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## LAUNDERED BILLIONS Govt fast-tracks recovery efforts

Special law in the works; 11 priority cases  
involving Hasina, Saifuzzaman,  
among others, identified

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is set to enact a special law aimed at streamlining the recovery process of money laundered during the Sheikh Hasina regime.

The special law, which would be formulated within one week, would provide a legal framework for retrieving the money, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said at a press conference yesterday.

It is being framed to address the demands of various foreign entities and organisations assisting the government in retrieving the laundered funds.

"Bringing back laundered money is a lengthy process and involves many legal issues. It is extremely crucial for us to recover this money. We are hopeful that we will be able to recover several billion dollars in assets by the end of this year if we can make sufficient progress."

The comments came after Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus chaired a meeting with a high-powered inter-agency taskforce formed to bring back money that has been illegally taken abroad.

Yunus called for expediting efforts to bring back billions in stolen money -- both from the banking system and other means.

"It is the top priority of the government. We want to bring the stolen money back at any cost. The chief adviser has emphasised the importance of acting swiftly and ensuring that not a single day is wasted in this effort," Shafiqul said, quoting Yunus.

The task force has identified 11 priority cases involving ousted prime minister Hasina, her family members, organisations connected to them, and former land minister and Awami League leader Saifuzzaman Chowdhury.

The names of all individuals involved in the 11 cases were not disclosed for the sake of investigation.

"The number one priority case is the involvement of money laundering by Sheikh Hasina, her family and connected organisations," Shafiqul said.

The joint investigation team has traced assets linked to Hasina, her family, and their associated individuals and organisations in the US, the UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Cayman Islands, he said.

"A Russian slush fund [a reserve of money used for illicit purposes, especially political bribery] has been identified in a Malaysian bank," he

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### ASSETRECOVERYPLAN FOR 2025

#### QUARTER 1

- ① Meetings with UK bodies to request sanctions
- ② Attend asset recovery seminar in London
- ③ Finalise draft TOR for international law firms/funders

#### QUARTER 2

- ① Engage law firms
- ② Push for freezes on Bangladeshi assets abroad
- ③ Settlement process to begin

#### QUARTER 3

- ① Start international criminal and civil cases
- ② Litigation funders to engage law firms and investigators
- ③ Call for UN and US sanctions

#### QUARTER 4

- ① Achieve settlements in at least 50% of 11 priority cases
- ② Asset freezes in 11 cases
- ③ Establish an asset recovery agency

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### TÜRK INTERVIEW Army says it wasn't directly contacted by UN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army has responded to recent remarks made by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, clarifying that it was not directly contacted regarding the concerns he raised in an interview with the BBC's HARDtalk.

In a statement issued yesterday, the army said any concerns the UN rights body had were conveyed to the previous government, not the military leadership.

"Please note that the Bangladesh Army did not receive any direct communication or intent from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the matter stated by Mr Türk. If any such concerns were raised, they were conveyed to the erstwhile Government of Bangladesh and not directly to the

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### 8-yr-old rape victim still on life support

#### CMH forms medical board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eight-year-old rape victim from Magura, who is undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka, moved her eyelids for the first time yesterday morning.

However, doctors said her overall condition has improved only slightly. Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Mohammad Abul Kalam Azad Mazumdar said at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital last afternoon.

The CMH formed a high-level medical board for her treatment as she remained on life support at the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU), the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) said in a statement.

The board includes

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### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Protests rage on streets, online

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students across the country took to the streets for the third day in a row yesterday, demanding justice for victims of sexual violence, stricter punishment for offenders, and the resignation of the home affairs adviser.

The protests erupted after the rape of an 8-year-old girl, who is now fighting for her life, sparking outrage nationwide.

Demonstrations were held at universities and key locations, with students blocking roads and forming human chains to press home their demands.

Protesters called for swift legal action, with some demanding special tribunals to ensure faster trials for rape cases.

Many students boycotted classes and took to social media, posting blindfolded photos in solidarity with victims.

In Dhaka, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (Marxist) held a demonstration at Raju Sculpture.

Protesters criticised the government's failure to curb

sexual violence and condemned the adviser's dismissive remarks on recent harassment cases. They also denounced the culture of impunity that allows perpetrators to escape justice.

As part of their nationwide programme, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leaders and activists formed a human chain in front of the High Court.

Addressing the event, JCD President Rakibul Islam Rakib expressed concerns over the increasing incidents of rape, online harassment, and violence against women, as well as the deteriorating law and order situation and the lack of justice for victims of

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

### EC starts process to register new political parties

#### Reaffirms polls in December

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and AHMED DEEPTO

The Election Commission, reaffirming that the next parliamentary polls will be held in December, yesterday initiated the registration process for new political parties.

The commission took the initiative without making any changes to the process, although the Electoral Reform Commission had proposed modifications.

The EC's work on updating the voter roll is going on in full swing and is expected to be completed by June. The commission has also taken steps to amend the existing law on demarcation of constituencies. The EC is also working to revise the guidelines for local and national observers, said top officials.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said they did not want to miss the December deadline, as announced by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad.

"We are making necessary preparations to ensure the timeline is maintained," the CEC told reporters after a meeting with British High

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Topsoil has been dug out from the bank of the Surma for making bricks. Ignoring a ban, a group of people are involved in this illegal activity. This not only ruins the fertility of the land, but also increases the likelihood of river erosion. The photo was taken in the Mirerchak area in Sylhet city yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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### CONSENSUS COMMISSION It's prepping for talks with parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission is preparing to hold discussions with political parties to quickly reach an agreement on formulating a "National Charter".

Its Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz revealed this at a press conference at the LD Hall of the parliament yesterday.

Responding to a question, he said constitutional amendments are possible through ordinances as it has been done in the past.

Prof Riaz said the commission has sought opinions from 34 political parties and alliances on 166 important reform recommendations.

The commission expects to receive the responses by March 13. Once the parties submit their opinions, talks will begin, even though specific dates have not yet been set.

Prof Riaz urged political parties and alliances to provide their opinions as quickly as possible.

"The next steps in this process depend on the political parties. We want to start the discussions quickly."

Commission members Badiul Alam Majumdar, Iftekharuzzaman, Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, Safar Raj Hossain, Emdadul Haque, and Chief Adviser's Special Assistant (Consensus) Monir Haider were present at the press conference.

The six reform commissions, formed in October last year, submitted their proposals to the government on February 8.

The consensus commission is now trying to build consensus on the reform proposals.

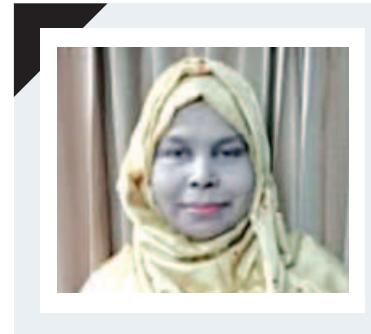
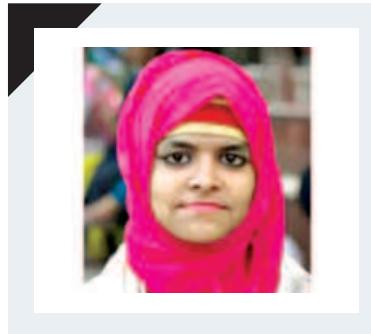
Prof Riaz said key recommendations of five

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# Tales of female martyrs of the July uprising

FARID UDDIN RONY

Women played a significant role in the July uprising. In the past decade, no other movement saw such a spontaneous presence of women on the streets. From actively participating in protests to strategising and coordinating activities, women contributed at every level. They not only led and organised the student movement but also provided support in various ways—medical professionals treated the wounded, while working mothers and homemakers supplied water to protesters on the streets. A report from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in December last year mentioned 11 female martyrs. Yesterday, we told the stories of five of them. We are telling the stories of five more today.



## RITA AKHTER

Rita Akhter was only 17 years old. She wanted to become a doctor and lift her impoverished parents out of hardship.

Her family lived in Talkhur village, under the Punit Union of Kalai Upazila in Joypurhat. Her father, Ashraf Ali, was a rickshaw puller; her mother, Rehena Bibi, was a homemaker. Rita was the middle child among three siblings. Her elder brother had not studied much and now worked as a day labourer. Her younger brother had just completed primary school. Rita was the family's sole hope for a better future.

Determined to give their daughter a chance, her parents did everything within their means. Her mother worked as a domestic help, using her meagre earnings to cover Rita's education expenses.

After Rita passed her secondary exams, her father moved the family to Dhaka so she could attend a good urban college. She was admitted to the science department at Mirpur Duarpara Government College. To make things easier for her, her father rented a small, low-cost home in Mirpur-2, H Block, near the college. He continued pulling rickshaws in Mirpur, while her mother worked in nearby houses.

On the morning of August 5, her father left for work with his rickshaw, and her mother went to her job. Around 11 AM, Rita slipped out of the house to join the March to Dhaka protest.

When her mother returned home at noon, she found the house empty. Frantic, she began searching for her daughter. After looking everywhere in the neighbourhood and finding no trace of Rita, she started checking hospital morgues.

She ran from one medical college to another, desperately searching for her daughter. Finally, after 10:00pm, at the morgue of Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, she found Rita's body.

Eyewitnesses later told the family that a bullet had entered one side of Rita's head and exited the other.

She was buried in a local graveyard in her village.

## MOSAMMAT LIZA

Mosammam Liza, 18, came to Dhaka six years ago due to financial hardship, through her elder brother Mohammad Rakib. She started working as a domestic help in Shantinagar while also attending an all-female madrasa nearby to study Arabic.

The apartment where Liza worked was a 14-story building, and she lived on the seventh floor. On July 18, 2024, clashes erupted in the afternoon between protesters and law enforcement, along with members of Chhatra League and Jubo League. Hearing loud noises, Liza stepped onto the balcony to see what was happening. A bullet struck her head, and she collapsed instantly.

Household members quickly carried her to a nearby hospital. Her brother tried to reach Dhaka hearing the news, but was stopped at multiple checkpoints. After much difficulty, he reached Shantinagar on July 20, travelling partly by rickshaw and partly on foot. After a surgery the next day at Popular Hospital, she passed away on July 22.

Liza was the fourth among five sisters and two brothers. In her final days, her brother often spoke to her, trying to convince her to return home. "You're grown up now. Father and mother are looking for a groom for you. Come back home, sister."

In their last conversation, Liza had said, "Just three more months. By then, I'll become a Hafiza. Then I'll go home for good."

She did, but as a corpse. She now lies buried in the family graveyard in Deulashibpur village in Bhola.

## NASIMA AKHTER

Nasima Akhter was 24 years old. In July, she had come to visit her elder brother's home in Dhanmondi, Dhaka. The Science Lab intersection had become a hotspot during the student-led uprising, with daily clashes.

On July 18, her nephews, who were actively participating in the protests, were injured and stayed home the next day. On July 19, the entire household remained indoors. With the internet shut down, they spent time peeking through windows or going up to the rooftop to observe the streets outside.

That afternoon, they repeatedly heard the loud noise of helicopters flying overhead. Tear gas and rubber bullets were being fired from helicopters at protesters across different parts of Dhaka. In the evening, when the situation seemed to have calmed down a bit, Nasima went to the rooftop with her nephew to see what was happening outside.

Within minutes, they came under fire. A bullet struck her nephew and then hit Nasima. She collapsed face down.

Inside the house, there was chaos. Rehana Akhter, Nasima's sister-in-law, was beside herself with panic—one moment she was tending to her wounded son, and the next, she was hearing that her sister-in-law had been shot on the rooftop. They rushed both of them to hospital. The two were admitted to the ICU. The son survived, but Nasima passed away the next day.

The following day, her body was taken to Maijdee, Noakhali. She was buried in the family graveyard.

## MAYA ISLAM

July 19, 2024. After lunch, little Musa, just seven years old, begged his father for ice cream. His father said, "I'm heading out now. Come with me, get your ice cream, and then go back home."

They lived in a rented apartment in Rampura's Banasree area. Musa held his father's hand as they went downstairs. His grandmother, Maya Islam, 60, followed them to bring him back home after he got his ice cream.

Just as they were returning a bullet struck Musa's head. The same bullet passed through his skull and hit his grandmother in the lower abdomen.

Wounded, Maya tried to climb back up to the second floor but collapsed unconscious on the stairs. Neighbours rushed in and carried both of them to a nearby hospital in Banasree.

While her grandson was still fighting for his life in the hospital, Maya died the next day at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She was buried in her ancestral home in Mirzapur, Tangail.

Musa survived, but is still under treatment in Singapore.

## MEHERUN NESSA TANHA

Meherun Nessa Tanha, 22, was a third-year honours student at Hazrat Shah Ali Women's College in Mirpur. Her father, Mosharrif Hossain, was a driver, and her mother, Asma Akter, a homemaker. Alongside her studies, Meherun worked part-time to support herself. Their family lived in Mirpur.

Initially, Meherun was not deeply involved in street protests. But on July 19, her cousin Rabbi joined a demonstration on Mirpur Mazar Road after Jumu'ah prayers. During the protest, police shot and killed him. Rabbi's body was also withheld at the medical morgue, with the family facing unnecessary hurdles before they were allowed to take it three days later.

Furious over her cousin's killing, Meherun and her younger brother Tarif took to the streets, demanding justice. She held up a placard that read, "I will not let my brother's blood go in vain."

Her father recalled, "We could not keep them inside the house no matter how hard we tried. They would say, 'Our brother is a martyr. We cannot just sit at home. We must go out and demand justice for his killing."

On August 5, after Sheikh Hasina fled, people across the country took to the streets in celebration. Meherun and her younger brother also joined the jubilant rallies. After attending the festivities near the Ganabhaban and the Jatiya Sangsads, Meherun started heading home around 7:30pm, while her brother remained outside.

As she reached Notun Bazar in Mirpur 13, she found herself near ongoing clashes between students, the public, and the police. She managed to slip past the violence and get inside her home safely. Once in her room, she called her brother to warn him about the unrest, advising him to take a different route home.

But as she stood near the window, a bullet struck her. She collapsed instantly.

She was rushed to the nearest hospital, where doctors pronounced her dead. That night, around 11:00pm, Meherun was laid to rest at the Purbabaitak graveyard in Mirpur.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ STORY ONLINE



## Army denies being directly contacted

FROM PAGE 1

Army leadership," the statement said.

Reiterating its adherence to national security directives, the rule of law, and human rights principles, the army said Türk's statement had been taken out of context by certain quarters, misrepresenting the army's role and potentially damaging its reputation.

The statement further highlighted the army's long-standing commitment to neutrality, citing historical events such as the democratic transition of 1991. It also referenced its role during the July-August 2024 protests, where it ensured public safety without bias or external influence.

As the second largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, the Bangladesh Army is globally recognised for its professionalism, the statement added.

It noted that peacekeepers receive a small portion of foreign earnings, approximately Tk 27,000 crore generated over 23 years, which has contributed to the national economy.

The army reaffirmed its strong ties with the UN human rights body and urged that concerns regarding its role be addressed through open dialogue and constructive engagement.

