties as others.

"It's really challenging to maintain consistent performance. Without regular activity, players lose their peak form. When they stay in training, they remain motivated, but inactivity makes them too relaxed. That's why we've continued training despite financial issues," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

All the other clubs are either set to resume their training this week or after the Eid-ul-Fitr break due to financial difficulties.

As things stand, the BFF appears to be prioritising its financial benefits over the well-being of clubs -- raising an important question: Is it justifiable to hinder football development in pursuit of financial gains?

If such decisions persist, Bangladesh's already underdeveloped club football structure will only deteriorate further.



With a long break in the league, Abahani players (L) resumed training while the foreign players of Mohammedan, who suspended camp, were left spending time in the gym.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Amer also pointed out that clubs have been struggling to operate, particularly since the country's change in political landscape following the July uprising has led to shifts in club management across the boards.

Having missed out on the USD 50,000 allocation last season for concluding the BPL just about 10 days short of the six-month mark, the BFF seems determined to secure the funding this time.

The 2024-25 season kicked off on

a shorter pause that would have helped them manage operational costs during a financial crunch.

A visit to Mohammedan's club tent in Motijheel painted a stark picture of the crisis.

Mohammedan, one of Bangladesh's most popular clubs, currently lead the table and are in a prime position to win the league for the first time. Their players were supposed to continue training to maintain momentum, but a gloomy atmosphere hung over the



Nottingham Forest forward Callum Hudson-Odoi celebrates scoring the all-important goal in a 1-0 win against defending Premier League champions Manchester City at the City Ground yesterday. The win consolidated Forest's third spot with 51 points. City remained provisionally in fourth position with 47 points, 20 points behind leaders Liverpool.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladesh to host Zimbabwe for two Tests in April-May

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the itinerary for Bangladesh's upcoming home Test series against Zimbabwe in April-May.

The Zimbabwe team will arrive in Bangladesh on April 15 to play a two-Test series against the Tigers.

The first Test will begin on April 20 at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. After the match, both teams will move to Chattogram for the second Test, which will be played at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium from April 28.

The Zimbabweans will leave Bangladesh on May 3.

Zimbabwe last played a Test in Bangladesh in February 2020, with the hosts winning the one-off match by an innings and 106 runs.

The two-Test series was originally scheduled to take place in January 2024, but the BCB deferred the Tests and instead staged a five-match T20I series as preparation for the Tigers ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

This will also be Bangladesh's first Test series of the year. Bangladesh's last Test series was in November last year, when they took on the West Indies in the Caribbean and levelled the two-Test series 1-1.

Booters' Sudan tie uncertain

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh football team's proposed practice match against Sudan was thrown into uncertainty after the African nation declined to play it on Saturday, without fixing a new date.

Bangladesh have been camping in Taif, Saudi Arabia for the last three days and were scheduled to play three practice matches -- one against Sudan and the two other against clubs from Saudi Arabia. However, the uncertainty over the Sudan match would certainly disturb the team's preparations ahead of their Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture against India on March 25.

"We were told about a match on March 8. Sudan's coach had asked us to schedule the match on March 9. This morning they told us that they would play this fixture at a later date," national team manager Amer Khan said in a video message.

Meanwhile, in a separate message, defender Rahmat Mia said that they did not expect the kind of cold weather that is prevailing in Taif at this time, but said it would help them against India due to similar weather and altitude in Shillong.



Students of Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protishthan take part in an exhibition football match at one of the grounds of BKSP in Savar, marking the AFC Women's Football Day, organised by the Bangladesh Football Federation, yesterday.

PHOTO: BFF

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BANGLADESH'S

NO. 1 CEMENT BRAND

Tales of 10 female martyrs killed in July uprising



"Amma, if I die in the protests, what will you tell people?" Without waiting for a response, she answered her own question: "Tell them that she became a martyr. My daughter became a martyr."

NAIMA SULTANA

SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ STORY ONLINE



The construction of a dirt road over the canal has eliminated the only waterway that locals used to travel between Brahmanbaria town and Bijoynagar upazila. Recently, residents of Char Islampur built the road to their village. The canal water is also essential for irrigation.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOV



Mob justice is not justice

P8



PRAYER TIMING
MARCH 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:58 12:45 4:30 6:06 7:30
JAMAAT 5:08 1:15 4:45 6:21 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING
RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR
8 9 6:06
9 10 4:56 6:06
10 11 4:55 6:06

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 6

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 'Do not make us lose restraint' NCP says govt failing to ensure safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is failing to ensure women's safety, said National Citizen Party leaders at a rally marking the International Women's Day yesterday.

"Do not make us lose restraint. Safety must be ensured through the rule of law, not through questionable laws," said Samanta Shermeen, senior joint convener of the party.

"Women's safety is directly tied to citizens' security. In the last 53 years, no real effort has been made to ensure the citizens' dignity and safety," she added at the event held in front of the National Museum.

Women played a significant role at every stage of the uprising. But their contributions are being downplayed, she said.

Sarjis Alam, chief organiser (northern region), said the government was failing to ensure the safety of "our mothers and sisters".

"During the mass uprising, we saw women leading every procession. A hundred women standing at the front gave us more courage than the thousands of men standing behind them," he said.

