



"The day we abdicate about defending international law, we are paving the way for chaos all over the world."

UN chief António Guterres on ending Ukraine war

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subsidies soak
up almost half
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How will team
management
justify Shanto's
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MALAYSIA JOB MARKET

Bangladeshis may be given preference

Says Asif Nazrul; KL wants
Dhaka to drop trafficking,
laundering allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia will initially take nearly 8,000 Bangladeshi workers from among the 17,000 who missed a deadline for joining due to a flight shortage.

Asif Nazrul, adviser to the law and expatriates' welfare ministries, said this after meetings with Malaysian Human Resources Minister Steven Sim and Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in Putrajaya yesterday.

He said the Malaysian side told him that a list of 7,926 workers has been finalised and their recruitment is being processed.

"Malaysia has decided to process soon the recruitment

**Dhaka asks Kuala Lumpur to ensure
all registered recruiting agencies,
not just selected ones, have the
scope to send workers to Malaysia.**

of 7,964 stranded workers in the first batch and as proposed by Bangladesh, the recruitment process of those workers will be handled by Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL)," the Bangladesh high commission in Malaysia said in a statement.

During Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's Bangladesh visit in October last year, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus called for the recruitment of the 17,000 workers who had visas and made payments but could not make it by May 31, 2024, the deadline set by the Southeast Asian country, because of a flight shortage amid the rush.

Nazrul, in a video posted on Facebook, also said Malaysia will hire 1-1.5 lakh foreign workers, and that he requested Human Resources Minister Sim to prioritise recruitment from Bangladesh. The Malaysian minister said he would consider the matter.

Sim also reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to remain an ethical employment destination by ensuring that foreign workers have access to social protection, welfare, and skills training, in line with the principles of compassion, justice, and well-being under the Malaysia Madani framework.

Lutfey Siddiqi, the special envoy of the chief adviser on international affairs, accompanied Nazrul in the meetings.

Currently, as per Malaysian data, about nine lakh Bangladeshis are working in Malaysia. They include nearly 500,000 who travelled to the Southeast Asian country through 101 agencies selected by the Malaysian government for recruiting Bangladeshi workers since late 2022.

On March 12, Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission sued the owners of 12 of these agencies, along with former finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, on charges of embezzling and laundering Tk 1,128 crore through a syndicate that overcharged workers bound for Malaysia.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Rohingyas
cast into sea
by Indian navy
'alarming'

UN expert launches
inquiry into report

DIPLOMATIC
CORRESPONDENT

Alarmed by "credible reports" of Rohingya refugees being forced off an Indian navy vessel into the Andaman Sea last week, a UN expert has begun an inquiry into such "unconscionable, unacceptable acts".

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, also urged the Indian government to refrain from inhumane and life threatening treatment of Rohingya refugees, including their repatriation into perilous conditions in Myanmar.

The idea that Rohingya refugees have been cast into the sea from naval vessels is nothing short of outrageous. I am seeking further information and testimony regarding these

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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KSRM

শেকড় থেকে শিথরে



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Hundreds of Jagannath University students gather at the capital's Kakrail intersection for the second consecutive day yesterday to press home their demands, including housing allowance, increased budget allocation and improved academic facilities. They have vowed to continue the demonstration until the government issues an official response.

KUET SHUTDOWN No classes in almost 3 months

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Students of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology yesterday demonstrated demanding resumption of academic activities.

They staged a sit-in near the entrance of the administrative building in the afternoon.

"No classes have been held in almost three months. This is a major setback to our student life. It may even affect our career," said civil engineering student Rahatul Islam.

The impasse began on February 18 when several students were assaulted on campus allegedly by a group of outsiders. No classes have been held since then.

Amid demonstrations, the government relieved the VC of his duties last month. And Kuet syndicate members decided that academic activities would resume on May 4. But on May 5, the Kuet Teachers' Association told a press briefing that they would not return to classrooms unless "those who disrespect teachers" are punished.

The university authorities last week

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Academic stalemate at 4 public univs

Kuet, Barishal University remain
closed; DU, JnU face fresh protests

MOHIUDDIN
ALAMGIR

Four public universities have been experiencing severe disruption to their academic activities due to ongoing demonstrations by students and teachers, putting the future of nearly 70,000 students in jeopardy.

The protests brought classes and examinations to a standstill, sparking serious concerns over prolonged session delays and disruption of the academic calendar.

The four universities are Jagannath University (JnU), Dhaka University, Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet), and Barishal University (BU).

Students and faculty members fear that it will not be possible

to complete the syllabi in time due to the prolonged disruption, especially at Kuet and BU, which have remained closed for nearly three months and one month, respectively.

"It's been nearly three months since our campus shut down. This is hurting our education and our future—we

just want to return to class," said a second-year Kuet student.

Mohammad Zahid Hossain, a BU student, added, "Finishing this semester's syllabus now feels nearly impossible."

Several teachers echoed the concern, saying the unrest made it impossible to run full academic sessions, inevitably harming students' progress.

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JNU PROTEST

Hunger strike, class boycott till govt meets all demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University teachers and students last night announced fresh protest programmes as the government has yet to respond to their demands.

Around 11:45pm, Prof Rais Uddin, general secretary of the JnU Teachers' Association, said protesters will go on a mass hunger strike after Juma prayers, while their rally will continue from 10:00am onwards.

Meanwhile, JnU Chhatra Dal Member Secretary Shamsul Arefin declared May 14 a "Black Day", protesting the police action during their demonstration on Wednesday.

JnU students and teachers, along with other stakeholders, earlier in the day announced a boycott of all academic activities.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

SHAMMO MURDER

Students enforce day-long strike Demand resignation of DU VC, proctor

DU CORRESPONDENT

Protests continued at Dhaka University for a second consecutive day yesterday, as students enforced a day-long strike, demanding justice for the murder of their fellow Shahriar Alam Shammo and the resignation of vice chancellor and proctor.

No classes or examinations were held as the demonstrators locked the gates of several faculties and the registrar's building, rejecting DU authorities' announcement of a half-day suspension of classes and exams to mourn the death of Shammo.

The students accused the university administration of failing to ensure students' safety.

The protests began after Shammo's killing on Tuesday night.

Shammo, 25, was the literature and publication affairs secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal's Sir AF Rahman Hall unit and a student of the 2018-19 session at the Institute of Education and Research.

Three suspects, who have been arrested over the murder, have no links with the DU, said police.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5



A vendor desperately clutches onto his cart as a DSCC staffer tries to pull him away. As part of the city corporation's eviction drive at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, numerous illegal makeshift shops were demolished and removed from the area. With permission from the DSCC executive magistrate, this vendor was able to remove his cart before it got destroyed. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

JULY VICTIMS, FAMILIES

Govt moves to ensure support

Approves ordinance to that end

BAHARAM KHAN

The government yesterday approved an ordinance to ensure employment, training, housing, medical care, and low-interest loans for those injured in the July uprising and families of those who were killed.

The advisory council cleared the "July Mass Uprising Martyrs' Families and Injured Students-Citizens Welfare and Rehabilitation Ordinance, 2025" at a meeting chaired by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

A gazette on the ordinance will be published soon, officials said.

Drafted by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, it includes a provision to revise the financial benefits for the families of the people killed by law enforcement agencies or political organisations affiliated with the then government.

According to the draft, "The amount of one-time or monthly financial assistance may be increased or decreased based on the socio-economic condition, age, and number of dependents of the martyred person."

The ordinance refers to the martyred and injured individuals as "July Martyrs" and "July Warriors", respectively.

Of the injured, individuals who have lost at least one eye, hand, or leg; those who are completely blind; persons fully mentally impaired; or those entirely incapable of independent living or working are under category A.

Category B includes individuals who are partially blind, have suffered serious brain injuries, or have sustained

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Why everyone's quietly moving to Uttara

RBR

"Uttara is so far away. Oh God, Uttara traffic! Uttara is a gram (village)!"

These are the things I have to constantly hear and bear because I live in this "far off land" called Uttara.

In my imagination, Uttara is like Malificent's garden. A magical forest realm bordering a human kingdom, Uttara is considered a model town within the broader Dhaka metropolitan city.

To the naysayers, know that this planned neighbourhood is one of the divisions within the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and it is greener and more tranquil than many of the posh urban core areas or city centres.

Living in this beautiful suburb in the northern part of Dhaka has both pros and cons, and I agree with that. The distance does pose a problem for many, but it is only 22 km away from the zero point. It is not that far, if you compare it with the time it takes to travel to other outskirts and neighbourhoods adjoining the capital.

The traffic bottlenecks in Uttara are a result of jams on the Tongi-Gazipur highway or on Mymensingh road; otherwise, there are only a few signals inside this well-organised residential area that hamper the flow of traffic.

In my two decades of living here, I can say that Uttara has become a thriving hub of economic, social, and cultural activities, which was not the case a few years ago.

Thoroughfares and avenues like Rabindra Sarani, Jashimuddin Avenue,

Sonargaon Janapath, Gareeb-e-Nawaz Avenue and Gausul Azam Avenue, which were lacklustre when I came to live here, are now boozing with restaurants, cafes, rooftop eateries, shopping malls, hotels and offices.

With most of the happening cafes opening their branches in Uttara, the after office hours, evenings, and weekends have become a routine social activity filled with fun, adding to Uttara's vibrant nightlife.

North End Coffee Roasters at Liberty Tower, which is a 13-story posh commercial building located beside the



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Uttara; Gloria Jeans in Navana Centroid, another modern architectural infrastructure in Gareeb-e-Nawaz



Avenue; KOI Thé Bangladesh, a fancy bubble/boba tea store in Sonargaon Janapath; are all favourite spots for families and young adults.

