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Paribahan, who was secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association for fourth time in a row, has been replaced by Cumilla (North) unit BNP Convener Saiful Islam.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



Female students of Dhaka University bring out a torch procession on campus last night, demanding justice for the recent spate of rape and sexual harassment of women and children. Early today, a rally was held in front of TSC where students chanted slogans demanding the home adviser's resignation.

PHOTO: STAR

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.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Recent attacks on women are 'deeply concerning'

Says Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the recent reports of heinous attacks on women are "deeply concerning" and is completely contrary to the dream of a "New Bangladesh".

"We are committed to establishing equal rights for all men and women in this 'New Bangladesh'. We will use all our strength to establish these rights," he

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

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



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

The sky is overcast by the plumes of smoke from the brick kilns in the Fatulla 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.

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.



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: PTI

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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 heal 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 Utarkhan areas.

The arrestees were identified as Md Helal Uddin, 45; Asaduzzaman Nur, 18; Tanim 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 Sazzat 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 alleys, 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."

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. Its 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 extortionists 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, refuted the findings, and said the transport sector is free from extortion.

"After August 5, all sorts of extortion by owners and workers' associations have stopped. Only city corporations are collecting tolls," he said.

The BNP leader also warned of tough action in case of allegations of involvement in 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 11 types of such payments were found by the agency.

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

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 get shares of the bribes and extortion money.

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

Dhaka City Corporation and linemen.

However, in three terminals, some traffic police are being able to get their "fair share" through linemen, the report says.

To stop this practice, the report recommended privatising the bus terminals and stands and allowing them to officially charge commissions from the vehicles using those structures. The terminals and stands will operate using the proceeds of that commission.

It also recommended introducing bus franchising to better manage the roads and creating a sustainable transport management strategy.

According to data from the BNP's Nava Paltan central office, more than 1,000 party members have been expelled for their involvement in rent-seeking and illegal occupation of properties and businesses over the last few months. More than 12 committees have been dissolved after allegations against members proved true.

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."

Road Transport and Bridges Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said the government is trying to control extortion 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.

representation system to the upper house, lowering age limit of MPs to 21, keeping at least 10 percent candidates in the lower house from among the youth, and constitutional amendments with two-thirds majority in both houses are among the topics in the questions.

The commission asked for the parties' opinions on limiting the terms of the president and the prime minister, and prohibiting the same person from simultaneously holding the positions of party chief, prime minister, and leader of parliament.

It wants the parties' views on the constitution of the Election Commission, a separate authority for demarcation of constituencies, making a bachelor's degree mandatory to become a member of the upper house in the proposed bicameral legislature, barring individuals from contesting polls if charges are accepted by the International Crimes Tribunal, establishing a permanent national constitutional council for appointing officials in all constitutional bodies and others.

The political parties will need to give feedback on Public Administration Reform Commission's proposals on transforming four oldest divisions into four provinces and introducing a provincial governance system, the formation of an independent and permanent Public Administration Reform Commission, amendments to the Official Secrets Act of 1923, and creation of two new divisions named Cumilla and Faridpur.

The other proposals in the letter with questions include having new commissions named Public Service Commission (Education), Public Service Commission (Health), establishing a Capital City Government at the proposed provincial government level, comprising Dhaka Metropolitan, Tongi, Keraniganj, Savar, and Narayanganj.

Govt creating 7,000 supernumerary posts

FROM PAGE 1

Forum, postponed their demonstration for 12 weeks following government assurances regarding their demand for promotion.

The doctors, who were protesting at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, withdrew their abstention after 45 minutes. Emergency services remained operational during this time.

Many of these doctors were denied promotion during the previous government's tenure for political reasons, forum leaders said. They added that since the political changeover in August last year, they had been urging the health ministry to grant their overdue promotions, but to no avail.

Against this backdrop, the forum announced on February 25 a two-hour work abstention for three days from yesterday if their demands were not met.

As per the announcement, over 100 doctors formed a human chain in front of the Bagan Gate at DMCH around 10:00am, pressing their two-point demand: the immediate promotion of all eligible specialised doctors with retrospective benefits and the elevation of all third-grade doctors to first and second grades in due course with appropriate benefits.

Sources said doctors' leaders met Prof Sayedur Rahman on Friday night to discuss their demands and reached a consensus.

Prof Sayedur visited the DMCH around 10:30am yesterday to announce the decision to the protesting doctors.

