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DISRUPTING OFFICE WORK

Govt employees can be punished within 8 days

Recommends draft amendment to Government Service Act-2018

BAHARAM KHAN

The interim government has moved to amend the Government Service Act-2018 to allow swift disciplinary action against its employees who will be found guilty of disrupting official activities.

The accused employees can be suspended, removed from service or demoted with only eight-day show-cause notices. The notices would be served in two phases – first in a maximum of five days and second in three days, according to the proposed amendment.

The public administration ministry has prepared the draft amendment in the wake of disruptions in civil administration since the July-August mass uprising. The home ministry also requested the amendment.

Five senior officials from the public administration and home ministries with knowledge of the draft confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

In the existing act or rules, there is no provision to mete out swift punishment to the public servants for major or minor offences. They can be punished if found guilty in a lengthy investigation process, said public administration experts.

They spoke to The Daily Star off the record as the matter is sensitive.

The draft amendment will be placed before the cabinet once it gets the go-ahead from Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, who has kept the public administration ministry under his watch.

In the existing act or rules, there is no provision to mete out swift punishment to the public servants for major or minor offences. They can be punished if found guilty in a lengthy investigation process, said public administration experts.

However, the act permits the government to retire public servants without explanation once they complete 25 years in service.

The civil administration went through a period of disorder after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5 last year. A number of cadre officials demonstrated for promotion and other personal benefits by skipping work.

Processions were brought out at the Secretariat in Dhaka almost every day, while scuffles were also reported. Even the offices of secretaries of different ministries were locked up.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Dhaka North City Corporation workers using excavators to demolish illegal structures during an eviction drive along Haikka Canal in Mohammadpur's Katasur area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Poverty may worsen: World Bank

‘Political tensions over polls likely to affect economic recovery’

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is confronting a potential rise in poverty and inequality as stubborn inflation, job losses and a slowing economy erode household welfare, according to a World Bank report.

The national poverty rate is projected to rise to 22.9 percent in 2025, up from 18.7 percent in 2022, while the share of people living in extreme poverty – those earning below \$2.15 a day – is expected to nearly double to 9.3 percent and push an additional 3 million people into this group. However, the poverty rate is forecast to ease in 2026.

GDP growth forecast lowered to 3.3% for FY25

An additional 3m people may go into extreme poverty

Export growth may slow due to global trade disruptions

“High inflation and job losses have strained economic welfare, particularly for low-income households who spend a larger share of their income on

essential goods,” the World Bank said in its Bangladesh Development Update released yesterday.

Nearly 4 percent of workers lost their jobs in the second half of 2024, while wages fell by 2 percent for low-skilled workers and 0.5 percent for high-skilled workers.

Bangladesh’s labour force is showing signs of distress. The labour force participation rate declined to 59.2 percent from 60.9 percent, driven largely by a sharp fall in female participation, which dropped from 41.6 percent to 38.9 percent. The number of employed fell by 1.6 million.

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Pile pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya return

Yunus urges Qatar
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said Qatar can use its good offices to exert pressure on Myanmar for starting repatriation of Rohingyas without any further delay.

Given the renewed international geopolitical and geostrategic scenario, Qatar can strongly express their solidarity to resolve the issue and be proactive to engage the OIC countries to raise more funds and impose pressure on the international community to advocate for the repatriation of the Rohingyas, he said.

Prof Yunus made the comments at a roundtable discussion on “Social and Environmental Challenges around Forcibly Displaced Populations: The Case of the Rohingyas”.

He is on a four-day visit to Qatar to attend Earthna Summit 2025.

Qatar Foundation Chief Executive Officer Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, also the sister of Qatar emir and the host

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Battery-run rickshaw drivers throwing brick chunks at police during clashes in the Outer Signal area of Chandgaon in Chattogram yesterday. The drivers blocked the street during a demonstration against the seizure of their vehicles and alleged police harassment.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

KASHMIR TERROR ATTACK India blames Pakistan, downgrades ties

Expels diplomats, suspends Indus water treaty, tells Pakistanis to leave India

STAR REPORT

India announced a raft of measures to downgrade its ties with Pakistan yesterday, a day after suspected militants killed 26 men at a tourist destination in Kashmir in the worst attack on civilians in the country in nearly two decades.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told a media briefing that the cross-border linkages of the attack had been “brought out” at a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after which it was decided to act against Pakistan.

He said New Delhi would suspend with immediate effect the bilateral treaty of 1960 on the sharing of the trans-border Indus river.

“The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and

Pakistan convenes security committee after Indian measures

Tourists flee India-administered Kashmir after 26 killed

‘Resistance Front’ claims responsibility

Modi cuts short Saudi visit to attend security cabinet meet



BNP seeks reform, not revenge
Says Tarique

UNB, Rangpur

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said his party does not want to take revenge on their oppressors, but wants to implement its 31-point reform proposal, aimed at serving the interests of people.

“For the last 15-16 years since 1/11, you all endured unspeakable torture and abuse. You were subjected to false cases, and you were oppressed by the police or by autocrats and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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Haor farmers rush Boro harvest amid flash flood fears

DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

Boro harvesting is underway across the Haor regions of Sylhet Division and Netrokona, with farmers racing to cut their crops amid fears of flash floods.

Farmers in four Sylhet districts are harvesting even before their paddy fully ripens, anxious after past flash floods, especially the devastating one in 2017. Recent years have only deepened their fears.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), 4.97 lakh hectares of Boro have been cultivated in Sylhet Division this year – 2.76 lakh hectares in deep Haors. Sunamganj leads with 2.23 lakh hectares, followed by Habiganj (1.23 lakh), Sylhet (87 thousand hectares), and Moulvibazar (62 thousand hectares). In Netrokona, 1.85 lakh hectares were cultivated, with 41,000 in Haors.

Harvesting is in full swing despite uneven ripening caused by early drought and late recession of last season's floodwater. Most paddy is only 70-90 percent ripe.

So far, 1.75 lakh hectares (35 percent) have been harvested in Sylhet Division, including 1.47 lakh hectares in Haor areas, accounting for 56 percent of cultivation in the Haors.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

However, the Flood Forecast and Warning Centre (FFWC) noted only minimal flood risk, despite expected mid to heavy rainfall.

"I harvested early, even though my paddy was only 80-90 percent ripe," said Eklasur Rahman from Sunamganj. "Some even harvested at 70-80 percent."

FFWC executive engineer Sarder Uday Raifhan clarified, "We forecasted rain, not floods. Long-term flash flood prediction is difficult due to weather unpredictability."

"We regularly share a three-day flood forecast for general information and a seven-day forecast for officials to act before the time, considering the Boro harvest of the Haor areas," he added.

Similarly, Mamun Hawlader, executive engineer of BWDB in Sunamganj and general secretary of the district committee to protect Boro harvest, said that only rain, not flooding, was forecasted, and the harvest advisory was precautionary.

"The administration urged farmers to harvest only 'ripe' crops, because the rainfall might submerge low-lying areas," he added.

Amid the confusion, the FFWC yesterday forecast mid to heavy rainfall in the northeastern region of the country but stated a 'minimal' chance of flash flood.

Meanwhile, farmers in Moulvibazar and Habiganj voiced concern as drought, pest infestations, and a shortage of labour threaten their harvest.

Ahmed Mia, a farmer from Kawadighi Haor in Moulvibazar, said that prolonged drought and lack of rainfall have dried up vast Haor lands.

However, not all farmers anticipate losses.

Saddam Hossain from Hakaluki Haor said his yield is good, with half his 3-acre field harvested using combine harvester.

However, labour shortage remains a major issue. Rafiqul Islam of Karab village in Habiganj's Lakhai upazila said that he couldn't harvest ripe crops as there was no one to harvest.

"Local labourers are demanding higher wages,

and even then, they're hard to find. We are waiting for combine harvesters to arrive," he said.

Over 2,000 combine harvesters are active across Sylhet Division, DAE reports. 1,850 of them are local. Harvesting costs range from Tk 1,400-2,000 per bigha.

Adding to worries, many farmers are selling their crops early at low prices, fearing they will not get a fair price.

"I don't have cash in hand. So, I'm selling my paddy in advance. The middlemen are offering only Tk 950-1,000 per maund (37.5 kilograms)," said Tofayel Khan, a farmer from the Dingapota Haor area in Netrokona's Mohanganj upazila.

Others echoed concerns about poor market rates. Shyamal Sarker, a farmer from Bagbari in Sunamganj's Dharmapasha, said he has harvested half of his 2 acre field, but the low market price is making him worried. He said, last year, farmers got Tk 1,100 per maund at the start of the season and later it rose to Tk 1,400, barely meeting the production cost.

However, DAE officials, quoting farmers, said, due to favourable weather, this year's yield is better than the last two years. "We've harvested from the most vulnerable Haors, so floods won't do major damage," said Md Nuruzzaman, deputy director of DAE in Netrokona.

Bimal Chandra Shome, additional director of the DAE in Sylhet Division, agreed.

"Though only a few paddy fields were affected by drought and insects, overall harvest is very good this year. We aim to complete the harvest by April 30. We urge farmers to begin harvesting once their paddy is around 90 percent ripe. This is just a precautionary measure to stay on the safe side, considering the flood risk," he said.

He also said there was no shortage of labourers and the number of combine harvesters is sufficient for the harvest.

[Reporting by Jaydul Islam, Netrokona Correspondent]



DAE data shows harvest progress in the low-lying Haor areas at 51 percent in Sunamganj, 53 percent in Habiganj, 50 percent in Sylhet, 70 percent in Moulvibazar, and 58 percent in Netrokona.

On April 15, the Sunamganj administration issued a high alert based on Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) forecasts, urging immediate harvesting of ripe paddy. All official leave was suspended until harvest completion.

Local labourers are demanding higher wages,

India blames

FROM PAGE 1
rivers each and the right to hydropower and irrigation resources.

Misri added that the border crossing at Attari Wagah border "will be closed with immediate effect", although those with valid travel documents may return to Pakistan before May 1.

Three defence advisers in the Pakistani high commission in New Delhi were declared persona non grata and asked to leave, Misri said, adding that the overall strength of the Indian high commission in Islamabad will be reduced to 30 from 55.

India also announced a halt to visas for Pakistani nationals under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme, our New Delhi correspondent quoted him as saying.

Misri said India is also withdrawing its air, air and navy advisers from its High Commission in Islamabad.

He said any visa under the SAARC Visa Exemption Service issued in the past to Pakistani nationals is deemed cancelled. He also asked any Pakistani national currently in India under SVES visa to leave the country within 48 hours.

The CCS reviewed the overall security situation and directed all forces to maintain high vigil and resolved that the perpetrators of the Pahalgam attack will be brought to justice and their sponsors held to account," Misri said.

"India will be unrelenting in the pursuit of those who have committed acts of terror, or conspired to make them from," he added.

At least 17 people were also injured in the shooting that took place on Tuesday in the Baisaran valley in the Pahalgam area of the scenic, Himalayan federal territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The dead included 25 Indians and one Nepalese national, police said.

It was the worst attack on civilians in India since the 2008 Mumbai shootings, and shattered the relative calm in Kashmir, where tourism has boomed as anti-India insurgency has waned in recent years.

Meanwhile, Pakistan yesterday said the government has decided to convene a rare meeting of its National Security Committee to respond to diplomatic measures imposed by India over the attack in Kashmir.

The committee – composed of senior civil and military officials and summoned only in cases of external threat or major terror attack – will meet today, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, who is also the foreign minister, said on X.

A little-known militant group, the "Kashmir Resistance," claimed responsibility for the attack in a social media message. It expressed discontent that more than 85,000 "outsiders" had been settled in the region, spurring a "demographic change".

Govt employees can be punished

FROM PAGE 1

All these incidents for several weeks led to the delay or disruption in government initiatives, policies, and services.

The proposed amendment is aimed at ensuring discipline during such periods. The act will have provisions similar to those in the "Government Servants (Special Provisions) Ordinance, 1979", which was repealed in 2018 with the passage of the Public Service Act, said the officials.

Abdul Awal Majumder, a former secretary and public administration expert, told The Daily Star that the special provisions in the ordinance were "very strict". Some even described it as a "black law".

But in the current administrative context, such stricter provisions have become necessary, he said.

Asked about the proposed provision of eight days' time for the employees to submit an explanation, Awal said if the government wants, it can terminate any employee found guilty of an offence with an eight day notice.

"There is no requirement for Public Service Commission's opinion or an investigation in such cases," he said.

OFFENCES, PUNISHMENTS

According to the draft, disciplinary action can be taken against any government employee who engages in activities that cause dissatisfaction among colleagues, disrupt discipline, obstruct others' work; remains absent without approved leave or valid reason or refrains from performing duties; provokes others to abstain from work, or prevents them from carrying out their duties; and obstructs another from attending office or performing their assigned tasks.

For these offences, the proposed amendment has three types of disciplinary action: dismissal, removal, and demotion or salary reduction.

The draft outlines the procedure for punishing government employees in question.

It says an accused employee will be served notice and he or she will have to respond to the allegation or attend a hearing in person within two to five days of being notified.

If the accused official fails to respond within the stipulated time or is found guilty even after giving a response, the authorities will impose a specific penalty and provide the employee with an opportunity to show cause within three days.

In case the accused fails to respond to the show-cause notice, or if the response is deemed unsatisfactory to

the authorities, a final penalty will be imposed. However, the draft allows the accused to appeal the decision within seven days to the appropriate authority or, in special cases, to the president within 30 days.

Sources involved with the matter said that under the 1979 ordinance, appeals against penalties could not be challenged in court. The proposed draft of the Government Service Act also does not have any such provision.

The draft states that the president's decision on the appeal will be considered final.

WHY AMEND NOW

A home ministry official said that the involvement of public servants, including cadre officers, in chaotic incidents following the uprising has raised questions.

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In recent times, we have witnessed unprecedented chaos in the name of protests, often driven by personal interests. Discipline is yet to be restored in the administration due to the incompetence and weakness of the public administration. Therefore, the

government may be trying to bring back provisions of the repressive ordinance," he said.

"There has probably never been such incompetent leadership in public administration since independence," added Firoz.

A senior official at the public administration ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the amendment was necessary.

"Most of the strict laws introduced during Sheikh Hasina's long tenure have been gradually weakened, which increased the tendency of misconduct among government officials," the official said.

"The government has the authority to forcefully retire any public servant after 25 years of service without showing cause, but this provision is rarely used," the official added.

An official from the Chief Adviser's Office said on condition of anonymity that the law will only be applied to those who violate the rules. Therefore, there is no reason for honest officials to be afraid.

He said enacting a stringent law could create trouble for officials who held key positions under previous administrations.

A joint secretary from the Local Government Division argued that the move to amend the act would curb freedom of thought among government employees, thereby infringing on their constitutional rights.

Citing article 39(f) of the constitution, he said, "Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed."

"When the Special Powers Act of 1979 was enacted, the constitution was under suspension. The current government claims to uphold the rule of law, so why does it favour such a repressive law now?"

An official from the law ministry said, "A law with such special provisions is not prepared with good intention. The motives behind them are often questionable."

Contacted, Additional Secretary (Rules) ANM Moinul Islam of the public administration ministry declined to comment on the matter.

Mokhles Ur Rahman, senior secretary of the ministry, told The Daily Star, "The matter is under the jurisdiction of the government."

Pile pressure on Myanmar

FROM PAGE 1

of Earthquake Summit, joined the discussion.

Prof Yunus said Qatar was among the first few countries to immediately provide assistance and support after the Rohingya crisis began in 2017. Qatar also took strong diplomatic positions on the issue in different international forums.

Prof Yunus said Bangladesh is currently hosting about 1.3 million Rohingyas, while 32,000 newborns are being added yearly.

He said prolonged stay of the Rohingyas poses enormous challenges for Bangladesh and making these Rohingyas frustrated. "Rise in criminal activities in the camps and attempts of illegal migration are clear signs of desperation among government officials," the official said.

"The government has the authority to forcefully retire any public servant after 25 years of service without showing cause, but this provision is rarely used," the official added.

Despite numerous challenges and constraints, Bangladesh is giving shelter to such a huge number of Rohingyas only on humanitarian considerations. "Bangladesh considers sustainable repatriation as the only solution to the current crisis."

Bangladesh will organise a "High-Level Conference on the Situation of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar" under UN auspices, probably in September 2025 in New York.

Bangladesh expects high-level political participation and cooperation from Qatar in the conference, the chief adviser said.