## Govt fast-tracks recovery efforts

FROM PAGE 1

said, adding that the task force is targeting to freeze the foreign assets linked to the priority cases by the end of the year.

It is also aiming to have the British government slap sanctions against Bangladeshi individuals who have laundered money to the UK within six months, and to accelerate the filing of domestic cases against the accused individuals.

A total of 124 bank accounts, amounting to Tk 635.14 crore, belonging to Hasina, her family members and connected organisations have been frozen or attached. Additionally, a 60-katha plot in Purbachal, valued at Tk 1.8 crore in official documents, has been identified.

However, each katha of land in that

area is worth about 4 crore, according to the government's estimation.

Furthermore, eight flats and 10 decimals of land worth Tk 8.85 crore have also been traced. Six cases have been filed on charges of fraud and forgery.

Investigations for the six cases have been completed, and charge sheets have been submitted, Shafiqul said, adding that seven members of Hasina's family have an international travel ban on them.

About Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, Shafiqul said international media reports show that he had brought block after block abroad using money stolen from the people of Bangladesh.

The National Board of Revenue is investigating 11 cases of tax evasion by Saifuzzaman and individuals and

organisations connected to him.

The court has attached four properties worth Tk 20 crore, while petitions have been filed to attach two plots and 31.594.39 decimals of land.

Additionally, 39 bank accounts with a total balance of Tk 5.27 crore and shares worth Tk 102.85 crore have been frozen following court orders.

Information about owning 228 properties in the UAE, seven in the US and 343 in the UK was sent to the respective countries through the foreign ministry. Furthermore, a travel ban has been imposed on two members of Saifuzzaman's family.

For 10 cases, assets worth Tk 1,717 crore were either frozen or attached. Meanwhile, 188 BO accounts having shares worth Tk 15,500 crore have been frozen.

Apart from those linked to the 11 priority cases, there are several hundred individuals who have laundered money amounting to Tk 200 crore each or more abroad, Shafiqul said, adding that Yunus has asked the officials to expedite investigations regarding them.

Previously, it was known that money was being laundered through the banking system, hundi operations or by over-invoicing and under-invoicing.

In yesterday's meeting, an important finding was shared by the NBR chairman: money was also laundered through tuition fees for foreign universities.

In one specific case, it was discovered that an individual transferred tuition fees amounting to more than Tk 400-500 crore for their child, Shafiqul said.

Implementation method, which has six options for response -- "before the election through an ordinance", "before the election through a referendum", "during the election through a referendum", "through a Constituent Assembly", "after the election through constitutional amendments", and "through a parliament elected as both a Constituent Assembly and a Legislature".

The first is whether the party concerned agrees with the proposal, with three response options: "Agree", "Disagree", and "Partially Agree".

The second is about the timeline and

implementation method, which has six options for response -- "before the election through an ordinance", "before the election through a referendum", "during the election through a referendum", "through a Constituent Assembly", "after the election through constitutional amendments", and "through a parliament elected as both a Constituent Assembly and a Legislature".

Besides, a section for comments has

## It's prepping for talks with parties

FROM PAGE 1

commissions have been arranged in a structured format. The 166 structured proposals were sent to the political parties and alliances on March 6, he added.

The proposals of the Police Reform Commission were not included in this framework, as that commission believes their suggestions can be implemented through administrative measures.

Among them, 70 proposals pertain

to constitutional reforms, 27 to electoral reforms, 23 to judicial reforms, 26 to public administration reforms, and 20 to anti-corruption measures.

At the press briefing, Prof Riaz said feedback has been sought on two aspects of each proposal.

The first is whether the party concerned agrees with the proposal, with three response options: "Agree", "Disagree", and "Partially Agree".

The second is about the timeline and

## 4 held for harassing, assaulting women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have detained two men and arrested two others for harassing and sexually assaulting women, including a US national, in separate incidents in Dhaka, Savar and Cox's Bazar.

One of the men named Rinku was detained from Dhaka's Lalmatia for questioning on Sunday night, DMP Deputy Commissioner Mohammed Ibne Mizan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Legal action would be taken against him on allegations of harassing two young women for smoking at a tea stall in Lalmatia on March 1, Mizan added.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki also announced the detention of Rinku, identifying him as "the harasser of Lalmatia" on Facebook yesterday.

Another man named Rasel Hossain was arrested from Motijheel yesterday by the Cyber Crime Unit of DMP's Detective Branch on charges of assaulting women near Dhaka's Shyamoli Square recently, said Talebir Rahman, Deputy Commissioner (Media), DMP.

Rasel recorded and shared videos of him making hateful remarks about women and exhibiting aggressive behaviour in the Shyamoli Square area.

In Savar, police arrested Mohammad Khalid Mahmud, also known as Hridoy Khan, from the Aminbazar area for harassing women and publishing videos of the incidents on social media.

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## BSF killed 305 Bangladeshis in 10yrs: HRSS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 305 Bangladeshis were killed and 282 more injured along the Bangladesh-India border by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) personnel in the last 10 years, according to the Human Rights Support Society (HRSS).

In a media statement yesterday, the rights group condemned and protested recent killings of Bangladeshis along the border.

According to HRSS statistics, based on media reports and its own findings, 26 Bangladeshis were killed by BSF and another 25 were wounded last year.

In 2024, 47 Bangladeshis were shot by BSF and 158 arrested.

As of March 8 this year, four Bangladeshis were killed, 10 injured, five shot, and 15 arrested by BSF personnel in 15 incidents.

According to the HRSS, since 2015, the highest number of Bangladeshis killed by BSF in a single year was 51 in 2020, and the number was the lowest, 15, in 2018.

The HRSS said the incidents indicate a fragile border security. Despite repeated

SEE PAGE 6 COL.6

## Thief's phone ends mystery behind murder of woman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

চুক্তি এ রিপোর্ট প্রমিটেড পাঠান  
প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...

যেকোনো শাখা থেকে রোমটিয়াল প্রথম করলেই  
পাবেন সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রশ়াদন।

সাথে আরও আরও নিশ্চিত আত্মস্থীয় পুরস্কার  
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পাই ব্যাংক (PI Banking) -  
একটি পুরালী ব্যাংক অ্যাপস

Π

## Complaint filed over enforced disappearance of BNP leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A complaint was submitted yesterday to the Chief Prosecutor's Office of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) over the enforced disappearance of BNP leader and former Dhaka City Corporation councillor Chowdhury Alam in 2010.

Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, son of the missing politician, lodged the complaint, naming 18 individuals, including former minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, ex-Rab officers Maj Gen (relieved) Ziaul Ahsan, Mohammad Sohail, and the then additional director general (operations) of Rab, Col Mujibur Rahman. Also accused are the former president of the Jubo League's Dhaka Metropolitan South unit, Ismail Hossain Chowdhury

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Activists painting images of violence against women on canvas in protest against gender-based violence across the country, at Central Shaheed Minar in Narayanganj yesterday.

PHOTO: SOURAV SIAM

## RMG workers block road after truck fatally hits fellow

### Commuters suffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A truck yesterday hit two female garment workers while they were crossing the road near the Chairmanbari area in Dhaka's Banani, leaving one of them dead and the other injured.

The incident took place at around 6:45am. The deceased was identified as Sumaiya Akhter, 19.

CCTV footage of the incident that later went viral showed that the victim, Sumaiya, had signalled the truck to stop while crossing the road, but the truck ran straight onto her and fled, leaving her dead on the spot.

Police arrested the driver of the truck, Titon Islam, last night, said Deputy Commissioner (Media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Talebir Rahman.

Meanwhile, BRTA has suspended registration of the truck following the accident and said it would cancel the registration unless the owner visits its Dhaka Circle 2 office with other documents within three working days.

After the accident, several hundred RMG workers blocked the road for around six hours protesting their fellow's death, which brought traffic to a standstill.

The gridlock stretched to nearby roads too, leaving office-goers and commuters stranded for hours.

Many were seen walking long distances to reach their destinations amid sweltering heat.

Though the protesters left the road after around six

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## Act now to tackle gender-based violence

Demand speakers at MJF event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an event yesterday called for immediate action to address the rising incidents of gender-based violence in Bangladesh.

Condemning the recent release of a convicted child rapist in Dinajpur, they emphasised the need for speedy trials of rape cases and the closure of legal loopholes.

The speakers warned that without immediate justice, perpetrators would continue acting with impunity, perpetuating a cycle of violence.

These remarks were made during a discussion titled "Reflection on Reality: Women's Journey Towards Leadership and Empowerment," organised by the Manusher Jonno Foundation at the MJF Tower in the capital. The event was held in observance of International Women's Day 2025.

At the programme, MJF Executive

The recent rape incident in Magura touched our hearts because it was shared a lot on social media. But why is there no protest when a rapist from eight years ago is released and walks free? Our growing tolerance is fuelling violence against women.

Banasree Mitra Neogi

Director, MJF

Director Shaheen Anam expressed deep concern over the recent surge in sexual violence, stating, "Many have wished me 'Happy Women's Day,' but I am not really happy."

Noting that the law adviser has directed that rape case investigations must be completed within 15 days

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Anisuzzaman  
new special  
assistant to CA  
Aminul Islam  
who oversaw edn  
ministry resigned  
from same post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday appointed Anisuzzaman Chowdhury as a special assistant to the chief adviser with the rank of state minister.

He will oversee matters related to the finance ministry, according to a gazette notification issued by the Cabinet Division.

On the same day, Prof M Aminul Islam, another special assistant to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus who oversaw the education ministry, resigned from his post.

Speaking to The Daily

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



## Trump's policies open new prospects for Bangladesh

### Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US president has imposed higher tariffs on some countries and reciprocal tariffs on many others, but not on Bangladesh, presenting an opportunity for the country, said CAF Dowlah, a former professor at the State University of New York, yesterday.

Dowlah said the US president has significant authority to grant the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) to any country at any time.

He also noted that currently the US is Bangladesh's largest source of export earnings, investment, and remittances.

Dowlah made the remarks while speaking at a discussion titled "America-Bangladesh Relations in the Trump Era," organised by the International Business Forum of Bangladesh (IBFB) in the capital.

At the event, Humayun Rashid, former IBFB president, said Trump is highly business-oriented and Bangladesh should focus on expanding trade and creating more job opportunities for Bangladeshi communities in the US.

Jon F Danilowicz, executive director of Right to Freedom and a former US diplomat in Bangladesh, said there is a lot of misinformation regarding US-Bangladesh relations.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## 823 prison officials penalised in 7 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Prisons has taken disciplinary action against 823 prison officials over the past seven months due to allegations of irregularities. Among them, 12 officials have been dismissed from service.

Inspector General of Prisons Brig Gen Syed Md Motaher Hossain shared these details at a press conference in the department's conference room yesterday.

He said six officials were forced into retirement, 84 were temporarily suspended, 270 received various disciplinary punishments, and 260 are facing departmental cases. Additionally, 29 officials were asked to provide explanations, 21 received final warnings, 39 were immediately transferred, and 102 were transferred outside their departments for administrative reasons.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A large crowd assembled in front of this TCB truck in Karwan Bazar yesterday. With Ramadan underway, TCB trucks provide some relief to low-income groups who are financially struggling to afford daily essential commodities amid continually rising prices.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Trump

FROM PAGE 3

He stressed that trade, investment, and people-to-people ties between the two countries are more significant than USAID assistance.

Danilowicz advised Bangladesh to pursue a long term relationship with the US, as the Trump administration's strategy for the country and South Asia remains unclear.

Humayun Kabir, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, said the US political landscape has changed significantly.

He said Trump, backed by Congress and the judiciary, has widespread support in the US.

Kabir highlighted ongoing major changes in Bangladesh and the US, alongside shifting regional dynamics in the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific region.

Former US ambassador to Bangladesh and Right to Freedom President William B Milam said his organisation is committed to promoting democracy and freedom.

He described the political transition in Bangladesh as the beginning of a new era.

He dismissed concerns that Bangladesh had lost global relevance, saying the country has the potential to play a more active role in global politics and free trade.

DU Prof Asif M Shahan and Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury, IBFB's founding president, also spoke.

## Coast Guard vigilant

FROM PAGE 5

security ahead of Eid. A special patrol system has been introduced during Ramadan and Eid to enhance security measures," he added.

Apart from securing river routes, the Coast Guard is also assisting the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and the Ministry of Shipping by checking vessel registration and fitness.

Currently, the Chittagong Port Authority has restricted lighter, tanker, and edible oil-carrying ships from anchoring for more than 72 hours, according to officials at the BCG headquarters.

The Coast Guard is maintaining round-the-clock surveillance to ensure these ships reach their destinations without unnecessary delays.

Coast Guard Media Officer Lt Commander

### Clash at NITOR

FROM PAGE 3

that eight to ten of them were hurt, including Ansar member Ruhul Amin, who was later found unconscious at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

Following the clash, hospital staff ceased work, shutting down ticket counters and X-ray rooms. Male nurses and ward boys were also absent.

Critically injured patient

Siyam-Ul Haque revealed that since February 11, 2025, the Coast Guard has conducted joint operations on 1,085 commercial and lighter ships.

"Through these operations, we hope to prevent any edible oil crisis and stabilise market prices during Ramadan," he said.

Lt Commander Ahsan mentioned that eight Coast Guard ships are deployed in Chandpur and ten in the Paga station.

"We are facing some manpower shortages, but we are providing round-the-clock security in the interest of national and public safety," he said.

Coast Guard personnel remain dedicated to safeguarding fisheries, preventing piracy, smuggling, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, as well as conducting relief and rescue operations during natural disasters, he said.

## Complaint filed over

FROM PAGE 3

Samrat, and then-general secretary of Sweekhasebok League, Bahauddin Nasim. The complaint also implicates several unidentified individuals.

According to the complaint, Chowdhury Alam, a popular commissioner in the Awami League's central office area, was a potential parliamentary candidate for the Dhaka 10 constituency and a key grassroots organiser of the opposition. It alleges that he was targeted due to being both a political and personal rival of Sheikh Hasina.

The complaint states that Awami League leaders, activists, and supporters, in

collusion with the accused Rab officials and their informants, orchestrated Alam's enforced disappearance to eliminate him permanently.

On June 25, 2010, six to seven individuals stopped Alam's car on Indira Road. They forced him into another vehicle, leaving his driver behind, and he has not been seen since.

Following the submission, Abu Sayeed Chowdhury expressed hope for justice.

"We received a complaint from Chowdhury Alam's family today (yesterday) and have forwarded it to the investigation agency," confirmed Tarek Abdullah, an ICT prosecutor.

## RMG workers block

FROM PAGE 3

hours, commuters bore the brunt throughout the day.

The protesters also blocked the expressway ramp near Banani Chairrambari, halting operations since 7:40am. They left the expressway after around four hours, and operations resumed at 11:45am," said Hasib Hasan Khan, head of Traffic Safety and Security Department at Dhaka elevated expressway.

Md Munna, 28, who was going to Kurnitola General Hospital with an injury, said it took him over two hours to reach there from Nikunja.

"I left for office at 8:30am and reached at around 10:30am. The roads are completely gridlocked, with no way to move," she said.