SUPERNUMERARY POSTS

According to Prof Sayedur, they have been working on the issue for the past three months, consulting various stakeholders to find a resolution.

Following recommendations from the public administration ministry, promotion proposals are being submitted in three phases, he said.

In the first phase, a proposal to create supernumerary posts for the promotion of 3,033 specialised doctors has already been sent to the public administration ministry and is expected to be forwarded to the

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Take firm actions against perpetrators

BNP leader Salahuddin urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday expressed concern over the growing incidents of violence against women and children and urged the government to take tougher measures to tackle the issue.

"Maintain law and order with a firm hand. Ensure that the country's situation does not become unstable and that Bangladesh's reputation remains intact," he said, calling upon authorities at the interim government and law enforcement agencies.

He made the remarks while speaking at an event titled "Indomitable Women, Invincible in Strength," organised by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in honour of women's role in the July uprising.

There, Selima Rahman, another standing committee member of BNP, also spoke as a special guest.

finance ministry within the week.

In the second phase, a proposal for 2,065 posts was sent to the public administration ministry on Thursday.

In the third phase, another proposal for 2,024 posts will be submitted, Prof Sayedur added. The total number of supernumerary posts, in that case, would be 7,122.

A senior DGHS official said they had sought applications from eligible candidates for various posts and received many submissions. Candidates for vacant posts were selected first based on a set of criteria, though he could not immediately provide the exact number.

As the number of vacant posts far outweighs the number of eligible candidates, the authorities decided to create supernumerary posts, he said, adding that three separate lists were prepared due to the large number of candidates.

Another senior DGHS official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the health ministry sent the proposals after getting the green light from the public administration ministry.

Meanwhile, Prof Sayedur informed the doctors at the DMCH that the promotions would be granted within 12 weeks. Following his assurance, they postponed their protests for the same duration.

Contacted, Prof Sayedur said a backlog of promotions had accumulated due to a lack of a proper manpower development plan. Additionally, many doctors had faced discriminations, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"As a result, a situation arose where such measures were necessary to retain specialised doctors in service."

In response to a question, he said additional budget would not be required immediately, as most doctors were already receiving the amount due to annual increments.

"They need the promotion for prestige."

Regarding the process, he said it was a massive task and they were working in coordination with other ministries to resolve it.

Security guards can now arrest people

FROM PAGE 1

and have the power to detain individuals when necessary.

"They will be legally protected, just like regular police officers," he said, adding that private security guards working in shopping malls and residential areas will be given official appointments under this initiative.

For instance, a shopping mall such as Bashundhara City, which has around 50 security guards, has a designated leader. That leader has been given a temporary appointment as a member of the police force under the initiative, he said.

While the DMP is committed to ensuring security, the force faces limitations as some officers will be on leave for Eid.

"Many of our personnel live in barracks, away from their families for long periods. A certain percentage must be granted leave as per government directives. We urge residents to ensure the safety of their homes, apartments and shops when they leave for prayers or travel for Eid."

Ali also emphasized the importance of vigilance during Tarawih prayers.

"As the evening falls, many people head to mosques for prayers, leaving streets and neighbourhoods relatively empty. This is a vulnerable time for security."

Major crimes such as murders and armed robberies have significantly

declined in Dhaka, Ali said.

However, he acknowledged a rise in street crimes, particularly snatchings by young offenders.

In recent times, there has been an increase in street crimes where young offenders, often referred to as 'teen gangs,' snatch mobile phones from pedestrians. Many of them are aged between 15 and 22.

These incidents mostly occur when people are distracted while using their phones on buses, in private cars or on motorcycles, he said.

Efforts are underway to curb such crimes and recover stolen goods.

"Some stolen phones are being smuggled across borders and sold illegally. We are working to detect and recover those."

Ali reassured Dhaka residents that while the city faces various challenges, the overall law-and-order situation remains under control.

"Dhaka is one of the most densely populated megacities in the world. Comparing its crime rate to that of other major cities will show that we have relatively lower incidents of serious crimes."

He reiterated that police stations are now more proactive in registering cases.

"Since I took charge, I have instructed officers to record all complaints truthfully. We do not refuse cases if there is merit to them."

জন ও নিরাপদে টেমিটিয়ান্স পাঠান
প্রিয়জনকে প্রয়োজনে...

যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রেমিটিয়ান্স গ্রহণ করলেই
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রদোদনা

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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.