Yunus said ongoing justice and accountability initiatives in International Court of Justice (ICJ), the investigation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the activities of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIM) regarding the atrocities committed against Rohingyas are "very crucial".

Meanwhile, some serving officials questioned the rationale of enforcing an ordinance from the military regime era, suggesting that such a move might heighten anxiety among civil servants.

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He said the people of the country believe BNP can deliver positive outcomes, as they trust the party. "We all have the responsibility to uphold that trust, and unity is essential to do so," he said.

way my brother was killed, through the implementation of the 31 points."

The BNP Training Affairs Committee

arranged the workshops titled '31 Point

State Structure Reform Proposal and Public Engagement' in Rangpur City,

Rangpur and Nilphamari districts, and Saidpur upazila.

Tarique called upon his party

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PARVEZ MURDER
Two including prime accused arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers yesterday arrested two youths, including the prime accused, in connection with the murder of Jahidul Islam Parvez, a student of Primeasia University.

The prime accused, Meheraj Islam, 20, was arrested by Rab from Gaibandha, while another accused, Mahathir Hasan, 20, was arrested by a team of Banani police from Chattogram, said Banani Police Station Officer-in-Charge Russel Sarwar.

"A team of Banani police went to Chattogram and arrested Mahathir. Efforts are underway to arrest the other accused and those involved in the incident," the OC said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

SC scraps graft case against Yunus, six others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday dismissed the proceedings of a corruption case against Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, chairman of Grameen Telecom, and six other officials.

A four member bench, led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, delivered the verdict after allowing an appeal, filed by Yunus and the six others, challenging a High Court order that had upheld their indictment in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The full text of the Supreme Court's verdict, which will provide detailed reasoning, is yet to be released.

The six Grameen Telecom officials are Managing Director Nazmul Islam and Directors Ashraful Hassan, Naznin Sultana, Md Shahjahan, Nurjahan Begum, and SM Huzzatul Islam Latifee.

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On the eve of the 12th anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy, relatives of victims and labour organisation leaders light candles at the site in memory of those who lost their lives. Inset, a file photo of rescuers working at the site after the tragedy took place in Savar on April 24, 2013.

PHOTO: AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

12 YEARS OF RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY



**Ensure long-term support for survivors
Speakers tell event**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Survivors of Rana Plaza tragedy, alongside rights activists and legal experts, yesterday criticised the slow pace of trial proceedings, blaming past political interference and lack of urgency.

Speaking at a discussion titled "Rana Plaza Bhaban Dhwongsho: Bicharer Opekkhay Ek Jug" at Jatiya Press Club, Abul Kalam Khan, additional public prosecutor of Dhaka district, alleged that the previous government had protected those responsible.

"For years, the case made little progress. Only 93 witnesses testified in eight years. Many of the accused, including the building owner, were granted bail," he said.

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Victims still await justice as trials drag on

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Twelve years have passed since the Rana Plaza collapse, yet the trials of two related cases remain incomplete at a Dhaka court, mainly due to the repeated absence of prosecution witnesses.

Frustrated by the prolonged delay, survivors and victims' families said they will not be able to see justice in their lifetime.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and over 2,500 were injured when the nine storey building collapsed in Savar on April 24, 2013, marking the deadliest garment factory disaster in history.

In 2016, the murder trial against 41 accused, including building owner Sohel Rana, began. However, proceedings in another case -- filed for violating building codes -- have not yet started.

On July 18, 2016, the Dhaka district and sessions judge's court framed charges against the accused in the murder case. Since then, only 94 of the 594 prosecution witnesses have testified, according to the prosecution.

The court recorded statements of witness Nuruzzaman Dolon, former

secretary of Rana Plaza Owners' Association, on February 12 this year. Since then, no witnesses have testified in the court.

On April 15, the court issued non-bailable arrest warrants against 15 witnesses and set May 15 as the next date for witness statements.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Public Prosecutor Md Iqbal Hossain said witnesses are now being summoned to testify properly, and non-bailable arrest warrants are being issued against those who fail to appear.

"We are taking steps to finish the trial without delay," he said, adding, "Some witnesses testified but did not give statements properly before the court. We declared them hostile," he said.

A day after the incident, Wali Ashraf Khan, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station, filed the murder case against Sohel Rana, also former Juba League leader, and several others.

On May 24, 2015, CID's Senior Assistant Superintendent Bijay Krishna Kar pressed charges against Sohel Rana, his parents Abdul Khaleque and Morjina, and 38 others.

Of the 41 accused, only Sohel Rana

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



The capital's Jirani canal in Khilgaon Nandipara has long been a victim of encroachment and pollution. The waterbody now resembles a drain due to indifference of the authorities concerned.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Student bodies gear up for Jucsu polls

Concerns remain over fairness, timely execution

SAKIB AHMED

As Jahangirnagar University inches closer to the long-anticipated Jahangirnagar University Central Students' Union (Jucsu) elections, student organisations are intensifying preparations and engaging in discussions over nominations and strategic alliances.

Still, doubts persist about the timely and fair conduct of the polls.

Initially, the election schedule was expected on February 1, according to the university's roadmap.

However, following recommendations from the Environment Council, a body tasked with monitoring the electoral atmosphere, and due to disagreements among student bodies, the announcement was delayed.

Instead, a 10 member committee was formed to review and amend the Jucsu and



Polls postponed from original Feb 1 schedule

Elections set to be held by May 21

Schedule due end of April

Students want VC removed as Jucsu president

Voter list, code of conduct in progress

hall union charters.

On February 7, the vice chancellor issued a notice confirming elections would be held no later than May 21, with the schedule to be published in the last week of April.

Prapti Taposi, organiser of Jahangirnagar Bachao Andolon, said her coalition is in talks with various cultural and social bodies. "We're skeptical," she said. "There are still faculty members loyal to the ousted regime..."

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) echoed the concern, while projecting confidence in their ground work. "We've won Jucsu elections before. Students trust us," said

Jahir Uddin Babor, convener of JUC JCD.

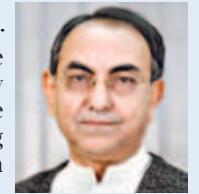
However, he questioned the administration's impartiality, noting that BCL members involved in past attacks

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Timely polls under interim govt doubtful
Says Mirza Abbas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas yesterday expressed doubts over the possibility of the upcoming national election being held on time.

Addressing a discussion organised by Ganatantra Forum at Jatiya Press Club, he alleged that several individuals close to the chief adviser are trying to disrupt the electoral process.

Mirza Abbas alleged that both government officials and members of the advisory council were attempting to misguide the CA and steer him away from the right path.

"This is my personal opinion, not the party's stance... There's a saying in English: 'Hope for the best, think for the worst.' I hope for something good, but thinking of the bad, it seems like perhaps they won't hold the election very soon..." said the BNP leader.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Hills more peaceful than before
Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Chittagong Hill Tracts are now more peaceful than before, said Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

He made the remarks while speaking to reporters at the Chattogram Circuit House after a closed-door views exchange meeting with senior officials of the Chattogram Range Police, Chattogram Metropolitan Police, and representatives from the army, navy, and Border Guard Bangladesh.

Regarding the recent abduction of five Chittagong University students in the hill tracts, the adviser said such incidents are not unique to the region.

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Do not block roads with demos: DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police has urged all groups and individuals to refrain from blocking roads during demonstrations, saying such actions are worsening traffic congestion and causing immense public suffering.

In a statement yesterday, DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media and Public Relations) Talebir Rahman said different groups and vested quarters have recently been blocking roads at will in the name of pressing demands or staging protests, causing severe traffic congestion and immense suffering to commuters, including students and office-goers.

Such road blockades are also causing difficulties for outbound air passengers and transportation of critically ill patients, said the statement.

Neonatal mortality

FROM PAGE 5
Despite these issues, Bangladesh's broader child health indicators reflect substantial progress, said the study.

According to the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2022, the under-five mortality rate has dropped to 31 per 1,000 live births, nearing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of 25 by 2030.

However, neonatal mortality, accounting for the majority of under-five deaths, remains high at 20 per 1,000 live births, far from the SDG goal of 12, it said.

According to the study, Bangladesh aims to establish 62 SCANUS and 111 NSUs nationwide by 2025 to improve access to life-saving care for newborns.

However, researchers stressed that expanding facilities alone won't be enough. Stronger maintenance practices, equipment upgrades, and better resource allocation are crucial for improving care for the most vulnerable infants.

According to the UN

Inter agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), over 100,000 children in Bangladesh died before age five in 2023 -- nearly two-thirds of them within the first 28 days of life.

To meet SDG targets, Bangladesh must save an additional 28,000 newborns every year. This requires renewed efforts in maternal and newborn health, both in hospitals and at the community level, the study said.

At the conference, Bridget Job Johnson, deputy representative (OIC) of Unicef Bangladesh, said "Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing newborn and maternal deaths, but we're still losing a newborn every 8 minutes -- often from preventable causes like prematurity, low birth weight, birth asphyxia, and infection."

"To accelerate progress, we must support mothers and adolescents, improve nutrition, promote healthy birth spacing, and raise awareness to end preventable newborn and maternal deaths," she added.

Timely polls

FROM PAGE 3

He expresses hope that the government will take measures to ensure the election aligns with the people's expectations, saying, "There's no alternative to the election."

Meanwhile, at a meeting, BNP leader Amir Khasru has stressed the urgent need for clarity to prevent further uncertainty, saying, "Currently, the absence of an election announcement or roadmap by December is creating doubt, hesitation. Therefore, this needs to be addressed."

The meeting was held with Ganoforum leaders at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office.

"...Every party has already submitted their reform proposals to the government. Where has the government reached a consensus? Why is this not being presented to the public? This is the question everyone is asking," he told reporters.

A 12-member delegation of Ganoforum met BNP leader Amir Khasru and Vice-Chairman Barkatullah Bulu.

Ensure long-term

FROM PAGE 3

compensation. She said the current government had directed the prosecution to expedite proceedings. "Since I took charge last October, I've been instructed to ensure quick disposal. We're under pressure to complete it, and I hope it'll be resolved by next year."

Sifat Khanam of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) presented updates on the case and outlined several legal and policy recommendations.

She suggested forming a monitoring team of lawyers, journalists, trade unionists, and other private sector stakeholders to regularly track case progress.

She recommended daily hearings in Sessions and Labour Courts for all pending cases and proposed that the High Court assign a dedicated bench for pending petitions related to Rana Plaza.

She also urged the Ministry of Home Affairs and police to actively pursue outstanding arrest warrants and hold those responsible for delays accountable.

On compensation and rehabilitation, Sifat said victims of Rana Plaza -- and other workplace disasters like Tazreen -- should receive adequate

hours after the collapse. She suffered several injuries to her spine, legs, and head, and despite receiving treatment for a long time, she has not recovered enough to return to normal life.

In 2017, Rana was also sentenced to three years in prison in a separate graft case.

BUILDING CODE VIOLATION CASE

Rajuk filed the second case on the day of the collapse for violating building codes while constructing Rana Plaza.

Charges were pressed against Sohel Rana and 17 others on May 24, 2015, and indictments followed on June 14, 2016.

However, the trial is still pending at the additional chief judicial magistrate's court of Dhaka.

Assistant Public Prosecutor Estiyak Hossain Zupu said the proceedings had been delayed due to the High Court stay orders, which were recently scrapped.

He expressed hope that the trial will start soon.

VICTIMS STILL WAIT FOR JUSTICE

Nilufar Yasmin, who used to work as a sewing operator on the fifth floor, was rescued nine and a half

hours after the collapse. She suffered several injuries to her spine, legs, and head, and despite receiving treatment for a long time, she has not recovered enough to return to normal life.

Speaking to The Daily Star, she said, "It [the collapse] was murder. We have been demanding compensation, rehabilitation, medical care, and punishment for the owner. None of our demands have been met to this day."

[Our Saver correspondent contributed to this report.]

Two including

FROM PAGE 3

Six persons have so far been arrested in connection with the murder.

On Tuesday, a team of Rab II and police arrested Hridoy Mazi, 23, from Titas upazila in Cumilla. Hridoy is the joint member secretary of the Banani Thana Committee of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), according to the case statement.

Hridoy was placed on a seven-day remand yesterday.

Parvez, 24, was stabbed to death in front of the campus in Banani on Saturday. His cousin Humayun Kabir filed a murder case with Banani Police Station early Sunday, naming eight individuals -- including two SAD leaders -- and 25 to 30 unidentified others.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director

Feasibility Study on 'Livestock Service Transformation (LST)' Project

Krishi Khamar Sarak, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215

Memo No. 33.01.0000.109.14.512.25-05

Dated: 22 April, 2025

Corrigendum/Amendment

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Consulting Firms for Feasibility Study of Livestock Service Transformation

| Areas of amendment | Original (Previous) | Amended (Present) |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| 11. EOI submission place | a) Office of the Project Director, Feasibility Study of Livestock Service Transformation (LST) Project, Department of Livestock Services, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215. b) Room No. 501, Bhaban No. 6, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka. | a) Office of the Project Director, Feasibility Study of Livestock Service Transformation (LST) Project, Department of Livestock Services, Pranisampam Bhaban-1, Room No. 314, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215. b) Office of the Director, Central Veterinary Hospital, 48, Kazi Alauddin Road, Dhaka-1000. |

22/04/2025

Dr. Rezaul Haq Khan

Project Director (Add. Charge.)

Feasibility Study on 'Livestock Service Transformation (LST)' Project

Department of Livestock Services, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215

GD-965

Student bodies gear

FROM PAGE 3
remain unpunished and some continue to reside in dorms despite bans.

Riddha Anindya Ganguly, general secretary of a faction of JU unit of Chhakra Union, said, "We've submitted a revised charter, but with partisan figures in administrative roles, the integrity of the election is in doubt."

Samajtantrik Chhakra Front and Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhakra Sangsad also said if the administration shows any bias, they will take to the streets again.

Meanwhile, several student groups -- including JCD and left-leaning organisations -- have demanded the exclusion of Islami Chhakra Shibir from the polls.

They said allowing Shibir could legitimise the return of other controversial groups to campus politics.

JU President Muhibur Rahman Muhib, however, defended their participation. "This is the first time in 35 years we've been able to work openly. We want to collaborate with those who stood for change in July," he said.

He also criticised the administration's failure to address non-student occupancy in dorms.

Pro-VC (Administration) Prof Dr Sohel Ahmed said they will take action against individuals who have completed their studies but are still residing in the dormitories.

Meanwhile, most of the student organisations opposed a clause that designates the vice chancellor as the JU president and demanded that the position be directly elected by students.

Prof Md Maniruzzaman, chief election commissioner for the JU polls, said preparations are underway, including voter list finalisation and a draft code of conduct.

"However, the administration has yet to update the commission on charter reform progress or confirm the schedule. We're ready to conduct the election if instructed within the May 21 timeline," he said.

Contacted, VC Prof Dr Mohammad Kamrul Ahsan said they still need

to hold meetings with the Environment Council and student bodies for holding JU election.

If the campus environment is deemed suitable by the council and intelligence agencies, and if student bodies maintain a positive approach, then the election will take place within the announced timeframe," he hoped.

SC scraps

FROM PAGE 3

The ACC had filed the case on May 30, 2023, accusing Yunus and 13 others of misappropriating approximately Tk 25.22 crore from the Grameen Telecom Workers' Profit Participation Fund and engaging in money laundering.

The Appellate Division concluded hearings on the appeal on March 19 and fixed April 23 (yesterday) for delivering the verdict.

Contacted, Barrister Abdullaah Al Mamun, principal lawyer for Dr Yunus and the six others, said following the Appellate Division's verdict, it has been proved that the case filed against his clients was false, baseless and fabricated, and that the HC verdict was wrong.

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Hit by train, 3 die in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Cumilla

Three boys died after being hit by a train in Madhabpur area of Cumilla's Burichang upazila early yesterday.

The victims were struck by a train on the Chatogram-bound line, said Sohel Molla, a sub-inspector and in-charge of Cumilla Sadar Railway Police Outpost.

Two of the deceased were identified as Saiful Islam, 18, and Md Tuhin, 17. The identity of the other deceased could not be known immediately, he said.

Prasanjit Chakrabarty, station master of Sadar Rasulpur Rail Station, said the incident occurred between 3:45am and 4:00am when the Chatogram-bound Udayan Express hit the three.

Railway police said bodies will be handed over to families after legal procedures.

Neonatal mortality still high at 20 per 1,000 births

Study suggests better care, community-level intervention

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Although Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing mortality in children under five over the past decade, saving newborns -- especially in the first weeks of life -- remains a major challenge.