Buses were seen dropping off passengers near Banani Graveyard before turning back towards the airport.

## 823 prison officials

FROM PAGE 3

Addressing concerns about special treatment for high-profile prisoners, Motaher Hossain said no inmate has access to home cooked meals or mobile phones. To strengthen security, 275 surprise raids were conducted at Keraniganj Prison over the past three months, leading to the seizure of cash, mobile phones, and narcotics.

Motaher Hossain alleged that some corrupt prison officials, who benefitted from 15 years of systemic mismanagement, are now attempting to undermine reform efforts and damage the department's reputation.

"Bringing order to those accustomed to corruption for 15-16 years is not easy, but the process is ongoing," he said.

In this regard, Motaher Hossain said, "Seven

hundred inmates remain at large, and law enforcement agencies have yet to apprehend them. Among them, 69 are convicted criminals, including death row and life-term prisoners."

Motaher Hossain alleged that some corrupt prison officials, who benefitted from 15 years of systemic mismanagement, are now attempting to undermine reform efforts and damage the department's reputation.

"Bringing order to those accustomed to corruption for 15-16 years is not easy, but the process is ongoing," he said.

## Ctg elevated

FROM PAGE 5

Delwar Hossain Mazumdar, an executive member of the Forum for Planned Chittagong, and former chairman of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (Chittagong centre).

### DRIVING ON WRONG SIDE SPIKES

Visiting the Akhtaruzzaman flyover connected with the expressway recently, this correspondent observed a traffic congestion was created at the mouth of the flyover at Lalkhan Bazar area as a car was trying to move on the wrong lane.

"Some drivers are always driving on the wrong lane, leaving others at risk of accidents," said Mahmood Hossen, who regularly drives from Kadamtali to Textile area using the flyover.

Commuters attributed the tendency to drive on the wrong side to lack of proper enforcement of traffic rules and absence of strong monitoring, even though it is a punishable offence under the Road Transport

Act with a maximum fine of Tk 10,000.

Mahfuzur Rahman said they wrote to traffic police for taking legal action against rule violators.

## Canada

FROM PAGE 5

Canada will also support climate action through nature-based solutions, green innovations, and enhanced disaster preparedness through projects aimed at improving living standards across the Indo-Pacific and mitigating global poverty.

The funding aligns with Canada's commitment to advancing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, fostering inclusion, and strengthening international partnerships.

Under the Trump administration's new policy, the US government has terminated nearly 100 USAID-supported projects in Bangladesh, valued at approximately US\$ 400 million.

## সিগন্যাল বেস ওয়ার্কশপ

### ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা-১২০৬

#### দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। সিগন্যাল বেস ওয়ার্কশপের ভার্তাবাধারে বিভিন্ন টেকনোলজীয় ও টেলিকমিনিয়েশন সরকারী নথি করা হবে। অযাধী প্রকৃত সরবারাহাবী সংস্থার নিষিদ্ধ হতে নিয়ে বর্ণিত কর্তৃপক্ষের ব্যাবহারে দেশীয় মুদ্রার সীমান্তের বেতাবে আবাবন করা যাচ্ছে। ত্রয়োদশ সরকারী সামাজিক তালিকায় বিভিন্ন প্রতিক্রিয়া কর্তৃপক্ষের ব্যাবহারে আবাবন করা যাচ্ছে। আবাবন করা যাবে।

২। আগামী ২৫ মার্চ ২০২৫ তারিখ অবস্থার অনুসৰি সামাজিক মাধ্যমে (০৭৫০.০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১৪০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত) ৭৫০.০০ (সাতশ' পঞ্চাশ মাত্র) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)

প্রদর্শন ও প্রয়োজনীয় বিনিয়োগ শর্তের সময়সূচী মোতাবেক আবাবন করা যাবে।

৩। আগামী ২৫ মার্চ ২০২৫ তারিখ অবস্থার অনুসৰি ১১০০ ঘটিকার সময়ে আবাবন করা যাবে। আবাবন করা যাবে।

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## Tarique acquitted in sedition case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole



A Jashore court yesterday acquitted BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman in a sedition case filed around 11 years ago.

Jashore District and Sessions Judge Sheikh Nazmul Alam delivered the verdict on the case filed by Jashore District Awami League Organising Secretary SM Alzal Hossain on January 22, 2014.

Tarique was accused of making hateful and disrespectful statements about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, which amounted to sedition.

Jashore Public Prosecutor and District BNP President Sved Saberul Haque Sabu stated that the case was initially filed for framing charges, but later, an application was submitted to withdraw it.

He said under the law, a sedition case can only be filed if the alleged victim held an official position in the state at the time of the offense. Since Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was not in any official state position at that time, the case was deemed inadmissible.

## BANGLADESH, INDO-PACIFIC

### Canada announces US \$272.1m for development projects

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Canada has announced US\$ 272.1 million for development projects in Bangladesh and the broader Indo-Pacific region amid major funding cuts by US President Donald Trump's administration.

Canadian Minister of International Development Ahmed Hussen, alongside Member of Parliament Parm Bains, made the announcement, the Global Affairs Canada said in a statement yesterday.

It remains unclear how much of the total fund will be allocated for Bangladesh.

Ahmed Hussen reiterated Canada's commitment to strengthening ties with Bangladesh and the Indo-Pacific, highlighting efforts in healthcare, women's empowerment, and climate action.

Support will prioritise gender equality, sexual and reproductive health rights, and improved access to inclusive education and workforce training, the Global Affairs Canada's statement said.

"These initiatives reflect Canada's core values, as outlined in its Feminist International Assistance Policy, which seeks to empower women and girls globally," it added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



## Ctg elevated expressway fails to meet expectations

Limited entry and exit points, low usage, and revenue shortfall raise concerns

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The first elevated expressway in Chattogram is facing significant challenges in delivering benefits to commuters due to a lack of entry and exit points, as most of the ramps are still under construction.

Even more than a year after its inauguration, this lack of accessibility resulted in considerably low usage by commuters, as they deem the convenience brought by the expressway less than their expectations.

This, in turn, deprives the government of potential revenue from toll collections.

The Chattogram Development Authority constructed the expressway in the port city from Lalkhan Bazar to Patenga, at a cost of Tk 4,298.95 crore, aiming to reduce traffic congestion and boost economy.

According to a 2015 feasibility study by the Bureau of Research Testing and Consultancy

at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, the Chattogram expressway was projected to handle 39,793 motorised vehicles daily by 2025, accounting for 60 percent of traffic on the Lalkhan Bazar-Patenga route.

However, data from the project authority reveals an average of just 2,676 vehicles using the expressway daily since toll collection began on January 3 this year.

As such, the anticipated revenue from toll collection has not materialised yet.

In total, Tk 2.93 crore has been collected in tolls from 4,14,272 vehicles as of February 28, raising questions about the expressway's capacity to meet traffic and revenue expectations.

Meanwhile, commuters expressed frustration and criticised CDA for lacking the proper infrastructure for seamless movement using the expressway.

"The CDA makes the expressway

useless without constructing ramps for Patenga-bound vehicles in Lalkhan Bazar area," said Abdullah Ahad, a banker, who regularly drives a car to commute from GEC to Cement Crossing area.

The expressway, supposed to have 14 ramps at nine points, is ironically running with only an exit ramp in Tigerpass area, while CDA has postponed construction of six of the ramps.

"We failed to construct the designed ramps due to delays in land acquisition and issues surrounding possession of acquired land," said Mahfuzur Rahman, project director of the Chattogram Elevated Expressway.

Admitting that the expressway is yet to deliver benefits to commuters, he said, "We are trying, but several complexities leave us helpless."

"The expressway is not living up to expectations due to a lack of dedicated exit and entry ramps at several points," commented Md

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Coast Guard vigilant to prevent hoarding during Ramadan

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In an attempt to destabilise the market, a section of dishonest traders are allegedly hoarding essential commodities, food items, and edible oil in floating warehouses on bulkheads and lighter ships.

Their ultimate goal is to create an artificial crisis and drive up prices during Ramadan and ahead of Eid.

To counteract this, the Bangladesh Coast Guard (BCG) has intensified surveillance along river routes, particularly at the Chandpur point on the Dhaka-Chandpur route, to prevent market manipulation.

During a visit to the Chandpur station yesterday, Lt Commander Takiul Ahsan, station commander of the Coast Guard Chandpur station, highlighted their ongoing efforts.

"We are continuously monitoring and patrolling lighter ships to ensure that no one hoards food in floating warehouses to create instability in the market," Ahsan told The Daily Star.

He said the Coast Guard has increased vigilance on the Dhaka-Chandpur-Barishal route.

"Alongside inspecting bulkheads and lighter ships, we are also ensuring passenger launch

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Habibullah Bahar vice principal killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The acting vice principal of Habibullah Bahar College was hacked to death at an apartment in the capital's Uttarkhan early yesterday.

Syfur Rahman Bhuiyan, 45, was from Brahmanbaria.

His wife lives in a house in the Shantinagar area with their two children. However, Syfur mostly used to live in that apartment in Uttarkhan for the past few months.

The incident occurred around 5:00am on the third floor of a six-storey building, Ziaur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Uttarkhan Police Station, told The Daily Star.

A man -- who introduced himself as Syfur's nephew -- and a woman rented that apartment six months ago. Syfur used to live with them, said police.

Both the two have been on the run since the incident. Police suspect their involvement in the murder.

"We are trying to determine the motive behind the killing," said the OC.

Syfur was declared dead at a hospital in Uttara.

### Chittagong Medical University

BITID Building, Faujdarhat

Chattogram-4316, Bangladesh

Contact: 01829-626055, 01815-924581, 01719671824

Email: [kazi.m.saleheen@gmail.com](mailto:kazi.m.saleheen@gmail.com), [frashid943@gmail.com](mailto:frashid943@gmail.com)

e-Tender is invited to the e-GP Portal for following procurement. Interested tenderers are requested to visit (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) website for details.

Sl. No	Tender ID	Name of the procurement	Tender publication date	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender opening date and time	Method
1	1084718	CMU/GR-05/2024-25 Framework Agreement of Procurement of Answer Paper, Bills & forms for different Exams under Controller of Examination of Chittagong Medical University	11-03-2025	25-03-2025 12:30pm	25-03-2025 1:00pm	OTM (Framework)

Dr. Md. Delwar Hossain  
Controller of Examination  
Chittagong Medical University

BITID Building, Salimpur, Faujdarhat, Chattogram

GD-629

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
নির্বাচন কমিশন  
শিশু-মাতৃ-স্বাস্থ্য ইনসিটিউট  
মাতুয়াইল, ঢাকা-১৩৬২

Ref No. ICMH/Admin/2024-25/1431

Date 09/03/2025

### Re-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit r-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.

Re-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](https://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) by Dr. Mohammad Ahsanul Haque, Joint Director, Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka-1362 for the Procurement of:

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time
1084911	Procurement of Surgical Instrument for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	11-Mar-2025 12:00	23-Mar-2025 10:00	23-Mar-2025 12:00
1084912	Procurement of Radiology Items for the F.Y 2024-2025 at Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka.	11-Mar-2025 12:00	23-Mar-2025 10:00	23-Mar-2025 12:00

Re-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

Re-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

(Brig. Gen. Md. Emdadul Haque)  
Executive Director  
Institute of Child & Mother Health  
Matuail, Dhaka-1362.

GD-629



বাংলাদেশ নির্বাচন কমিশন

নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়

তারিখ: ২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৪৩১  
১০ মার্চ ২০২৫

### গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আদেশ, ১৯৭২-এর অনুচ্ছেদ ৯০ক এর অধীন রাজনৈতিক দল হিসেবে নির্বাচন করতে ইচ্ছুক এবং রাজনৈতিক দল নির্বাচন বিধিমালা, ২০০৮-এ উন্নিতির শর্তাবলী প্রয়োগে সক্ষম রাজনৈতিক দলসমূহকে নির্বাচন কমিশন প্রদত্ত নির্দেশিকা যোতাবেক বিধিমালায় সংযোজিত ফরম-১ প্রয়োগৰূপে আগস্ট ২০ এপ্রিল ২০২৫ তারিখের মধ্যে নির্বাচনের জন্য আবেদন করার আহ্বান জানানো যাচ্ছে।

০১। নিরবাচনে আগ্রহী রাজনৈতিক দলকে স্থীর প্লেটোরহেড প্যাডে দরখাত করতে হবে এবং দরখাতের সাথে নির্বাচিত আবশ্যিকীয় দলিলাদি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে, যথা-

- (ক) দলের গঠনতত্ত্ব;
- (খ) দলের নির্বাচনি ইশতেহার, যদি থাকে;
- (গ) দলের বিধিমালা, যদি থাকে;
- (ঘ) দলের লোগো এবং পতাকার ছবি;
- (ঙ) দলের কেন্দ্রীয় নির্বাচী কমিটি বা সময়সূচীর পদক্ষেপ পদবীসহ নামের তালিকা;
- (চ) দলের নামে রচিত বাংলাক একাউন্ট নথৰ ও বাংলাকের নাম এবং উক্ত একাউন্টের সর্বশেষ খুঁটি;
- (ছ) দলের নির্বাচনের দরখাত করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তির অনুকূলে প্রদত্ত ক্ষমতাগত;
- (জ) নির্বাচন ফি বাংলাদেশ আঙ্গরে পৌর হাজার টাকা সচিব, নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়ের বরাবরে জমাকৃত ট্রেজারী চালানের ক্ষেপি (ট্রেজারীতে টাকা জমাদানের ক্ষেত্রে নথৰ-১০৬০১০১০১২৫-১১০০০০০০০-১১০০০০০০০০-৪৪২২০৮)
- (ঝ) দরখাতের দাখিলে দল পর্যন্ত-

(অ) বাংলাদেশ স্বাধীন হবার পর হতে দরখাত দাখিল করার তারিখ পর্যন্ত সময়ের মধ্যে অনুষ্ঠিত সংসদ নির্বাচনের যে কোন একটিতে দলীয় নির্বাচনি প্রতীক নথৰে কর্মসূচি একটি আসন লাভের সম্বর্থনে

মোট ভোট সংখ্যার শতকরা পাঁচ টাকা ভোট লাভের সমর্থনে কমিশন বা তদুকৃত ক্ষমতাপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক ইস্যুত প্রত্যয়নপত্র; অর্থাৎ

# VIOLENCE ON WOMEN

## is a byproduct of patriarchy

SHAYAN

## DOWEL BISWAS

Renowned musician and social activist Farzana Wahid Shayan, known for her bold stance on gender inequality and oppression, has once again raised her voice in response to the alarming rise of gender-based violence in Bangladesh. In recent weeks, a wave of brutal incidents, including the rape of eight-year-old Asia by a relative, has sent shockwaves throughout the nation, prompting widespread outrage and calls for justice.

Gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence against women and children, has long been a pressing issue in Bangladesh. However, the recent spate of cases has reignited concerns about the safety and security of women in the country. While the heinous assault on Asia has incensed the nation, Shayan, like many others, is demanding more than just legal action—she is calling for a fundamental shift in societal attitudes and governmental responsibility.