Women's leadership in admin on the rise

WOMEN IN SERVICE			
Deputy Commissioner	18	Additional Secretaries	69
Upazila Nirbahi Officer	158	Joint Secretaries	173
Addl deputy commissioner	63	Deputy Secretaries	390
AC Land	141	Senior Assistant Secretaries	668
Secretaries	14	Assistant Secretaries	306

BAHARAM KHAN

The presence of women in key administrative positions is increasing, with a growing number of female officers taking on leadership roles in field administration. According to the Ministry of Public Administration, at least 18 women officers are currently serving as deputy commissioners (DCs), 158 as upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs), 63 as additional deputy commissioners (ADCs), and 141 as assistant commissioners (AC Land). Women are also making strides in central administration, with at least 14 women serving as secretaries, including one senior secretary. Additionally, 69 women hold the rank of additional secretary, 173 are joint secretaries, 390 are deputy secretaries, 668 are senior assistant secretaries, and 306 women serve as assistant secretaries. Women are leading field administration across Bangladesh, although some regions still lack female representation in key positions. Among the 18 female DCs,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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 Nilufa Begum voiced concern over the growing insecurity of women, criticising the culture of impunity for offenders.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

58pc want elections to be held this year: survey

BNP ahead in popularity, Jamaat follows

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 58 percent of participants in a recent survey said they want the national elections to be held before the end of this year. The survey was conducted by Innovision Consulting, an international advisory and management consulting firm, using a random sampling methodology. The findings were presented at a press conference at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday, with assistance from the citizens' platform Voice for Reform and Bangladesh Research Analysis and Information Network (BRAIN). Conducted between February 19 and March 3, the survey covered 10,696 individuals across all eight divisions and 64 districts, with 55 percent male and 45 percent female respondents. Meanwhile, 70 percent participants were aged below 45. According to the study, 31.6 percent want polls by this June and 26.5 percent by December. Meanwhile, 7.9 percent preferred elections in June 2026, while 10.9 percent supported polls after December 2026.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- » 41.7% support BNP
- » 31.6% support Jamaat
- » 14% support AL
- » 5.1% support student-led party
- » Total respondents: 10,696

SOURCE: INNOVISION CONSULTING

Md Rubaiyath Sarwar, managing director of Innovision Consulting and lead of Bangladesh Speaks, presented the findings, detailing public opinion on the interim government's performance, voter preferences, and future expectations. The survey found that 62 percent of respondents had already decided on their preferred candidate, with 65.7 percent expressing a clear voting choice. If elections were held now, BNP would secure 41.7 percent of the vote, followed by Jamaat-e-Islami with

31.6 percent, Awami League with 14.0 percent, and a new student-led political party with 5.1 percent. Among Gen Z voters (aged 18-28), 35.5 percent showed support for BNP, 34.2 percent for Jamaat, 11.3 percent for Awami League, and 10.1 percent for the student-led party. BNP enjoyed stronger support among Generation X (47 percent) and Boomers (44.7 percent). The study explored key factors influencing voting decisions. While 21.6 percent cited grassroots politics, 20.5 percent said religion-based politics played a key role. Additionally, 16.4 percent felt ideological alignment with the July Uprising could make the election an ideological contest. Family influence remained significant, with 47 percent stating household discussions shaped their voting decisions. Social media also played a role, with 18.28 percent citing platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok as major sources of information. However, 29.4 percent remained undecided. Among them, 49.3 percent said they needed more

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

US ROLE DURING 1/11

Prioritising polls over reforms was a 'great mistake'

Says former diplomat

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Washington made a "great mistake" during Bangladesh's 2007-08 political crisis by prioritising election timelines over public aspirations and fundamental reforms, said former US diplomat Jon Danilowicz yesterday. Speaking at a discussion on "Navigating the Dynamics of Bangladesh-US Relations After the Mass Uprising," organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) at the BISS Auditorium yesterday, he said the current interim government has taken a more effective approach by fostering national consensus on reform. Danilowicz, who served as political and economic counsellor at the US embassy in Dhaka from 2007 to 2011, witnessed the military-backed caretaker government's tenure following mass protests against the BNP-Jamaat alliance. He said the US and other stakeholders focused too heavily on the army's position rather than the demands of the Bangladeshi people. "I am the first to acknowledge that the United States made great mistakes in the 2007-08 period," he said. "We put too much emphasis on



Jon Danilowicz

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

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, Dulal Chowdhury, 43, and Aminul, 35. Detectives apprehended

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'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



The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh begins distributing Smart Family Cards which will allow people to buy essentials at subsidised prices. The photo was taken at Suchona Community Centre in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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.