A key factor behind the progress has been the introduction of Special Care Newborn Units (SCANUs) by the health ministry in 2009. These units, focused on treating vulnerable infants, have saved countless lives.

However, a recent study has raised concerns about their current condition, revealing operational issues that could threaten future progress.

While most medical equipment in SCANUs and Newborn Stabiliser Units (NSUs) is still functional, around 25 percent is either non-functional but repairable or beyond repair.



According to the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), over 100,000 children in Bangladesh died before age five in 2023 -- nearly two-thirds of them within the first 28 days of life.

This was found in a study titled "Strengthening Special Care Newborn Units in Bangladesh: An Extensive Assessment and Improvement Strategies."

The study -- conducted by Pyae Phyo Then Chao, Zahid Hassan, and

Dewan Md Emdadul Hoque of Unicef Bangladesh -- was presented at a conference titled "Quality Newborn Care at Facility and Home: A Pathway to Healthier Future" yesterday.

The event, focused on future strategies for improving newborn care, was organised by the Bangladesh Neonatal Forum (BNF) with support from Unicef at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center in Dhaka.

According to the study, ageing infrastructure is a major concern, with 38 percent of SCANUs and 42.8 percent of NSUs using equipment that is over 10 years old.

The study also revealed that 32.1 percent of ventilators and 42.8 percent of infant incubators are repairable. However, functionality remains low for critical devices like pulse oximeters (71.7 percent) and infant incubators (57.1 percent).

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Immigration and Passports
E-7, Agargaon, Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207
www.dip.gov.bd

Date: 23/04/2025

Corrigendum

Subject: Amendment of DIP Tender No. 58.01.0000.102.99.019.24-570, 19-08-2024 for Selection of service provider for the supply of manpower

| Tender No. & Date | Description | Existing | Amended As |
|--|--|--|------------|
| At Serial No. 14 Application Closing Date and Time | 24/04/2025 at 1:00pm (BST). | 29/04/2025 at 1:00pm (BST). | |
| Opening Date and Time | 24/04/2025 at 2:00pm (BST). | 29/04/2025 at 2:00pm (BST). | |
| | Type of category: | | |
| | Brief Description of Outsourcing Staff | Dispatch Rider Security Guard Cleaner Liftman Electrician Pump Operator | |
| 58.01.0000.102.99.019.24-570, 19-08-2024 | Recruitment at Serial No. 17 | | |

- Outsourcing Recruitment Policy-2025 will be followed for this recruitment.
- All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

GD-975

23/04/2025
Md Al Amin Mridha
Deputy Director (Procurement)
For Director General

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Narail
www.eed.narail.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice No. 217-20/2024-2025 Date : 23/04/2025.

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works Under EED, Narail District as mentioned below.

| SL No | Tender ID No. | Package No | Identification of Package | Procurement Method | Tender Document last selling/ Downloading Date & Time | Tender Closing Date & Time |
|-------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 01 | 1101838 | NARAIL/REP/SHED/ GOVT/2023-24/WR-16 | Overall Repair And Renovation Works Of Model Building At Kalia Govt. Pilot Model High School, Kalia, Narail. | LTM | 12/05/2025 (16:00) | 13/05/2025 (13:00) |
| 02 | 1101828 | NARAIL/REP/SHED/ GOVT/2023-24/WR-15 | Completion Of Remaining Repair & Renovation Works Of Main Building At Kalia Govt. Pilot Model High School, Kalia, Narail. | LTM | 12/05/2025 (16:00) | 13/05/2025 (13:00) |
| 03 | 1101822 | NARAIL/REP/SHED/ GOVT/2023-24/WR-14 | Repair & Renovation Works At Office of the Executive Engineer, Education Engineering Department, Sadar, Narail. | LTM | 12/05/2025 (16:00) | 13/05/2025 (13:00) |
| 04 | 1101817 | NARAIL/REP/SHED/ GOVT/2020-21/WR-12 | Repair And Renovation Works Of District Education Office, Sadar, Narail. | LTM | 12/05/2025 (16:00) | 13/05/2025 (13:00) |

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be acceptable in the National e-GP system portal and No offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender A1 & A2 renewed upto FY.2024-25 enlistment Category Contractor of Education Engineering Department under Narail District who are registered in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) will be eligible. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 12:00 on 13/05/2025. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason what so ever.

(Arunava Roy)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Narail.

GD-976



Children enjoying a playful bath in a pond using banana stems as floats in Rajshahi's Tanore upazila. Scorching heat has been sweeping across various upazilas of the district for the past few days. Yesterday, the temperature in Rajshahi reached 39 degrees Celsius.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

SINHA MURDER

HC starts hearing death reference and appeals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started hearing on the death reference and appeals filed by the convicts in Major (retd) Sinha Md Rashed Khan murder case.

The bench of Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman and Justice Md Sagir Hossain began the hearing with Deputy Attorney Generals Shamima Sultana Dipti and Md Jashim Sarker read out from the FIR, charge sheet and verdict.

On January 31, 2022, Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Ismail sentenced Pradeep Kunar Das, suspended OC of Teknaf Police Station, and suspended SI Liaqat Ali to death and also six others to life term imprisonment.

Sinha was killed in police firing at Baharchhara police check post on Marine Drive road in Teknaf on July 31, 2020.

Hills more peaceful

FROM PAGE 3

issue needs to be properly understood. We must work towards resolving it. Our borders are fully protected, but we require your [the media's] cooperation in maintaining that security."

Referring to the recent shooting and killing in Raozan, the adviser said, "Raozan is a hilly area, and like Raozan, Fatikchhari, Patiya, Satkania, and Lohagara are also surrounded by both hills and plains. The situation is different there. After each incident, the armed criminals hide in the hills..."

Responding to a question about a video allegedly featuring members of the Arakan Army in the CHT, he said, "The Arakan Army has been fighting [in this region] for a long time. Many of their members have married on this side [Bangladesh], and this cannot be denied. The way the videos present things is not entirely accurate. TikTok videos can be made in many ways, and not everything seen there is entirely true or false. It is important to maintain a balanced perspective."

He added, "The Arakan Army has taken over the border [on Myanmar side]. If anything is imported from Myanmar, taxes must be paid to the Myanmar government, and at the same time, the Arakan Army also demands money. This

COX'S BAZAR-MAHESHKHALI Ferry service begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The long anticipated regular sea truck service on the Cox's Bazar-Maheshkhali waterway will begin from today, according to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

The 250-seat sea truck will operate three times a day in both directions.

Passengers boarding from Jetty No 6 in Cox's Bazar will pay a fare of Tk 50, while those boarding from Nuniachhara Ghat will pay Tk 40, said BIWTA officials.



Residents of Maheshkhali expressed excitement over the launch, saying it will ease travel difficulties and reduce the influence of syndicates that have long controlled the route. Due to tourist attractions like the Adinath Temple, the island sees visitors year-round.

BIWTA Assistant Director at Cox's Bazar Md Khairuzzaman said, "A trial run was conducted from last Friday, and the decision to run the service regularly from Thursday has now been finalised."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources

Power Division

Power Cell

Biddut Bhaban (13th Floor), 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REO)
FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTING FIRM FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT STUDY OF SOLAR PARK AT JAMALPUR CHAR AREA (Package S-34)

No: 27.71.0000.003.03.010.25-310

Date: 22/04/2025

- The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a fund from the International Development Agency (IDA) and it intends to apply a part of the proceeds of this credit to payment under the contracts for appointment of consulting firm for "Environmental and Social Impact Study of Solar Park at Jamalpur Char Area". Power Cell, therefore, intends to appoint an internationally reputed consultancy firm to accomplish the mentioned services by using this fund under "TA for Strengthening and Development of Sustainable Power Sector in Bangladesh" project of Power Cell, Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resource.
- Interested consulting firms must provide information indicating the qualifications to perform the services. The short-listing criteria are:
 - General experience of the firm;
 - Experience in similar projects (especially RE generation projects);
 - Financial soundness of the firm;
 - Should have resources, key experts & support services of the firm.
- A consulting firm is allowed to submit the Expression of Interest (EOI) alone if it considers itself to be fully qualified on its own for the assignment, as it is not mandatory for a consulting firm to associate with any other firm(s), whether foreign or local. Alternatively, if the firm chooses to associate to enhance their qualifications and capability for the assignment, then such associations may either be as a Joint Venture (i.e., all members of the joint venture shall be jointly and severally responsible) and/or Sub-consultants (The Consultant will be responsible for the services of the sub-consultant, and the qualification and experience of the sub-consultants will not be evaluated). In case of an association, the Consultants must explain in the EOI submission (a) the rationale for forming the association and (b) the anticipated role and relevant qualifications of each member of the Joint Venture and/or each sub-consultant for carrying out the assignment, to justify the proposed inclusion of the JV members and/or sub-consultants in the association. Failure to provide the above explanation in the EOI may risk the association not being shortlisted for the assignment.
- Consultants are requested to submit the following supporting documents against the above mentioned criteria: (a) The Firm's Incorporation/Trade/registration documents from the country of the firm; (b) JV agreement/letter of intent (if applicable); (c) Firm's brochure; (d) Description of similar consultancy contracts, including the scope, contract amount, name of Client, period of the contract (date of contract signing to date of completion), location/country of the services, etc.; (e) Service experience record (including nature, total cost, total inputs in terms of staff month, employer, location, scope of the service etc.); (f) Short biography of key professional; (g) Company's Income Tax certificate/Income Tax registration certificate. The experience of a parent company, subsidiary company, group company or associates (whatever the names) of the applicant (consulting firm) shall not be considered in evaluation.
- Detailed Scope of Work will be available in the Terms of Reference (TOR) which can be downloaded from the website of Power Division (www.powerdivision.gov.bd), Power Cell (www.powercell.gov.bd), and CPTU website from the date of publication of EOI.
- Interested Firms are requested to submit their EOI in 2 (Two) sets, (one original and one duplicate) with soft copy to the above mentioned address and clearly marked "Request for Expression of Interest" for "Environmental and Social Impact Study of Solar Park at Jamalpur Char Area" on or before the submission deadline of May 29, 2025, 15:00 Hours (BST). Any submission received after the submission date & time will not be accepted.
- The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

22.4.25

(A J M Ershad Ahsan Habib)
Joint Secretary, Power Division &
Director General (Addl. Charge), Power Cell
Tel: +88 (02) 223386040
E-mail: dg@powercell.gov.bd

'Conclave' viewership soars in wake of Pope's death

Following Pope Francis's death on April 21, viewership of the 2024 Oscar-winning drama *Conclave* soared dramatically.

The film, which explores the secretive process of electing a new pope, saw a 283% rise in home streaming last Monday, jumping from 1.8 million to 6.9 million minutes viewed, according to Luminate, the US firm that monitors streaming activity.

Conclave portrays the intense political and spiritual deliberations within the Vatican following a fictional pope's death.

Interest also resurged in Netflix's 2019 film *The Two Popes*, with a 417% increase in viewership.

During Oscar season, the cast of *Conclave* was inquired about the Pope's health to which lead actress Isabella Rossellini responded with well wishes for him.

CONCLAVE



Miles embarks on month-long US tour

Legendary Bangladeshi band Miles has embarked on their *Legacy Tour USA 2025*, marking 30 years since their first US tour in 1996.

The month-long concert series

Organised by Ironclad Melody, the tour will span key US cities including Dallas, New Jersey, Los Angeles, New York, Denver, Austin, Michigan, and Buffalo.

Band frontman Hamin Ahmed



kicked off on April 11 at Houston's Stafford Centre Auditorium, followed by a landmark performance in Miami on April 12—attended by over 3,000 fans, making it the largest Bangladeshi music concert in the city to date.

noted the tour's historical importance, celebrating Miles' decades-long influence on Bangladeshi music. Organisers expressed hope that this tour will become another major milestone in the band's illustrious legacy.

New deadline announced for government film grants

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has extended the deadline for government film grant submissions to April 27. Initially set for April 7, the extension was confirmed in a notice signed by Assistant Senior Secretary Sharmin Akhter.

Submissions are invited for full-length and short films under the 2024-25 fiscal year, with plans to fund up to 12 full-length and 20 short films. Eligible applicants include



producers, directors, writers, and related organisations.

Proposals must include the story, screenplay, production plan, and full cast and crew details—submitted in 12 copies. While the ministry sets a target number, past trends show discrepancies in actual grants awarded, with selections influenced by submission volume and other factors, according to a grant committee member.

NEWS

Tobacco use declines 13%

FROM PAGE 14

He was presenting the findings at a workshop, organised by Public Health and Informatics Department of the BMU, on trends in tobacco use in Bangladesh (2009-2022) with projection to 2030.

He said tobacco use was 54 percent among people aged between 25 and 69 in 2009. It declined to 47 percent in 2022.

It indicates a 13 percent relative reduction in tobacco use in 13 years, he said.

During the period, smoking declined from 27 percent to 22 percent, a 19 percent relative reduction.

Smokeless tobacco use declined from 36 percent to 31 percent, a 14 percent relative reduction.

As per a 2009 survey, the age of initiation of smoking was 19.1 years while a 2022 survey showed it is 17.7 years.

"It means people are starting to smoke at a comparatively earlier age lately. We did not fare well here," Prof Mostafa said.

The use of e-cigarettes saw a serious

increase during the period.

In the 2017 survey, 3.6 percent people said they used e-cigarette. That number rose to 14.6 percent in a 2022 survey, he said.

"We have to do something in this regard."

The decline in tobacco use in men was a little prominent compared with women.

Although tobacco use decreased in both urban and rural areas, it dropped more prominently in urban areas, he said.

The use of Biri has decreased compared to cigarettes.

Zaman recommended strengthening the tobacco control programme to accelerate the current decline rate.

Special attention should be given to policies and laws to identify the reason for insufficient decline, he said, while calling for another round of survey soon.

Prof Shafium Nahin Shimul of the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University, however, said the data set is extremely limited, making

it difficult to draw firm conclusions from either the figures or the study's methodology.

While the analysis suggests tobacco consumption has fallen, the National Board of Revenue statistics indicate cigarette sales are on the rise.

"So, we need further detailed survey to get a better picture," he added.

Amendment to the Tobacco Products (Control) Act is in the works with the view to controlling tobacco use, said Sheikh Momena Moni, an additional secretary to the health services division.

People from all over the country need to get engaged in efforts to reduce tobacco use.

Farmers need to be discouraged from cultivating tobacco, she said.

"We have to do much more. Otherwise, it would be difficult to achieve the target," she said.

Mamunur Rashid, joint secretary of the division, Prof Atiqul Islam, chairman of DPHI, and Prof Mujibur Rahman Hawlader, pro vice chancellor of BMU, among others, also spoke at the event.

One candidate per constituency

FROM PAGE 14

Otherwise, the election will not be free and fair."

He said the five parties also agreed that the next election should be conducted under a proportional representation system – an electoral system in which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of total votes cast for each party.

For example, if a party receives 40 percent of the total votes, the PR system would allow it to obtain 40 percent of the seats in parliament.

"We're also of the opinion that the national election should be held after local body polls," Yunus told this correspondent.

Jamaat-e-Islami was not present at yesterday's meeting.

Regarding this, he said, "We had held a meeting with Jamaat earlier and will sit with them again soon."

Yunus said they were planning further discussions with different Islamist parties to finalise their plan for nominating single candidates for each seat in the next national election.

The Islamist leaders at the meeting also demanded the trial of the Awami League as a fascist party.

They further demanded that the Women's Reform Commission formed by the interim government be abolished.



'Enola Holmes 3' begins shooting with original stars

Netflix has confirmed that production is underway for *Enola Holmes 3*, starring Millie Bobby Brown and directed by Philip Barantini. A release date has not yet been announced.

The platform shared a behind-the-scenes photo of Brown and co-star Louis Partridge, captioned, "Your faves are back!!!"

The film also features Himesh Patel, Henry Cavill, Helena Bonham Carter, and Sharon Duncan-Brewster.

According to the film's synopsis, the story follows Enola to Malta, where a complex case entangles her personal and professional life.

The first *Enola Holmes* film debuted in 2020, with a sequel released in 2022.

Recently, Brown also unveiled a wax figure of her detective character modelling a period-style outfit inspired by the films at Madame Tussauds London.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

Exhibition: 'Save the Environment'

Alliance Française de Dhaka presents *Save the Environment*, the 16th solo painting exhibition by acclaimed artist Md Abu Salim.