Besides regular restaurants, Uttara flaunts two unique options for eating outside -- Yama Hotpot and Grill in Gausul Azam Avenue, which is probably the first of its kind in Dhaka; and Huaxing Chinese Food, which is a hole-in-the-wall kind of authentic Chinese eatery. They do not have fancy or modern ambience, but they are popular for their authentic flavours and affordable prices.

The warm ambiance of green rooftop cafes, offering a panoramic view of the open fields -- and with their diverse culinary menu, has all added a fun factor to Uttara's soul.

Besides eating out, thrift shopping in Uttara is an added plus point. The street behind Rajlaxmi Complex, the underground markets, and footpath

markets have given a new meaning to cheap street shopping. Uttara residents are crazy for the various van markets selling unusual ceramic crockery, bed sheets, curtains, clothing, costume jewellery, etc.

Urban villages on the outskirts of Uttara make its farmers' market one of the best in town. Villagers sell an array of homegrown vegetables and leafy greens with an organic tag.

The colours and tempo of this laid-back but contemporary and versatile residential area give you a calm yet energetic vibe. Uttara is set to become the next commercial and social hub of Dhaka because of its prime location near the MRT and elevated expressway.

This emerging satellite town is a shade of all the fun colours -- yellow, green, blue, black, and pink. And wait till Uttara Third Phase develops, you will all want to get a piece of this coming-of-age suburban area.

Hunger strike, class boycott

FROM PAGE 1

Prof Rais said threats would not deter them and that the university would remain "shut" until the authorities fulfilled their commitments.

At a press conference, he recalled Wednesday's clashes and said he, on behalf of the teachers' association, had expressed their sorrow to the information and broadcasting adviser. "The adviser himself is a former student ... Our students have been peacefully protesting for two days now, yet the government has shown no response. This government was formed on the blood of the July revolutionaries, and now it discriminates against them.

Initially, the protesters had

placed a three-point demand: the introduction of a housing allowance for 70 percent of students from the 2025-26 fiscal year until residential facilities are ensured; approval of JNU's proposed FY26 budget without cuts; and the approval of the construction of a second campus at the next ECNEC meeting as a

priority project.

Yesterday, they added a fourth demand, calling for the punishment of police personnel who attacked students and teachers on Wednesday.

On Wednesday afternoon, violence broke out when police intercepted the students' "Long March to Jamuna" from the university's Shaheed Minar. Around 12:40pm, police charged batons and lobbed tear gas shells near Kakrail as protesters attempted to breach barricades.

Over 50 people, including teachers, students, and journalists, were injured. At least 38 individuals were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Following the incident, protesters staged a sit-in at Kakrail, blocking nearby roads. JNU Vice Chancellor Prof Rezaul Karim and other teachers later joined the demonstration.

At 10:10pm, Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam visited the protest site, stating that the government had instructed police to refrain

from using force and to engage in dialogue. However, tensions escalated when students began chanting "Bhua, Bhua" (fake, fake). Amid the commotion, a plastic water bottle struck the adviser on the head, prompting him to leave.

At least 300 teachers and students, including the vice chancellor, spent the night in front of Kakrail mosque. In a late night notice, JNU authorities postponed all examinations scheduled for yesterday.

Notably, amid the ongoing

demonstrations, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday imposed a ban on public gatherings, processions, and rallies near the official residence of the chief justice and the surrounding areas until further notice. The specified location is near the JNU protest site.

Contacted yesterday, University Grants Commission Chairman Prof SMA Faiz told this newspaper that the government is seriously considering creating an emergency fund to address the university's long standing

residential crisis.

He said he had met with

university officials and

discussed how temporary

housing could be arranged

on the seven bighas (2.314

acres) of land owned by JNU.

He added that the immediate

priority was arranging

accommodation for students.

Prof Faiz further stated

that the government plans

to hold discussions with the

university's VC and treasurer,

the education and finance

advisers, and the Planning

Commission to arrange the

fund. "We hope to launch this

initiative immediately."

Regarding the housing

allowance demand, he said, "If

approved, this demand won't

remain limited to Jagannath

University; it will spread to

other institutions," adding,

"This crisis [the students

are facing] didn't develop

overnight. Students couldn't

raise their voices before

because they were denied the

opportunity."

"They have shown

intelligence and sacrifice, but

I urge them to act responsibly

and not cross the limits of

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DHAKA

MOITREE JATRA
50 progressive groups extend solidarity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty progressive organisations, comprising women, workers, cultural activists, students, and professionals, have expressed solidarity with the "Nareer Dak Moitree Jatra" (March for Women's Solidarity), scheduled for 3:00pm today on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital.

Speaking at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday, Shima Datta, president of Bangladesh Nari Mukti Kendra, said the most remarkable feature of the event is its diverse leadership.

"This programme is being organised at the call of women from a wide spectrum of classes, professions, and political views," she said.

Speakers criticised the exclusion of women from governance since the July uprising, despite

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

DU VC works with 'political bias': Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday alleged that the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, due to his "political philosophy", was unwilling to listen to the JCD leaders when they went to him demanding justice for Shahriar Alam Shammao.

He also questioned whether Shammao, a JCD leader, was killed for his nationalist political ideology.

He made these remarks at a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club.

Shammao, a student of DU's Institute of Education and Research and the Literature and Publication Secretary of the Sir AF Rahman Hall unit of JCD,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

DMP bans gatherings near CJ residence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid ongoing demonstrations by students and teachers of Jagannath University, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police has imposed a ban on public gatherings, processions, and rallies near the official residence of the chief justice and surrounding areas.

In a public notice issued yesterday, the DMP also urged all concerned not to block roads in the name of protests or demands, saying such actions disrupt vehicular movement and cause public inconvenience.

The ban was imposed by DMP Commissioner Sheikh Md Sazzat Ali under Section 29 of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, 1976, citing the need to maintain public order.

The restricted areas include the vicinity of the chief justice's official residence, the Judges' Complex, the main gates of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, Mazar Gate, Jame Mosque Gate, the entrances to International Crimes

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING
MAY 16

Fazr	Juma	As	Maghrib	Esha	
4:10	12:30	5:00	6:36	8:00	
AZAN	4:45	1:15	5:15	6:40	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A group of students lock the gates to the Institute of Modern Languages at Dhaka University, demanding the resignation of the vice-chancellor and proctor for what the protesters say is their failure to provide security on campus that led to the recent killing of DU student and Chhatra Dal leader Shahriar Alam Shammao.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

STRENGTHENING HEALTH FINANCING Commission for CSR-driven health fund, expat bond

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Aside from proposing a significant increase in the health budget, the Health Sector Reform Commission has suggested several innovative ways to mobilise funds to strengthen the country's underfunded health services.

The commission proposed forming at least three funds -- National Health Impact Fund, Expatriate Bond for Health Development, and Emergency Health Fund -- all to be jointly managed by the health and finance ministries and focused on specific areas within the health sector.

These proposals come at a time when the health sector receives only 5.2 percent of the national budget and just 0.74 percent of the GDP -- the lowest allocation among South Asian countries, according to the commission's report.

In its report submitted last week, the commission recommended allocating 15 percent of the national budget and 5 percent of GDP to the health sector.

HEALTH IMPACT FUND

The commission proposed setting up a National Health Impact Fund to ensure sustainable domestic financing for the health sector.

Large corporations -- particularly those in pharmaceuticals, banking, insurance, telecommunications, and chemicals -- would be required to allocate at least 20 percent of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets to this fund.

A clear policy framework should be developed to ensure the fund is used solely for health initiatives and supporting government priority programmes.

It would be jointly supervised by the health and finance ministries, with an independent, non-partisan management structure free from private influence, says the commission's

report.

Key areas for investment would include maternal and child health, non-communicable disease prevention, digital



HEALTH IMPACT FUND

Funded by mandatory 20% of CSR budgets from major industries

Targets maternal health, NCDs, digital health, and underserved areas

EXPAT BOND FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

Invites diaspora investment in foreign currency with tax incentives

Promoted through embassies, digital platforms

EMERGENCY HEALTH FUND

Rapid-response fund activated during health emergencies

Enables immediate financing for crises like pandemics

health infrastructure, emergency services, and expanding healthcare access in underserved regions.

Alongside mandatory contributions,

the fund would also encourage voluntary donations. To boost participation, the government may offer incentives such as public recognition as a "Health Impact Champion", honours at state events, involvement in policymaking forums, and financial benefits like tax exemptions or CSR credits, suggested the report.

Referring to similar initiatives in India and South Africa, the commission said this fund would make CSR investments more transparent, coordinated, and impactful.

EXPAT BOND FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT
The commission recommended introducing a government-backed bond titled "Expatriate Bond for Health Development" to create a sustainable source of financing for the health sector.

This bond would attract investments from Bangladeshi expatriates, offering competitive profit rates, tax exemptions or rebates, and allowing investments in foreign currencies.

The funds would be dedicated to improving the health sector -- especially primary healthcare, public hospital upgrades, digital health technologies, and social health insurance, alongside emergency health preparedness and response capacity.

The bond would be jointly managed by the health and finance ministries. To ensure engagement, the government should promote it through embassies, consulates, and digital platforms, said the report.

This initiative would reduce reliance on foreign aid and create a sustainable and long-term domestic funding source for the health sector.

Citing similar models in India and Ethiopia, the commission said it would also allow patriotic expatriates to contribute proudly and meaningfully to national development.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

CTG OPEN DRAINS, CANALS Patchwork protections fail to save lives

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The authorities concerned have erected a temporary barrier along an open canal in Kapasgola area of Chattogram city, days after a six-month old baby fell into the canal on April 18 and died.