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."

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 jewellery 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 Sanoara 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 Fatama 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) Joyrul 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.

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, Gobindo 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.
...Petitioner,
-Versus-
The Registrar of joint Stock Companies and Firms, I, 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 Chandara Biswas, Advocate
Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Advocate, Membership No. 6059, Hall Room No. 1, Supreme Court Bar Association Bhuvan, 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

Office of the Kalai Pourashava
District: Joypurhat

Memo No. KPS/Eng:/2025/217
Tender Notice (e-GP)
Notice No:-04/2024-2025

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/Rd-1 Under Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.	23 March, 2025 Time: 15.30	24 March, 2025 Time: 14.00
1082269	Upgrading of RCC Road Package no-GPBMD/KALY /25/Rd-10 Under Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.	23 March, 2025 Time: 15.30	24 March, 2025 Time: 14.00
1082274	Upgrading of RCC Road Package no-GPBMD/KALY /25/Rd-11 Under Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.	23 March, 2025 Time: 15.30	24 March, 2025 Time: 14.00
1082275	Upgrading of BC Road Package no-GPBMD/KALY /23/MT-1 Under Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.	23 March, 2025 Time: 15.30	24 March, 2025 Time: 14.00
1082276	Construction of Drain, Package no-GPBMD/KALY /23/DR-1 Under Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.	23 March, 2025 Time: 15.30	24 March, 2025 Time: 14.00
1082279	Construction of Drain, Package no-GPBMD/KALY /25/DR-2 Under Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.	23 March, 2025 Time: 15.30	24 March, 2025 Time: 14.00

These are an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted upto 14.00 pm on 24March, 2025.

To Submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 12.00 pm on 24 March, 2025. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(A K M Saiful Islam)
Executive Engineer
Kalai Pourashava, Joypurhat.

GD- 604

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



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

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 Rabiul 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.

Dev projects worsen Ctg traffic woes

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

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 pickups operate on the city's streets daily.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

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 Jounal 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 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 accused was sent to jail by the court, said Md Assaduzzaman, OC of Kotwali Police Station. The victim was sent to Faridpur Medical College Hospital.

In Tangail's Mirzapur upazila, a woman filed a case yesterday over the rape of her 10-year-old madrasa student and an arbitration over the incident.

The suspect was identified as Firoz Mia, 45. Four other accused – Babul, Malek, Yunus and Saju – face charges of covering up the crime through

arbitration, destroying evidence and helping the main suspect escape.

A week after the incident last month, the local influential people in an arbitration asked Firoz to pay the victim's family Tk 1,50,000. The mother was forced to accept the arbitration under threats. She said she was given Tk 92,000.

Mosharraf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Mirzapur Police Station, said that a police operation was underway to arrest the accused while the victim would be sent to the hospital for a medical examination.

In Chattogram, a gang of four youths attempted to rape a schoolgirl in the Guliakhali Sea Beach area of Sitakunda upazila yesterday, police said.

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 & Opening (Date & Time)
01	e-tender/ADP/Sadar/Sher/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/Sher/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/Sher/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/Sher/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/Sher/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/Sher/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/Sher/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/Sher/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 e-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).


 (Arefin Perviz)
 Upazila Engineer
 Sherpur Sadar, Sherpur.
 Phone: 0931-61272
 e-mail : us.sherpur@lged.gov.bd

GD- 605

(Corrigendum)
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Project Director, PIU
Farm Mechanization through Integrated Management Project
Room No-326, 2nd Floor, 1st Building
Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)
Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215.