"I consider looking at the issue of rape separately as a mistake. It

is a daily byproduct of how insensitively and patriarchally our country has treated the issue of women," the musician expressed, pointing out how the root causes of gender-based violence are deeply entrenched in societal norms and attitudes. She emphasised that the lack of strict governmental measures to protect women has allowed these crimes to persist, with rapists and abusers often escaping accountability or even being glorified in society.

The social activist expressed her frustration with the lack of action from the government, pointing out that while there is a legal framework in place, it is often ineffective in holding perpetrators accountable. "There has been no strict tone on the part of any government to justly handle the safety of women reflected in the laws of the

country," she said.

Rather than facing justice, Shayan pointed out that some rapists and abusers have been glorified in society, and even honoured by influential figures. She also criticised the silence of women in power, who have failed to challenge this pervasive culture of abuse. "Nobody wants to rock the boat," Shayan noted, underscoring how the political establishment has largely failed to confront this crisis head-on.

For Shayan, the need for immediate action is clear. She believes that the solution requires more than just legal reform—it requires a complete shift in societal attitudes toward women. "Make it a matter of shame to be remotely abusive or disrespectful towards women," she urged.

Shayan called for a culture where misogyny is no longer tolerated in any form, whether in the

workplace, public spaces, or even religious settings. She called for stricter measures to be put in place to identify and punish those who make disrespectful comments about women, particularly in waaz mehfils and other public forums.

One of Shayan's most urgent calls is for workplaces to implement mandatory rules to prevent abuse, suggesting that such policies should be as fundamental as fire extinguishers. She emphasised the importance of creating safe environments for women and ensuring that abusers do not have access to vulnerable individuals in any professional setting.

Shayan also stressed the importance of education and awareness campaigns to challenge the normalisation of victim-blaming and abusive behaviour. "Normalise feminism. Stop respecting superstars and celebrities who are associated with abuse," she stated.

She suggested that the fight against gender-based violence should be integrated into primary education, to ensure that future generations understand the importance of gender equality and respect for women from an early age.

As Bangladesh grapples with its ongoing struggle to address gender-based violence, the musician-activist's call for a collective societal effort to shift cultural attitudes and hold perpetrators accountable is a powerful reminder that change is not only necessary but urgent. With a combination of legal reforms, social awareness, and collective action,

Shayan believes Bangladesh can begin to dismantle the deeply entrenched systems that allow violence against women to thrive.



French playwright Zazie Hayoum brings 'Song of Hawkers' to Dhaka stage



Alliance Française de Dhaka is presenting *Song of Hawkers*, a comedy play by French playwright Zazie Hayoum, celebrating the lively hawkers of Dhaka. The play will be staged at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's Experimental Theatre Hall on March 20 and 21 at 3:30pm. Featuring three witty stories—*The Secret*, *The Thief Rewarded*, and *The Competition*—

the production highlights the daily lives of hawkers, using Grand Guignol, a 19th-century French theatre style blending comedy, songs, dance, and puppetry. Prajna Tasnuva Rubayat is the assistant director, with music by Rahul Ananda and choreography by Farhad A Shamim. The cast includes Imam Hossain, MS Rana, PK Fazal, Suraiya Mou, and others. Admission is free with online registration.

## 'Jongli' set for worldwide release this April



The much-anticipated film *Jongli*, starring Siam Ahmed, Shobnom Bubly, and Prarthana Fardin Dighi, is scheduled for a global release on April 25, ahead of its Eid-ul-Fitr debut in Bangladesh. The announcement was made by Siam Ahmed, who revealed the film's international rollout across key markets, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the UAE, among others. Zahid Hasan Abhi, head of production at The Abhi Kathachitra, confirmed the distribution, which will be managed by Swapna Scarecrow, BongOZ, Reverie, and other international partners. Directed by M Rahim, *Jongli* has gained attention for its track *Jonmo Jonmo*, penned by Prince Mahmud and performed by Tahsan Khan and Atiya Anisha. Additionally, Siam Ahmed's appearance in the film has drawn positive reviews.

# NEWS

## Six children raped in 6 dists

FROM PAGE 12  
A local court sent Rakib and Helal to jail, the OC added.

upazila.

Quoting locals, police said the victim came out of her room on Saturday night to use the toilet. Tafazzal, who was waiting there, forcibly took the girl to a nearby field and raped her.

Police arrested Tafazzal yesterday morning after her father lodged a case. A Kishoreganj court sent him to prison, said Abdullah Al Mamun, OC of Kishoreganj Sadar Model Police Station.

Police said accused Sabbir Miah, 20, and the victim used to work at a brick kiln. Sabbir raped the girl on Saturday afternoon.

Sabbir was arrested on Sunday night after the victim's mother lodged a case. He was produced before a local court that sent him to jail yesterday, said Habibur Rahman, OC of Nakla Police Station.

In another incident, a man landed in prison yesterday on charge of raping a three-year-old child in Noakhali's Kabirhat upazila.

The accused is Md Nuruzzaman, of the same upazila.

Police said Nuruzzaman took the child to a toilet and raped him on Tuesday afternoon.

On information, police arrested Nuruzzaman yesterday. A local court sent him to prison, said Shaheen Miah, OC of Kabirhat Police Station.

In Kishoreganj, a man landed in jail yesterday on charge of raping a 14-year-old girl.

The accused, Tafazzal Deen Islam, 27, is a resident of Kishoreganj Sadar

## The damage Hasina

FROM PAGE 12  
hundreds of charges.

Despite his various reform initiatives, Yunus is facing mounting pressure from political groups, particularly the BNP, to hold elections swiftly, reports The Guardian.

Yunus denied any suggestion that the streets were less safe than under Hasina's rule, but others have warned that the country's security situation threatened to spiral beyond his government's control, reported the UK-based newspaper.

The chief adviser maintained that he had a "very good relationship" with the military, and that there was "no pressure" from the army chief.

"Hasina's regime wasn't a government—it was a family of bandits," he said.

"Any order from the boss, and it was done. Someone's causing problems? We'll make them disappear. Want to hold an election? We will make sure you win all the seats. You want money? Here's a million dollar loan from the bank and you never have to pay back."

"Banks were given full licence to steal people's money, with active participation from the government," Yunus said.

"They would send their officials with guns to get it all signed off."

In December, a formal extradition request was made to India to send Hasina back to face trial in Bangladesh, but the chief adviser confirmed there had been "no response" from the Indian government.

"Hasina would still face trial for crimes against humanity, even if in absentia," he added.

Yunus said that while India sheltering Hasina was tolerable, "allowing her to use India as a platform to undo everything we have done is dangerous. It destabilises the country."

The return of Donald Trump to the White House has also complicated matters. The Biden administration was a key supporter of Yunus, but Trump has slashed USAID funding. In efforts to bring the US on side, Yunus has invited billionaire Elon Musk to bring his Starlink satellite internet service to Bangladesh, reports The Guardian.

Yunus expressed hope that Trump might see Bangladesh as a "good investment opportunity" and trading partner, and said he intended to pitch this to Musk during his visit.

"Trump's a dealmaker, so I say to him: come, do deals with us," he said.

If he did not, Bangladesh would feel a little pain, Yunus said.

## EC starts process to register

FROM PAGE 1

Commissioner Sarah Cooke at the EC office in Dhaka.

"We have informed them [British envoy] about our preparations for voter and party registration. We will go for procurements needed for the election very soon. We are revising the observer policies," he said.

"The chief adviser has already blown the train's whistle, signalling that the election will be held in December or January."

EC Senior Secretary Akhter Ahmed said the political parties seeking registration ahead of the national polls were given until April 20 to submit their applications.

The registration must meet the conditions set out in the Political Party Registration Rules, 2008, he said, adding, "We have not changed any rules."

For the registration, a political party needs to meet at least one criterion out of three.

A political party will get registered if it has secured at least one seat with its electoral symbol in any parliamentary election held since the independence of Bangladesh.

The second criterion is securing five percent of the total votes cast in the constituencies, for which its candidates contested in any previous parliamentary election.

The third condition is that the party needs to set up a functional central office with whatever name it may be called, a central committee, having offices in at least one-third of the administrative districts and in at least 100 upazilas or metropolitan areas, and having a minimum of 200 voters as its members in each upazila.

If the EC finds that political parties are not abiding by the law, it can cancel their registration, said the EC officials.

The registration of political parties was introduced in 2008. Now 49 political parties are registered with the EC.

The Electoral Reform Commission recently proposed major changes to the registration process. It recommended barring individuals accused of gross human rights violations like extrajudicial killing and enforced disappearance from becoming members of parliament if charges are accepted by the International Crimes Tribunal.

It also proposed relaxing the conditions for registering new parties, with the requirement for offices reduced to 10 percent of districts and 5 percent of upazilas.

Two cases were filed with Atwari Police Station in connection with rape and murder and the theft of the rickshaw.

## BSF killed 305

FROM PAGE 2

commitments by India and diplomatic efforts, such incidents have been happening for years.

The rights group said border killings are one of the most sensitive issues in Bangladesh-India relations. These create diplomatic tension between the two countries.

Despite many bilateral meetings to bring border killings to zero, such incidents continue to occur.

The HRSS called on the authorities of both countries to have constructive dialogues and take effective steps to end border killings.

It asked Bangladesh and India to thoroughly investigate all border killings and ensure justice.

## ACC approves

FROM PAGE 12

court is currently underway.

The cases registered on January 12, 13, and 14 were filed under Sections 161, 163, 164, 409, and 109 of the Penal Code, 1860, along with Section 5(2) of the Anti-Corruption Act, 1947.

The accused face charges of abusing their positions in the government to illegally obtain six 10-katha residential plots in Sector 27 at the Purbachal Housing Project. Despite being ineligible for allotment, they allegedly used their influence and power to secure the plots illegally.

Besides Hasina's family members, the other accused individuals include Shahid Ullah Khandaker, former secretary of the public works ministry; Kazi Wasi Uddin, additional secretary of the public works ministry; Saiful Islam Sarkar, administrative officer of the ministry; Purabi Goldar, senior assistant secretary of the ministry; and Anisur Rahman Miah, former chairman of Rajuk.

The ACC announced its decision to investigate the irregularities surrounding the procurement of the 60 katha plots on December 27 last year.

Additionally, a five-member team was formed on December 17 to investigate allegations of graft totalling Tk 80,000 crore in various projects linked to Hasina, Joy, Rehana, and Rehana's daughter Tulip Siddiqi.

The commission is also probing accusations of laundering \$300 million against Hasina and her son Joy.

## Present roadmap

FROM PAGE 12  
reforms carried out," said the NCP leader.

Nahid said the people will also hold accountable the political parties, who are pressing for early election, when they would seek votes.

"We want to maintain the consensus that has been established in Bangladesh. None of us are against elections. In fact, we have formed a political party ourselves to participate in the elections. But we are saying that justice, reform, and then elections."

Nahid said the NCP is for an election to constituent assembly as the existing constitution has become ineffective.

He said the political parties must clarify their stance regarding the fate of the Awami League.

"If another government comes to power without ensuring justice for

the July killings, what guarantee is there that the Awami League will not be rehabilitated in Bangladesh?"

On August 5, the people of Bangladesh gave their verdict against the Awami League. There will be no place for the fascist politics of the Awami League in Bangladesh anymore," he added.

At the event, Akhter Hossen, member secretary of the NCP, urged the government to take initiatives to implement the reform proposals they have made.

"It is not possible to divert the people's demand for reform and justice by trickery or by merely holding elections. We, the family members of the martyrs, the injured, and the members of the NCP, will remain on the streets to ensure the trial of murderer Hasina and for the reforms necessary to rebuild the state of Bangladesh," he added.

If he did not, Bangladesh would feel a little pain, Yunus said.

"Hasina would still face trial for crimes against humanity, even if in absentia," he added.

Yunus said that while India sheltering Hasina was tolerable, "allowing her to use India as a platform to undo everything we have done is dangerous. It destabilises the country."

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# INTERNATIONAL

## Aid halt endangers Gaza civilians

Warns UN agency; PA says Israel's electricity cut an 'escalation in genocide'

AGENCIES

Israel's suspension of goods entering Gaza has begun to take a toll on the Palestinian enclave, with some bakeries closing and officials warning of growing risks to the environment including possible discharges of raw sewage into the sea.

The suspension, intended to pressure Hamas in ceasefire talks, applies to food, medicine and fuel imports. Hamas describes the measure as "collective punishment" and insists it will not be pushed into making concessions at the discussions.

The UN Palestinian refugees agency UNRWA said the decision to halt humanitarian aid threatens the lives of civilians exhausted by 17 months of "brutal" war, adding that most of Gaza's 2.3 million people were dependent on aid.

Negotiators left for Doha to discuss truce: Israel

Hamas accuses Israel of renegeing on ceasefire deal



Rohingya refugees seeking education, healthcare, and other provisional aid take part in a demonstration outside the United Nations (UN) office in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## US cancelling 83pc of USAID programmes: Marco Rubio

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said yesterday the United States was cancelling 83 percent of programmes at the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

President Donald Trump signed an executive order in January demanding a freeze on all US foreign aid to give his administration time to assess overseas spending, with an eye to gutting programmes not aligned with his "America First" agenda.

"After a 6 week review we are

officially cancelling 83 percent of the programmes at USAID," Rubio said on social media platform X.

"The 5,200 contracts that are now cancelled spent tens of billions of dollars in ways that did not serve, (and in some cases even harmed), the core national interests of the United States," he added. USAID distributes US humanitarian aid around the world, with health and emergency programmes in

The State Department, which oversees USAID, had announced on February 26 its intention to cut 92 percent of the agency's program funding, identifying 5,800 grants to be eliminated.

Rubio yesterday notably thanked the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which billionaire Elon Musk is leading in a drive to slash costs and cut jobs across government departments.



Nasser Al Ajrami, head of the Gaza bakers' union, told Reuters that six out of the 22 bakeries still able to operate in the enclave had already shut after they ran out of cooking gas.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority (PA) yesterday said Israel's decision to halt the electricity supply to Gaza was "an escalation in the genocide" in the war-ravaged territory, reports AFP.

The Palestinian foreign ministry said in a statement that it "strongly condemns the Israeli Ministry of Energy's decision to cut electricity to the Gaza Strip, considering it an escalation in the genocide, displacement and humanitarian disaster in Gaza", which is controlled by Hamas and not the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.

Israel's negotiating team left for Qatar yesterday for talks aimed at extending the fragile Gaza ceasefire.

Hamas accused Israel of renegeing on the ceasefire deal, saying in a statement yesterday Israel "refuses to commence the second phase, exposing its intentions of evasion and stalling".

## Protests rage on streets, online

FROM PAGE 1  
such crimes.

He urged the government to take immediate action and ensure the quick and fair trial of those responsible for the rape of the eight-year-old girl from Magura.

In Rajshahi, several hundred students from various institutions blocked the Dhaka-Rajshahi Highway, demanding the implementation of the highest punishment for rapists to ensure the overall safety of women.

The protest march started from Rajshahi University's Paris Road around 11:30am. The march moved towards the university's main gate around 12:15pm. They then blocked the highway until 1:00pm.