The exhibition, featuring 18 evocative works, highlights urgent environmental concerns through powerful visual storytelling, inviting art enthusiasts and environmental advocates to reflect on nature's fragility and the need for preservation.

Date: Friday-Tuesday | April 25-May 6

Time: 3-9pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi



Tarua stages anti-war drama 'All Quiet on the Western Front' at Shilpakala

Dhaka-based troupe Tarua brought the harrowing realities of war to the stage with their latest production, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, at the National Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy yesterday, at 7pm.

Directed by Bakar Bakul and adapted for the stage by Runa Kanchan, the play is based on Erich Maria Remarque's seminal anti-war novel. Subsequent performances are scheduled for today at 7pm and Friday at 4pm and 7pm.



No permission needed to arrest FIR accused

FROM PAGE 14

Sikder Mahmudur Razi issued the order and rule following a writ petition challenging the legality of the DMP commissioner's order.

Supreme Court lawyer Md Jasim Uddin filed the writ petition as a public interest litigation, seeking a stay on the order issued by the DMP commissioner's office on April 9.

The order said the officers in charge of the police stations must get prior permission from higher authorities by submitting documents to arrest accused named in FIRs or suspects in the cases related to the anti-discrimination student movement and the subsequent uprising.

Citing the petition, Jasim Uddin told The Daily Star that the DMP commissioner's office order was "illegal" both under the Code of Criminal Procedure and the constitution.

Barrister Ruhul Quddus Kazal appeared for the writ petitioner during the hearing of the petition.

4 indicted in Magura child rape case

FROM PAGE 14

prosecutorial adviser to the home ministry, who was appointed to assist the prosecution, also participated in the proceedings.

Following the hearing, he told reporters, "The court has accepted the application to frame charges against the accused based on the charge sheet, the confessional statement of the prime accused under Section 164, and supporting documents."

According to court sources, Hitu Sheikh has been charged with causing death after rape, Sajib Sheikh and Ratul Sheikh with criminal intimidation, and Jaheda Begum with destroying evidence.

Ehsanul further informed reporters that the judge told the accused they may appoint legal counsel by applying under the provisions of the Prison Code.

When asked by the court whether they admitted to the charges, all four accused denied involvement in the crime.

Kuet withdraws suspension

FROM PAGE 14

Till filing of the report last night, 23 were continuing their hunger strike demanding the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Prof Muhammad Masud.

Another section of students brought out a procession on the campus around 6:30pm to press home their demand.

However, the teachers' association of Kuet said at a press conference yesterday that it would not accept the resignation of the VC solely on the demand of the protest students.

Meanwhile, students of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar, Rajshahi, and Khulna universities held different programmes in solidarity with the Kuet students.

In another development, the University Teachers' Network, a coalition of private and public university teachers, in a statement yesterday expressed solidarity with the Kuet students.

The university had suspended the 37 students over the incident.

[Our correspondents from respective universities contributed to this report.]

Thousands say goodbye to Pope Francis lying in state

AFP, Vatican City

Tens of thousands of mourners began saying their last goodbyes to Pope Francis at St Peter's Basilica yesterday, as the body of the late Argentine pontiff began three days of lying in state.

A long line of pilgrims and tourists stretched across the sprawling St Peter's Square before the doors opened at 11:00 am (0900 GMT), when the public were allowed inside to file past the open coffin.

"I came to say a last goodbye to a great man. He stood for the people," Simonetta Marini, 67, a Roman pensioner, told AFP.

For the next three days, it will rest on a low bier before the Altar of the Confession underneath the soaring dome painted by Michelangelo, before being closed at 8:00 pm (1800 GMT) on Friday evening ahead of Saturday's funeral.

Strike a deal or US will 'walk away'
VP Vance tells Russia, Ukraine

AGENCIES

US Vice President JD Vance warned yesterday that Moscow and Kyiv must strike a deal or Washington will end its efforts to reach a ceasefire.

"We've issued a very explicit proposal to both the Russians and the Ukrainians, and it's time for them to either say yes, or for the United States to walk away from this process," Vance told reporters in India.

Vance spoke as envoys from Washington, Kyiv and European nations gathered for talks in Britain amid a new US push to end Russia's war in Ukraine, reports AFP.

"It's now time, I think, to take, if not the final step, one of the final steps, which is, at a broad level, the party saying we're going to stop the killing, we're going to freeze the territorial lines at some level close to where they are today," Vance added. "Now, of course, that means the Ukrainians and the Russians are both going to have to give up some of the territory they currently own," he added.

Meanwhile, A Russian drone hit a bus carrying workers in the Ukrainian city of Marhanets yesterday, killing 9 people, reports Reuters.



Local residents wait in a park in Istanbul, Turkey, yesterday, following an initial earthquake of 6.2 magnitude at 12:49 pm, which was followed by three others with magnitudes ranging from 4.4 to 4.9. A total of 151 people were hurt and received hospital treatment after leaping from buildings in panic during the tremor but none were in a critical condition, the Istanbul governor's office said.

PHOTO: AFP

Israeli airstrikes hit Gaza school, hospital

20 Palestinians killed; President Abbas calls on Hamas to hand over arms to his authority

REUTERS, Gaza

An Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced families in northern Gaza killed at least 10 people, while another hit a children's hospital, local health authorities said, taking yesterday's death toll to 20.

Medics said the airstrike on the Yaffa School in the Tuffah area of Gaza City set fire to tents and classrooms. There has been no Israeli comment on the school attack.

Some furniture was still in flames several hours after the strike as people sifted through blackened classrooms and the schoolyard in search of their belongings.

"We were sleeping and suddenly something exploded, we started looking and found the whole school on fire, the tents here and there were on fire, everything was on fire," said eyewitness, Um Mohammed Al Hwaiti.

"People were shouting and men were carrying people, charred (people), charred children, and were walking and saying: 'Dear God, dear God, we have no one but you.' What can we say? Dear God, only," she told Reuters.

Medics said at least 10 other people were killed in separate Israeli strikes across the enclave.

Since a January ceasefire collapsed on March 18, Israeli attacks have killed more than 1,600 Palestinians, according to the Gaza health authorities.



Meanwhile, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, in a televised speech yesterday, called on Hamas to cede its responsibility over the Gaza Strip, hand over its arms to the Palestinian Authority and turn itself into a political party.

Yesterday, the Gaza health ministry said an Israeli missile also hit the upper building of the Durra Children's Hospital in Gaza City, damaging the intensive care unit and destroying the solar panel system that feeds the facility with power. No one was killed in the hospital strike.

Gaza's healthcare system is close to collapse due to an Israeli blockade on all supplies to Gaza, including fuel and electricity, since

the beginning of March, when it relaunched military operations.

The health ministry said many Palestinian victims of Israeli military strikes remained trapped under rubble and on the roads, as rescue teams are unable to reach them because of ongoing bombardments.

The attacks have also hit dozens of bulldozers and machinery used to clear roads, remove debris and to carry out rescue operations.

The Israeli military said on Tuesday it had hit 40 "engineering vehicles" that were used for "terrorist actions. Some of those heavy vehicles were parked on the road and others inside the garages of municipalities.

Poverty may worsen: World Bank

FROM PAGE 1
Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank in Dhaka, said the poverty surge is primarily being driven by food inflation and prolonged wage stagnation.

"All research on poverty shows that the poverty rate is inversely related to food inflation," Hussain said. "The higher the food inflation, the higher the poverty rate, because the share of the budget that poor people spend on food is very high."

Hussain said real wages have been declining for over 40 months as nominal wage growth fails to keep pace with soaring prices. "Income has not grown at the same rate as expenditure due to inflation. That also increases the number of people below the poverty line," he said.

Inflation is expected to remain around 10 percent this fiscal year, with a gradual easing projected in the following year.

Three in five households are likely to have faced increased financial stress by depleting their savings, driven largely by deteriorating labour market conditions between 2023 and 2024, the World Bank said. "Vulnerable populations are likely to be disproportionately affected."

in FY2025, down from 4.2 percent last year and 5.8 percent in FY2023. The slowdown has been driven by falling investment, policy uncertainty, high borrowing costs, and political unrest that disrupted activity in the first quarter.

Private sector credit growth hit a 30-year low of 7.3 percent in December 2024, and ADP spending declined 24.1 percent in the first half of the fiscal year. Imports of capital goods fell by 12 percent, reflecting weak investment sentiment.

Despite this, strong remittances and a rebound in garment exports helped narrow the current account deficit to \$1.1 billion, and reserves have stabilised around \$20 billion.

The World Bank projects a gradual recovery, though GDP growth is expected to rebound to 4.9 percent in FY2026, assuming the successful implementation of financial sector reforms, improved domestic revenue mobilisation, and a more stable business environment.

The medium-term outlook hinges on restoring investor confidence, addressing macroeconomic imbalances, and delivering structural

reforms across the banking, fiscal and regulatory landscape.

UNCERTAIN CLIMATE
The World Bank warns that delays in banking and fiscal reforms, coupled with persistent inflation and uncertainty surrounding the upcoming national election, could undermine Bangladesh's economic recovery.

"Higher costs of borrowing, policy uncertainties, and the timing of elections are expected to weigh heavily on investment growth," the World Bank said.

Beyond the economic risks, the report also flagged political tensions as a growing source of concern.

"Safety and security concerns remain and are likely to continue until the restoration of a fully functioning police force," it said.

Bangladesh's export outlook faces fresh risks in FY2026 due to mounting global trade disruptions and rising policy uncertainty, the World Bank said. While the economic impact is expected to be limited in FY2025, as disruptions occurred late in the fiscal year, the fallout is likely to be more pronounced in the following year.

The World Bank projects that Bangladesh's exports and real GDP growth could decline by 1.7 percentage points and 0.5 percentage points, respectively, in FY2026 compared to previous forecasts.

"There is considerable uncertainty around this outlook due to the rapidly evolving status of trade policy discussions," the World Bank said.

Lower fuel import payments, due to falling international energy prices, are expected to provide some cushion to the current account balance. Meanwhile, the Bangladeshi government has expressed its intent to reduce the trade surplus with the United States by boosting imports, a move seen as part of broader trade diplomacy amid tensions over tariffs and reciprocal access.

The Department of Environment is implementing the "Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division" Project. The overall objective of the project is to assess the environmental impact and damage occurred out of Rohingya influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram division.

Project Director of the "Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division" invites eligible applicants to express their interest in providing the services. Applicants are advised to provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services in completed Curriculum Vitae (CV) and proven documents with a cover letter. Request for Application Form with detailed Terms of References (ToR) are available in the website of the Department of Environment (www.doe.gov.bd).

One original and two copies of EoI must be submitted in the Project office on or before 15th May 2025, 02:00 pm in sealed envelope and be clearly marked the position for Expression of Interest.

The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all EoI. Persons who are in service should submit EoI through the proper channel, otherwise EoI will be rejected.

GD-972

Beijing ready to work with Dhaka to advance economic globalisation

FROM PAGE 2

"The Chinese government strongly condemns and resolutely opposes such a move," Wen said while addressing the Government Training Programmes Inauguration Ceremony at the Chinese embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

"History has repeatedly proved that there are no winners in trade or tariff wars. Protectionism is a dead end," he said, stressing the need for a safe and stable international environment.

Referring to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' visit to China last month and his meeting with President Xi Jinping, Wen said the visit marked a new phase of development in China-Bangladesh relations and elevated the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership to an unprecedented height.

"This visit injected new momentum into the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation between the two countries. It has become a broad consensus in Bangladeshi society that China is the most trustworthy and reliable development partner."

Wen said China will accelerate the construction of the Mongla Port Project and Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in

Chittagong, and stands ready to participate in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project.

China will continue to facilitate medical access for Bangladeshi citizens seeking treatment in China, expand scholarship opportunities, and encourage greater engagement of Bangladeshi nationals in business, education, and cultural exchanges in China, he added.

About the training programme, he said as Bangladesh and China celebrates 50 years of diplomatic relations this year, China will organise 23 bilateral seminars and 30 multilateral seminars, trainings for over 500 Bangladeshis.

These seminars will cover areas such as smart governance and information technology, new energy, finance, transportation, agriculture, tourism, and education, he added.

Mirana Mahrulkh, additional secretary and wing chief at the Economic Relations Division and

Mohammed Nore Alam, director general at the East Asia & Pacific Wing of the Foreign Ministry also spoke, among others.

Chief adviser

FROM PAGE 2

statement, also strongly condemned the attack that claimed the lives of 26 people.

"Bangladesh strongly condemns the terror attack in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India, resulting in the tragic loss of innocent lives," it said.

The Government of

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Environment
"Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division" Project (A component of HELP Project)
1st Floor, Room: 202, Poribesh Bhaban New Building
E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.doe.gov.bd

Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) for Selection of Individual Consultants (National)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Ministry/Division | : | Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change |
| 2. | Agency | : | Department of Environment (DoE) |
| 3. | Procuring Entity Name | : | Project Director |
| 4. | Procuring Entity District | : | Dhaka |
| 5. | Expression of Interest for selection of | : | Individual Consultant (National) |
| 6. | EoI Ref No. | : | 22.02.0000.020.14.001.25-10 |
| 7. | Date | : | 23 April 2025 |
| Key Information | | | |
| 8. | Procuring Method | : | Selection of Individual Consultant (SIC) |
| Funding Information | | | |
| 9. | Source of Funds | : | World Bank through DoE |
| 10. | Grant No. | : | E325-BD |
| Particular Information | | | |
| 11. | Project ID | : | P501274 |
| 12. | Project Code | : | 224403000 |
| 13. | Project Name | : | Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division |
| 14. | EoI Closing Date and Time | : | 15 May 2025, 02:00 pm |
| Information for Applicants | | | |
| Package No. | Name of Positions | Number of Positions | Duration |
| HELP/S-01 | Junior Consultant (Procurement) | 1 (One) | 6 months (Intermittently) |
| HELP/S-02 | Junior Consultant (Finance) | 1 (One) | 24 months |
| Procuring Entity Details | | | |
| 15. | Name of Official Inviting EoI | : | Md. Samsuzzaman Sarker |
| 16. | Designation of Official Inviting EoI | : | Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division |
| 17. | Address of Official Inviting EoI | : | Department of Environment 1st Floor, Room: 202, Poribesh Bhaban New Building E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 |
| 18. | Contact details of Official Inviting EoI | : | Phone: 02-222218378, Email: helpdoepd@gmail.com |
| 19. | Place of submission of EoI | : | Project Director, Comprehensive Environmental Impact and Damage Assessment of Rohingya Influx in Cox's Bazar and Bhasanchar of Chattogram Division 1st Floor, Room: 202, Poribesh Bhaban New Building E/16 Agargaon Administrative Area Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 |
| 20. | The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EoI without showing any reason. | : | |

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-signed-
Md. Samsuzzaman Sarker
Project Director
Email: helpdoepd@gmail.com



এসেন্সিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা

ঢাকা-১২০৮।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ইডিসিএল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমগুলি প্রকৃত প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারীদের (সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যবসার সাথে জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলনের ক্ষেত্রে খামে দরপত্র আহবান করছে ৪-

| ক্রমিক নং | দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ | বিবরণ | পরিমাণ |
|-----------|---|--|--|
| ০১ | ইডিসিএল/ড্রাগস/দরপত্র/২০২৫/১৪০ তারিখ: ২৩/০৪/২০২৫ হিঁ | INK Cartridge For Jet Printer (সিলিং মোড়াবেক) | ৩৭ পিস |
| | সিলিউরিটি/আনেটি মানি | দরপত্র সিলিউরেল মুল্য (অনেকব্যবহার) | দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় |
| | ২.৫% | টাকা ৭৫০.০০ প্রতি সেট | ০৭/০৫/২০২৫ হিঁ বেলা ১২-০০ ঘটিকা বেলা ১২-১৫ ঘটিকা |

সকল কার্যদিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে উপরোক্ত কার্যালয় হতে শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র শিল্পিল করা যাবে। উচ্চের্ষ্য যে, যাদের ভ্যাট
রেজিস্ট্রেশন নাই তাদের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র শিল্পিল বিজ্ঞপ্তি করা হবে না।

মহাব্যবস্থাপক, প্রকিউরমেন্ট (চলতি দায়িত্ব)
পক্ষেও ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক।

(কোর্সিং X ৪কলাম)



পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ প্রিলিমি

(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

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www.powergrid.gov.bd

স্মারক নং- ২৭.২১.০০০০, ২১০.১১.০০১, ২৫.১৮.১১

কারিগরি ২২/০৪/২০২৫ হিঁ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পাওয়ার গ্রিড বাংলাদেশ প্রিলিমি দেশব্যাপী বিস্তৃত এর আকায়ি গ্রিড পরিচালন, সংস্কলন ও উন্নয়ন কাজে নিয়োজিত।
পাওয়ার গ্রিড নিয়োগাদার পদের বিবরণে নিয়োজিত পদসমূহ প্রদর্শনের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের স্থানীয় নাগরিকদের নিকট
হতে অনলাইনে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

| ক্রম নং | পদের নাম, বেতন প্রেত ও বেতন ক্ষেত্র | পদ সংখ্যা | বিবরণগত ও অন্যান্য ব্যোগ্যতা |
|------------|--|--------------|---|
| ১. | জুনিয়র সহকারী ব্যবস্থাপক (ইকুড়িন/সাইনেটিটিং) বেতন: ৫৫০-৫৮, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ৫৫,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০২টি | (ক) ইউজিসি কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে একাডেমিক/সাইনেটিটিং প্রোগ্রাম এবং যাংকিং/ অ্যাইচিএস বিষয়ে মাত্রক/বিএ/বিবিএস ডিগ্রী। (খ) প্রেতিং পক্ষত্বতে ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের সিজিপিএ/জিপিএ ৫.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ৩.০০ এবং ৪.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.৫ থাকতে হবে। প্রচলিত পক্ষত্বতে (প্রোগ্রাম/বিভাগ) ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের কমপক্ষে বিজ্ঞায় প্রেসি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনের কোন পর্যায়ে কৃতীয় বিকাগ/প্রোগ্রাম থাকতে হবে। সর্বান্ধের কোন পর্যাকার ফলাফল প্রাপ্তনোয়া হবে না। (গ) কম্পিউটারের কাজে অবশ্যই স্বত্ত্বাত্মক দক্ষতা থাকতে হবে। |
| ২. | জুনিয়র ইসার সহকারী বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র-২৩,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০২টি | (ক) ইউজিসি কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে একাডেমিক/সাইনেটিটিং প্রোগ্রাম এবং যাংকিং/ অ্যাইচিএস বিষয়ে মাত্রক/সম্মান ডিগ্রী। (খ) প্রেতিং পক্ষত্বতে ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের সিজিপিএ/জিপিএ ৫.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.৮-২ এবং ৪.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.২৫ থাকতে হবে। প্রচলিত পক্ষত্বতে (প্রোগ্রাম/বিভাগ) ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের কমপক্ষে বিজ্ঞায় প্রেসি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনের কোন পর্যায়ে কৃতীয় বিকাগ/প্রোগ্রাম থাকতে হবে। সর্বান্ধের কোন পর্যাকার ফলাফল প্রাপ্তনোয়া হবে না। (গ) কম্পিউটারের ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা এবং প্রশ়াই সুপারেক্সের অধিকারী হতে হবে। |
| ৩. | জুনিয়র ব্যক্তিগত সচিব বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র-২৩,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০২টি | (ক) ইউজিসি অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিষয়ে মাত্রক/সম্মান ডিগ্রী। (খ) প্রেতিং পক্ষত্বতে ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের সিজিপিএ/জিপিএ ৫.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.৮-২ এবং ৪.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.২৫ থাকতে হবে। প্রচলিত পক্ষত্বতে (প্রোগ্রাম/বিভাগ) ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের কমপক্ষে বিজ্ঞায় প্রেসি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনের কোন পর্যায়ে কৃতীয় বিকাগ/প্রোগ্রাম থাকতে হবে। সর্বান্ধের কোন পর্যাকার ফলাফল প্রাপ্তনোয়া হবে না। (গ) কম্পিউটারের ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা এবং প্রশ়াই সুপারেক্সের অধিকারী হতে হবে। |
| ৪. | জুনিয়র প্রশাসনিক সহকারী/ জুনিয়র প্রশাসনিক সহকারী কাম ভাড়ার সহকারী বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ২৩,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০২টি | (ক) ইউজিসি অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিষয়ে মাত্রক/সম্মান ডিগ্রী। (খ) প্রেতিং পক্ষত্বতে ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের সিজিপিএ/জিপিএ ৫.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.৮-২ এবং ৪.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.২৫ থাকতে হবে। প্রচলিত পক্ষত্বতে (প্রোগ্রাম/বিভাগ) ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের কমপক্ষে বিজ্ঞায় প্রেসি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনের কোন পর্যায়ে কৃতীয় বিকাগ/প্রোগ্রাম থাকতে হবে। সর্বান্ধের কোন পর্যাকার ফলাফল প্রাপ্তনোয়া হবে না। (গ) কম্পিউটারের ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা এবং প্রশ়াই সুপারেক্সের অধিকারী হতে হবে। |
| ৫. | জুনিয়র নিরাপত্তা পরিদর্শক বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ২৩,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০২টি | (ক) ইউজিসি অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিষয়ে মাত্রক/সম্মান ডিগ্রী। (খ) প্রেতিং পক্ষত্বতে ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের সিজিপিএ/জিপিএ ৫.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.৮-২ এবং ৪.০০ কেলে মুন্তম ২.২৫ থাকতে হবে। প্রচলিত পক্ষত্বতে (প্রোগ্রাম/বিভাগ) ডেকার্জ প্রার্থীদের কমপক্ষে বিজ্ঞায় প্রেসি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। শিক্ষাজীবনের কোন পর্যায়ে কৃতীয় বিকাগ/প্রোগ্রাম থাকতে হবে। সর্বান্ধের কোন পর্যাকার ফলাফল প্রাপ্তনোয়া হবে না। (গ) কম্পিউটারের ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা এবং প্রশ়াই সুপারেক্সের অধিকারী হতে হবে। |
| ৬. | কেয়ার টেক্নিক বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ১৫,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০১টি | (ক) ইউজিসি অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিষয়ে মাত্রক/সম্মান ডিগ্রী। (খ) এস.এস.সিপিসামান ও এস.সি/সম্মান জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.০০ থাকতে হবে। (গ) সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রযোজন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। |
| ৭. | কেশন এ্যাটেনডেন্ট বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ১৫,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০১টি | (ক) এস.এসসি/পার্সিল/সম্মানের পর্যাকার ডেকার্জ। (খ) মুন্তম জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.০০ থাকতে হবে। |
| ৮. | নিরাপত্তা প্রধারী বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ১৫,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০১টি | (ক) এস.এসসি/পার্সিল/সম্মানের পর্যাকার ডেকার্জ। (খ) মুন্তম জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.০০ থাকতে হবে। (গ) প্রার্থীক অবশ্যিক নির্বাচিত নির্বাচন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। |
| ৯. | নিরাপত্তা প্রধারী বেতন: ৫৫-১১, বেতন ক্ষেত্র- ১৫,০০০/- এবং চাকুরী বিষি মতে প্রযোজ্য অন্যান্য ভাত্তা/সুবিধাদি। | ০১টি | (ক) এস.এসসি/পার্সিল/সম্মানের পর্যাকার ডেকার্জ। (খ) মুন্তম জিপিএ ৫.০০ এর মধ্যে ২.০০ থাকতে হবে। (গ) প্রার্থীক অবশ্যিক নির্বাচিত নির্বাচন করার প্রয়োজন নেই। |
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An urgent call to action

Do not neglect malnutrition among children, who are our future

Amid continued focus on economic crises, dollar shortages, and political developments, one topic that perhaps impacts our long-term future the most—the nutrition level of our children—hardly comes into discussion. Children, especially those under five years of age, have no voice in the public realm, whether in politics, policy planning, or in our parliament. As a result, a crisis of nutrition among children is quietly in the making.

Although there has been some improvement in this regard over the last decade, experts are worried that, given the current prevalence of stunting and wasting among children under five, Bangladesh may not meet the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) targets by 2030. Besides, statistics and percentages often hide the real picture. Take, for example, the stunting rate among children under five, which came down from 41 percent in 2011 to 21 percent in 2022—it does not really convey the reality of the millions who are still stunted. When these children become adults, the deprivation of proper nutrition during their most crucial development years is likely to haunt them for the rest of their lives. According to experts, 80 percent of brain development occurs between birth and three years of age. As such, even if an adult increases their nutrition intake, they will not be able to reverse the harm done from lack of nutrition in the early years.

One of the main causes of malnutrition among children under five is deprivation from breast milk. Sadly, in Bangladesh, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding has come down from 65 percent in 2018 to 55 percent, according to the most recent data. Reasons include inadequate campaigns to raise awareness on the importance of breastfeeding, an increase in caesarean deliveries, aggressive marketing by powder milk suppliers, an increase in the number of working mothers, and lack of space for nursing at workplaces. Child marriage, which remains quite high in Bangladesh, can also lead to malnutrition among mothers and children under five, according to research.

Ironically, we are not just depriving our children of proper nutrition; we have allowed toxins to seep into our food chain through excessive use of plastics, chemical fertilisers, and pesticides, harming their health and nutrition in the long run. Therefore, we must not only increase budget and manpower—especially at the grassroots—for nutrition programmes and raise awareness about breastfeeding and antenatal care. Child marriage must also be stopped, along with the use of harmful chemicals and plastics that toxify our food chain. It is time for an urgent call to action.

A tragic waste of youthful energy

Clashes between students of Dhaka, City colleges raise concerns

In what is becoming a tedious display of ego clashes and false heroics, students of Dhaka College and Dhaka City College have again turned the streets around their campuses into battlegrounds, leaving the general public to suffer the consequences. Given how routine such conflicts involving the two colleges have become, this is no longer just about who or what started it off; any excuse seems enough to unleash violence. On Tuesday, it was the allegation of a Dhaka College student being assaulted the previous day, leading to an attack on the City College premises as well as hours of chase and counterchase as police struggled to contain the situation. Many, including police officials, were injured. It's painful to see this meaningless cycle of violence among students who are supposed to lead the nation one day.

According to a report, this is the fifth time that students of these colleges clashed in the last four months. City College students were also involved in a separate clash with their peers from Ideal College earlier this year. As police and witnesses have noted, often trivial matters ignite clashes, leading to repeated disruptions, injuries, and property damage. The surrounding areas, dense with markets and educational institutions, bear the brunt of these outbursts. For commuters and small businesses, every such episode means lost time, lost income, and a growing sense of insecurity. For the students involved, it is a tragic waste of youthful energy, and it has a damaging effect on all other students as well.

Equally alarmingly, this tendency for violent outbursts seems to be increasing in the country. Only days ago, a third-year student of Primeasia University was stabbed to death in broad daylight over a petty argument. The ease with which young people often resort to violence—even over minor personal slights—suggests a deeper malaise caused by decades of authoritarian and undemocratic practices, whose effects continue even after the uprising. There is a possibility that this culture of impulsive aggression could harden into a long-term norm if we do not act urgently.

It is, therefore, not enough to blame the police for the failure to prevent vandalism at City College, as its authorities did. This vandalism or violence is not just a law enforcement problem; it goes much deeper, and all must do their part to resolve it. Dhaka College and City College administrations must work closely with law enforcement to impose strict disciplinary measures, enhance monitoring on and around campuses, and ensure swift punishment for any acts of violence. The role of social media groups in fuelling tensions must also be addressed. We urge the interim government and political parties—whom feuding students often draw their strength from—to treat this issue with the seriousness it deserves.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Installation of Pope Benedict XVI

On this day in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), successor to John Paul II, formally assumed his position as the new leader of the Roman Catholic Church during a mass in St Peter's Square in Vatican City.

EDITORIAL

Rana Plaza: 12 years of grief, courage, and unkept promises



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TASLIMA AKHTER

It's been nearly 12 years, but the memories still refuse to fade.

Back then, the place was sealed off with tin walls and barbed wire. Inside that enclosure lay what could only be called a graveyard—where human remains were mixed with dust, brick chips, and scraps of concrete. If you dug even a little, you might've found a tooth, a bone, or even a skull. Just the thought still sends shivers down the spine.

The ground was uneven, with small mounds and dips. Pieces of torn fabric in red, blue, and violet were scattered everywhere, silent witnesses to the shattered bodies they once clothed. Threads lay tangled with buttons, blood-stained clothes, and foreign labels bearing unfamiliar names. Seen from above, it looked like a land struck by a brutal storm. But this wasn't caused by nature. This was the wreckage left behind by April 24, 2013.

These workers were not just statistics. They were citizens of this country. They were daughters, sons, mothers, and fathers. They were the lifeblood of a national economy, part of a 40-lakh-strong workforce. How can we, as a country, turn away from them?

That day, at Rana Plaza, more than a thousand lives were crushed beneath cement, machines, and metal. It wasn't a natural calamity. It wasn't an accident or divine punishment. No outside enemy attacked. The real storm that hit Rana Plaza was made with human hands—by neglect, by greed, and by the failure of those who should have protected lives. It was a massacre, silent, cold, and structural.

April 24 is a date that cannot be swept under the rug. No matter how many years pass, its impact will linger. On that morning in Savar, just



On April 24, 2013, the name Rana Plaza became synonymous with both tragedy and awakening.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

21 kilometres from central Dhaka, more than 1,100 workers lost their lives when the nine-storey Rana Plaza building collapsed. At least 162 are still missing, according to research by Bangladesh Garment Sramik Samhati.

The workers arrived early, in groups, as they had every day. They entered the building that housed five factories—New Wave Bottoms Ltd, Phantom Apparels, Phantom Tac, Ether Tex, and New Wave Style—spread across six floors (third to eighth). The lower floors held shops and banks; the top floor was empty. Bizarrely, huge generators were installed on the third and eighth floors, not on the ground, raising the risks. From the outside, the blue glass facade looked polished. Inside, it was a death trap.

The land that the building had been constructed on had been illegally grabbed, including the property owned by locals like Rabindranath Sarkar. Sohel Rana, owner of Rana Plaza, and his family had a reputation for grabbing land. People were afraid to speak out. "If you say anything about him, there will be trouble," they would whisper. "Even the local MP

deafening roar, the building came crashing down. Within moments, everything was reduced to rubble. Survivors described it as being buried alive inside a grave. Some cried out for help. Others whispered prayers. Many fainted from shock or exhaustion.

In the dim light of their mobile phones, trapped workers saw horrifying sights. Bodies crushed under machines and concrete. Blood dripping down the walls. One man's legs hung from beneath a staircase. A woman was impaled by an iron rod. There were dismembered limbs, lifeless eyes, broken dreams. Some survivors clung to one another, huddled in the darkness, their only wish to live. Religion, gender, age—none of it mattered. People reached for comfort wherever they could find it.

Jasmine, a survivor pulled from the rubble two days later, shared a story that still resonates with me. "I was trapped and had lost hope," she said. "An unknown man held me close to his chest. As a woman, leaning on a stranger like that would normally be unthinkable. But in that moment,

nothing mattered more than the hope of living—of seeing my daughter again. I'll pray for that brother all my life. Because of him, I'm alive."

The horrors didn't stop there. Blood, filth, intestines, and death surrounded them. Some drank their own sweat, others resorted to drinking urine to survive. One woman named Rojina cut down her own hand to release herself out of desperation. People recited their final prayers. Some lost their minds. They pulled hair, scratched, attacked each other—anything to stay sane or alive. Trapped survivors held on for as long as 17 agonising days.

The official record says the Rana Plaza collapse caused 1,136 deaths. But when you include those who are missing and DNA evidence, the number exceeds 1,175. Still, for the authorities, factory owners, and international buyers, these lost lives seem to be just a number—a number that's too easy to forget.

But these workers were not just statistics. They were citizens of this country. They were daughters, sons, mothers, and fathers. They were the lifeblood of a national economy, part of a 40-lakh-strong workforce. How can we, as a country, turn away from them?

The world woke up that day. The name Rana Plaza became synonymous with both tragedy and awakening. Since then, the ready-made garment (RMG) sector has seen massive changes: green factories, new markets, ambitions of becoming a hundred-billion-dollar industry. But the question remains: how much of this progress has reached the workers?

Twelve years have passed. And yet, there has been no real justice. Sohel Rana and others responsible have not faced meaningful consequences. The compensation laws haven't changed. Survivors still struggle to live on a minimum wage of Tk 12,500. The site remains unpreserved. There is no national memorial at the site of Rana Plaza, nor other sites of industrial disasters such as Tazreen Fashion and Hashem Foods.