Memo No: 12.01.0000.000.14.054.25-213 Date : 05-03-2025

(Invitation for Tenders (Non-Consulting service))

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH					
1.	Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)			
2.	Agency	: Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).			
3.	Procuring Entity Name	: Project Director, Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project.			
4.	Procuring Entity District	: Dhaka			
5.	Invitation For	: Vehicle Hire/Transportation For monitoring Field Activities			
6.	Invitation Ref. No.	: 12.01.0000.000.14.054.25-213			
7.	Date	: 05-03-2025			
8.	Procurement Method	: OTM			
9.	Budget & Source of Funds	: GOB			
10.	Project Code	: 2243213			
11.	Project Name	: Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project.			
12.	Tender Package No	: GK/DAE/FMP-01			
13.	Tender Package Name	: Vehicle Hire/Transportation: For monitoring Field activities.			
14.	Tender Publication Date	: 05-03-2025			
15.	Tender Last Selling Date	: 18-03-2025 (at 03.30 pm)			
16.	Tender Dropping & Closing Date & Time	: 19-03-2025 (at 03.30 pm)			
17.	Tender Opening Date & Time	: 19-03-2025 (at 03.30 pm)			
18.	Eligibility of Tender	: * Minimum 05 (Five) years' experience in providing car/vehicle rental services. The firm should have financial solvency of BDT 50, 00000 (Fifty lakh taka) as Working capital to ensure service delivery or as per Bid Document. * The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in providing non Consultant Service of at least two contracts of similar nature completed over a period of last three (3) years each with a values of at least of Tk. 80.00 lakh (Eight lakh Taka Only) shall be required in Govt./Semi Govt./Autonomous body. * Contract for providing Service will be treated as similar nature.			
19.	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	: 2000/-			

20.	Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk.)	Completion Time in Weeks/Months
	GD/DAE/FMP-213	Vehicle Hire/Transportation: For monitoring field activities by HQ.FSW. DG. DAE office including ICT Wing in Regions, Districts, UZ. UP & PIU.	Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project, Room No-326, 2 nd Floor, 1 st Building, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215.	50,000/-	14-Month (Approx.)

21.	Name of Official Inviting Tender	MD. MONZUR-UL-ALAM
22.	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director
23.	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project, Room No-326, 2 nd Floor, 1 st Building, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Khamarbare, Dhaka-1215.
24.	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	01713045502
25.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the Tender proceedings	


 (MD. MONZUR-UL-ALAM)
 Project Director
 Farm Mechanization through Integrated Management Project
 Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)
 Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215.
 Tel: 02-55028427
 E-mail : mechanizationdae@gmail.com

GD- 603

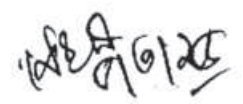
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বেসরকারী আইনজীবী প্যানেল নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সরকারি কার্য রক্ষার্থে দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা ও জ্ঞান মন্ত্রণালয় এবং এর আওতাধীন দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তরের সকল মামলা পরিচালনায় বিজ্ঞ এটর্নি জেনারেল কর্তৃক নিয়োজিত বিজ্ঞ সরকারী আইনজীবীকে সহায়তা প্রদানের নিমিত্ত মহামান্য সুপ্রিম কোর্টে আপীল বিভাগ ও হাইকোর্ট বিভাগের মামলাসমূহের জন্য ২(দুই) জন, প্রশাসনিক ও প্রশাসনিক আপীল ট্রাইব্যুনালের জন্য ০১ (এক) জনসহ সর্বমোট ০৩ (তিন) জনের একটি বেসরকারী আইনজীবী প্যানেল তালিকাভুক্ত করার লক্ষ্যে আগ্রহী আইনজীবীদের নিকট হতে নিম্নোক্ত শর্তে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