Fahim Reza, one of the protesters, said, "We demand setting

up a special tribunal to accelerate the trials of rape cases. We will continue our movement against rape. Interim government must take effective steps to stop rape and ensure women safety."

Students from different departments boycotted their classes and joined the protest. Students have also undertaken a programme of uploading blindfolded photos of themselves on social media to show solidarity against rape.

Students of Chittagong University staged a sit-in protest on the campus.

Teachers of the university were also present at the demonstration. During the programme, they addressed the issue of illegal expulsion orders of female students at CU.

The sit-in took place at the Shaheed Minar premises on the university campus at 11:30am.

Speaking at the event, Prof GH Habib from the English department said that incidents of murder, rape, and violence continue to occur in this country, but justice has not been served in any of these cases year after year.

"The culture of impunity persists day after day. We must collectively, strategically, and persistently fight against this. Reforming our education system should be the first step. Only then can we gradually overcome these issues."

In Cumilla, a student blockade on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway led to a 10-km tailback.

When police intervened, students warned of escalating actions if authorities failed to ensure exemplary punishment for offenders.

Yunus, UN chief to visit Rohingya camp

FROM PAGE 1

who fled persecution and violence in Myanmar.

The chief adviser is set to leave Dhaka for Cox's Bazar on Friday morning and return to Dhaka in the evening, his Deputy Press Secretary Abdul Kalam Azad Majumder told UNB.

Guterres is set to land in Dhaka on March 13 on a three-day visit, where he will meet Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, one of the world's largest refugee settlements, his Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said.

During his visit, he will also visit the capital, Dhaka, where he will meet Yunus, as well as young representatives from civil society.

The secretary general has made solidarity visits an annual tradition, beginning during his decade-long tenure as UN high commissioner for refugees, when he regularly observed Ramadan alongside displaced and marginalised communities.

"Every Ramadan, I undertake a solidarity visit and fast with a Muslim community around the globe. These missions remind the world of the true face of Islam," Guterres said in his message.

"Ramadan embodies the values of compassion, empathy and generosity. It is an opportunity to reconnect with family and community... And I always come away even more inspired by the remarkable sense of peace that fills this season," he added.

UN chief Guterres, in a recent letter to Yunus, expressed his hope that the high-level conference on Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar will renew global focus and help develop broader solutions for their plight.

The UN will continue to mobilise the international community to support Bangladesh as a host to the Rohingya, Guterres said.

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

FROM PAGE 12  
adviser to the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The court also ordered the ACC to take steps to confiscate the immovable properties in London owned by Ahmed Shahriar Rahman, son of Ahmed Sohail Fasihur Rahman, Beximco Group chairman and Salman's brother.

The court came up with the orders in connection to corruption allegations

against them.

The court also ordered authorities concerned to take steps to freeze two accounts of Shayan and Shahriar at Barclays Bank PLC in the UK and shares in RR Global Trading, a company in the UAE.

While passing the order, the judge ordered the ACC to send copies of the order to the chief executive and chief land registrar of HM Land Registry in the UK, the

## 8-yr-old rape victim

FROM PAGE 1

the CMH commandant, the chief surgeon general, and heads of the paediatric, obstetrics and gynaecology, plastic surgery, and paediatric surgery departments, along with senior specialists in anaesthesiology and paediatric neurology.

Following the board's recommendations, the child underwent several medical examinations, including CT scans of the brain, chest, and abdomen, an abdominal ultrasound, a chest X-ray, and various blood tests.

The test results revealed that the child was suffering from Pneumothorax (RT), Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS), and Diffuse Cerebral Edema. Immediate medical interventions were initiated accordingly, according to the ISPR.

Azad said that the interim government is closely monitoring her condition. Lt Gen (retd) Abdul Hafiz, the chief adviser's special assistant for defence and national unity, has been in regular contact with doctors.

Lt Gen Hafiz spoke with them again yesterday and was informed that while her condition slightly improved, respiratory complications disrupted oxygen supply to her brain, said Azad.

Doctors said the air in her chest was cleared, but the fluid accumulated in her brain was yet to be removed. They remain hopeful about potential improvement in the coming days.

Police arrested four individuals—her sister's husband, his parents, and brother—in connection with the incident, following a rape case filed by the child's mother.

A Magura court granted a seven-day remand for her

sister's father-in-law and five-day remands for the three other accused. Due to security concerns, the remand hearing was conducted late last night. Magura Chief Judicial Magistrate Abdul Matin passed the order.

Md Alauddin, inspector (investigation) of Magura Sadar Police Station and the investigating officer in the case, had initially sought a seven-day remand for all four accused.

As no defence lawyer was present during the hearing, the accused were given a chance to defend themselves. They claimed innocence and requested that the remand not be granted.

The investigation officer said interrogation of the accused was crucial since he was unable to record the girl's statement as she remained unconscious.

The third grader was visiting her elder sister's house in Magura town as her school was closed for Ramadan when she was raped there between March 5 night and March 6 morning.

The child was taken to Magura 250-Bed Hospital in an unconscious state by her sister's mother-in-law around 11:30am on March 6.

She was transferred to Faridpur Medical College Hospital for better treatment that afternoon. Later that night, she was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital's PICU to CMH the next day.

By March 7 night, she was placed on life support. As her condition remained critical, she was transferred from Dhaka Medical College Hospital's PICU to CMH the next day.

The child's mother filed a case with Magura Sadar Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

## Confiscate 1,006 bighas of S Alam, family

FROM PAGE 12  
adviser to the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The court also ordered the ACC to take steps to confiscate the immovable properties in London owned by Ahmed Shahriar Rahman, son of Ahmed Sohail Fasihur Rahman, Beximco Group chairman and Salman's brother.

While passing the order, the judge ordered the ACC to send copies of the order to the chief executive and chief land registrar of HM Land Registry in the UK, the

chief executive of Barclays UK, and the chairman of the Sharjah Economic Development Department.

The same court yesterday issued a travel ban on Salman, his wife Rubaba Rahman, their son Shayan, Salman's elder brother Sohail and his son Shahriar when an application was submitted in this regard.

On February 24, the same court ordered the ACC to freeze 358 bank accounts belonging to Salman, his family members and associates.

On August 22 last year, the ACC initiated the inquiry into Salman following allegations of corruption, embezzlement, and irregularities in the banking sector.

Salman, a prominent Bangladeshi businessman and former member of parliament, was arrested at Sadarghat on August 13 last year when he was trying to flee the country.

He then assaulted her by touching various parts of her body, Shahin said. The woman later reported the incident to police, who arrested Tarek in the afternoon from the Jhautala area, Shahin said, adding that police were investigating the incident. [Our Correspondent, Savar contributed to this report]

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## Will transport extortion ever end?

Probe finds BNP-linked people involved in extortion in Dhaka's transport stands

We are alarmed by the findings of a government probe on extortion in Dhaka's transport terminals and stands. The investigation, conducted by an intelligence agency after the ouster of the Awami League government, found the involvement of influential figures including some linked to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in this exploitative practice. Not only is this unacceptable, but the fact that even the fall of an autocratic regime through a violent mass uprising could do nothing to reverse this trend in the transport sector is deeply concerning.

According to the probe report, a staggering Tk 2.21 crore is extorted daily from 53 transport terminals and stands in the capital city. Over a month, this amounts to Tk 66.3 crore to even Tk 80 crore. The system established by Awami League leaders and allies during the party's 15-and-a-half-year rule has simply been taken over by leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations. Of the daily extortion earnings, Tk 1.17 crore is collected under the name of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, currently headed by Saiful Islam, convener of BNP's Cumilla (north) unit. All this money is reportedly being extorted as "fees" for city corporations, terminal authorities, "expenditure" of counters and terminals, and payments for workers, linemen, cleaners, and security guards, the intelligence agency has found. Long and medium-haul buses, trucks, pickups, covered vans, microbuses, private cars, human hauliers, CNG-run autorickshaws, and evenrickshaws are being charged these "fees."

It is no secret that extortion has plagued our transport sector for decades. Its extent and sphere of influence can be understood from a study—unveiled by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in March last year—that revealed that private buses and minibuses pay at least Tk 1,059 crore in illegal tolls and bribes every year. Unfortunately, following the Awami League government's fall, we saw how BNP-affiliated transport leaders took over the sector, seemingly to get their hands on the extortion money, thus perpetuating this unscrupulous practice.

This status quo must be broken. As Bangladesh moves forward with key reform initiatives to establish discipline and accountability in various sectors, the transport sector cannot be left to rot under this age-old cycle of extortion and corruption. The BNP leadership must take into cognisance the allegations against its leaders and take punitive action, as it did against more than 1,000 members and 12 committees when allegations of rent seeking and illegal occupation were proven. The government should also consider the probe report's recommendation: privatising bus terminals and stands, allowing them to officially charge fees, and using that revenue to run these establishments. Whatever the solution, it must be implemented immediately to rid the sector of this illegal practice.

## Govt must prioritise farmers' needs

Ensure adequate storage facilities for potatoes, reduce transportation costs

It is concerning that potato growers in the northern districts are struggling to find space in cold storages for their produce. According to a report, there are 101 cold storage facilities in the Rangpur division with a total capacity of 1.1 million tonnes—which is insufficient given the high demand for space. This shortage has caused severe congestion outside the facilities, particularly in Dinajpur and Syedpur. Hundreds of potato-laden trucks remain stranded on highways for days, causing traffic disruptions and driving up transportation costs. Farmers in the region have also alleged that cold storage operators are favouring traders over them, which is unfortunate.

Reportedly, more farmers have cultivated potatoes this year, encouraged by last year's high prices. However, they now fear incurring losses instead of making profits. Sensing the crisis, transporters have also almost doubled their rates—from Tk 35 to Tk 65 per sack of potatoes—mostly because trucks carrying potatoes have to wait for a prolonged period outside storage facilities. The cold storage charge also remains high, as the government has imposed a fee cap of Tk 6.75 per kilogramme of produce. Many farmers allege that while they wait for days, traders' trucks are granted entry at night. Storage operators, however, have attributed the delay to overwhelming demand for space. Due to this unfavourable situation, farmers are already facing financial losses. Worse still, the market price of potatoes has fallen below Tk 20 per kg.

Under the circumstances, we urge the government to ensure adequate storage facilities for potato farmers. The capacity of both government and private cold storages should be increased to accommodate the high volume of produce, and storage authorities must maintain the government-mandated storage ratio of 60:40 for farmers and traders. While local authorities have deployed police and Ansar-VDP personnel to manage the chaos outside storage facilities, more government oversight is needed to ensure farmers get proper access. Additionally, the storage charge per kg should be reduced to Tk 5 from the current Tk 6.75, as farmers have demanded. Our potato farmers—already burdened by high production costs and falling incomes—should not suffer further losses due to storage shortages and mismanagement.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

### Japan hit by earthquake, tsunami

On this day in 2011, an earthquake struck off the northeastern coast of Honshu, Japan, causing widespread damage in the country and triggering a devastating tsunami that instigated a major nuclear accident.

# The ongoing struggle for women's safety

## MACRO MIRROR

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## FAHMIDA KATUN



In Bangladesh, this year's International Women's Day saw protests and marches by people from all walks of life across the country, demanding the safety of women and girls. The day arrived at a time when an eight-year-old girl was raped in Magura and a female student of Dhaka University was verbally harassed by a bookbinder of the university library. Protesters called for stricter measures to punish the perpetrators without delay.

Violence and discrimination against women are not new in Bangladesh. In recent times, many women have faced scrutiny and moral policing regarding their clothing choices. So, the sense of insecurity among women has escalated significantly. This insecurity is compounded by the rise of mob justice, virtual harassment, and public shaming, which have instilled widespread fear among the population—both women and men. The weak law and order situation has emboldened perpetrators, leading to a surge in gender-based violence (GBV) and all forms of harassment. These incidents undermine the spirit of the July uprising, which called for establishing a discrimination-free society.

The situation has been further aggravated by insensitive comments by a government adviser regarding women smoking in public places, reflecting a lack of understanding of gender issues. While the interim government has formed a Women's Affairs Reform Commission, demonstrating a commitment to gender equality, its lack of substantial action on moral policing and GBV is deeply frustrating.

Indeed, despite economic progress over the last five decades since our independence, GBV has not decreased. Like in many other countries, violence against women seems to be pervasive and unstoppable in our country. Women of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds are victims of violence—both in rural and urban areas. It manifests in multiple forms, including physical, sexual, and verbal abuse.

Women face violence from their own family members within their homes, with domestic violence being a common reality. After marriage, many women continue to experience abuse at the hands of their husbands and in-laws. The above-mentioned rape victim was violated by her sister's father-in-law, who should have played the role of a guardian.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

**Lack of accountability emboldens not only politically connected offenders but also ordinary criminals who believe they can act without consequences.**

The problem extends beyond the domestic sphere—educational institutions often fail to provide a safe learning environment. Female students are subjected to verbal and physical harassment by male classmates, teachers, and other officials. Similarly, workplaces are not always safe for women, as they frequently encounter harassment and exploitation from supervisors and male colleagues. Public spaces, including public transport and open areas, pose further risks, where incidents of sexual harassment, assault, and even rape are alarmingly common.

The root cause of gender-based violence lies in deeply entrenched power imbalances between men and women. Though still lower than that

must instil values of gender equality and respect from an early age. Beyond formal education, mass media and community programmes can challenge harmful gender norms by promoting positive representations of women. Families, too, have a fundamental responsibility in shaping children's perceptions of gender roles. Parents need to foster an environment where boys and girls are treated equally and where boys are taught to respect women as equals rather than as subordinates.

Political factors play a decisive role in shaping social behaviour and ensuring accountability for crimes against women. In Bangladesh, the culture of impunity is a significant driver of violence. When perpetrators of rape, harassment, or violence are

shielded by political connections, it sends a message that such crimes will not be punished. Many criminals take refuge under the protection of political parties, escaping legal consequences. In turn, law enforcement agencies are often unable to act without approval from higher political authorities.

In the face of strong protests from citizens, the rapist in the above case has been arrested, and the government has promised to complete the trial quickly by changing some legal provisions. However, such actions are not visible in the case of other perpetrators who have committed similar crimes, as they are wealthy and politically connected.

Despite having several laws and policies to address these crimes, their implementation remains a significant challenge. In fact, the man who harassed the university student was released after his arrest, allegedly due to pressure from a certain group. The helplessness of the state in the face of such pressures is astounding!

The legal framework requires robust enforcement. But the justice system often fails to deliver due to corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political influence. Our experience indicates that ensuring justice is not an automatic process. It requires a systemic shift in attitudes and governance structures that uphold the rule of law.

Unfortunately, this lack of accountability emboldens not only politically connected offenders but also ordinary criminals who believe they can act without consequences. Ending this cycle requires strong political will and judicial independence to ensure that laws are enforced impartially and that perpetrators, regardless of their status, are brought to justice.

Another important issue is that, despite numerous policies and legal frameworks aimed at combating violence against women, its widespread persistence indicates that legal instruments alone are insufficient. A holistic approach is necessary.