He urged people not to assume that women can be used when needed and defamed when not needed.

"When our sisters took to the streets [in July], everyone supported them. But now, as they enter politics, they are being subjected to slander. Our party wants to see the women at the forefront of policy making, just like the way they led the anti-fascist movement.

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 6

Putin has 'no interest in peace'

Says EU foreign policy chief as Russian strikes kill 14 in Ukraine; Zelensky seeks more sanctions on Moscow



AFP, Brussels

Washington has suspended crucial US military aid and access to satellite imagery and intelligence sharing after President Donald Trump and Zelensky had a public falling-out in the Oval Office last week.

"Russian missiles keep relentlessly falling on Ukraine, bringing more death and more destruction. Once again, Putin shows he has no interest in peace. We must step up our military support -- otherwise, even more Ukrainian civilians will pay the highest price," Kaja Kallas said on X.

Russia yesterday said its troops had retaken three villages seized by Ukraine in its Kursk border region in a fresh setback for Kyiv as the prospect of peace negotiations appeared to be increasing.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday called for more sanctions against Russia after the deadly strikes that wounded dozens more.

The war is at a critical juncture, days ahead of talks between US and Ukrainian negotiators aimed at securing a truce in the three-year-long war.

Russia appears to have cut off the logistics route needed by Ukraine to supply its troops in the town.

Ex-MP's house occupied, turned into asylum

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A woman, identifying herself as a representative of the Students Against Discrimination (SAD), has set up a shelter for mentally challenged individuals by occupying the house of a former Awami League lawmaker in Tangail district town.

According to locals, Mariam Mukaddas Miste, founder and chairman of the non-profit AIMukaddas Foundation, and her associates broke into the house in Akur Takur Para yesterday morning. They then brought in 20 mentally challenged individuals to reside there.

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 1

5 girls raped in 4 districts

2 others survive rape attempts

STAR REPORT

Allegations that five girls were raped in separate incidents emerged on International Women's Day yesterday amid a cry for justice for a wave of recent sexual assaults.

Meanwhile, two schoolgirls survived rape attempts as the nation was still in shock over the alleged rape and attempted murder of an eight-year-old girl in Magura.

In Gazipur's Sreepur, police detained two people yesterday for allegedly raping two children in separate incidents. They are Arman Mia, 27, from Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh, and Md A Malek, 22, from Kalmakanda upazila of Netrakona.

Arman took an eight-year-old third grader to a forest of Dargarchala village in Barmi union and

SEE PAGE 5 COL. 6

BDR PROBE COMMISSION Hasina, 14 others asked to testify

BSS, Dhaka

The National Independent Investigation Commission on the 2009 BDR carnage has issued a public notice urging 15 individuals, including ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, to testify as part of its inquiry.

In a notice issued yesterday it said due to time constraint, the commission hopes to complete the process of recording the testimony of the 15 individuals by March 31.

Former army chiefs General Moen U Ahmed and Aziz Ahmed; Maj Gen (retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, former prime minister's security adviser; Fazle Noor Taposh, former mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation; Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, former member of parliament from Gopalganj-2; Jahangir

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 6

Bangladeshi shot dead by BSF

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force shot dead a Bangladeshi man near the border in the Bhitorgarh area of Panchagarh early yesterday, Border Guard Bangladesh officers said.

Al Amin, 36, was a resident of Haribhasha Jinnatpara village in Panchagarh Sadar.

BGB Commanding Officer Sheikh Bodruddoza told this correspondent that Indian border security personnel had informed that they opened fire on a group of men who were trying to smuggle some cattle into Bangladesh from India around 3:00am.

Al Amin died on the spot, while the others managed to escape unhurt.

Upon receiving the news, Lt Col Bodruddoza contacted BSF and a flag meeting was held between the two border forces around 10:50am.

During the meeting, the BGB strongly protested

SEE PAGE 6 COL. 6

36 members of Hizb ut-Tahrir held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have launched a nationwide search for members of the banned militant outfit Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), leading to the arrest of 36 individuals since Friday.

The arrests followed a rally of the banned outfit outside the Baitul Mukarram Mosque in Dhaka on Friday, said the chief adviser's press wing in a statement yesterday.

"We are analysing the video footage of the rally. We have identified many members of HT, and they will be arrested for joining a political programme of a banned organisation," said Baharul Alam, inspector general of police.

Among those arrested is Saiful Islam, a key organiser of the group, which was outlawed in 2009 for anti-state activities.

Police have filed several cases under the anti-

SEE PAGE 2 COL. 1

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কোর্সের মেয়াদ

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অনলাইনে আবেদনের টিকনা

<https://bctiadmission.org/>

আবেদনের শেষ তারিখ

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অয়েজনারি তথ্যাদির জন্য

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BGMEA Election 2025-2027

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Election Notice

This is to inform all members of BGMEA that the upcoming BGMEA Election 2025-2027 will be held as per the following schedule:

Last date for payment of subscription	29 March 2025
Last date for submission of voter nomination	06 April 2025
Last date for submission of nomination of candidature	24 April 2025
Last date for withdrawal of candidature	06 May 2025
Date of election	28 May 2025

Secretary, Election Board

Email: electionboard@bgmea.com.bd