But their fight should not be forgotten. In the new Bangladesh built by its people, there must be justice—not only for Rana Plaza but also for Tazreen and Hashem Foods fires. We must protect the stories, the sites, the sacrifices.

Let April 24 be a day not just of mourning, but of renewal. Let us remember the dead—and the fight for the living. That must be our promise.

Our propensity for violence and the elements that foster it



Abir Hossain is a journalist. He can be reached at abir.hossain@thethedailystar.net.

ABIR HOSSAIN

On April 20, 2025, battery-run rickshaw drivers took to the streets to protest against the decision to ban their vehicles in Dhaka's Gulshan and Banani areas. Soon after, tensions flared with clashes breaking out between battery-run rickshaw drivers and the locals, pedal rickshaw pullers, and ride-sharing motorcyclists. Based on the reports on the alteration, it appears that this entire affair has devolved into a "he said, she said" situation, with all parties claiming that they did not provoke the clashes—they just acted to defend themselves. The following day, protests escalated again. This time, there were reports of the protesting drivers threatening pedestrians who attempted to take photos of or record the incident unfolding. Additionally, the scuffle with pedal rickshaw pullers intensified as the protesters threw two pedal rickshaws off the bridge into Gulshan Lake.

Earlier this month, when demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza poured out across the country, the movement garnered attention for all the wrong reasons. With the rallies fizzing into chaos, it was the looting and vandalism that captured most of our attention. Not only did these abhorrent acts divert attention away from the very issue the protests were

for, but they also undermined the collective effort that the rest of the nation displayed.

A month before that, records of two young women being attacked in Lalmoni by an enraged mob pervaded much of our discourse and psyche. What followed was a barrage of more reports of violence against women. In between and beyond, plenty more has happened. One might claim that too much has happened. Yet, it would be wrong to claim that these acts have only taken place in the past several months since the interim government took charge. It did, however, feel like they happened more frequently. Moreover, it would be dismissive to claim that a collective fear did not grip the nation. After all, we are a nation in transition. Any sign of instability threatens grave consequences.

However, as we look back and scrutinise at all such incidents that took place over the years, an underlying pattern emerges. That pattern not only binds the many events that have plagued the conscious collective, but in many ways is a reflection of it. What I am alluding to is our inclination for violence. Many traits may characterise this irrational phenomenon. It may be described as being delirious, damning, and downright despicable. But if all we do is condemn these attacks, without

fully fleshing out what compels them to transpire in the first place, then the thoughts we spare for the victims are performative at best, and dismissive of their struggles at worst.

What triggers violence cannot just be explained by the rule of the former regime and its subsequent overthrow. To make sense of it, we must turn to the values, or rather the lack of them, that the country has survived with for far too long. Our core values, the four principles of our constitution, haven't been used to create organisations that promote them. Without institutions built on the foundation of state values, how can we expect to undertake a long-term project of nation-building? On what basis is it meant to be sustained and directed? What core beliefs are supposed to resonate across generations?

Despite our history, all these questions are devoid of a solid answer. We have been left to fend for ourselves based on the whims of our politicians, most of whom have rarely, if ever, attempted to rectify or even address it. Rather, they have continued to perpetuate a political culture of control and dominance and leveraged it to accumulate personal wealth. The cycle has repeated far too many times because the system here has been rife with corruption for decades. It has cultivated a culture of impunity, not accountability, essentially warping the law and forcing functionality to completely crumble. Inevitably, the impulse that one might get away with their wrongdoing trickles down, thus forging the culture of impunity as the norm.

Nonetheless, the malfunctioning of the system doesn't exist in isolation. Its roots, which are a result of a lack

of a value system, are entrenched deep in our education system as well. Without a set of values to dictate the curriculum, what core principles are meant to be instilled in and embodied by young minds? We cannot deny that these principles can at least act as references to mould their thinking around. Additionally, what is indicative of the state of our educational institutions is the fact that elected politicians themselves tend not to send their children to local government schools, opting instead for private English medium schools or schools abroad.

What, then, does that say about the state of our educational institutions? It screams of the giant rift between politicians and their constituencies. In the process, it also lays bare the scarcity that the rest of the nation has to make do with. The dynamic this fosters is one of resentment, enforcing the idea that not only is there no one looking out for them, but also that these institutions are doing nothing to bolster their interests. As a result, people take matters into their own hands and take drastic, often poorly thought out measures that prove to be counterproductive.

With crumbling institutions built on fragile principles, power has, time and again, been co-opted. Is it any wonder, then, that Bangladesh has been marred by mindless violence for as long as most of us can remember? The sources of people's apathy and collective restlessness can be attributed to a system that has continued to fail them. A withering system may amplify and echo their troubles. However, it most certainly underpins that while values may be abstract, their weight is tangible.

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THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Installation of Pope Benedict XVI

On this day in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), successor to John Paul II, formally assumed his position as the new leader of the Roman Catholic Church during a mass in St Peter's Square in Vatican City.

CHALLENGES IN BUILDING A REFORMED POLITICAL ORDER

Pathways to a new political order

THIS IS THE SECOND PART OF A TWO-PART ANALYSIS



Prof Rehman Sobhan, one of Bangladesh's most distinguished economists and a celebrated public intellectual, is founder and chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

REHMAN SOBHAN

Between 1991, when democracy was restored in Bangladesh, and 2009, the Awami League and the BNP were each twice elected to office, through free, fair and inclusive elections. Unfortunately, the tenures of either party did not conspicuously serve to promote the practice of democracy and appeared to be more preoccupied with consolidating power and perpetuating a winner-take-all political culture.

In the backdrop of a bipartisan political system, the BNP has emerged as the largest political party in the country. In the absence of the AL in the political arena, in the aftermath of the post-July-August uprising, the prospect of the BNP forming the next government through a free and fair election appears propitious. Public attention is naturally focused on whether they will return as improved practitioners of democracy. In the aftermath of the uprising, remarks made by top BNP leaders on the state, governance, and practice of democracy project a renovated image of the party and has been widely appreciated by the public. However, the spectacle of the party's field-level workers moving to fill the power vacuum created by the exit of the AL from the field and appropriating the vacated opportunities for rent-seeking have aroused some concern that old habits die hard. Punitive actions by the BNP leadership against malfeasant party members do not appear to have done enough to discourage such predatory actions. Popular discontent against such misbehaviour suggests that the BNP leadership needs to act more decisively to discipline their party cadres if they are to persuade the public of their reformed identity.

In contrast, the forces which came together to overthrow the AL regime represent a fresh presence in politics and have generated their own political dynamic where a younger generation has begun to assert itself. The students have earned respect and legitimacy through their vanguard role in the July-August uprising, particularly among the younger people. They have been justifiably concerned that the old political order should not be perpetuated and demand that substantive reforms take place to ensure that a new, more just, and equitable order emerges. They have welcomed the reforms initiated by Prof Yunus but aspire to be more actively engaged in carrying forward the reform process. To do so, a segment of the students have launched a political party, the National Citizen Party (NCP). This is a welcome step.

Bangladesh has long needed a third party to challenge the duopoly exercised by the AL and the BNP for the last four decades, which has tribalised national politics. Prof Yunus made a rather mistimed and misconceived effort to establish such a third party in 2007. Its early demise did not rule out the need for a political force which would challenge the hegemony of the two parties. Jamaat is indeed another such force of political consequence. But its politics so far have been targeted to a specific ideological rather than a national constituency. It may now have wider aspirations to reach out to a broader spectrum of voters and promises to be a significant force in the forthcoming national election.

The emergence of the NCP as a prospective challenger to our dynastic politics has the attraction of novelty and the virtue of not carrying any baggage from past involvements

Failure to effectively manage the economy and the law and order situation could erode the credibility and authority of the IG, which remains crucial to ensure a transition to a free and fair election with a peaceful transfer of power to an elected government.

in governance. To capitalise on such assets, the NCP would be advised to project itself as the party of the future, rather than re-fighting historical battles. Some of the student leaders have so far invested much rhetoric over rewriting the constitution and proclaiming a second (?) republic. As it transpires, their five-point declaration on displacing the four fundamental principles that have underwritten the Bangladesh constitution appears to be a largely semantic exercise, which says nothing that is not already inherent to the original fundamental principles of the constitution. Such provisions as "pluralism" are integral to the ideas of democracy and secularism. The provision of "equality" and "social justice" are essential components of the idea of socialism. Such a move to engage in constitutional dialectics appears to be driven

more by a desire to re-interpret history than to redefine the fundamental values guiding the national mission.

The preoccupation of the students in engaging in such a historical discourse has left limited opportunity for them to spell out how they aspire to create a society committed to eradicate *boishomoy* or inequality. It has also distracted them from what should have been their primary responsibility in the post-August 5 period, providing backup to the Yunus-led interim government (IG) in restoring stability to the ravaged socio-economic landscape of Bangladesh. They could have, through organising students groups, served as a reinforcement to the weakened law enforcement agencies. They could have shown an active commitment towards challenging *boishomoy* by drawing attention to the problems of vulnerable groups, and could have been more proactive in protecting such groups against acts of oppression and exploitation. Such initiatives would have given the students both visibility and credibility as a new force committed to change—not just through words but actions. Such a hands-on role in civic activism would have helped to define their political identity and widened their support base beyond their student constituency.

One of the enduring messages of politics is to fight the right war at the right time. As a consequence of their incapacity over the last several months to project a more clearly

transparent, creating an example that other political parties can follow.

REFORMS VERSUS ELECTIONS

Yunus is himself a strong believer in the need for reforms, but his promise to hold free and fair elections remains his most tangible commitment to the people of Bangladesh since it remains his most realisable objective. He has indicated that elections may take place between December 2025 and June 2026. This target is still to be firm and a roadmap clearly laid out to take the country towards elections. But there appear to be pitfalls ahead which could complicate the design of a clear guidepost.

Yunus sensibly argues that holding free and fair elections may serve little purpose if the inherited state of political malgovernance is perpetuated. Such a position, which is possibly widely shared, particularly among the students, indicates a lack of confidence in the credibility of the promises made by various political parties, but more specifically the BNP, that they are committed to structural reforms.

Yunus and the students demand substantive institutional reforms, which can bring about real change. To this end, he has set up a number of commissions populated by well-known and respected intellectuals and retired bureaucrats to recommend institutional reforms in such areas as the constitution, judiciary, public administration, police, an anti-corruption commission, an election commission, media, women's affairs, local government, health, and a task force as well as a White Paper on the economy. Many commendable reform proposals have emanated from these bodies. Surprisingly, the students/youth have been underrepresented in these commissions. Nor has there been adequate representation of women and religious or ethnic minority groups in the commissions.

It is one thing to write up reforms

options for implementing the reforms whether by executive order of the IG, an elected constitutional assembly, or to be left to an elected parliament. This complex set of governance challenges are also spelt out in synoptic form in the spreadsheet. As anyone who has conducted such US-style examinations knows, such a process may not be able to capture the nuances and complexities which underlie each question. Nor does the spreadsheet provide scope for discussing the process through which each reform will need to be enacted and eventually

(ICT) will be able to convict and sentence a significant number of AL leaders, apart from SH, through a credible judicial process remains to be seen. Many of these AL leaders, whether as ministers or MPs, may also be expected to be held accountable for various acts of corruption. This would also need to be done through a judicial process which may determine their eligibility for contesting elections.

Moving from jail cells and remand to the courtroom and passing sentence in Bangladesh is a time-consuming process if it is to be done within the rule of law. So AL's capacity to eventually contest elections remains a grey area. If such issues are resolved in time and the AL is permitted to contest, with the right to campaign on the streets for their nominated candidates, take out processions, and organise public meetings, this is likely to introduce a highly incendiary element into the electoral campaign.

Moves by the IG, under pressure from the NCP and their allies, to ban the AL or keep them out of the elections is likely to be open to contestation, both legally and politically, within the country. Nor may it find favour at the international level, particularly within the UN system. The UN has called for an inclusive election. India, in particular, is likely to make an inclusive election into an issue of both bilateral and international concern. It should be kept in mind that the exclusion of a major party such as the BNP from contesting the national elections of 2014 and 2024 and the fraudulence of the 2018 election put the legitimacy of the AL-led regime at the national and global levels under challenge throughout the last decade. The exclusion of a major political party such as the AL, however discredited it may be, is hardly likely to keep the forthcoming elections immune from challenge.

Prof Yunus recently said that the next election in Bangladesh would be the most free and fair. In this context, we can recall that in 1991, the Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed caretaker government, of which I was privileged to be a member, received much applause both at home and abroad for holding a free, fair, peaceful, and fully inclusive election. In that election, the ousted military dictator HM Ershad's Jatiya Party won 35 seats in parliament. Ershad himself won in five constituencies while he was under house arrest in Gulshan. A veteran Indian journalist, Nikhil Chakravarty, editor of the weekly *Mainstream*, who was a member of a team of election observers, termed the Shahabuddin election as the freest and fairest election he had witnessed in his lifetime.

The pathway to national elections, whether in December 2025 or in 2026, is not likely to be so smooth. Whenever the election campaign hits the streets, we will get a sense of how far the attempt by the IG to build a consensus to ensure a more peaceful political process has built up any traction. The contested social and political landscape is already manifesting itself through the growing visibility of attempts by extremist forces to use the more congenial environment provided by the IG to more openly express themselves. This has created an increasing sense of insecurity for women in public spaces and an enhanced sense of vulnerability for indigenous and religious minorities. Threats of violence voiced by extremist groups and expatriate influencers using social media indicate that the freedom to practise a particular brand of politics or voice uncomfortable opinions can no longer be taken for granted. If such acts of violence are to remain a relevant factor in the practice of democracy, even under the Yunus-led government, the emergence of a reformed democratic order based on public reasoning is going to remain elusive.

In this fast-evolving political environment, the IG may find that its most challenging agenda remains to prevent a further deterioration in the condition of the economy and to bring about some visible improvements within their tenure. While some improvements in the economy have been registered under the IG, the recent decision by the Trump administration to expose Bangladesh's principal exports to a regime of high tariffs has added a further element of uncertainty for the IG's management of the economy. The law and order situation remains a matter of continuing concern. Failure to effectively manage the economy and the law and order situation could erode the credibility and authority of the IG, which remains crucial to ensure a transition to a free and fair election with a peaceful transfer of power to an elected government.

Fortunately, prospects for change are not without hope. Bangladesh is today led by Muhammad Yunus, a universally respected person of unquestioned integrity. Attempts across the border to paint him as an intolerant fundamentalist with a hunger for power lack credibility and hence appear tendentious in intent. His presence as the head of the IG has provided the country with a rare moment where governance and policy decisions are largely made not for personal benefits, but for the greater good. Some of these decisions may be unwise, governance may be deficient in some areas, but the commitment of the regime remains sincere. If such a regime cannot lead the way towards substantive change, then Bangladesh may indeed face another era of disappointment and discontent.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

articulated vision for the future, the student movement has lost some of its lustre. The NCP's capacity to reach out to the mass of students who participated in the July-August uprising is eroding as various sections of the student's movement have remained reluctant to follow them into the NCP. It should be recognised that students are not a homogenous class with shared political views. Their immediate goal is to study, pass exams, and enter the job market, so political engagement remains a passing commitment.

To retain its student base and broaden its outreach, the NCP needs to recapture the dynamism of the July-August movement. To do this, they need to establish their political autonomy and project their promise of delivering a fresh agenda before the people. In practice, the NCP has already unnecessarily engaged themselves in the same historical dialectics which frustrated the emergence of a more workable two-party democratic system.

The NCP is already politically identifying itself on such issues as the urgency of elections (not high) and antagonism towards India, where its position is closer to the JI. The emerging political contradiction today pits the NCP and the JI against the BNP, which daily demands an early election, which it expects to win comfortably in the absence of AL as a major challenge. In contrast, the NCP needs more time to build their party, so they argue that reforms should be initiated and implemented before elections are convened, a position supported by the JI but strongly resisted by the BNP, who views this position as a delaying tactic for elections.

As the NCP moves ahead to prepare for elections, whenever they may be, it is facing up to one of the realities of Bangladeshi politics which have sadly not been resolved by any of the reform commissions. It needs to build up a sizeable war chest to contest elections. The party should, however, aim to build an election fund for itself that is above board and

on paper and quite another to secure political consensus on reforms as well as to operationalise them. The IG has constituted a so-called Consensus Commission, made up of the chairs of the six commissions, headed by Yunus, and coordinated by the chair of the Commission on Constitutional Reforms, which has been empowered to draw up a concise agenda of reforms distilled from the reports of the various commissions. This agenda is to then be presented to and discussed with the political parties to establish a consensus behind the reforms.