Violence against women and girls is not just a women's issue—it is a societal crisis that hinders national progress. Achieving a violence-free society requires a comprehensive and sustained effort from all sectors, including the government, civil society, youth, and all individuals.

Unless decisive action is taken, the achievements of Bangladeshi women over the past five decades will be at risk. A safer, more inclusive Bangladesh is not only possible but imperative for the nation's development.

## Beijing's tactical silence over Trump's global gambits



## IMRAN KHALID

Dr Imran Khalid  
is a geostrategic analyst.

Not surprisingly, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, a seasoned diplomat, opted for parables to characterise Donald Trump's foreign policy. Addressing an audience at the Munich Security Conference, he remarked, "No matter which way the wind blows—north, south, east, or west—we will remain calm and unshakable." This, however, should not be mistaken for passive detachment. Beijing is not merely an observer of Trump's seismic shifts in global affairs. Rather, it is fastidiously recalibrating its strategy.

As Washington unsettles transatlantic relations, China's approach is neither reactionary nor resigned but calculated; a quiet yet assertive force adapting to the evolving geopolitical landscape with precision and foresight. Beijing's perspective is apparent—a new global order is rapidly taking shape, one that may soon establish a G2 framework, effectively side-lining the Western-dominated G7. The G20 might persist as a supplementary platform, but the real power struggle will centre on Washington and Beijing.

Two key elements define Trump's global impact. First, his controversial demands—ranging from musings over acquiring Greenland to negotiations with Moscow on Ukraine—underscore Washington's bid to consolidate control over the Western Hemisphere. Second, his aggressive tariff wars signal an economic realignment. China, fully aware of Trump's transactional approach, is consciously preparing for

a prolonged contest over global trade and influence. Instead of reacting impulsively, Beijing is redesigning its strategy, reinforcing its economic defences, and expanding its geopolitical reach. The world is witnessing a fundamental power shift, one where China is a formidable contender, shaping the future of international politics.

Beijing appears cautiously optimistic about the second Trump administration, seeing it as more economically pragmatic than its predecessor. The presence of business elites with deep ties to China fosters the belief that Washington's approach may be more measured this time. Amid this recalibration, China seems receptive to the shifts emanating from the White House, interpreting them as adjustments rather than outright confrontation. Unlike Europe—where alarm over Trump's policies runs high—Beijing does not yet perceive his administration as actively stoking hostilities.

Meanwhile, US Vice President JD Vance delivered a speech that sent shockwaves through European circles, evoking parallels to Vladimir Putin's 2007 Munich address, which marked Russia's definitive break from the West. Vance's rhetoric signalled a new challenge, one that underscores Washington's shifting priorities and the fracturing transatlantic consensus.

While Europe braces for turbulence, China is playing the long game—strategically adapting to a world order

where US-China relations are defined less by ideological struggle and more by calculated economic manoeuvring.

The Trump-Putin dialogue on Ukraine has cast doubt over the post-WWII transatlantic security framework, triggering European anxieties about America's retreat from its role as guarantor of continental stability. Vance's dual critique—targeting Europe's handling of extremist political forces and signalling Washington's unpredictable policy shifts—has injected strategic dissonance into NATO's cohesion.

This destabilising dynamic has spurred Macron to convene an urgent Paris summit, seeking a unified European counter to Washington's Ukraine stance. Three implications emerge: i) US unilateralism under Trump risks eroding trust in its security commitments, reviving existential questions about NATO's relevance; ii) Europe's internal political fragility—amplified by rising far-right movements—leaves it vulnerable to Washington's transactional diplomacy; and iii) the crisis underscores a paradigm shift: America's strategic priorities now diverge sharply from Europe's, mirroring Cold War-era fissures but without the Soviet-era ideological clarity.

Unlike NATO's unified posture against Moscow in the 20th century, today's fragmented response exposes a geopolitical vacuum—one that Beijing and Moscow could exploit. The Macron-led initiative, while reactive, highlights Europe's precarious position: reliant on US military muscle yet compelled to hedge against its capricious leadership. This recalibration, however, lacks the structural heft to redefine Euro-Atlantic power equations unilaterally.

From a Chinese vantage point, Trump's broader agenda presents opportunities. When queried about reducing China's dependence on Russian oil and gas, Foreign Minister

Wang dismissed the notion, asserting that no other nation could meet Beijing's demands. Though China's involvement in Ukraine's peace talks may be minimal, it has compelling reasons to remain engaged. Beijing envisions its expansion in the Middle East, propelled by ceasefire discussions over Gaza. This allows China to bolster its historic support for Arab and Palestinian causes.

Reconstruction needs across the region offer avenues for Chinese infrastructure prowess, potentially in Ukraine, should Beijing sustain its involvement. In this context, China stands to manage the evolving global landscape, asserting its influence while seizing strategic opportunities. This nuanced approach underscores Beijing's aspiration to shape the international order, much like the fabled lords of old.

With transatlantic tensions simmering, the prospect of Europe aligning with the US on trade barriers against China remains uncertain. The American strategy to curb Chinese technology, particularly electric vehicles, hinges on Europe fortifying its own defences. Observers eyeing a potential G2 world view Trump's approach as steering the US away from a head-on clash with a rising China while simultaneously disrupting nearly eight decades of US-European unity.

For China, this scenario is advantageous. It not only bolsters Beijing's global standing but grants it greater influence on critical issues like the Ukraine conflict and Middle Eastern turmoil. Europe, although unsettled, finds itself as the third pillar in this geopolitical triad. Undoubtedly, the Washington-Beijing relationship has entered a new phase, paralleled by the fraying transatlantic partnership. As the global landscape shifts, these dynamics will shape the future of international relations and the balance of power.

# Why the DU student harasser got bail



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TAQBIR HUDA

There is a lot to say about the recent case making headlines in Bangladesh, whereby a man who has been accused of harassing a female student over her clothing choices was then treated as a hero by a mob of other men. Taking stock of the legal provisions a victim of harassment can rely on in such situations is a good place to start.

Section 509 of the Penal Code, 1860 criminalises acts, words and gestures intended to "outrage the modesty of a woman" with a prison sentence that may extend to one year along with fines. Additionally, Section 10 of the Nari-O-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000 introduced an offence termed *jounopiron* (commonly translated as "sexual oppression") to criminalise the act of someone who touches a woman or child (with any part of their body or with an object) or "violates a woman's modesty" (*nariishilotahanikoron*) in order to "illegally satisfy their sexual desires."

As one can see, Section 10 is substantially similar to Section 509 since female "modesty" is still a point of focus. The punishment prescribed in Section 10, however, is imprisonment between two to 10 years, which is much higher than the maximum one year under Section 509. This is yet another example of our legislators' tendency to implement legal reform on violence against women by simply increasing the penalty while preserving the archaic substance and definition of the offence itself.

The law's continued reliance on the concept of "modesty"—the very notion the accused harasser in this case sought to invoke—creates a perverse irony: a provision meant to protect women from harassment is rooted in the same misogynistic logic that enables moral policing. From the road where a woman is harassed to the courtroom where she seeks justice, the focus remains on the woman's "modesty" rather than the alleged harasser's actions.

Beyond the law, this case also reveals something more insidious and all too familiar—the way self-appointed enforcers of morality manipulate religious virtue to exert control over women. At the risk of sounding trite, if the man was truly committed to the principles of the religion he claims to uphold, he would have followed its most fundamental tenet of modesty—lowering his own gaze, which would have stopped him from noticing what a woman is wearing (much less the

placement of her ornate) in the first place. Such men weaponise the rhetoric of morality and religious virtue not out of faith, but to police and suppress women whose autonomy unsettles their fragile sense of control. They are not just a threat to women—they are a threat to the very faith they claim to defend.

Worse still, the glorification of such figures is nothing new. We have seen this before, in far graver contexts. Let us not forget Nusrat Jahan Rafi, the madrasa student who was burned alive after reporting sexual harassment by her principal, Siraj ud Dowla. Even after her brutal murder, there were those—including women and children—who framed her killer as a religious martyr and marched for his release. As long as impunity is draped in garlands, righteousness is measured by how loudly men can silence women, and the law itself remains fixated on women's "modesty" rather than the violence they experience, justice can never stand a chance.

**If courts bend to mob intimidation, justice is dictated by force, not law. But equally dangerous is the expectation that courts should deny bail simply to ease public outrage, which only strengthens the state's power to arbitrarily deprive people of their liberty.**

Going beyond impunity and the law's fixation on "modesty," this case has also sparked another debate—one that reveals deeper tensions within our legal system and feminist movements alike: the question of bail. Many are outraged that the judge—a woman herself—granted bail to the man accused of sexually harassing a woman by telling her how she should dress "decently." But before rushing to condemn the judge, we must ask: did she even have legal grounds to deny bail?

Under basic principles of due process, bail is a constitutional right because the state should normally only imprison someone after a trial has taken place and a court has determined their guilt. Pretrial detention is

an exceptional measure, not the default, and can only be imposed if specific conditions are met—if the accused is a flight risk, poses a threat to public safety, or could tamper with evidence or intimidate witnesses. If none of these conditions apply, then denying bail would have been an abuse of judicial power.

Much of the outrage stems from the belief that the judge granted bail due to pressure from the angry mob that surrounded the

or one woman's harassment. It also exposes the dangers of what many critics have called "carceral feminism"—the belief that gender-based violence should primarily be addressed through criminalisation and incarceration. While this instinct is understandable, especially in contexts where impunity thrives, carceral feminism does more to expand authoritarian state power than it does to secure justice for women. It does little to

is found, it can impose disciplinary action within 30 days, including suspension or dismissal of the harasser. If the case is serious enough to constitute a criminal offense, only then should it be referred to court.

This approach aligns with recommendations by UN human rights bodies and global best practices, where harassment is treated as an institutional matter—not just a criminal offense. These much-celebrated



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

police station. But while mob coercion is deeply concerning, it does not change the fundamental principle that bail cannot be denied outside these restrictive conditions. If these conditions did not exist, then the judge was bound to grant bail—not because of public pressure, but because the law requires it. The danger here is twofold. If courts bend to mob intimidation, justice is dictated by force, not law. But equally dangerous is the expectation that courts should deny bail simply to ease public outrage, which only strengthens the state's power to arbitrarily deprive people of their liberty.

But this case isn't just about one man's bail

dismantle the conditions that enable sexual harassment. We've seen how past regimes, particularly the Awami League, weaponised pretrial detention to jail journalists, dissidents, and opposition members. A state that imprisons people without due process isn't feminist—it's authoritarian.

So what should the role of the law be? In 2009, the Supreme Court issued 11 directives on preventing sexual harassment in workplaces and educational institutions.

These directives impose a legal duty on employers and universities to set up Sexual Harassment Complaint Committees that can independently investigate complaints. If guilt

directives have largely remained on paper, with weak or non-existent enforcement. Instead of demanding more arrests, we should be demanding that universities and workplaces enforce these directives. Hold your institutions accountable if they fail to act.

When punitive instincts masquerade as feminist justice and the obsession with imprisonment overshadows real solutions, we do not protect victims as much as we legitimise authoritarian power. And a movement that pursues justice only through retribution can never achieve transformation.

# Echoes of Tulip Mania in our economy



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AKM SAYEDAD HOSSAIN

The tale of Tulip Mania in 17th century Netherlands remains one of the most infamous examples of speculative excess in economic history. At its peak, the price of a single tulip bulb reached astronomical levels—equivalent to the value of an entire house—only for the market to collapse abruptly, leaving thousands financially ruined. While centuries apart, the underlying causes and consequences of Tulip Mania find striking parallels in Bangladesh's current economic landscape.

In this analysis, we explore how Bangladesh's stock market volatility, real estate boom, and rising foreign debt reflect patterns reminiscent of Tulip Mania. This will help to assess whether the Bangladeshi economy is at risk of a similar speculative collapse and explore strategies for ensuring long-term economic stability.

Tulip Mania, which unfolded between 1633 and 1637, was fuelled by a speculative frenzy surrounding rare tulip bulbs in the Netherlands. What began as a fascination among the elite quickly spread to ordinary citizens, with people from all walks of life buying tulip bulbs in hopes of making a fortune. At its height, the most coveted tulip bulbs sold for more than 10 times the average annual wage of a skilled worker.

This speculative boom was characterised by key factors such as the overvaluation of assets, market illiquidity, and a sudden collapse. Prices were driven by investor speculation rather than the intrinsic value of tulip bulbs. Many transactions occurred through futures contracts, where buyers and sellers traded on promises rather than physical goods. When confidence in the market evaporated in February 1637, prices plummeted, leaving investors bankrupt. This episode revealed how greed, herd mentality, and poor regulation can create and burst economic bubbles—an enduring lesson for modern economies.

Bangladesh has emerged as a rising economic force in South Asia, achieving impressive GDP growth and industrial expansion. However, beneath this growth lies a fragile foundation marked by overleveraged sectors and speculative behaviours. Three

areas in particular—the stock market, real estate, and foreign debt—exhibit symptoms of a speculative bubble akin to Tulip Mania.

#### Stock market volatility

Bangladesh's stock market, particularly the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), is similar to the structure of Tulip Mania in several ways. The DSE has experienced dramatic fluctuations, most notably the 2010-2011 stock market crash, which saw share prices surge by 62 percent before collapsing by 50 percent, wiping out billions of taka in investor wealth. Similar to Tulip Mania, overvalued assets and rampant speculation fuelled these booms and busts.

Much like the "wind trade" of tulip futures, the stock boom in Bangladesh is often driven by borrowed money through margin trading, amplifying risks if market sentiment shifts. The concentration of investment in a handful of blue-chip stocks further increases market vulnerability. Regulatory lapses, including weak enforcement against insider trading and price manipulation, undermine market confidence. If political turmoil or global economic shifts trigger a sudden shock, the resulting collapse could devastate small investors.

#### The real estate bubble

The real estate sector in Bangladesh, especially in urban centres like Dhaka and Chattogram, has experienced staggering price increases over the past decade. Land prices in Dhaka alone, rose by 2700 percent between 2000 and 2021, making housing unaffordable for many middle-class families. This boom is reminiscent of the speculative excesses of Tulip Mania.

Luxury housing developments dominate the market, while affordable housing remains neglected. Many property purchases are financed through loans, increasing the risk of default if prices decline. If the real estate bubble bursts, it could destabilise the financial system by increasing non-performing loans (NPLs) and causing a credit crunch, echoing the collapse of tulip prices in 1637.

#### Foreign debt and currency devaluation

Bangladesh's external debt exceeds \$100

billion, with the burden increasing due to the depreciation of the Bangladeshi Taka. Rising global interest rates further escalate the cost of debt repayment, posing a significant challenge for the economy. As with the Dutch economy during Tulip Mania, the heavy reliance on external borrowing creates vulnerabilities that could lead to a systemic crisis.

The Taka's depreciation against the US dollar

including limiting external borrowing and improving foreign reserve management, is essential to withstand global shocks.

While Bangladesh's economy is stronger than 17th century Holland, the dangers of a speculative bubble—particularly in the stock market and real estate sector—are impossible to ignore.