However, this reactive measure highlights a larger, persistent problem: the significant safety risk posed by numerous open and unprotected drains and canals across the port city, especially in monsoon.

SM Nazer Hossain, vice-president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), criticised this pattern of action only after accidents occur, pointing out that many other dangerous open drains, like those in Bahaddarhat, remain unprotected.

Residents fear a repeat of past tragedies, including the drowning of a vegetable trader in a flooded Muradpur canal in 2021 and the death of a university student who fell into an open drain in Agrabad the same year.

A recent Chattogram City Corporation survey identified 134 unprotected spots in drains and canals, 12 uncovered manholes, and 703 drains without slabs across the city's 41 wards.

"We have taken initiative to temporarily protect the risky spots with bamboo fences," said Pranab Kumar Sharma, deputy chief conservancy officer at CCC, adding, "We will also place slabs over the open drains."

A recent visit revealed that many drains, such as the



A man walks on a footpath in Chattogram city, right next to an open drain. Since 2017, at least 10 people have died after falling into open drains and canals in the port city. While authorities recently took the initiative to start erecting temporary barriers along open canals in the Kapasgola area, open drains still continue to pose a major risk to passersby.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

DSCC launches eviction drive at Suhrawardy Udyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation launched an eviction drive at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday, demolishing hundreds of illegal makeshift shops and structures.

The operation, led by DSCC Executive Magistrate Md Aminul Islam, began around 9:00am near the gate adjacent to Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre.

The drive was conducted with the assistance of a large contingent of police personnel.

Acting Estate Manager of Dhaka University, Fatema Binte Mustafa, was present at the scene.

The move came in the wake of the killing of Shahriar Alam Shammao, a postgraduate student of Dhaka University. In response to the incident, the government has introduced a series of measures aimed at enhancing security in Suhrawardy Udyan.

These include permanently closing the TSC-adjacent gate, removing illegal vendors, increasing surveillance with CCTV cameras, installing adequate lighting, setting up a dedicated police box, and banning public access after 8:00pm.

Mohammad Aftab, who has been running a tea stall in the DU area since 2006, said, "The authorities came and demolished my stall today. When I tried to retrieve my goods, they started arresting people."

He said another shop belonging to his brother at the gate of Suhrawardy Udyan, adjacent to the TSC, was also knocked down.

"They also sealed off the gates... Setting up a new shop in a different place requires a lot of money. Where will we get that kind of money now? We have families to feed... what will we do now?"

Another tea vendor, Malek, echoed him.

Dhaka, Tokyo outline areas of cooperation ahead of CA's visit

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Japan yesterday outlined future areas of cooperation between the two countries, ahead of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' upcoming visit to Japan, as both sides look to take the relationship to new heights.

Japan said it would strengthen its engagement with Bangladesh under the Bay of Bengal Initiative (Big B), as the country aims to support high-quality infrastructure development projects and encourage Japanese manufacturing and production companies to expand their industrial value chains to Bangladesh, according to the Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo.

The issues were discussed at the 6th Japan-Bangladesh Foreign Secretary-level consultations held in Tokyo.

In February this year, Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina Akiko invited Chief Adviser Prof Yunus to visit Japan for the Nikkei 30th Future of Asia event to be held on May 29-30 in Tokyo.

Yunus was also a recipient of the Nikkei Asia Prize in 2004.

The chief adviser will attend the Nikkei 30th Future of Asia event and both sides are working to arrange a bilateral meeting between Yunus and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, a diplomatic source told UNB.

The two sides confirmed that they will further strengthen the bilateral relationship in a wide range of areas, including security, economy, economic cooperation, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges, under the "Japan-Bangladesh Strategic Partnership" at the FOC, said the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



PHOTO: STAR

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK
SC adjourns hearing until May 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned until May 26 the hearing of the leave to appeal petitions filed by the state challenging the High Court verdict that acquitted BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfuzzaman Babar and all the others convicted in two cases over the August 21, 2004 grenade attack.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed passed the adjournment order after concluding yesterday's proceedings on the matters.

Additional Attorney Generals Abdul Jabbar Bhuiyan and Aneek R Haque appeared for the state while a group of lawyers including SM Shahjahan, Mohammad Shishir Manir and Kayser Kamal were present for the accused during the hearing.

On December 1 last year the HC acquitted Tarique, Babar and all the others convicted in two cases over the grenade attack.

The HC also scrapped the lower court verdicts that convicted and sentenced the 49 accused.

CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS
Travel ban on former minister Muktadir, wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a travel ban on former housing and public works minister RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury and his wife Fahima Khatun in connection with corruption allegations brought against them.

Judge Md Zakir Hossain of the Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order following an application filed by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Deputy Assistant Director Abu Mohammad Anwarul Masud, who is leading the inquiry team.

ACC Public Prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir moved the application on behalf of the anti-graft body.

In the application, the ACC stated that Obaidul Muktadir allegedly amassed huge moveable and immoveable assets using his political influence.

"The ACC official came to know from a credible source that the couple was attempting to flee the country. If they flee, inquiry into the allegations brought against them might be hampered. So, an order is needed to prevent them from doing so," read the ACC's application.

Muktadir, a former Awami League lawmaker from Brahmanbaria-3, was arrested from Dhaka's Nakhalpara area on November 1 last year.

KALUKHALI HEALTH COMPLEX
Doctor shortage disrupts services

SUZIT DAS, from Rajbari

An acute shortage of doctors at the Kalukhali Upazila Health Complex in Rajbari has left health services in disarray for nearly two lakh residents.

Only five doctors are serving the hospital against 17 sanctioned positions. Currently, only the upazila health and family planning officer, a gynecology consultant, two medical officers and a dental surgeon are posted at the hospital, while three doctors are on deputation elsewhere, two are undergoing training, and seven posts remain vacant.

The absence of an anesthesiologist, in particular, has halted all surgical procedures, including Caesarean sections since February.

Moreover, while being designated as a 50-bed hospital, the health complex receives medical supplies meant for 30-bed facilities, adding to its woes.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found the emergency unit and outpatient department quite overwhelmed with patients, while the operating theatre on the upper floor lies non-functional.

Dr Atish Dipankar, a medical officer at the hospital, said at least 200

patients come for treatment at the outpatient department, and nearly 40 patients get admitted daily, alongside some patients at the emergency unit.

Prodrup Biswas, 26, from Chandipur village, whose mother is currently admitted to the hospital, said, "The district hospital is 25 kilometres from here, so we rely on this facility for urgent health services. However, due to the prevailing shortage of doctors, the hospital often refers critical patients to Rajbari or Faridpur, leading to delay in treatment."

Ananda Kumar Shil, 39, of the village, echoed him.

Dr Israt Jahan Ummon, upazila health and family planning officer in Kalukhali, said, "Just two doctors now run the operations, often working

24-hour shifts to cover both emergency and outpatient services. Only cesarean surgery used to be conducted here, but it has been suspended due to lack of anesthesiologist. Although we have diagnostic equipment, we can hardly utilise them amid manpower shortage. I have informed the civil surgeon about the situation."

Rajbari Civil Surgeon Dr SM Masud said they have notified higher authorities to resolve the crisis.

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Local fishers repair their nets before they head out into the Kalabardar River. The photo was taken in the Vhenduria area of Barishal Sadar upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Three die from electrocution

UNB, Dhaka

Three people including two members of a family died from electrocution in Gaibandha yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Abdal Hossain, Milon Mia and Mosharraf Hossain.

Shaghata Police Station OC Badsha Alam said Milon of Kamaler Para village came in contact with a live electric wire while he was removing dry leaves from the roof in Shaghata in the afternoon.

Hearing his screams, Milon's uncle Abdal tried to save him, but he too got electrocuted.

Another person Mosharraf also tried to save them and also got electrocuted.

Lightning kills BGB member

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) member was killed in a lightning strike while patrolling the Roumari border in Kurigram yesterday.

Four others, including a BGB habildar, two sepoys and an Ansar member, were also injured in the incident that took place at Kauniachar-Khetarchar border area in Roumari upazila.

The deceased is Riyad Hossain, 32, of Danthanga BGB Camp under Jamalpur 35 BGB Battalion.

The injured are Havildar Md Jasim, 52; Sepoy Nadim Islam, 28; Sepoy Shahin Islam, 28; and Ansar member Ferdous Hossain, 36.

Subedar Md Farid, commander of Dantbhanga BGB Camp, confirmed the incident.



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তারিখ ১৩/০৮/২০২৫ খ্রিষ্ট

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ID	Title of Works
1105049	Construction of One Storied Ansar Barrack at Ghatai 132/33 kV Grid Sub-Station, GMD Kalikair, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC.

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www.moef.gov.bd

স্মারক নং: ২২, ০০, ০০০, ০৬৬, ৩১, ০০১, ২৫, ১০০
তারিখ ০১ জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১৪৩২
১৫ মে, ২০২৫

প্রজ্ঞাপন

পরিবেশ, প্রতিবেদ্য ও জীববৈচিত্র্য সংরক্ষণের স্থার্থে এবং জাতীয় ও আর্জাতিক অঞ্চলের পুরুণে সরকারি, বেসরকারি সংস্থা ও ব্যক্তি পর্যায়ে বৃক্ষরোপণ কর্মসূচীতে আগ্রাসী প্রাঞ্জিত ইউক্যালিপ্টাস এবং আকাশশব্দনি গাছের চারা রোপণ, উত্তোলন ও বিক্রয় নিষিক করা হলো। উভ আগ্রাসী প্রাঞ্জিত গাছের চারা রোপণের পরিবর্তে দেশিয় প্রজ্ঞাতির ফলজ, বনজ ও ঔষধি গাছের চারা রোপণ করে বনায়ন করতে হবে।

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তুষার কুমার পাল
উপসচিব
ফোন: ৫৫০০৩১২
ইমেইল: forest@moef.gov.bd

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
E-4/B, Agargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
Phone: 880-2-22221833-33 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

e-GP Tender Notice (Goods)

PKSF invites e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No	Description	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Opening Date & Time
1099255	Procurement of Office Equipment (40 nos. Desktop Computer, 32 nos. Laptop, 10 nos. B/W Laser Printer, 02 nos. Auto-Feed Scanner, 05 nos. Portable SSD, 07 nos. Video Conference System) under SMART Project of PKSF; Package no- PKSF/SMART/G-08	15-05-2025 & 12:30 PM	19-06-2025 & 14:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Ziauddin Iqbal
Senior General Manager (General Services)

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TENDER NOTICE

01. Sealed tenders are invited from bona-fide vendors for Supply and Installation of Air Conditioner at Karwan Bazar Branch, Babu Bazar Branch of BASIC Bank Limited.