- আবেদনকারী আইনজীবীকে ঢাকায় স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাস করতে হবে;
- আবেদনকারীর নাম, পিতা/স্বামীর নাম, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা (চেষ্টা/কর্মস্থলের ঠিকানাসহ), জন্ম তারিখ, বয়স, ফোন নম্বর, মোবাইল নম্বর, ই-মেইল নম্বর ইত্যাদি উল্লেখপূর্বক পূর্ণাঙ্গ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত দিতে হবে;
- আবেদনের সাথে সদ্য তোলা ০৩ (তিন) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি দিতে হবে;
- আবেদনের সাথে জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, বার কাউন্সিলের সনদপত্র, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সকল সনদ এবং বার কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত পেশাগত অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্রসহ সকল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে;
- বাংলাদেশের সুপ্রিম কোর্ট ও প্রশাসনিক ট্রাইব্যুনালে মামলা পরিচালনার জন্য হাইকোর্ট বিভাগ ও আপীল বিভাগে এ্যাজডকেট হিসেবে কমপক্ষে ১০ (দশ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে;
- আবেদনের সাথে মামলার ধরণ অনুযায়ী পরিচালনা ব্যয়ের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ উল্লেখ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত হারে আইনজীবীকে ফি পরিশোধ করা হবে এবং সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত সংশ্লিষ্ট বিধি-বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে ও সরকারের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে;
- অন্যকোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে আইনজীবী হিসেবে নিয়োজিত থাকলে তা প্রমাণকসহ উল্লেখ করতে হবে;
- আবেদনকারীর বয়স ৬০ (ষাট) বছরের অধিক হতে পারবে না;
- অবসরপ্রাপ্ত জেলা জজ/বিচারকগণও আবেদন করতে পারবেন;
- আইনজীবী নিয়োগের মেয়াদ ২ (দুই) বছর হবে; তবে কর্তৃপক্ষের সন্তুষ্টি সাপেক্ষে মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধি করা যাবে।
- কোন আইনজীবী অব্যাহতি গ্রহণ করতে চাইলে ৩০ (ত্রিশ) দিন পূর্বে নোটিশ প্রদান করতে হবে এবং দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা ও জ্ঞান মন্ত্রণালয় ৩০ (ত্রিশ) দিন পূর্বে নোটিশ প্রদানের মাধ্যমে প্যানেলভুক্ত কোন আইনজীবীকে অব্যাহতি প্রদান করতে পারবে;
- নির্বাচিত আইনজীবীকে কর্তৃপক্ষের সহিত ৩০০ (তিনশত) টাকার নন-জুডিশিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পে চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করতে হবে
- বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের ১৪ (চৌদ্দ) দিনের মধ্যে মহাপরিচালক, দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা বরাবরে আবেদন জমা দিতে হবে।
- কোন ধরণের ভুল তথ্যাদি প্রদান এবং তদবির প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা হিসেবে গণ্য হবে।
- ঐতিপূর্ণ কিংবা অসম্পূর্ণ এবং নির্ধারিত সময়ের পরে প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগের বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।


তানুসুকা নাশতারান
 উপসচিব
 উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন-১)
 সদস্য সচিব
 প্যানেল আইনজীবী নিয়োগ কমিটি
 দুর্যোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তর, ঢাকা

GD-601

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.



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

farther south, 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

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.



Ex-MP’s house occupied, turned

FROM PAGE 12

Miste, originally from Tangail’s Delduar 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 Joaherul 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

against him in different district police stations.

Speaking to local journalists, Miste said she had previously announced on Facebook that the homes of AL leaders would be converted into shelters for mentally challenged individuals.

Miste also claimed that they had plans to demolish the house. However, a man, on behalf of the owner, offered to build an ashram there instead.

She also said she would not live in or profit from the house.

Meanwhile, Sher Shah, member secretary of SAD’s Tangail district unit, told The Daily Star that they have no affiliation with Miste. While she participated in student protests, she holds no position in SAD.

“We learned about the occupation

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,

police sources said the sister had married one of the accused four months ago and lived with his family in Magura’s Nijnanduali.

In the complaint, the child’s mother alleged the accused rapist had previously made inappropriate advances towards her elder daughter, which was known to other family members and had led to disputes.

On March 5, around 2:30am, the victim’s elder sister woke up to find her lying unconscious on the floor instead of beside her on the bed.

The child later complained of severe pain and burning in her genital area. She said her brother-in-law had unlocked the door, allowing his father to come in and rape her, said police quoting from the case statement.

The victim said she was forcibly taken to another room, gagged, and raped before being left unconscious on the floor of the room her sister was in.

The case statement further said that when the elder sister tried to inform their mother over the phone, her husband snatched the phone and physically assaulted her.

He also threatened to kill the child if she disclosed the incident. The two sisters were then locked in separate rooms.

At one point, the child lost consciousness.

Later that morning, a neighbour arrived at the house. Taking advantage of the distraction, the rapist’s elder son went into the room the child was kept in and poured water on her so she regained her senses.

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

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.

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.

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

Build social unity against oppression. Stand by each other. Cooperate with the government to build a beautiful and peaceful society,” said the chief adviser.

In Bangladesh, he said, women have also been struggling for their rights for centuries. From anti-British movement to the Language Movement, and in the Liberation War, the women’s community of Bangla has played an active role.

“Today, I remember those martyred women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the July Uprising. I pay tribute to the women fighters who were injured in July. I pray that they can return to a healthy and normal life soon,” Dr Yunus said, adding that preventing violence against women is one of the government’s priorities.