Without proactive policy intervention and prudent economic management, the country risks a modern day replay of Tulip Mania's tragic end.

By learning from the mistakes of history and embracing sustainable growth strategies, Bangladesh can preserve its economic progress and avoid the devastating consequences of unchecked speculation.

বাংলাদেশ পর্যায়ী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড	
নিম্নলিখিত, মিলকেত, ঢাকা-১২২৯।	
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
১ সর্বান্বয়/বিডগ্র	: বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ, বিদ্যুৎ, জলালানি ও খনিজ সম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়।
২ ক্রমকারীর নাম	: পরিচালক, সম্পত্তি ও লজিস্টিক পরিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ পর্যায়ী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড, ঢাকা।
৩ যে দরপত্রের জন্য বিজ্ঞপ্তি	: যানবাহন ওয়ার্কসপ্লের অন্য বিভিন্ন ধরনের টুলস ও ইলেক্ট্রিসিটেট ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত।
৪ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	: ২৭.১২.২৬৩৭.০২০৫.০২.২০৩৫(১).২৪.১২.৪৩০ ০৯/০৩/২০২৫
৫ ক্রয় পক্ষতি	: OTM পক্ষতি
৬ বার্জেট	: রাজস্ব খাত।
৭ দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নং	: EL-GR-24-25-04
৮ দরপত্রে প্রকাশের তারিখ	: ১১/০৩/২০২৫ খ্রি।
৯ দরপত্র প্রকাশের সর্বশেষ তারিখ	: ২৪/০৩/২০২৫ খ্রি।
১০ দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ২৫/০৩/২০২৫ খ্রি দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১১ দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ, সময় ও ঠিকানা	: ২৫/০৩/২০২৫ খ্রি দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা। সাধারণ প্রাক্তন বিভাগ, (২য় তলা), বাপুবিহোৰ, নিম্নলিখিত, ঢাকা-১২২৯।
১২ দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য (ঢাকা)	: ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) ঢাকা (অক্ষেয়ত্বযোগ্য)
১৩ দরপত্র আহবানকারীর পদবী	: পরিচালক
১৪ দরপত্র আহবানকারীর কর্মসূচীর ঠিকানা	: সম্পত্তি ও লজিস্টিক পরিদপ্তর বাংলাদেশ পর্যায়ী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড, ঢাকা।
১৫ দরপত্র আহবানকারীর সহিত যোগাযোগের বিভাগিত বিবরণ	: পরিচালক, সম্পত্তি ও লজিস্টিক পরিদপ্তর বাংলাদেশ পর্যায়ী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড, ঢাকা। ফোন নং: +৮৮০-২-৮৯০০১৯৮
১৬ ক্রমকারী সকল দরপত্র বা দরপত্র প্রক্রিয়া বাতিল করিবার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে।	
 বাংলাদেশ পর্যায়ী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড BANGLADESH RURAL ELECTRIFICATION BOARD নিম্নলিখিত, মিলকেত, ঢাকা-১২২৯	
<p>পরিচালক সম্পত্তি ও লজিস্টিক পরিদপ্তর বশ পর্যায়ী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড নিম্নলিখিত, মিলকেত, ঢাকা-১২২৯</p>	
<p>বাধ্যবিবোৰণ নং (১৫০০-১০০) ২০২৪-২৫ অর্ধেক্ষ বছর GD-621</p>	

## WOMEN AND LAW

# Observing International Women's Day



DR. NASRIN RAHMAN

Global observance of the International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8 every year sheds light on gender equality, women's rights, and the challenges faced by women worldwide. The official commemoration of the International Women's Day by the UN began in 1975 during International Women's Year, and two years later, the UN General Assembly formally established the day.

While the direct impact of International Women's Day on substantive gender equality may be limited, it serves as a powerful platform to initiate conversations, raise awareness, and inspire actions contributing to the overarching goal of achieving gender equality. The effectiveness of these efforts

depends on various factors, including the level of engagement, the nature of specific initiatives and events, culture of different nations and the broader societal contexts. These actions must go beyond mere rhetoric and reflect a genuine commitment to change.

Legally speaking, a significant landmark in the journey towards recognising women's human rights was the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly in 1948. This declaration acknowledged the existence of basic inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms for every individual, including women. Women's rights got further entrenched within the international human rights paradigm through the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women 1979.

Despite these commitments, gender equality remains an elusive ideal across countries. This ambivalence highlights the need for a closer examination of factors such as engagement levels, specific initiatives, and societal contexts. Pertinently, Bangladesh

has reservations to two important articles of the CEDAW, which many think go against the object and purpose of the treaty.

In our country, gender inequality is manifested prominently through violence against women. Despite commendable government initiatives, including special laws such as Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010, the Dowry Prohibition Act, 2018, the Women and Children Repression and Protection Act, 2000 (Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain, 2000), the Acid Control Act, 2002 and the Pornography Control Act, 2012 and a parliamentary quota system to advance women, challenges persist. Unfortunately, effective implementation remains a significant hurdle. Issues such as lengthy legal processes and financial constraints impede justice, leaving women vulnerable and lacking protection.

Examining the broader societal context reveals a deeply ingrained patriarchal culture in Bangladesh. This cultural backdrop reinforces traditional attitudes towards women, portraying them as dependent and sacrificial. This perspective not only hinders the effectiveness of initiatives but also perpetuates a rhetorical commitment rather than genuine implementation agenda.

Despite the annual celebrations of Women's Day in Bangladesh, the reality suggests a substantial gap between the intended goals of raising awareness about gender equality and women's rights within the societal landscape. Closing this gap requires a comprehensive approach that not only emphasises legal frameworks and protective measures but also challenges ingrained cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality.

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## LAW VISION

## Safeguarding novel designs in business

FATEMA TUZ ZOHORA

A common scenario prevalent in Bangladesh is replicating foreign or local brand clothes and accessories and selling them at a lower price in the market. In fact, if any design or product becomes popular or *viral* on social media, many local designers try to replicate that design. Moreover, many local designers often complain about getting their designs replicated without their consent. These conducts are considered as infringement of the intellectual property rights of the creators.

Nonetheless, large portion of the population is unaware of intellectual property rights. As a result, some of them are infringing the intellectual property rights of the creators, but the creators also do not initiate legal steps against the infringer. Replicating designs without authorisation also increases unfair business practices. They can initiate legal action if they are aware of their rights and the steps necessary to obtain the damages. In addition to that, to attract foreign companies to business here and to maintain fair business practices, strict regulation of intellectual property is needed. In order to safeguard these products with unique aesthetics, industrial designs—a type of intellectual property—may be used in this situation.



'Industrial design' refers to "the aesthetic visibility of the characteristic shape, line, colour, graphical user interface, calligraphy, etc. of any manufactured product." An industrial design concerns the product's appearance; it is the ornamental or visually appealing element of the item. If any product's visibility is distinct and novel, then that product's visibility can be protected. Unlike patent, industrial design protects the ornamental or aesthetic aspects of the product. It focuses on the aesthetic nature of a finished product, excluding technical or functional aspects of the finished product. One may argue that products' appearance can be protected through copyright or trademark laws, but it may not always be correct. Trademark means a sign that may be used to differentiate the goods or services of one business from those of other businesses. Thus, a trademark's exclusivity forbids others from using the same or a similar trademark in business for the same or a similar product or service. On the other hand, copyright protects the right of the creator over their literary and artistic works. It is apparent that the scope of protection of these forms of Intellectual Property is different and focuses on different aspects of the creation.

While both the Paris Convention and Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) have provisions for the protection of industrial design, the WIPO member states adopted the Riyadh Design Law Treaty in a Diplomatic Conference in November 2024. This treaty aims to expedite and simplify design protection procedures, as well as enable designers, micro, small, and medium-sized businesses to acquire domestic and international design registrations at reasonable costs.

In Bangladesh, industrial designs have been protected since the colonial period, but recently, a new Act was passed in 2023 by repealing the previous Act. Let us delve into the key provisions of the Bangladesh Industrial Design Act 2023 (hereinafter The Act) for venturing into the new industrial design regime. Section 5 of the Act incorporates conditions for registrability of an industrial design in Bangladesh while section 4 categorically excludes certain designs that shall not be given protection. Moreover, the Act provides exclusive rights to the owner of the industrial design on registration of their industrial design. Hence, if any person uses the industrial design without authorisation of the owner for commercial purposes, then that person will infringe the rights of the owner, and the owner may initiate legal steps against the infringer under this Act. Exceptions to the protection under section 14 are included in the Act, such as actions carried out at educational or research institutes for educational and research purposes or for non-commercial reasons. Furthermore, section 6 permits employers to register industrial designs made by employees under a contract unless the contract specifies otherwise. Additionally, this provision permits joint ownership of any industrial design. The Act's sections 22-26 further grant the owner of the design administrative, civil, and other remedies for infringement.

Now, it remains to be seen how pragmatic this Act can be in terms of design protection in Bangladesh. In the future, the Act could require certain changes to conform to the new design treaty. It is expected that the implementation of the Act may establish confidence in conducting business in Bangladesh for local designers as well as foreign big fashion houses. Simultaneously, the Act may safeguard customers from the malpractices by fraud designers. In fact, it will boost credibility in the region's seller-buyer relationships.

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## LAW AND TECHNOLOGY

## Technological advances and the right to freedom of thought: The liminal space

MUHAMMAD KHALID KHAN

Freedom of thought is known as one of the foundations of a democratic society. Article 39(l) of our Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of thought without any exception, pointing towards its absoluteness. The right receives similar treatment in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which states: "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion." Though enshrined as a fundamental right, or its presence in international documents, the right often remains neglected within our regular discourse. But thanks to the recent technological developments, this oft-forgotten right has once again gained prominence.

In general, the right to freedom of thought comprises three elements: (a) the right not to reveal one's thoughts or opinions, (b) the right not to have one's thoughts or opinions manipulated, and (c) the right not to be penalised



on their friends and family but in the 21st Century you just build social networks, and everyone informs on everyone else."

Today Facebook and Google hold an unprecedented amount of user data, which can be analysed using advanced machine learning algorithms to infer the unobservable inner mental states of a person. On the other hand, research shows that detailed personal information can be predicted based on what pages on Facebook they had 'liked'. Similarly, a 2015 Cambridge University study conducted by Wu Youyou and others revealed that psychological profiling based on Facebook likes allowed researchers more insight into a user's personality than their close friends and family. The power of Facebook to alter the emotional state of users by manipulating their news feeds has also been found in a 2012 research conducted by A.D.I. Kramer and others.

However, the absolute status of freedom of thought posits us before a new dilemma. If new technologies are deemed to violate one's absolute right to freedom of thought, this could hinder the further development of these technologies. But given the general benefits of these technologies, such an approach does not appear desirable. To strike a balance, two options are delineated by Richard

Mullender (2000). The first one, driven by precautionary principle, is to recognise "the right as intrinsically valuable" while acknowledging that both the right and the culture in which it can flourish are worthy of protection."

This approach demands clear reasons for putting it at risk by brain or behaviour reading technologies. The other option, referred to as a qualified consequentialist approach, is to prioritise the beneficial outcomes from such technologies while acknowledging the obligation to put limitations on them for their potential detrimental impact of the freedom of thought.

In this backdrop, it is notable that the 2021 UN Report on Freedom of Thought suggests that technology companies examine how their products or services might infringe the right to freedom of thought and to make it more human rights compliant. The neurotechnology companies are also urged to "ensure a robust, privacy-focused and human rights-compliant framework for the collection, processing and storage of neurodata". Thus, it is necessary for the national and international bodies to develop new legal policy and regulatory frameworks to map the right in the new context.

*The writer works with Law Desk, The Daily Star.*

for one's thoughts. This right has to be distinguished from the right to manifest one's thoughts, beliefs or opinions. While the former deals with thoughts as mental processes (*forum internum*), the latter deals with the same manifested onto the external world (*forum externum*), e.g., speech. In General Comment No. 20 on Article 18 of the ICCPR, the Human Rights Committee acknowledges this distinction and elaborates the 'absolute' impermeability of the *forum internum*, compared to the qualified nature of the right in *forum externum*.

For a long time, as hinted above, freedom of thought had received little to no attention from the courts and the academics because of its presumed inviolability for practical reasons. As William Blackstone puts it: "[A]s no temporal tribunal can search the heart, or fathom the

## Riyad opts out of central contracts



### SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh star Mahmudullah Riyad had requested Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to remove his name from the central contract list announced yesterday, raising questions over whether the veteran batting all-rounder will be seen in

BCB sources informed that the 39-year-old had asked not to be considered for the central contract list after February. The board announced the list of 22 players yesterday, with a footnote noting his request. Although the contracts run from January to December, BCB has honoured his decision.

Mushfiqur Rahim had been placed in category 'A' of the list, but after his retirement from ODIs, he will be placed in category 'B'.

Meanwhile, Taskin Ahmed has been awarded the 'A+' category with a salary of Tk 10 lakh. Pacer Nahid Rana and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain have been named in the central

### BCB CENTRAL CONTRACT (JAN 1 - DEC 31, 2025)

Grade	A+	A	B	C	D
Salary (per month)	BDT 10,00,000	BDT 8,00,000	BDT 6,00,000	BDT 4,00,000	BDT 2,00,000
PLAYERS' NAMES	Taskin Ahmed	Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Liton Das	Mominul, Taijul, Mustafizur, Hridoy, Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana	Shadman, Soumya, Jaker Ali, Tanzid Tamim, Shariful, Rishad, Tanzim Sakib, Mahedi Hasan	Nasum Ahmed, Khaled Ahmed

international cricket again.

Mahmudullah, who announced his retirement from T20Is during the India series last year and had already stepped aside from Tests back in 2021, remains the only representative from the 'Big Five' to still remain in the ODIs after Mushfiqur Rahim retired from the 50-over format this month.

The media release also stated that Mahmudullah, placed in category 'B', will no longer be part of the central contracts from March.

"When the central contracts were proposed to the board, the players knew about the developments, and that's when the player discussed with the board," a BCB source claimed.

contracts for the first time, alongside Hasan Murad, Shadman Islam, and Jaker Ali Anik.

Players who only feature in red-ball cricket have been prioritised in the latest central contracts, with Mominul Haque and Taijul Islam in category 'B', with a specified monthly salary of Tk six lakh.

## Slot demands more from Liverpool's week of 'finals'



- PSG have lost on their two previous visits to Anfield (in 1997 and 2018).
- Salah has played more games against PSG without scoring than against any other opponent in the Champions League (three).
- Liverpool had just two shots, collectively worth 0.27 expected goals (xG) in the first leg in Paris; it was their fewest goal attempts on record in a knockout game in this competition.
- In the first leg, Salah failed to attempt a shot for just the second time as a Liverpool player in the Champions League, following a blank against Real Madrid in March 2023.
- Liverpool have won all four of their Champions League at home this season, meaning Slot could become the first manager to win each of his first five home matches in charge of an English side in this competition.
- Liverpool are on a run of progressing in 14 Champions League ties when winning the first leg and have never been knocked out in a European tie in which they won the first leg away from home.