02. The participating companies must have at least 5 years proven experience of successfully Supplying, Installing, Testing and Commissioning of Air Conditioners in any Scheduled Bank / Bangladesh Bank or must have previous record of successfully Supplying, Installing, Testing and Commissioning of Air Conditioners in BASIC Bank Limited. Copy of previous work orders must be supplied along with the tender as proof in this regard.

03. A pay order of Tk. 50,000/- (Five thousand Taka) has to be submitted with the tender in the name of BASIC Bank Limited, Head Office, Dhaka as earnest money. Earnest money can be forfeited for reasons mentioned in the tender schedule.

04. The tender document may be obtained from Common Services Division (Sena Kalyan Bhaban, 5th floor, 195 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000) of BASIC Bank Limited between 10:00 A.M. and 05:00 P.M. of all working days at a cost of Tk.1,000/- (Non-Refundable) only. No tender document will be sold after 05:00 P.M. of 02/06/2025.

05. Sealed tenders have to be dropped in the tender box kept at Common Services Division (Sena Kalyan Bhaban, 5th floor, 195 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000) of BASIC Bank Limited within 03/06/2025 by 03:00 P.M., and the tenders will be opened at 03:30 P.M. on the same day in presence of bidders, if any.

06. Other terms and conditions can be found in the tender document.

Deputy General Manager
Common Services Division

এসেন্সিয়াল ড্রাগস কোম্পানী লিমিটেড
৩৯৫-৩৯৭, তেজগাঁও শিল্প এলাকা
চাকা-১২০৮।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ইতিমিল নিম্নোক্ত আইটেমটি প্রকৃত প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারীদের (সহস্রাংশ ব্যবসার সহিত জড়িত) নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করছে :-

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্র নং ও তারিখ	বিবরণ	পরিমাণ
০১।	ইতিমিল/ক্রয়/ছানায়/দরপত্র/২০২৫/১৮৫ তারিখ: ১৫/০৫/২০২৫ইঠ।	Benzyl Benzoate BP (সিডিউল মোতাবেক।)	৫,০০০ কেজি
সিকিউরিটি/ আনেক্স মালি	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরয়েগ্য)	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়
২.৫%	টাকা ১,২৫০.০০ প্রতি সেট	২৫/০৫/২০২৫ইঠ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটকা	২৫/০৫/২০২৫ইঠ বেলা ১২.১৫ ঘটকা

সকল কার্যবিসে অফিস চালাকীন সময়ে উপরোক্ত কার্যালয় হাইতে শর্ত ও নিয়মাবলীসহ দরপত্র ড্রয় করা যাইবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, যাহারে ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন নাই তাহাদের দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণ করার প্রয়োগেন নাই।

দরপত্র খোলার দিনে কোন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হইবে না। কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা স্বত্ত্বালক্ষণ করেন।

মহাব্যবস্থাপক, প্রক্রিয়ামেট (চলতি দায়িত্ব)
পক্ষেষণ ব্যবস্থা পরিচালক।

সাইজ: ৪ (কলাম X ৪ ইঞ্চি)

US close to a nuclear deal with Iran

Says Trump

REUTERS, Dubai

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that the United States was getting very close to securing a nuclear deal with Iran, and Tehran had "sort of" agreed to the terms.

"We're in very serious negotiations with Iran for long term peace," Trump said on a tour of the Gulf, according to a shared pool report by AFP.

"We're getting close to maybe doing a deal without having to do this... there (are) two steps to doing this, there is a very, very nice step and there is the violent step, but I don't want to do it the second way," he said. An Iranian source familiar with the negotiations said there were still gaps to bridge in the talks with the United States.



Palestinians flee for cover as an Israeli strike hits the Hmeid family's home in Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, yesterday. No humanitarian assistance has been delivered to Gaza since March 2, and a global hunger monitor has warned that half a million people face starvation in Gaza.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia-Ukraine talks at 'logjam': Rubio

REUTERS, Antalya

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio yesterday said the only way a breakthrough will happen in the efforts to end Russia's war in Ukraine would be through direct talks between President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, after Moscow sent a second-tier team to talk in Turkey.

Rubio, who spoke to reporters in Antalya, said he would travel to Istanbul for meetings today with Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and a Ukrainian delegation, but said he did not have high expectations for the talks.

"I don't think we're going to have a breakthrough here until the president (Trump) and President Putin interact directly on this topic," Rubio said, echoing earlier comments from Trump.

The top US diplomat described the current state of the talks to end the war as a "logjam," and said Trump was the only person who can break it.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had travelled to Turkey after Putin proposed talks there, before the Russian president decided against travelling to the talks himself.

When asked if any efforts were underway to bring Trump and Putin together, Rubio said Trump was going to make decisions once his Middle East trip ends.

AGENCIES

India and Pakistan yesterday accused each other of failing to control their nuclear weapons, calling on the world to monitor their neighbour's arsenal just days after their most serious military confrontation in two decades.

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Pakistan's nuclear arsenal should be under the surveillance of the UN's atomic energy agency, while Islamabad said the international community should investigate a "black market" in India.

The latest conflict between India and Pakistan had sparked global concerns that it could spiral into a full-blown war before a ceasefire was brokered on Saturday, reports AFP.

"I wanted to raise this question for the world: are nuclear weapons safe in the hands of a rogue and

irresponsible nation?" Singh told troops at a base in Srinagar in Indian-administered Kashmir.

"I believe that Pakistan's atomic weapons should be brought under the surveillance of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency)," Singh added.

In a statement hours later, Pakistan's foreign minister said the IAEA should instead probe "the repeated theft and illicit trafficking incidents involving nuclear and radioactive material in India".

"These incidents also suggest the existence of a black market for sensitive, dual-use materials inside India," it added.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said yesterday that hostilities between Pakistan and India were

settled, after he urged the two countries to focus on trade instead of war.

He told US troops at a base in Qatar during a Gulf tour that Pakistan and India were happy with that.

Pakistan's PM Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday evening invited India to a comprehensive dialogue to address all contentious issues, including the Kashmir dispute and the water distribution, between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, reports Dawn.

The latest military conflict between the South Asian neighbours spiralled alarmingly on Saturday and there were brief fears that nuclear arsenals might come into play as Pakistan's military said a top body overseeing its nuclear weapons would meet. But the Pakistani defence minister said no such meeting was scheduled.

NUCLEAR ARSENALS' SAFETY Rivals trade blame

INDO-PAK TENSION

1. দরপত্র দলিল বিভাগের অন্যান্য অফিস

জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, লক্ষ্মীপুর।

জেলা প্রশাসক এবং কার্যালয়, লক্ষ্মীপুর।</

Let's not normalise VC removal culture

Grievance redress, accountability a must, but so is academic stability

Given how politicised and unaccountable the institution of vice-chancellorship in public universities has become over the years, today's VCs may rightly feel unlucky to inherit an office burdened by a legacy of deep distrust and poor governance. Without the politico-administrative backing their predecessors enjoyed—which often made them immune to calls for resignation or removal, however justified—the position today is as exposed as it is constrained. We're seeing its effects now at Dhaka University, where the VC is facing pressure to resign following the murder of a student affiliated with the BNP's student wing, amid frustration over the administration's perceived inaction to ensure campus safety.

Not long ago, it was the turn of KUET and Barishal University, whose VCs and deputies were removed following similar protests. Previously, the principal of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute was removed amid protests by polytechnic students. These developments cannot be seen in isolation from the broader trend of unrest seen in public and, to some extent, private universities since the July uprising, which seems to have opened the floodgates to years of suppressed tensions and grievances. At KUET, for instance, where the stalemate still persists, the VC removal saga was actually a side story to a larger crisis that has, since February 18, seen a breathless sequence of violent clashes, demonstrations, campus/dormitory closures, break-ins, student suspensions, and—to cap it all off—an unthinkable face-off between students and teachers. Similar disruptions have occurred in many colleges and universities over the last nine months, most recently at JNU, where a platform of students and teachers has just declared a shutdown.

One reason for such turmoil on campuses could be the students' growing demand for fairness and parity, but also their newfound power of mobilisation—making them opt for disruptive protests often as a first rather than last response, thus shrinking the space for negotiation and compromise. It is little wonder that this unsustainable, pressure-cooker atmosphere would also be directed at the VCs and principals. To be clear, no one is above reproach or accountability if there is reason for it. And VCs, as heads of universities, must answer for any administrative failure or irregularity. But it is equally crucial to insulate the process of accountability from manipulative or unjust pressure. The mass resignations of VCs occurring after the uprising could at least be partly justified by their perceived connection with the ousted regime—under which VCs rarely resigned. But should we make up for it by sacking them without following due process?