Such a route to reform appears unusual because it does not involve either Yunus or his interim government in participating in or guiding the political task of consensus-building. As a result, the reform agenda is not identified with Yunus or his government and is the outcome of the diverse views of six different groups of experts who have themselves not been mandated to establish coherence in their particular vision for reform.

It is the Consensus Commission which has now been invested by Yunus with the political challenge of building consensual support for the reforms among a heterogeneous group of politicians with widely disparate electoral support and political agendas.

The initial modus operandi of the Consensus Commission has yielded a spreadsheet which puts together their proposed reform agenda in a synoptic form of 167 itemised questions on specific reforms, which are expected to be answered by each party through a quiz format limited to responses through tick-marking one of three possible options: "agree," "disagree," or "partially disagree." There is also a box attached to each question for parties to attach comments, if any, relating to the proposed reform.

Beyond indicating their preferences on each reform proposal, the political parties are also expected to tick-mark their preferred

Nor is it clear as to how the IG will relate to the consensus-building of the commission since Yunus and the IG are currently the only available institutional body with the power to move towards enacting reforms based on the evaluation of the questionnaire and consultation with the political parties.

While some reforms, classified as "low-hanging fruits," can be picked for immediate implementation by the IG, the process of actually operationalising even these reforms to a point where they yield results on the ground is likely to take time. Reforms, if they are to be carried out, will thus largely depend on the commitment and political perspective of whichever party or coalition wins the forthcoming elections and their capacity to implement the reforms. In such an undefined universe for enacting and implementing reforms by the Yunus government, the debate over reforms versus elections is somewhat theoretical and reflects contesting political strategies rather than policy differences.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Within this still-evolving scenario, the elephant in the room remains the Awami League. The NCP wants to ban the AL. The BNP rather ambiguously argues that AL's fate should be decided by the people or the courts, whatever this means. The BNP is inhibited from taking a categorical position on this issue at this time. It would ideally like to claim that it fought a freely contested election fairly defeating all comers, particularly the AL. The party reckons a banned AL would remain a permanent source of agitation on the streets, better positioned to challenge a victorious BNP government, more so than an electoral defeated party. However, the path towards drawing the AL into the electoral arena, with its leadership in exile and other leaders and activists largely in hiding or incarcerated, remains uncertain.

How far the International Crimes Tribunal

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

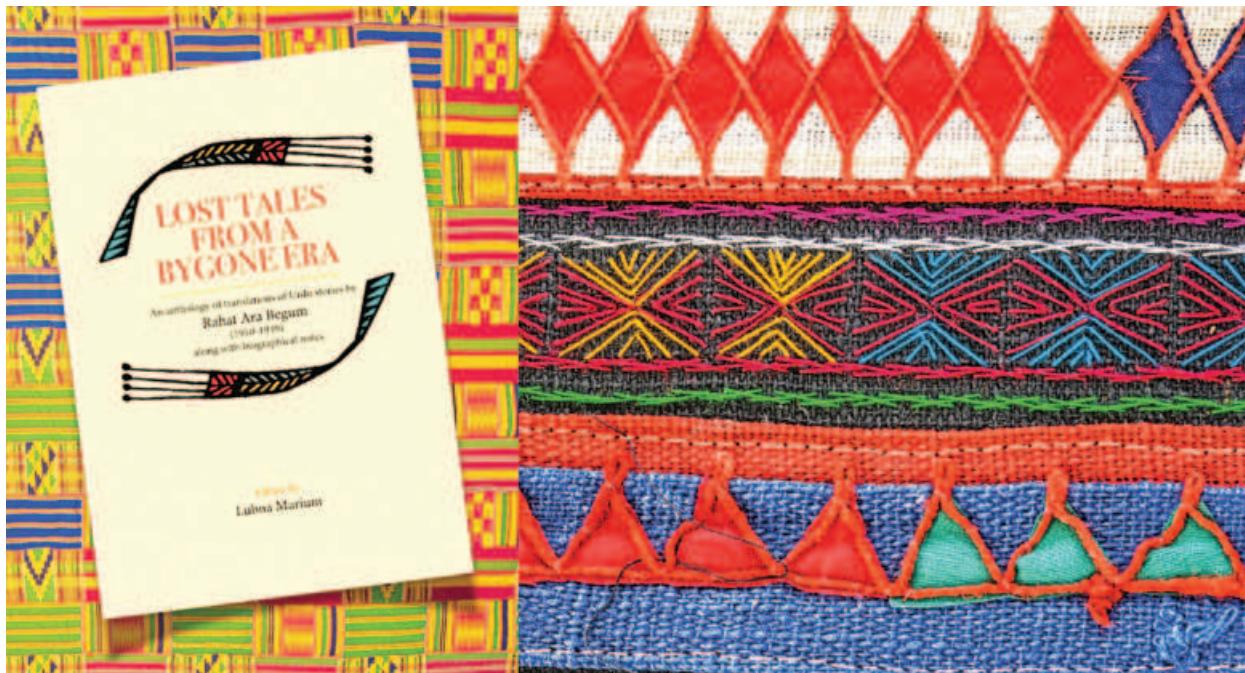
A priceless fictional HEIRLOOM

Review of 'Lost Tales from a Bygone Era: An Anthology of Translation of Urdu Stories by Rahat Ara Begum (1910-1949), Along With Biographical Notes' (Nymphaea, 2024), edited by Lubna Marium

FAKRUL ALAM

There are any number of ways one can approach Rahat Ara Begum's collection of short stories, *Lost Tales from a Bygone Era: An Anthology of Translation of Urdu Stories*, assembled, contextualised and published in this book by her loving grandchildren and their siblings. One can view their work as a recovery of not only a female ancestor's works; one can also feel in reading it their delight in coming across her considerable fictional talent and preserving it for posterity. The realisation that their grandmother had used the short story form with considerable skill and sensitivity to depict the lives of women and their loved ones of "a bygone era" is something her descendants can justifiably take pride in.

Another way of looking at the stories anthologised in the volume is to stress their artistry, for Rahat Ara's ability to bring us close to diverse aspects of men-women relationships in the pre-partition era fictionally is an achievement that can



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

lives in her era and what skills and techniques did she deploy in her writing to portray her characters and delve into their minds and the intricacies of their relationships?

Finally, a point that can be dealt with relates to the genesis of the book. How did the "lost tales" come into public view seven decades or so after they were written and after the writer herself had passed away?

I am reminded a bit by the last of these questions of A. S. Byatt's 1990 Booker-prize winning *Possession* (Random House), which at least in part depicts the excitement and thrills experienced by the fictional descendants of the woman poet at the center of the novel when they discover her literary "remains".

in no way be underestimated. Indeed, when one thinks of the way most Muslim upper-class women were made to spend their lives in the innermost parts of houses and cope with all sorts of restrictions placed on their movements routinely then, her coverage of these areas and of their occupants artistically in her short stories featuring them appears even more admirable.

A third way of approaching these works, however, is to not be influenced solely by considerations dependent on cultural and social history to arrive at the real estimate of Rahat Ara's writing skills. In other words, one can try to assess her writerly abilities: how good was she as a chronicler of women's

From the prefatory material of *Lost Tales from a Bygone Era* we learn that the stories were originally written in Urdu and published either in Kolkata or in Lahore between 1939 and 1948. We also gather from the introduction the collective excitement that spurred the grandchildren on to search for her works in libraries in Lahore, Hyderabad and Kolkata as well as the University of Dhaka. As Lubna Marium, the editor of the volume, points out in her Introduction: their grandmother's work and Rahat Ara herself had been almost "erased from public memory". This was something that drove her and her sister Naila Khan, "the Project Coordinator", to "retrieve Rahat's publications and reprint them in the original or in translations." And it was thus that they managed to get the stories translated by Neeman Sobhan, Rukshana Rahim Choudhury, and Aamer Hossein. Collectively, they as well as the other grandchildren and great grandchildren had felt that it was "certainly time to bring out into the open and celebrate her unusual but creative life".

To turn now to the nine stories of *Lost Tales from a Bygone Era*, six of them deal with Muslim characters and three with Hindu ones. In other

words, Rahat's focus extends across religious boundaries, something surely remarkable in pre-partition Bengal. Spatially, too, there is variety, for we have stories set in villages as well as cities. The social standing of the characters, moreover, reveal the range of her interests, for they include people coping with poverty on the one hand, and financially well-off people, or even aristocratic ones, on the other. But almost all the stories deal with situations arising from love or desire, and the barriers in the way of lovers preventing them from uniting with their loved ones, or the hurdles that have to be crossed to live happily. As in life, Rahat depicts tales with endings depicting union and fulfillment in addition to ones that have tragic or disturbing outcomes. Not surprisingly for a woman writer of that period, Rahat depicts the vulnerability of women in quite a few of these stories, and the stereotypes about female duties and conduct and the boundaries they are confronted with.

Only on a few occasions does Rahat signpost a moral from the conflicting situations she portrays in most of her stories. A moral that can be considered representative of her position on love and marriage is what we come

across in the following lines from "The Confession": "Love and trust are the only two things that can transform an individual's life into paradise." Not unsurprisingly perhaps for a woman writer of her time, Rahat also has a point to make implicitly in some of the stories that is used almost like a refrain in "The Young Student": "A man can love many women at the same time. His heart probably has compartments where he has to keep the love of many women. But a woman loves only once in her lifetime." And implicit in quite a few of the stories is the one encapsulated in the title of the story: "Azadi" or "Freedom": women would like to come out of confinement if they could do so. But the story ends by showing how a predatory man attempts to abuse her for daring to do such a thing, although her husband will continue to believe in her!

On the whole, Rahat Ara prefers to show and not tell. Thus readers will more often than not have to draw the moral or the point being made in a story through the thrust of the narrative and on their own. This never poses a problem to the reader though since her storytelling method is simple and the pace of the narratives gentle. Almost always, the reader is carried along by the plot and assisted by the narrative techniques she uses. The events depicted seem natural and the setting is portrayed economically. Because the translations are very readable and the book neatly produced, readers will surely be able to go through the nine stories on their own easily whenever they want to.

One can only hope that more such efforts will be made by Rahat Ara's descendants to rediscover other manuscripts she has left behind in addition to publishing some of the other collections of stories they already have in their possession. Present and future readers can then relive the past and come across the stories of people whose memories may have dimmed but whose lives still can be revived fictionally for pleasure as well as for guidance, and for coming to know more about our past social and cultural history.

Fakrul Alam has retired as Professor of English from the University of Dhaka and is now Adjunct Faculty and Adviser, Department of English at East West University.

BOOK REVIEW: COLLECTION

Reading Begum Rokeya, again and always

Review of 'Spider-Mother: The Fiction and Politics of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain' (Warbler Press Annotated Edition, 2024) edited by Ben Baer and Smaran Dayal

MAHMUDA EMDAD

Begum Rokeya was once described as a "Spider Mother" (makar-mata or makarsha janani) in her biographical account but there is nothing sinister in this metaphor. The image of the spider here symbolises the quiet, patient, and selfless labour of an educator, caring for children who were not her own. Shamsunnahar Mahmud, her close co-worker, wrote: "Day after day in this way, with the blood of her own breast, Spider Mother began to revive hundreds of baby spiders into new life."

This hauntingly beautiful image stayed. It became the title of Ben Baer and Smaran Dayal's book *Spider Mother*. This anthology brings together a curated selection of Rokeya's most compelling fictional and political writings. The editors have chosen works that exemplify her reflective and speculative engagements with the world around her, texts that pushed against the boundaries of how gender, religion, science, and power were conventionally discussed. From the visionary technoutopia of "Sultana's Dream" to the sharp critique of gendered seclusion in "Burka", from reimagining biblical allegory in "Fruit of Knowledge" to interrogating the very structures that shape a woman's voice in "Woman Prisoner", the collection captures

Rokeya's literary range and radical insights.

For many of us, our first encounter with Begum Rokeya's revolutionary voice came through "Sultana's Dream". What makes this short tale groundbreaking is how it prefigures concepts of ecofeminism, long before the term was coined. The harmonious balance between nature, science, and society in Ladyland mirrors many of the ideas we now associate with ecofeminist thought. As artist Chitra Ganesh reflects, "Sultana's Dream, and the visual grammar it generates remind us of the radically generative potential of dismantling patriarchy, thinking with structures rather than individuals, the power of collective action, and what a concrete vision of a more just and enduring world might look like."

One of the key intentions of this book is to make her work accessible to a wider, multilingual readership. The editors and translators have taken special care to preserve the distinctiveness of Rokeya's style in translation, believing that her clarity, rhythm, and rhetorical power are essential to the impact of her ideas. Their goal was not to smooth out or modernise her voice, but to retain the integrity and resonance of the original texts, allowing readers to experience both the substance and style of Rokeya's thinking.

The second piece in the collection, "Fifty



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

Miles in an Airplane (Dream Fulfilled)", offers a retrospective glance at "Sultana's Dream" and reflects how Rokeya's once-imagined world of aerial travel became her lived reality. Published in 1932, the essay captures her first flight experience, written with light humor and profound insight into technological and social transformation. This brief essay is a subtle commentary on the disparities between technological advancement and gender progress, showing how speculative fiction can anticipate real life change.

The collection also reimagines the

tale of Adam and Eve. Rokeya challenges the traditional view of women as the root of all evil by portraying Eve's act of eating the forbidden fruit as the beginning of knowledge, consciousness, and human progress. Through this lens, the woman is not a seductress but a catalyst for enlightenment and action. Rokeya cleverly links this awakening to the socio-political reality of British colonial India, using "Kanakadweepa" to represent the subcontinent and Fairyland to symbolise Britain. With literary finesse, she critiques

imperial exploitation and reframes women as agents of change, making a compelling case for collective liberation.

Begum Rokeya's contributions to feminist thought and activism remain both profound and timeless, as exemplified in the collection *Spider Mother*. Beginning her advocacy for women's rights in the early 20th century, she focused on the education and empowerment of Muslim women, a marginalised group in a rapidly changing society. Her writings, often under-recognised in her time, consistently addressed the multifaceted oppression women faced, connecting it with broader social, economic, and political structures. Her ability to uncover the deep-rooted causes of gender inequality and link them with various facets of society highlights the versatility and depth of her work. Despite limited exposure during her lifetime, Rokeya persisted in her mission, using her voice to challenge the status quo until her final years.

This review has been abridged. Read the full article on *The Daily Star* and *Star Books and Literature's* websites.

Mahmuda Emdad is a women and gender studies major with an endless interest in feminist writings and historical fiction, all while questioning the world in the process. Reach her at mahmudaemdad123@gmail.com.

Muzarabani wins battle of pacers

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Zimbabwe pacer Blessing Muzarabani stood tall and won the battle against the much-hyped pace unit of Bangladesh in the first Test in Sylhet.

Much of the talk from the Bangladesh camp was about their pace sensation Nahid Rana, and how he could dismantle batters with sheer pace. But instead, it was Muzarabani who shone, putting all those chatters to bed as he starred with match figures of nine for 122 -- the best for a Zimbabwean against Bangladesh -- to help his side to a three-wicket win at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Standing at six feet and eight inches tall, Muzarabani produced an accomplished display throughout both innings, using not just his physical abilities to great effect but also having his wits about him.

The 28-year-old persistently challenged Bangladesh batters with short deliveries -- an Achilles heel for the Tigers -- and perhaps had the best read on the wicket on offer.

Muzarabani had several top-order batters jumpy by ruffling them with deliveries directed at the bodies, winning the mind-game with the Bangladesh batters. The right-arm quick then went for the kill with nipping deliveries just on a length or just short of it. He had as many as five batters, most of them key in the Bangladesh lineup, succumbing to the short ball.

But, perhaps, what Muzarabani did best was identify how the grassy wicket offered extra bounce for the bowlers. He remained adamant about bowling short of a length, surprising the batters almost at every turn.

Pacers usually get high dividends for bowling it full and on a good length, especially when the cherry is shiny and the wicket is conducive to fast bowling.

But Muzarabani opted to go against the norm, and perhaps, it was not a surprise.

"That's my strength, to bowl the hard length on the body. It is my No. 1 skill," Muzarabani had said on Tuesday.

The Zimbabwean quick deciphered what was going to work for him and stuck to shorter lengths. Till Day 4, his short ball percentage was the highest -- 69.6% -- amongst bowlers from both sides.