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmeen S Murshid chaired the event attended by members of the Council of Advisers, diplomats stationed in Dhaka, women leaders and senior government officials.

Sharifa Sultana, Halima Begum, Marina Besra, Lipi Begum, Muhin Mohona, players of Bangladesh National Women Cricket team members are among the recipients of the awards.

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

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

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.”

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.

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.



A joint initiative by

The Daily Star



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.

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 watermelon 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 healthcare.

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.

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.

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 Karbari (village chief) and an advocate for women's rights. As the organizing secretary of the CHT Female Headman Karbari 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.

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 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.

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.



FILE VISUAL: STAR

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,

are rarely enforced. Special courts should be established to fast-track trials of those involved in lynchings. A few high-profile convictions would send a strong message that mob justice will no longer be tolerated.

Third, community engagement is crucial. Political parties, religious leaders, and civil society organisations must actively campaign against mob violence. Too often, political divides prevent meaningful reform, but this issue transcends partisanship. It is a national problem that demands a united response.

Fourth, the role of social media in spreading panic and misinformation cannot be ignored. Many mob attacks are triggered by unverified rumours that spread like wildfire online. The government must invest in digital literacy campaigns to educate the public on the dangers of acting on misinformation. Simultaneously, tech companies and law enforcement should work together to track and remove incendiary content before it leads to violence.

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 our 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.

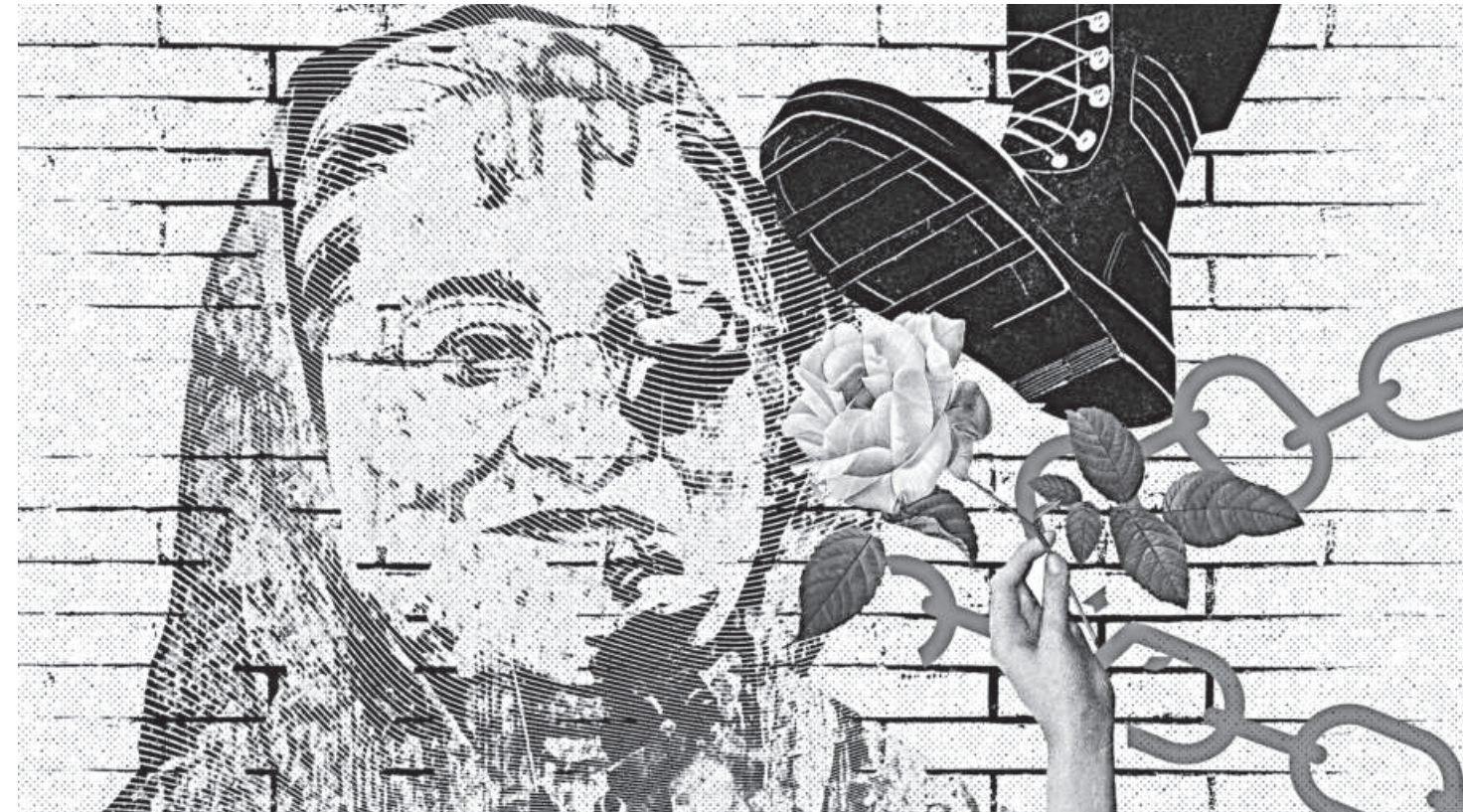
The very first paragraph of the proposed Preamble asserts that “(we have) forged united resistance against autocratic and fascist rule in order to establish democracy.” The second paragraph goes on to proclaim “the ideals of democracy and anti-discrimination that united (us) against fascist rule in 2024.” 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 is