We cannot normalise the tendency of forcing VC removals—like so many other decisions that have been forced following student protests in post-uprising Bangladesh—as it will only further jeopardise the academic and administrative functions of educational institutions. Students are demanding greater accountability from those in power, including at their universities. This should be addressed through reforms aimed at rebuilding trust and establishing robust mechanisms for resolving grievances and ensuring accountability of officials, where necessary. But students—and teachers—must also give due process a chance and help to resolve, not worsen, any undesirable situation.

Address Khulna's water crisis urgently

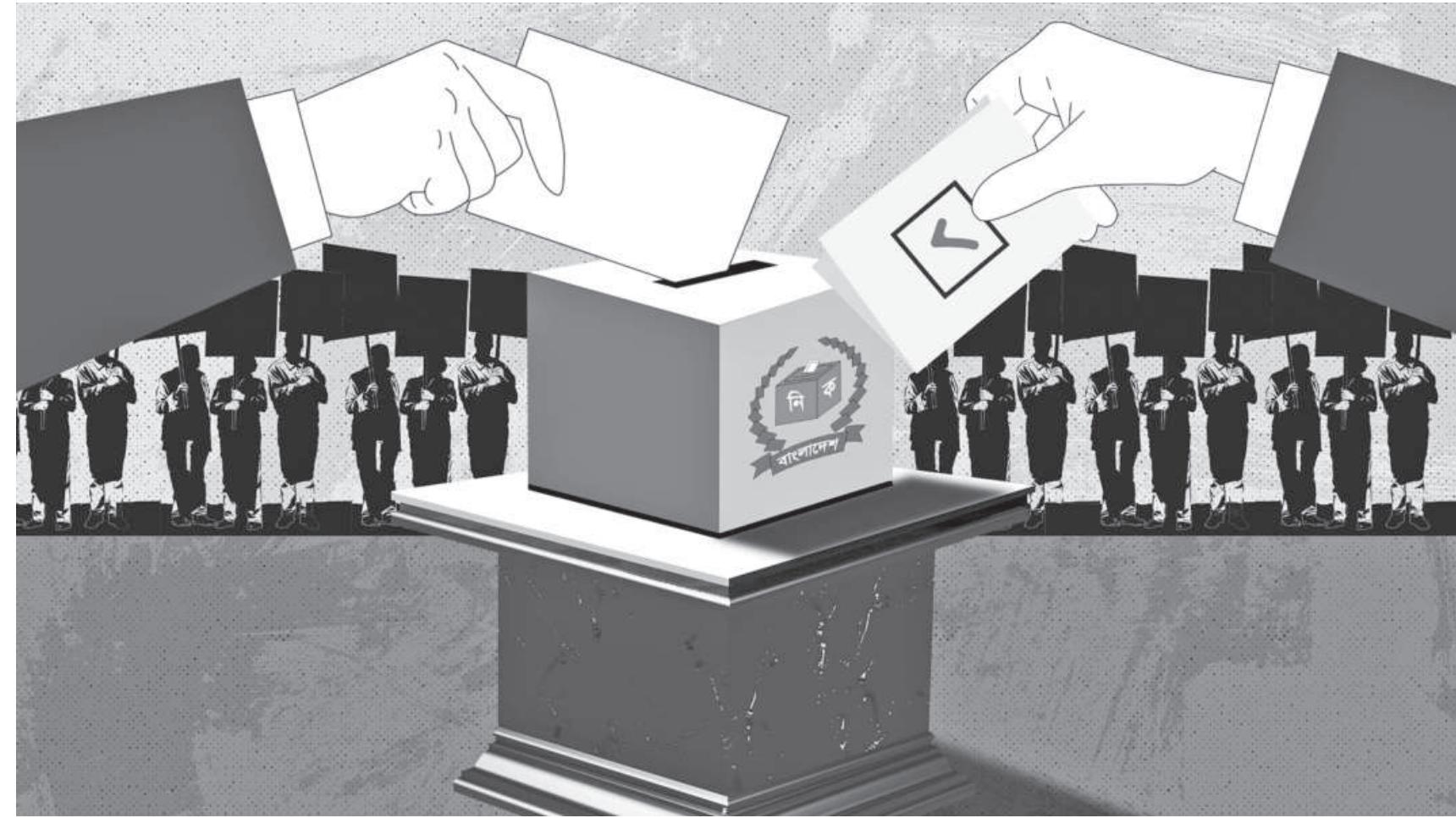
Water management by relevant authorities overall must improve

We would like to draw the attention of the relevant authorities to the deepening water crisis across Khulna and its neighbouring districts. Reportedly, 85 percent of the 101,350 hand pumps in the Khulna division are non-functional, including 28,452 in Khulna district alone. The situation is similarly dire in Jashore, where two thirds of the 24,303 tube wells are unusable.

With the vast majority of hand pumps in Khulna not working, people are being forced to travel long distances and queue for hours alongside hundreds of others to collect water. In some areas, the situation is so severe that only a single functioning tube well remains, serving as the sole safe water source for several nearby villages. In recent years, many previously functional hand pumps have dried up—a trend that appears to be accelerating. Experts and officials from the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) attribute this crisis to excessive groundwater extraction, low rainfall, a lack of water retention structures, climate change, and increasing salinity intrusion. According to them, hand-operated tube wells stop functioning when the water table falls below 26 feet. When it drops to between 30 and 35 feet, even motor pumps fail to extract water. At those depths, only submersible pumps can draw water.

According to the DPHE, the groundwater level in the Khulna region ranged from 18 to 22 feet during March and April of 2015-16. But today, it has dropped to between 24 and 32 feet in parts of the southwestern region. Similarly, the water level has reportedly fallen below 30 to 35 feet in areas of Jashore Sadar, Bagharpura, Jhikargacha, and Sharsha. Although submersible pumps are being installed in some of the worst-affected areas, and Tara No. 6 tube wells and centrifugal pumps are being deployed in places where the water level has fallen below 30 feet, the pace of implementation appears wholly inadequate. This indicates that the authorities have failed to grasp the severity of the crisis and the suffering of the people, which is unacceptable. It is high time the authorities addressed this growing crisis with the seriousness it demands, accelerating the installation of more advanced water pumps.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that the continued and rapid extraction of groundwater is completely unsustainable. Therefore, the government must not only prevent further damage to the region's water retention structures but also ensure their restoration. In collaboration with experts, it must identify and implement additional measures to address this crisis and guarantee long-term water security for the people in the region.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

What are we building after dismantling the AL regime?



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

After removing the oppressive and corrupt Hasina government, we were supposed to restore democracy, end all sorts of discrimination, give the country honest and accountable governance, freedom, rights, an efficient and corruption-free bureaucracy, and many other things. But we are doing so?

We were angry at Sheikh Hasina because she subverted democracy, establishing which was our dream from the very inception of Bangladesh. We rejected her because of the arrogance and arbitrariness of her person. She totally lost our confidence when people did not matter to her. She failed to sense the people's pulse when a wall of corruption disconnected her party and the people. Finally, she lost power when, instead of listening to the students and the general people, she opted to shoot them down—at least 1,400 of them, with a far higher number of injured, according to UN findings. With all said and done, it was Sheikh Hasina's destruction of democracy that caused her fall.

Has anything happened recently in Bangladesh that can strengthen our faith that we are moving towards democracy? Is there anything in the present governance process that reflects the people's views, save for those who are adept in the use of social media, possess extraordinary agility to mobilise, can gather quickly, assert their views powerfully, make threats to the government, give ultimatum and see the government wilting under threats? We repeat, we have successfully destroyed Hasina's power monopolising and freedom-stifling regime. But what have we replaced it with?

Democracy does not seem to be our focus today. Because if it were, then shouldn't we have been talking about elections more? Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus keeps referring to the time frame of December 2025 to June 2026. He has been doing so from the beginning. If he prefers June '26, then he should clearly say so and move in that direction. The debate over the date should now be put to rest. It is harming the credibility of a person we trust and respect, especially because it is well-known that some of his cabinet members are far too enamoured with their present positions, so much so that they want to continue in power, for which they want the election postponed under the guise of reforms. If we look into their respective ministries, have we seen any reforms or even the slightest change in the methods of operation, or some suggestions in this regard to the cabinet?

The six major reform commissions submitted their reports on January 15 this year. Yesterday marked four

months since their submission. Shouldn't we have had a clearer picture on the agreed reforms by now? We accept that reaching consensus is more complicated than compiling reports. However, we think a clearer picture should have emerged by now because time is of essence, and four months is not too short a period. Yes, there are many political parties, but the ones that have large public support are few. So the situation is simpler than it appears to be. Reaching some sort of agreement on reforms is directly linked with holding the election, and hence the slow pace of reaching it gives birth to uneasy questions.

The interim government must be aware of the extent of its mandate and solidity of its tenure. The mandate was for reforms and a speedy transition from an unelected government to an

raised is about the lack of transparency in this whole process. The chief adviser, of course, determines when he needs additional help. But after his decision, what is the selection process? No public announcement is made and suddenly we are told so and so has joined the government from so and so place, with such and such responsibility. There are instances of old boys network working here.

Can Prof Yunus run his time-bound and agenda-laden government with people with such diverse and disparate backgrounds, some of whom have little experience of running a government? I fully acknowledge their expertise and respect them for it, but unless they have experience in navigating through our bureaucratic web, know how to deal with various groups with different agendas, and have personal exposure in handling our specific and sometimes not-so-cooperative cultural traits, they cannot be effective policymakers and much less implementers.