Muzarabani, undoubtedly, stood out in Zimbabwe's pace attack but his fellow quicks also played their part in making him shine as Victor Nyachi and Richard Ngarava bowled with discipline and sacrificed on extravagance. The trio definitely won the pace battle between both sides as they accounted for 13 wickets in the match, while Bangladesh's pace battery, comprising Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, and Khaled Ahmed, picked up five in total.



Even after an underwhelming game overall, Bangladesh almost turned things around in the final session of Day 4 of the first Test against Zimbabwe at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. It was all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who almost made it seem like the Tigers had a chance of defending a low 174-run target. Miraz scalped fifers in both innings, becoming the only Bangladeshi player to get 10-wicket hauls three times in Tests, surpassing Taijul Islam's record of two 10-wicket hauls. Miraz finished with figures of 10 for 102 runs in the game, with most of his wickets coming in the final session yesterday which helped Bangladesh reduce Zimbabwe to 161 for seven after the visitors got off to a flying start by amassing 95 for no loss at one stage of the game. With the final wicket of the day, Miraz, playing his 52nd Test, also became only the third Bangladeshi to reach 200 wickets (after Taijul Islam and Shakib Al Hasan). However, despite providing a scare to the visitors, Miraz could only help Bangladesh reduce the margin of defeat as Zimbabwe ended up winning the contest by three wickets.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shanto blames 'mental lapses' as home woes mount

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

During the current ICC World Test Championship cycle, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) opted for a significant shift -- moving away from spin friendly pitches to more balanced, sporting wickets for home Tests. The change came after years of criticism, with many arguing that doctored pitches may have helped secure occasional home wins but left the team exposed abroad, where they consistently suffered heavy defeats.

Criticism had long come from all quarters -- journalists, organisers, administrators, players and coaches -- over the preparation of pitches tailored to Bangladesh's spin strength. But once BCB committed to preparing fairer wickets for both domestic and international matches, the response was largely positive.

And initially, the gamble appeared to work as the Tigers began to show results overseas. Last year, they won three of their six away Tests -- the most in a single year in their history. Highlights included a historic first-ever Test series win against Pakistan and a long awaited victory over the West Indies on their turf after 15 years.

However, the picture at home was less encouraging. Since beating New Zealand in the opening match of the WTC 2023-25 cycle at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium in November 2023, Bangladesh have lost six consecutive home Tests -- the latest being a three-wicket defeat to Zimbabwe at the same venue yesterday, which gave the visitors a 1-0 lead in the series.

As in this Test match -- where

"I think the more Tests you can win, the more you'll be on the radar. As tough as Tests are, it is what every player wants to play and get better at. It really does test you over four or five days. The smaller teams want to play good, hard Test cricket against tough opposition. That's the only way you'll improve as a team."

Zimbabwe captain CRAIG ERVINE

** Since beating New Zealand in November 2023, Bangladesh have lost six consecutive home Tests.

** Out of the last 14 home Test innings, the Tigers have folded for under 200 on nine occasions, and only four times have they crossed the 300-run mark.

** With yesterday's three-wicket win, Zimbabwe ended a four-year wait for a Test win.

Bangladesh batters failed to put up good numbers on the board -- managing only 191 and 255 runs in their innings -- the main reason behind their home Test debacle has been the inconsistent performance from their batters.

Out of the 14 home Test innings since the start of the last WTC, the Tigers have folded for under 200 on nine occasions, and only four times have they crossed the 300-run mark. Meanwhile, during this same period, their highest score was 338 runs against New Zealand in Sylhet.

Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, who has led the side throughout this period, was asked to explain their continued poor form despite the shift to better wickets. He didn't go into great detail, but admitted that "mental lapses" and poor decision-

making were to blame.

"It's difficult to say what the problem is. If you see our batting, all were soft dismissals. I don't think we threw away our wickets to good balls," Shanto said during a press meet after the match.

"There can be mental errors and every individual can talk about their dismissals. I reckon the batters should have taken more responsibility -- especially those who were dismissed after getting set at the crease."

Bangladesh will have a chance to redeem themselves in the second and final Test, starting April 28 in Chattogram. However, unless they address the problems quickly, they risk further embarrassment -- particularly against a Zimbabwe side that just ended a four-year wait for a Test win.

Cabrera asked to reconsider Fahamedul for Singapore tie

SPORTS REPORTER

On the eve of the national team's departure for Shillong to face hosts India in their Asian Cup qualifier on March 25, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Tabith Awal found himself addressing a group of disgruntled fans. Their concern centred around the omission of Italy-based teenager Fahamedul Islam from the squad.

Head coach Javier Cabrera had released the young winger from the training camp in Saudi Arabia, explaining that he needed more time to adapt to the team's system and that more suitable options were available.

Media reports, however, later revealed that Fahamedul had grown frustrated during the camp, alleging a lack of support from local teammates in practice matches. He repeatedly voiced his concerns to Cabrera, who, displeased with the player's attitude, ultimately sent him back to Italy. Nevertheless, Cabrera acknowledged the player's talent and praised his efforts during the camp.

The issue resurfaced during Wednesday's meeting of the national teams committee, where the Spanish coach was asked to include Fahamedul -- along with other interested foreign-based players -- in the upcoming training camp for the June 10 fixture against Singapore.

"The meeting focused on our preparations for the



Singapore match," BFF media committee chairman Amirul Islam Babu told reporters at the BFF House on Wednesday. "We stressed the need for a strong performance and positive result, and the coach gave his assurance after we discussed the shortcomings from previous games."

Fahamedul's name inevitably popped up in the discussions. "The committee recommended his inclusion in the next camp," Babu confirmed.

"Of course, to field a foreign-based player in the national team, we need the necessary clearances. The BFF president is already trying to get Fahamedul's clearance..."

When asked if the committee had interfered with player selection, Babu clarified that the coach has full authority to include any foreign-based player he sees fit, and the board will support the decision.

To aid preparations, the committee also announced plans for a practice match against a foreign team on June 5.

"With the domestic league ending on May 29, we'll call up the national squad on May 31," said Babu, further informing that Sudan have shown the most interest to play the friendly in Dhaka.

Additionally, the meeting explored the idea of forming a selection committee to assist the head coach, though no final decision was reached. The committee also urged the BFF boss to appoint a foreign goalkeeping coach to strengthen the backroom staff.



Dani Olmo celebrates the only goal in Barcelona's hard-fought 1-0 home win over Mallorca on Tuesday with Eric Garcia, who provided the assist inside the first minute of the second half of the LaLiga game. The win saw Barcelona extend their lead over Real Madrid at the top of the table to seven points with five games to go. Real visit Getafe late on Wednesday and will be in with a chance to cut the gap with Barca to four points.

AHF CUP

Bangladesh set up semifinal against Oman

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh emerged Pool B champions with an all-win record in the AHF Cup following a 5-0 win against Sri Lanka in their fourth and last final pool match in Jakarta, Indonesia on Wednesday.

The result set up Bangladesh's semifinal on April 25 against Oman, who emerged Pool A runners-up by virtue of goal difference against group winners Chinese Taipei.

Like the previous matches, the men in red and green initially struggled against Sri Lanka and were held goalless in the first half.

Rashid, however, broke the deadlock from open play with Rakibul Hasan giving a 39th-minute lead before Bangladesh added four more goals in a span of only 11 minutes.

Rakibul doubled the margin in 42nd minute from open play before Fazla Rabby and Arshad Hossain widened the margin in the 43rd and 49th minutes with field goals. Naim Uddin sealed the victory from a penalty corner in the 50th minute.

SHORT CORNER

Nazmul appointed convener of CDM technical committee

Following the upheaval in relation to the reduction of Towhid Hridoy's suspension which led to Enamul Haque Moni's resignation as convener of technical committee, BCB director Nazmul Abedeen Fahim has been appointed as convener of the technical committee. The umpires' committee had also embroiled itself in controversy by signing a sanction table revision, which allowed Hridoy to play after serving a one-match ban.

Soumya hits 153, Abahani-Mohammedan title race going down to the wire

Abahani maintained their two-point advantage over Mohammedan at the top of the table as the title race builds up ahead of the final stages of the Dhaka Premier League Super League stage. Meanwhile, national team opener Soumya Sarkar hit a blistering 153 not out for Legends of Rupganj against Agrani Bank at BKSP four to help his side to a big win.

Remainder of Fed Cup final next Tuesday in Mymensingh

The Professional League Management Committee (PLMC) of Bangladesh Football Federation on Wednesday decided to hold the remainder of the Federation Cup final between Abahani and Bashundhara Kings next Tuesday at the same venue -- Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh. The meeting also decided to restart the game at 3:30pm.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website.

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One candidate per constituency

Five Islamist parties reach consensus, call for Islamic welfare state

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five Islamist parties yesterday jointly expressed a "strategic consensus" to nominate single candidates for each seat in the next national election.

They also resolved to unite in establishing an Islamic welfare state free from hegemony and imperialism, so that fascism cannot be re-established in any form.

Islami Andolok Bangladesh (IAB) organised the meeting at its headquarters in Paltan, in the capital, with the party's Amir Syed Muhammad Rezaul Karim in the chair.

The four other parties were represented by Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis Amir Mamunul Haque; Jamiat e Ulama-e-Islam Bangladesh Vice-President Abdul Rob Yousufi; Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Ahmad Abdul Kader; and Bangladesh Nejam-e-Islam Party Vice-President Maulana Abdul Majed Athari.

The four party alliance is also known as Samonoma Char Dol ('Like-minded Four Parties').

At the meeting, the five parties demanded that the interim government hold the next parliamentary election only after the trial of those responsible for the July massacre, and for enforced disappearances and killings over the past 15 years.

IAB General Secretary Yunus Ahmed told The Daily Star, "We've agreed that the election will be held only after completion of necessary reforms within a rational time.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Tobacco use declines 13% in 13 years

Meeting UN target for tobacco use reduction unlikely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The slow rate of decline in tobacco use suggests that Bangladesh is unlikely to achieve the UN set target for 2030, according to an analysis of six relevant surveys by the Bangladesh Medical University (BMU).



Bangladesh is supposed to reduce tobacco use by 40 percent by 2030 as per the World Health Organisation's extended target and by 30 percent by 2025 as per the WHO Implementation Roadmap for Global Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Disease 2013-2030.

Between 2009 and 2022, Bangladesh saw a 13 percent relative decline in tobacco use, meaning the country made only 30 percent progress towards the 2030 target and 40 percent towards the 2025 target, said M Mostafa Zaman, executive editor of BMU Journal, while presenting the findings of the analysis on six nationally representative surveys yesterday.

Given the current rate of decline, Bangladesh is unlikely to achieve the target, he said.

"So, we have to intensify our efforts three to four times to achieve the targets."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

4 indicted in Magura child rape case

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Jhenaidah

A court yesterday framed charges against four individuals in connection with the Magura child rape and murder case.

It set April 27 as the next date for the hearing.

Judge M Zahid Hasan of the Magura Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal framed the charges in the presence of the accused in the courtroom around 10:30am.

The accused are Hitu Sheikh, father-in-law of the victim's sister; his wife, Jaheda Begum; their son and the victim's brother-in-law, Sajib Sheikh; and Sajib's brother, Ratul Sheikh.

Public Prosecutor Advocate Monirul Islam Mukul, along with other lawyers, was present at the hearing.

In view of the significance of the case, senior lawyer Ehsanul Haque Samai, special

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Zimbabwe pacer Blessing Muzarabani was awarded the player of the match for his match figures of nine for 122 in the first Test against Bangladesh in Sylhet yesterday. This was the best return by a Zimbabwean against Bangladesh in the format, as the visitors took a 1-0 lead in the two-match series with a three-wicket win on Day 4.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



The Shitalakkhya has long been a victim to severe pollution, with waste and toxic chemicals from dyeing and other industrial factories in Narayanganj being dumped into its waters. The photo was taken at Demra Ghat, near the capital, where the river's darkened hue and toxic odour clearly indicate its deteriorating condition.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

JULY ATROCITIES
No permission needed to arrest FIR accused

HC stays DMP order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for law enforcers to arrest any accused or suspects without permission from the higher authorities in connection with the cases filed over atrocities during the July uprising.

The court stayed for three months the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner's order to get permission from the higher authorities before arresting any accused named in the First Information Report (FIR) or suspects in these cases.

It also issued a rule asking the government authorities concerned to explain why the DMP commissioner's order should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Fatema Najib and Justice

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Door for US trade talks 'wide open'

Says China after Trump signals tariffs will fall

AFP, Beijing

China said yesterday the door was "wide open" for trade talks with Washington, a day after US President Donald Trump signalled the possibility of a "substantial" lowering of tariffs on Beijing.

Bringing further relief to global markets spooked by his aggressive trade policies, Trump also said on Tuesday he had no intention of firing US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell.

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has imposed additional tariffs of 145 percent on many products from China.

These include duties initially imposed over China's alleged role in the fentanyl supply chain and later over practices Washington deemed unfair.

Beijing has responded with sweeping counter-tariffs of 125 percent on US goods, but reiterated yesterday that it was willing to engage in trade talks.

"China pointed out early on that there are no winners in tariff wars and trade wars," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiajun told a daily news conference in Beijing. "The door for talks is wide open."

Chinese President Xi Jinping also

warned yesterday that trade wars "undermine the legitimate rights and interests of all countries, hurt the multilateral trading system and impact the world economic order", state media said.

The reiteration from Beijing comes after Trump acknowledged that 145 percent was a "very high" level and that will "come down substantially".

"They will not be anywhere near that number" but "it won't be zero", he said. "Ultimately, they have to make a deal because otherwise, they're not going to be able to deal in the United States."

Those comments came after Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told a closed-door event on Tuesday that the tariffs amounted to a reciprocal trade embargo.

Bessent said he expected a de-escalation in the near future, according to a person who was in the room.

Such a development should bring markets some relief, he added at the JPMorgan Chase-hosted event, which was not open to the press.

Trump's recent tirades against Powell had fanned fears of an ouster, sending jitters through markets already spooked by the aggressive trade policies.

12 key AL leaders took shelter in JS on Aug 5

Palak tells court they were rescued by the army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former state minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak yesterday told a court that he was among 12 high-profile individuals of the fallen Awami League regime who took shelter in a special room inside the National Parliament from the morning of August 5, the day the AL government fell, to 2:30am the following day.

Later, the army rescued all of them, including former speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and former deputy speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku.

He, however, did not mention the other people who were with him during a remand hearing in a murder case filed with Badda Police Station linked to the July uprising.

The hearing was held at Dhaka Metropolitan

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

TALKS WITH IMF Consensus likely on exchange rate, revenue issues

2 instalments may be released at once

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Key differences with the International Monetary Fund on revenue generation and exchange rate policies have narrowed during the ongoing discussions in Washington DC, in a development that is likely to trigger the release of the fourth and fifth instalments of the \$4.7 billion loan.



"We are in dialogue and nearing a consensus," said Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, who is leading the Bangladesh side in the talks, according to the video statement issued by Golam Mortuza, the press minister in Washington DC.

The fourth tranche of the instalment was deferred due to disagreements and now talks are going on to release two tranches at once.

Since Saturday, the delegation has been engaged in a series of meetings with IMF officials, including Deputy Managing Director Nigel Clarke.

Multiple sessions have been held to address sticking points in the loan programme. The Daily Star has learnt from people involved with the proceedings.

Prior to the Washington visit, an IMF delegation concluded a two-week mission to Dhaka on April 17, which ended without a staff-level agreement.

Disagreements persisted over the flexibility of the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Kuet withdraws suspension of students

Opens dorms; demo demanding VC's resignation continues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

With Kuet students continuing a hunger strike demanding the resignation of the vice chancellor, the university authorities yesterday withdrew the suspension of 37 students and reopened all seven dormitories.

The decision was made during a syndicate meeting, said Anisur Rahman Bhuiyan, registrar of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet).

The suspension orders were withdrawn after a review of the situation, he told The Daily Star.

Classes are scheduled to resume on May 4, said a Kuet press release issued following the meeting.

Although the university officially announced the reopening of the dormitories yesterday, students forcibly entered six male dormitories on April 15 and broke the locks of the only female dormitory on Tuesday.

Education Adviser CR Abrar yesterday visited the university and spoke to students on hunger strike, urging them to end the protests and trust the ongoing investigation, but the students refused.

A three-member delegation from the University Grants Commission (UGC) also met the protesting students on the campus yesterday morning to review their demands and promised appropriate action.

Out of the 32 students participating in the hunger strike, nine reportedly fell ill and received medical care.

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