The conceptual error is that, strictly speaking, the term fascism is 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.

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. 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.



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

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 of 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.

Applause and amnesia: No Other Land’s Oscar win



Sumaya Mashrufa
is manager to executive director’s
office at Friendship.

SUMAYA MASHRUF A

The Academy awarded its Oscar for Best Documentary Feature to *No Other Land* on March 3. Palestinian activist Basel Adra, 28, shot most of the documentary on his camcorder from 2019 to 2023, showing the Israeli military’s destruction of his hometown, Masafer Yatta, a small region in the southern occupied West Bank. Basel made the film with Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham.

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.

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.

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,



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.

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 booed 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.



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: taufiqvin@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 MEHZABEEN

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.



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**

Unyielding India confront spirited Kiwis

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.

BFF's financial motive hindering clubs?

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.



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

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.

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 Shikkha 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



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

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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 HRIDOY



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, IF TAR TIMING

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

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.”

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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

Russian leader Vladimir Putin “has no interest in peace”, the European Union's foreign policy chief said yesterday, after overnight strikes by Moscow's troops killed 14 people in Ukraine.

“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.

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.

Ukraine still controls some 400 square kilometres (150 square miles) in the Kursk region after launching a cross-border offensive last August and Zelensky sees this as a possible bargaining chip in peace talks.

But Ukraine's troops in Kursk have seen their position worsen in recent weeks with Russia's army encroaching.

Russia's defence ministry on Saturday announced the recapture of three more villages: Viktorovka, Nikolayevka and Staraya Sorochina.

According to DeepState, an online military tracker linked to the Ukrainian army, the Russian move followed a “breach” in Ukrainian defence lines near the town of Sudzha, which is under Kyiv's control.

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 Al Mukaddas 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 Dargachala 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 Moeen U Ahmed and Aziz Ahmed; Maj Gen (ret'd) 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-

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সাংস্কৃতিক অগ্রযাত্রার নবতরঙ্গ

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

‘বেসিক ফিল্ম কোর্স’

Basic Film Course

প্রশিক্ষণের বিষয়

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কোর্সের মেয়াদ
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প্রশিক্ষণের সময়
সকাল ৯:৩০টা থেকে বিকাল ৪:৩০টা পর্যন্ত

অনলাইনে আবেদনের ঠিকানা
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আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি অথবা অনলাইনে জমা দেওয়া যাবে
ই-মেইল: bctibd2013@gmail.com

আবেদনের খোঁজা
ন্যূনতম এইচ.এস./সমমান পাস

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বাছাই পরীক্ষা
২১ এপ্রিল, ২০২৫ খ্রি.

(সকাল ১১:০০ টা - বিসিটিআই ক্যাম্পাস)

প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদির জন্য
☎ ০১৫৩১৮৩৫২৮৬
০১৭১২৮৯৪৫৪৯

বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট
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১২৫/এ, দাকস সালাব, এ.ডব্লিউ. গৌপ্ত রোড, ঢাকা-১২১৬
ওয়েবসাইট: www.bcti.gov.bd ইমেইল: bctibd2013@gmail.com



BGMEA Election 2025-2027

"Made in Bangladesh with Pride"

BGMEA Complex, House # 7/7A, Block # H -1, Sector #17, Uttara, Dhaka -1230

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