Others who have experience of running a government are also not showing the level of effectiveness that is required at the moment. Opening any newspaper or TV channel—of course, we are the villains—will show how urban life has become

community, who gave us around \$23 billion last year and nearly the same amount for many years, deserve an adviser of their own? Prioritising indeed. Another adviser has power, energy and mineral resources, road transport and bridges, and railways. Can one person effectively serve so many vital sectors? We have a foreign affairs adviser, a special envoy to

The six major reform commissions submitted their reports on January 15 this year. Yesterday marked four months since their submission. Shouldn't we have had a clearer picture on the agreed reforms by now? We accept that reaching consensus is more complicated than compiling reports. However, we think a clearer picture should have emerged by now because time is of essence, and four months is not too short a period.



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in a meeting with the advisers of the interim government.

FILE PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

elected one. Prof Yunus did a brilliant job of formulating significant reforms and putting them before the nation and the political parties. And he did so in good time.

However, as for the solidity of its tenure, the interim government doesn't seem to be as aware of its weaknesses as it should be. The only person who can be said to have some sort of people's support is Prof Yunus. He is the only one who, without any voting process, can be said to have been accepted by the people to govern the country for a specific period. But what about the rest of his cabinet members? What sort of public acceptability do they enjoy? It is widely known that when Prof Yunus took the oath of office, he did not personally know many of his cabinet members. In the present cabinet, there are some who have had a long record of public service and professional reputation. But there are others who are not as well-known. Some of them were flown in from abroad and imposed on us without adequate information.

The question that is now being

unpredictable and unaffordable and rural life unsafe.

Without questioning anyone's abilities, a look at the portfolio distribution among the advisers gives us an idea of the existing chaos. We have given the task of home affairs—which includes internal security—and agriculture to the same person. Is it doable? Isn't home affairs far too complex and a 24/7 job? When does he have time for agriculture, which is one of the three pillars on which we are surviving, the other two being RMG and remittance? Don't farmers deserve an adviser? Then we put law and expatriate welfare ministries together. As a result, we have a country full of journalists accused of murder, and the legal system has been "weaponised" to harass and intimidate a section of the citizens and extort money. The law and expatriate welfare adviser is currently visiting Malaysia and has urged the workers to "please directly communicate with me" and collect his email and phone number. Institution-building, indeed. Don't the expatriate

the chief adviser on international affairs, and a special assistant on foreign affairs. Do we need three? What have they done so far? For the first time in the country's history, we have a national security adviser with the additional task of advising the chief adviser on defence matters, and Rohingya affairs. His experience on national security and defence matters are totally unknown to the people of this country. His initiative on the "humanitarian corridor," which he prefers to call a "channel," has seriously raised justifiable concerns throughout the country and alarmed all defence establishments, especially as they were bypassed in whatever negotiations or talks that have taken place so far.

What are we to make of all this? We think the present reality and the government's inability to handle everyday affairs, especially on law and governance, give us the answer. As matter stands now, it is Prof Yunus's personal prestige, his well-known commitment, people's trust, and the international community's confidence in him that's helping us overcome the present challenges.

We should not take this for granted for too long. The best option is to get ourselves an elected government and restart our democratic journey, however flawed. We are aware that there exists a lot of doubt about our political parties' sincerity and ability to serve the people well. We also doubt their trustworthiness as they have a record of promising the moon and delivering very little. But the only way to find that out would be to elect one. Continuing with an unelected government based on one person's prestige, trust, and goodwill is not a way for a nation to proceed. And this is something a man like Prof Yunus should not permit for long.

ANTI-TERRORISM ACT

New amendment can be used to assault free speech



Taqbir Huda is a human rights lawyer, currently pursuing graduate studies at Harvard Law School. He can be reached at taqbirhuda@gmail.com.

TAQBIR HUDA

In an extraordinary turning point in Bangladesh's political history, the interim government has ordered a "temporary suspension" of the Awami League (AL), the country's oldest political party. The interim government amended the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009 to authorise the temporary suspension of all activities of any entity, and this amendment provided the legal basis for AL's suspension. The move followed a resurgence of student-led protests after an attack on Hasnat Abdullah (a leader of the July uprising), which was blamed on AL supporters. Demands for tougher action against the AL intensified as political parties, student organisations, and pressure groups joined demonstrations calling for a ban on the party. The government claims the amendment was necessary to ensure accountability for the atrocities committed during those protests and to ensure national security. Yet, the implications of this sweeping expansion of state power are chilling for free speech and the right to protest for at least two deeply troubling reasons.

First, the state now has the power to "temporarily suspend" any entity that it believes is involved in terrorist activities in addition to its earlier power to "prohibit" an organisation under Section 18. The sweeping powers it had against a prohibited organisation (under Section 20) is now automatically extended to temporary suspended entities as well. These powers include shutting down their offices, blocking and freezing bank accounts and other assets, prohibiting members from leaving the country, confiscating their belongings, and prohibiting any public displays of support for the entities.

Therefore, the state can now paralyse a party or organisation immediately through the softer sounding process of "temporary suspension," without needing to "prohibit" it. However, how temporary is a temporary suspension? We do not know because the amendment does not set any defined time limits, which means it can remain indefinite in practice, even if it is rhetorically called "temporary."

Second, and perhaps most chillingly, the amendment drastically expands the state's powers to prohibit actions in support of the prohibited/suspended entity under Section 20(e), which now stipulates, "The publication or printing of any press statement, or any kind of promotion through mass media, online, social media platforms, or any other means, or organising or participating in any procession, meeting, gathering, or press conference in favour of, on behalf of, or in support of the said entity shall be prohibited."

This prohibition must be read with Section 9 of the act, which criminalises those who support a prohibited entity with up to seven years of imprisonment and fine. Essentially, if anything anyone says or does can be interpreted as being in support of even a temporarily suspended entity, then it appears they may be punished with up to seven years of imprisonment.

Now, of course, anyone supporting an organisation credibly suspected of promoting terrorism should be stopped. However, the worry is that the wording in both the original Anti-Terrorism Act and the amendments just made to it are so broad and vague that there is nothing in the law to prevent repressive provisions such as 20(e) from potentially covering the conduct of not only all members of a temporarily suspended entity itself, but also journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens whose dissent (even on social media) might be interpreted as being "in support" of the entity.

The Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009 was one of the first draconian laws introduced by the AL government to test the boundaries of state power after taking office. It granted sweeping punitive powers under the banner of counterterrorism and set the template for later repressive laws justified in the name of fighting propaganda (Digital Security Act, 2018), drugs (Narcotics Act, 2018), and other perceived threats.

While we may have every faith that a government we trust will only use such powers against those who pose a real terrorist threat, the point is that the law is broad enough for the reverse to be true as well. And draconian laws have a tendency to outlast both trustworthy and untrustworthy governments.

So, I trust clear legal limits more than I trust any government with unchecked powers. The real question is not what one hopes a repressive law will be used for, but what it has the inbuilt potential to be used for.

Aside from the threats to free speech and right to protest outlined above, the decision to temporarily suspend the AL under the Anti-Terrorism Act sets an extremely dangerous precedent for other reasons as well. When a party, like the AL, has perpetrated widespread human rights violations, the correct course of action is electoral rejection and individual legal accountability for their unlawful acts, not pre-emptive and blanket suspension under the pretext of national security, a justification that can and has too often served as a blunt instrument for erasing political opposition.

The claim that AL should be banned because, as a governing party, it ordered killings and human rights violations,

and many within the party carried them out, nevertheless constitutes collective punishment despite having intuitive appeal. Collective sanctions directly violate the foundational principle of individual criminal responsibility under both international human rights law and international criminal law, which protect against guilt by association and demand that punishment be based solely on proven individual culpability

vital role in Bangladesh's democratic history, but respecting their courage does not mean endorsing blanket party bans that risk undermining the very legacy of the revolution for which so many students gave their blood, and that could dangerously destabilise the democratic order they fought to build. The irony is inescapable: the very fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and assembly which student activists were

less restrictive means have been demonstrably insufficient.

Finally, the argument that legal accountability must precede political participation falsely assumes that banning an entire party is the best route to ensuring legal accountability of its members facing trial. In fact, global experience suggests the opposite: exclusion fuels grievances, delegitimises transitions, and often leads to further cycles



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

before an independent tribunal. Historically, collective punishment has not been an effective tool to end cycles of violence; rather, it has institutionalised revenge politics as governance strategy, normalising authoritarian restrictions on fundamental freedoms and stripping transitional justice of legitimacy.

Any comparison to transitional justice mechanisms in post-apartheid South Africa, post-conflict Liberia, and Bosnia is misapplied. These contexts involved extraordinary circumstances: genocide, ethnic cleansing, or civil war. Bangladesh's current situation, though severe, does not equate to those legally defined thresholds of mass atrocity requiring radical party dissolution. Even in those cases, restrictions on political participation were applied narrowly and temporarily, with clear international oversight and often as part of negotiated settlements. No comparable consensus, legal determination, or process has occurred in Bangladesh to trigger that exceptional threshold. Moreover, post-conflict frameworks such as the South African TRC were specific to their contexts and never intended as universal templates for banning parties in transitional democracies struggling with authoritarian relapse.

Student movements have indeed played a

brutally punished for exercising in the July uprising—and which the AL government violently sought to suppress—are now again at risk through this indiscriminate measure. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Bangladesh is a party, such a restriction requires rigorous deliberation for legality, necessity, and proportionality, in order to ensure that blanket prohibitions are an absolute last resort.

