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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.

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## 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."

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## 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

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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

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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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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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