### AGENCIES

Liverpool boss Arne Slot described PSG's visit as the second of "three finals" in a week, but has warned much more is needed from the Premier League leaders to progress to the Champions League quarterfinals.

The Reds somehow escaped the Parc des Princes with a 1-0 lead, courtesy of Harvey Elliot's 87th-minute-winner last week, despite being battered by the French champions, who came up against an inspired Alisson Becker in the Liverpool goal.

The Brazilian number one said his nine-game display was the "performance of his life".

Never before have Liverpool won the first leg of a European tie away and let the lead slip at Anfield.

Luis Enrique remained upbeat his side are "going to do it" despite suffering a first defeat in 23 games.

Enrique's men thumped top-flight rivals Rennes 4-1 on Saturday, righting their attacking wrongs from the first leg as Bradley Barcola and Goncalo Ramos netted before the dazzling Ousmane Dembele netted his 19th and 20th Ligue 1 goals of the season in added time.

Adding to Slot's concern was the lethargic first 45 minutes from his side against rock-bottom Southampton in Saturday's 3-1 win that forced the Dutchman into three half-time substitutions.

The League Cup final against Newcastle is also around the corner on Sunday with Slot very much on track for a treble in his first season in charge.

"The first of three finals," he said of the victory over Southampton. "I do hope the next two finals we will play a bit better than the first one."

"When I look at the game against PSG, we need to go one step up in terms of intensity. But if I compare it with the game today (Saturday), we need to go three, four, five, six or seven steps up in terms of intensity if we want to have any chance of reaching the next round."

Meanwhile, Barcelona will honour the life of their late team doctor Carles Minarro Garcia by giving everything to try to win return leg against Benfica, manager Hans Flick said during a press conference on Monday.

Following a hard-fought 1-0 win last week at Benfica after a red card for defender Pau Cubarsi early in the game, Flick said he was confident Barca could keep the momentum going and advance.

They are on a 16-game unbeaten run across all competitions and in contention for three major titles as they lead LaLiga and have reached the Copa del Rey semifinals.

Ahead of the all-German affair, Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said his side would need a 'big miracle' to overturn a significant deficit as they went 3-0 down away at Bayern Munich last week.

"After this game we'll need a bit more time so we can recover -- in football we've seen big miracles quite often and we almost need one," he said on Wednesday.

"It's football, it's not my first time (against the odds), and there's another game at home."

## SA Games prep set to start after Eid

### SPORTS REPORTER

With Pakistan having announced a new schedule for South Asian Games from January 23 to 31 next year, Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is planning to start preparation camp for athletes in April, subject to release of government fund.

The 14th edition of the Games is likely to feature 28 disciplines, and Bangladesh is planning to participate in 25 of those disciplines following a nine-month residential camp. The BOA

has made a draft plan to start the camp with nearly 850 athletes as well as 150 coaches and officials and chalked up a budget worth Tk 35 crore for the camp and for appointing foreign coaches.

Before the SA Games, Bangladesh will take part in Asian Youth Games in October and Islamic Solidarity Games in November while it also has a plan to hold the Bangladesh Games in October.

"We need a big budget to prepare athletes for the three

international meets. We think the athletes will be able to take part in both Islamic Solidarity Games and SA Games with the same preparation but we need separate preparation for the Asian Youth Games as only athletes aged below 17 are eligible in the youth games," BOA's training committee secretary and treasurer AK Sarkar told The Daily Star yesterday.

It has been learnt that BOA made a draft budget of Tk 40 crore for preparation of the three events.

Asked whether they would start the training depending on receiving fund from the government, BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza said they will take action after consulting with BOA president Waker-Uz-Zaman.

BOA decided to increase meal budget to Tk 650 per day from Tk 600 per day given for the 2019 SA Games and set Tk 400 as pocket money per day, plus costs of transport and accommodation for the athletes and coaches.

## India's consistency undisturbed, but was playing field fair?

### SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Dubai

The ninth edition of the ICC Champions Trophy concluded in Dubai on Sunday, with India securing their second global title in nine months, reaffirming their status as a white-ball powerhouse. Yet, the tournament was mired in controversy, from its hybrid hosting model -- necessitated by India's refusal to travel to Pakistan -- to allegations of scheduling bias in their favour.

Pakistan were the official hosts, but remained only on paper. This reporter visited Rawalpindi and Lahore -- two of the three designated venues (the third being Karachi) -- only to find that Pakistan's campaign was effectively over after defeats to New Zealand at home and India in UAE. The disappointment among fans was evident, yet they continued to turn up in strong numbers.

While security and hospitality were impeccable, Pakistan had little say in key tournament decisions. The absence of a single Pakistani official on the post-final podium further reinforced their lack of influence, drawing criticism from Pakistan legends like Wasim Akram and Shoaib Akhtar.

**ICCS'S BALANCING ACT**  
In the 2023 World Cup, India travelled 9,767 km -- the most of any team -- before falling short in the final against Australia. Perhaps in response, they ensured minimal travel in the 2024 ICC T20 World Cup, playing most of their group-stage matches in New York before moving to the Caribbean for the remainder.

This time, in the Champions Trophy, they played every match in Dubai, eliminating travel fatigue and allowing their squad to remain fresh. By contrast, runners up New Zealand covered 7,048 km between Pakistan and the UAE.

Over the last three ICC events, India have lost just one match -- the 2023 ODI World Cup final -- leading many to argue that they hardly needed what some have termed an "unfair advantage" of

advantages."

Beyond the travel disparity, India also benefited from familiarity with Dubai's conditions and pitches, allowing them to fine-tune their squad selection and strategies. In contrast, other teams had to accommodate diverse playing conditions across Pakistan and the UAE, complicating their team compositions. India's well-laid plans were evident in their performances throughout the

with the world's wealthiest cricket board.

"That looks like the ICC putting finances ahead of fairness," said Brookes, whose book *An Island's Eleven*, a history of Sri Lankan cricket, won the Wisden Book of the Year award in 2023. "Some people will naturally think that the governing body is bending over backwards to accommodate India."

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR ODIs?

For over a decade, India have been a fixture in ICC knockout stages, often stumbling at the final hurdle. Last year, they ended an 11-year trophy drought with the T20 World Cup, and now they've added another 50-over title to their collection.

India captain Rohit Sharma said during the post-final press conference, "Whatever ICC tournament comes in front of you, you obviously want to win them all."

"One-day World Cup is One-Day World Cup. Because that's the only World Cup we've grown up watching. We didn't have the World Test Championships or many Champions Trophy... But this [holding the Champions Trophy] is no less. Ask me how much of an effort it takes to win this."

India's victory, though impressive, does little to alter the bigger picture that ODI cricket is on the wane. The much-anticipated tournament was meant to be a grand occasion had served as little more than an ICC fundraiser. The tournament revealed a stark lack of competition, and with interest in the seven-hour format dwindling, the future of 50-over cricket hangs in the balance.



playing exclusively in Dubai. tournament.  
"I feel sorry for India's cricketers," award-winning cricket writer Nicholas Brookes told Reuters. "They are an outstanding team -- in my mind, streets ahead of their competition regardless of conditions, and one of the greatest white-ball sides the game has seen."

"This tournament should have been their victory lap, but their brilliance has been somewhat overshadowed by constant questions about unfair

Allowing India to remain in Dubai not only deprived Pakistan of the honour of hosting the final but also disrupted the knockout schedule. South Africa, for instance, endured an 18-hour round trip to Dubai, anticipating a semifinal against India, before flying back to Pakistan to face New Zealand.

The entire affair portrayed the ICC, under the leadership of former BCCI secretary Jay Shah, as lacking strength in dealing

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## The damage Hasina did was 'monumental' Yunus tells The Guardian

STAR REPORT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said that when he took charge, the country was "completely devastated," like "another Gaza", where not buildings, but entire institutions, policies, and international relations were destroyed.

"The damage she [deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina] had done was monumental," Yunus said in an interview with The Guardian published yesterday.

Hasina has been in India after the ouster of her government amid a student-led mass uprising on August 5 last year.

Yunus' government has initiated prosecutions against senior police officers accused of extrajudicial killings, shut down secret detention centres, and established human rights commissions. Hasina is facing



SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Ongoing pavement renovation by Dhaka South City Corporation under the Moghbazar flyover has put pedestrians in trouble. They have been struggling to walk as rickshaws frequently park on the pavement, while cyclists often use it to bypass traffic. The pavement has been in this state for 10 days. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Six children raped in 6 dists Seven land in jail

STAR REPORT

At least seven people landed in jail yesterday on charges of rape in six districts.

Of the victims, a six year-old girl was raped by two teenaged boys in Habiganj's Baniachong upazila on Sunday.

Quoting the victim's family, police said the girl was playing at home on Sunday afternoon. Luring to give her chocolates, two neighbours took her to a nearby bush and raped her.

The two were arrested at night after the victim's grandmother filed a case against the duo -- one is 15-year-old and another is 17, said Prabash Kumar Singh, an additional superintendent of Habiganj police.

A local court sent the two to jail yesterday, he said.

Meanwhile, the victim's maternal uncle told The Daily Star that her father had been suffering from various diseases for a long time.

Hearing about the incident, his condition deteriorated, and he died around 11:00am yesterday, the uncle added.

Police officer Prabash, who visited the victim's house yesterday, also confirmed the news of the father's death.

In Laxmipur's Ramgati upazila, two men were sent to prison yesterday in a case filed over raping and provoking the victim to die by suicide.

The accused are Md Rakib, 24, and Md Helal Uddin, 27, residents of the same upazila.

Quoting the victim's family, police said Md Rakib somehow entered the 16-year-old girl's house late at night on March 1 and raped her.

Villagers held an arbitration on Thursday morning to settle the issue. But some people scolded the girl there. She died by suicide in the afternoon. Police later recovered the body, said Kabir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Ramgati Police Station.

A day later, the victim's mother lodged a case against 12 people, including Rakib, under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

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## Confiscate 1,006 bighas of S Alam, family Court orders ACC

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti Corruption Commission to confiscate 1,006 bighas of immovable properties owned by S Alam Group Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam, his affiliated organisations, and his family members in connection with corruption allegations against them.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Tahasin Munabil Haque, who is leading the inquiry team, submitted an application to this effect.

On February 23, the same court ordered the ACC to freeze 227 bank accounts of S Alam and his family.

On February 12, the same court ordered the ACC to freeze 437.85 crore shares of 42 companies belonging to S Alam and his family. The value of these shares stands at Tk 5,109,67,96,260.

On January 30, the court ordered concerned authorities to confiscate 58 acres of immovable property worth Tk 368 crore belonging to S Alam and his family.

CONFISCATE ASSETS OF SHAYAN F RAHMAN

The same Dhaka court yesterday ordered the ACC to take steps to confiscate the immovable properties in London owned by Ahmed Shayan Fazlur Rahman, son of Salman F Rahman, former private industry affairs

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

## Ukraine always striving for peace

Says Zelensky ahead of US talks, blames  
Russia for prolonging war

AGENCIES

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday ahead of talks with US officials in Saudi Arabia that Ukraine wants peace and Russia is the "only reason" that the war has dragged on.

"Ukraine has been striving for peace since the very first second of the war, and we have always said that the only reason that the war is continuing is because of Russia," Zelensky said on social media.

Zelensky arrived in Saudi Arabia yesterday, a day ahead of crucial talks between Ukrainian and US officials on ending the war with Russia.

Kyiv will propose an aerial and naval ceasefire with Russia during talks with US officials in Saudi Arabia, a Ukrainian official told AFP.

Highly anticipated negotiations today on resolving the three-year conflict will see US and Ukrainian officials meet for the first time since Zelensky's disastrous White House visit last month.

Zelensky said he would meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the country's de facto leader, after which his team "will stay for a meeting on Tuesday [today] with the

American team".

At the talks in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff has said Washington wants "to get down a framework for a peace agreement and an initial ceasefire as well".

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday it was expelling two British "diplomats" on suspicion of carrying out espionage activities.

Announcing the expulsion of the embassy's second secretary and husband of the first secretary, Russia's FSB security service said "counterintelligence work had revealed an undeclared British intelligence presence under the cover of the national embassy."

It said the two "deliberately provided false information when obtaining a permit to enter our country, thus violating Russian legislation."

On the war front, Russian forces advanced further in Kursk region yesterday and curled behind Ukrainian forces as part of a major encirclement operation aimed at forcing thousands of Ukrainian soldiers to either flee or surrender in western Russia, reports Reuters.

## PURBACHAL PLOT GRAFT ACC approves charge sheets against Hasina, Rehana, others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday approved the charge sheets against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, her sister Sheikh Rehana, and four of their family members in six cases filed against them over the alleged misuse of power to obtain plots under the Purbachal New Town Project.

The four family members are Hasina's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, daughter Saima Wazed Putul, Rehana's son Radwan Mujib Siddiqi Bobby, and daughter Azmina Siddiqi Ruponti.

The charge sheets also include the names of 23 other individuals, including former and current public servants and Rajuk officials, such as former state minister Sharif Ahmed and ex-secretary at Prime Minister's Office Md Salauddin.

ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain said that the process of submitting the charge sheets to the

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## Present roadmap to justice, reform Nahid urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam yesterday demanded that the government present a roadmap immediately, specifying within how many days justice for the July killings and reform initiatives will be visible to the people.

"... A clear roadmap must be announced without delay," said Nahid at an iftar event.

The NCP organised the event for the families of the July martyrs and injured at the Suhrawardy Udyan.

"We are being accused of trying to delay the election. We want to make it very clear, and we want to counter you, do not try to delay justice delivery and reforms," he added.

Nahid said Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, other members of the advisory council and the army chief, have all committed to ensuring people's safety and justice.

"They cannot deviate from this commitment. They must face the people. Therefore, we will hold them accountable on justice delivery and

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## Chinese scientists make vaccine for strokes, heart attacks

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists in China have developed a potential vaccine to prevent the build-up of plaque in arteries that can lead to blood clots, stroke and heart attacks.

The build up of fatty plaque in arteries, a condition known as atherosclerosis, is one of the leading causes of death worldwide.

A new study published in the journal *Nature Communications* described a vaccine that may mitigate atherosclerosis development in mice.

"Our nanovaccine design and preclinical data present a potential candidate for prophylactic treatment for atherosclerosis," scientists at Nanjing University of Science and Technology in China wrote.

Previous studies have helped create a digital library of various kinds of proteins that protect against inflammation and boost the body's immune response to atherosclerosis.

One such protein is called p210. It has been found to trigger an immune response against atherosclerosis progression, and it is what the new vaccine uses.



Workers painting a carriage after repairing it at Bangladesh Railway's Pahartoli workshop in Chattogram on Sunday. Work on refurbishing carriages is going on in full swing ahead of the Eid holiday travel rush. The workshop is working on 90 carriages.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Technological  
advances and  
the right to  
freedom of  
thought

P10

Prime Bank  
ISLAMIC BANK

## PRAYER TIMING MARCH 11

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:56	12:45	4:30	6:06	7:30

JAMAAT	5:06	1:15	4:45	6:21	8:00
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SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
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10	11		6:06
11	12	4:54	6:07
12	13	4:53	6:07