Instead of imposing a blanket ban, the Bangladeshi government could have ensured the security of July movement activists, plaintiffs, and witnesses through targeted and rights respecting measures consistent with the ICCPR. These include prosecuting individual AL leaders who are legitimately accused of violations, imposing targeted restrictions on violent factions rather than the entire party, regulating specific activities posing risks, deploying impartial security forces, and promoting political dialogue to prevent violence. Each of these alternatives would address legitimate security concerns while minimising infringements on the freedoms of association, expression, and political participation. A blanket ban is the most extreme form of restriction and, under international law, permissible only when such

of instability. Transitional justice scholarship warns precisely against the temptation to use structural guilt to dissolve political opposition wholesale. The burden must always remain on proving individual responsibility, not collective organisational guilt.

Banning a major political party with an entrenched history and well established voter base risks transforming an already wounded democracy into a vengeful exclusionary system, creating martyrs out of perpetrators and further polarising an already fractured society. True democratic renewal requires dismantling the apparatus of repression while maintaining the principle of political pluralism, without which no democratic rebirth can sustainably take root.

The use of the Anti-Terrorism Act to justify the ban on the AL exposes the perverse circularity of revenge politics in Bangladesh. The same repressive legislation that the AL once crafted to crush its political opponents under the banner of fighting terrorism is now being used against it with renewed zeal.

Yet, as philosopher and civil rights activist Audre Lorde warned, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change."

Finding the men in pink

Raffat Binte Rashid is editor of *My Dhaka* at The Daily Star.

RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

I follow a food vlogger, and in one of her posts, which was not food-related, she mentioned something in line with men wearing pink. It hit a chord in me, although I was not thinking about fashion because at that time my head was full of thoughts like "men in pink and women in blue."

The colours for me spoke about breaking prescribed gender roles. I was toying with the stereotypes about masculinity and femininity. Things like what a man should do and how a woman should behave, how their roles are all dictated, etc.

The stereotypes of men as the sole breadwinners and protectors, and women as only caregivers and homemakers, were not going well with my emotional resonance. There is nothing wrong with men being supportive of their female counterparts. If they respect each other's position in the social milieu of how they live, think, and act, the question of dominance does not arise.

But it is undeniable that traditional power structures keep women as subordinates, and men want it to stay that way.

We detest women
The blatant public displeasure for women who are unafraid to challenge societal norms, the outcry and resistance against any effort to promote women's rights, is downright unacceptable. The fiasco regarding the proposed recommendations made by the

teachings of moral righteousness. People will treat these incidents as free passes to look down on women and cause harm."

This expression of disgust by them made me happy to know that there are men in pink or men who support women's rights.

Nahar thinks that these groups who have made such vitriolic statements against women often interpret gender equality initiatives as a direct threat to their control over societal norms, especially those that define and

society at large," explains Sirajul Hossain, a social researcher and managing director at Cybernetic Systems Ltd.

It stems from a very critical and internalised misogyny where the mother has subconsciously adopted and applied sexist beliefs and stereotypes learned from society onto themselves, other women, and her children.

"Women who fall victims to internalised misogyny are now minimising the value of

The blatant public displeasure for women who are unafraid to challenge societal norms, the outcry and resistance against any effort to promote women's rights, is downright unacceptable. The fiasco regarding the proposed recommendations made by the Women's Affairs Reform Commission in Bangladesh, followed by the almost unanimous reaction or consensus of both men and women in certain strata of our society towards this resistance, has been quite a shock for me.

restrict women's roles. Their response reflects a deeper anxiety about losing authority and influence over public discourse and private life, particularly regarding women's autonomy, rights, and access to resources and decision-making power.

Inbuilt misogyny
The beating of a woman's effigy simply displayed a perverted hatred towards women, and strangely, women too are hating on women.

Our societal culture declares progressive, smart, independent, successful, and bold women and young girls as "bad."

"Stereotyping of women as 'good girl' and 'bad girl' is planted in both our sons' and

daughters' minds from a very young age, initially by their mothers and then by the women, mistrusting women, and believing gender bias in favour of their male child. She portrays a picture of good and bad girls from her sense of prejudice and influences her son to find a good wife who would protect the family. And the men, on the other hand, have taken it as their moral responsibility to punish the bad girls," Hossain continues.

Looking for moderate perceptions
Monjur Nahar believes that the first impact of such violence is on women and girls, who feel increasingly helpless and vulnerable. This pervasive sense of insecurity has severely restricted their mobility, especially after sunset, she adds, as they are afraid to leave their homes. The culture of fear is becoming deeply embedded, creating significant constraints on their ability to lead normal,

dignified lives.

"In such an environment, women's access to education, employment, and health services is also being compromised. Their participation in public life will shrink, and their voices will be silenced. This atmosphere not only violates basic human rights but also reinforces harmful gender norms and deepens social inequalities."

She also points out that the commission has proposed several critical aspects of women's development regarding property rights, access to healthcare, and participation in economic activities, which are essential for women's empowerment.

Nahar suggested a principled stand, confirming our commitment to non-discrimination and not capitulating to regressive pressures, especially when they contradict the values of equality and justice.

Bangladesh is a signatory to international human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Dismantling any commission dedicated to women's rights would violate these obligations, says Nahar. Not to mention that it will tarnish the country's international image as a development success story with notable gains in gender equality.

I feel my city Dhaka's society at large has always been liberal, accommodating, and courteous; outright hatred is not something Dhaka people carry with them. Generally, the core of Dhaka is moderate groups of people practising their own beliefs. Moderate perceptions, I believe, are denouncing extremist violence, be it political, religious, or

I strongly believe that most of the residents of my city have risen above rigid patriarchal norms. I need to find Dhaka's men in pink and women in blue. I know they are out there.

Rihanna returns with new single 'Friend of Mine'

Pop icon Rihanna is set to make her long-awaited return to music with a new single titled *Friend of Mine*, marking her first release in three years. The track will feature in the upcoming *Smurfs* movie.

The singer recently unveiled the trailer for the animated film, offering fans a brief glimpse of the song. Though the snippet is short, it suggests an Afrobeats-inspired rhythm, with Rihanna singing, "You're looking like a friend of mine." The teaser opens with the artiste dancing in the studio while recording the track.

Friend Of Mine will be Rihanna's first single since *Lift Me Up* (2022), from the *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* soundtrack. Her last full-length album, *Anti*, was released in 2016.



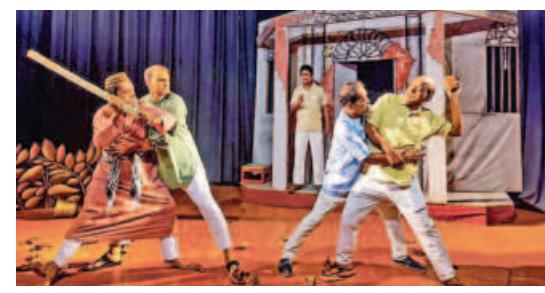
Nine-day theatre festival begins in Chattogram

The Chattogram Group Theatre Forum launches its nine-day festival *Natyam Sambhar 2025* on May 16 at the District Shilpkala Academy Auditorium under the theme "Ekshathe banchi, Ekshathe boli—Mancha Amader Shokti".

Featuring nine plays by seven troupes, performances begin daily at 7pm. The festival opens with Avant Garde Natyadal's *Fire* (May 16–17), followed by *Sara Rattir* (Proscenium Natya Dal), *Kobi* (Arindam), and *Asprishyo* (Kothok Theatre).

Theatre Workshop Chattogram presents *Antardaha* and *Ijot*, while Natyadhar performs *Pondit Bihar Bishwabidyalay*.

The event concludes May 24 with *Phool Kumari* by Uttaradhikar Natya Dal. Addressing themes from social injustice to intimate human struggles, the festival promises a vibrant showcase of contemporary Bangladeshi theatre.



TOM CRUISE receives standing ovation for 'Mission: Impossible' at Cannes

Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise was moved to tears after *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning* received a five-minute standing ovation following its world premiere at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival.

The film premiered at the Grand Théâtre Lumière on May 14, attended by Cruise, director Christopher McQuarrie, and co-stars including Hayley Atwell, Simon Pegg, and Angela Bassett. Clips on social media showed Cruise expressing gratitude with a hand on his heart.

A 40-piece orchestra opened the screening with the franchise's theme. Initially titled *Dead Reckoning – Part One*, the eighth instalment marks McQuarrie's continued directorial run.

The film also features Ving Rhames, Vanessa Kirby, and Henry Czerny, and is set to release in Indian theatres on May 17 in four languages.



NEWS

Who appoints CEO at Nagad now?

FROM PAGE 12

at Nagad. One major issue was a Tk 600 crore deficit created by issuing e-money without corresponding cash backing, an act considered a serious offence in the financial sector.

In another instance, unauthorised withdrawals totalling Tk 1,711 crore were reportedly made over the years through 41 distribution accounts

meant for government allowances.

The administrator's team had reported these findings to the director general of the Directorate of Posts.

Contacted, Tavir Mishuk, former managing director and CEO of Nagad, told The Daily Star that the court's stay on the activities of the central bank-appointed administrator effectively reinstated the previous

board, which then appointed an interim CEO.

Asked about his role in the appointment, Mishuk said he recommended Shafayet as CEO at the board's request.

He also claimed that the central bank-appointed management board is no longer valid following the court's stay order.

Bangladeshis in fear amid Tripoli unrest

FROM PAGE 12

Authority militia. Gunfire and clashes subsequently engulfed several parts of Tripoli on Monday.

Al Kikli was one of the capital's most influential militia leaders and had recently been involved in disputes with rival armed groups, including factions linked to the city of Misrata.

The Government of National Unity (GNU)'s internal affairs ministry urged residents to stay at home and avoid all movement, warning of further instability. Meanwhile, the education ministry suspended classes across Tripoli from Tuesday.

The GNU is Libya's provisional government, formed on March 10, 2021, to unify the country after years of political division and conflict.

Early Tuesday, the GNU's media platform announced that its defence

ministry had taken full control of the city's Abu Salim neighbourhood.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Ambassador Khairul Bashar said that while Gheniwa forces had been eliminated, another militia – Rada – had begun fighting with government forces.

On Wednesday, Al Jazeera reported that clashes had broken out between the Rada militia and the 444 Brigade, loyal to Prime Minister Abdul Hamid al-Dbeibah, in key areas of Tripoli, including the port.

The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) on Wednesday warned that the situation could "spiral out of control".

"UNSMIL reiterates its calls for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in all areas, allowing safe corridors for the evacuation of civilians trapped in intense conflict zones," the mission wrote on X (formerly

known as Twitter).

"Attacking and damaging civilian infrastructure, physically harming civilians, and jeopardising the lives and safety of the population may constitute crimes under international law. Those responsible will be held accountable for their actions," it added.

Asked whether any Bangladeshis had suffered casualties, Ambassador Khairul said there were reports of bullets striking the rooftops of residential buildings where some Bangladeshis live.

"However, as of yesterday, there were no casualties or injuries [of Bangladeshis] ... We are hoping for the fighting to stop."

There are around 20,000 Bangladeshis living in Libya – 10,000 in Tripoli and the rest in Benghazi. Benghazi, however, remains stable, he added.

Merit often took a back seat

FROM PAGE 12

Supreme Judicial Appointment Council; functions of its secretary; powers and functions of the council; and recommendations for appointment of judges of the Appellate Division of the SC respectively.

Earlier on January 21, the law ministry issued the ordinance containing the provision for establishing the seven-member Supreme Judicial Appointment Council led by the chief justice to select suitable persons for appointing judges to the SC's appellate and HC divisions.

In the full text of the judgment, the HC observed that the Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance, 2025, is desirable for a great interest of the nation.

The court said the president of Bangladesh has promulgated the ordinance to plug the loopholes in the present system with a view to eliminating favouritism or the impact of any political or party consideration in the matter of appointment of judges.

"Article 95 (1) of the constitution stipulates that the chief justice shall be appointed by the president, and the other judges shall be appointed by the president after consultation with the chief justice. Pursuant to the Ordinance, 2025, the Supreme Judicial Appointment Council has been established, consisting of individuals known for their integrity and independence, with a judicial background. The Council aims to ensure

scrutiny in judicial appointments, eliminating the influence of political or other extraneous considerations before recommending candidates to the president.

"Experience tells us that wrong appointments not only affect the image of the courts, they also undermine the confidence in, and respect for, the judiciary amongst the litigants, the members of the Bar and the ordinary people at large," the HC judges observed in the full text of the verdict.

Writ petitioner lawyer Ajmol, who went through the HC judgment, told The Daily Star that he was yet to decide about moving an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC verdict.

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Film producers demand fair revenue share from theatres



Several film producers in Dhaka convened at a restaurant in Gulshan 2 on Wednesday, May 14, to demand a fair share of cinema hall revenues. The meeting was prompted by a Prothom Alo report alleging that major theatres – such as Star Cineplex and Blockbuster Cinemas – deduct significant amounts under the pretext of AC maintenance, thereby depriving producers of their rightful earnings.

Calling the deductions "unjust", producers urged a revision of these charges and pressed for transparent revenue sharing from ticket sales. Producer Shahriar Shakil emphasised the need for unity among producers and called for open dialogue with theatre owners.

The meeting included key figures from the Eid release lineup, including Redoan Rony, Nusrat Imrose Tisha, Raihan Rafi, and others, who echoed the demand for a more equitable and accountable distribution system in the industry.

WHAT'S THE HAPS? 'Goppo Meets Cinema'

Stamford University will host *Goppo Meets Cinema* on May 17, featuring screenings of *Shunte Ki Pao!* and *Neel Mukut* by acclaimed filmmaker Kamar Ahmad Simon. The event will include a panel discussion on hybrid filmmaking and conclude with a Q&A session with the director, offering insight into his narrative style.

Date: Saturday | May 17, 2025

Time: 2 pm onwards

Venue: Stamford University Bangladesh



Kim Kardashian leads all-female legal drama 'All's Fair'



Kim Kardashian steps into her biggest scripted role yet in *All's Fair*, a new legal drama from renowned producer Ryan Murphy. The series follows a group of formidable female divorce lawyers who leave a male-led firm to start their own.

Described as bold, stylish, and emotionally layered, the show explores high-stakes courtroom battles and personal conflicts. Starring alongside Kardashian are Naomi Watts, Niecy Nash-Batts, Glenn Close, Judith Light, Teyana Taylor, Sarah Paulson, Grace Gummer, and a surprise appearance by Jessica Simpson.

7 of a family hurt in 'teen gang' attack

FROM PAGE 12

fleeing, they said.

Police suspect the gang had a prior conflict with some of the family members.

No arrests have been made so far, but several suspects from the nearby areas have been identified through CCTV footage, Inspector Hafizur said.

Filing of a case is underway, he added.

Season's first mangoes

FROM PAGE 12

weather conditions and their situation."

Sanaul Islam, a mango grower, said, "This year's yield is not significantly higher than last year. We hope the prices will remain good."

He said it was important to harvest mangoes at the right time to avoid chemical ripening practices.

Md Liton, another grower from the market, said, "Due to intense heat this year, mangoes ripened faster than usual. There hasn't been much rain either, so the fruit size is smaller and can't be left on the trees for too long."

Trader Mohammad Majel said, "Today's market looked promising. I sold Guti mangoes at Tk 1,200 per maund. Since harvesting has just started, the supply is still low, but we expect a surge from tomorrow [Friday]."

No classes in almost 3 months

FROM PAGE 1

asked 37 students to explain their conduct. Yesterday evening, the students submitted a joint response.

The teachers association said it would observe the situation over the weekend, and announce their next course of action on Sunday.

Professor Faruq Hossain, general secretary of the association, said, "The university administration is taking necessary steps. We are ready to return to classes. We hope classes will resume on Sunday. But it is difficult to say what will happen if a new complication arises."



BURI BHAIRAB RIVER

Crumbling bridge puts 50,000 lives at risk

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY,
from Narail

A wooden bridge over the Buri Bhairab River remains the only route for around 50,000 people commuting between the Afra area of Narail Sadar upazila and the Basundia area of Jashore Sadar upazila.

Built with wooden planks laid across two iron and 14 concrete pillars, the bridge is now in a severe state of disrepair.

Thousands of commuters from 16 villages in the two neighbouring upazilas continue to suffer daily while crossing the dangerously fragile structure.

A recent visit revealed that parts of the wooden planks have collapsed into the river, leaving large gaps. The absence of any guard railings on either side makes the bridge highly risky for both pedestrians and vehicles.

Warning signs at both ends of

the bridge prohibit motorcycles, loaded vans, trolleys, and nasimons. However, in the absence of any alternative route, these restrictions are often ignored.

Rahman Sheikh, a local, was seen pushing his motorcycle across. "You can't ride a bike across the bridge; it has to be pushed amid risk. When one bike is already on the bridge, another has to wait. If both go at once, they might fall into the river," he said.

Residents said eight villages in Sheikhatti union under Narail Sadar and another eight in Basundia union under Jashore Sadar rely on this bridge for their daily commute.

Previously, boats were the only means to cross the river, which posed serious risks, especially for students and workers. In 2012, locals built the bamboo and wooden bridge, about 100 metres long and 10 feet wide, with multiple repairs carried out since.

"The condition has become so dire now that a fatal accident could happen any time. Around 1,500 people cross it daily out of necessity," said Akkas Ali, another resident.

Joydeb Biswas, local fisherman, said, "Loaded vans can't cross the broken bridge. I have to carry fish in a basket on my head to the other side."

Bulbul Ahmed, former chairman of Sheikhatti Union Parishad, said a permanent bridge would greatly improve connectivity in the area.

Contacted, Biswajit Kumar Kundu, executive engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department in Narail, said a new bridge will be constructed under the Narail District Infrastructure Development Project.

"The project's survey work has been completed, and the design is currently in progress. Once the design is finalised, we will float a tender," he added.

Commission

FROM PAGE 3

EMERGENCY HEALTH FUND

The commission also proposed an Emergency Health Fund to allow rapid, coordinated and well-financed responses to any future pandemics or public health emergencies.

This fund would be automatically activated once a predefined risk threshold is crossed, enabling quick release of necessary funds.

Like the other funds, it would be jointly overseen by the health and finance ministries.

The commission cited examples from Vietnam and the African Union, stating that the government must establish such a fund to improve response times during public health crises, reduce deaths and economic losses, and boost the health sector's long-term financial and risk resilience.

DMP bans

FROM PAGE 3

Tribunals 1 and 2, and the area in front of the Judicial Administration Training Institute.

The move comes as students, teachers, and other stakeholders of Jagannath University, under the banner of Jagannath University Oikyo, continued their blockade for the second consecutive day at the Kakrai mosque intersection -- just steps away from the chief justice's residence -- pressing home a four-point demand.

They have vowed to continue their sit-in until the government gives a clear and official response.

Earlier, on May 9, the DMP banned public gatherings, processions, and rallies near the Secretariat, the chief adviser's official residence at the state guest house Jamuna, Kakrai mosque intersection, and nearby areas.

Previously, on March 13 this year, and on August 25 and 29 last year, similar restrictions were imposed around the Secretariat and the chief adviser's residence.

Despite these bans, multiple gatherings have continued to take place in these areas, according to

50 progressive groups extend

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their pivotal involvement. "Women have been systematically sidelined. We are protesting this exclusion and broader discrimination," said Shima.

She added that patriarchal forces are exploiting weak institutions while capitalism commodifies women and denies them social and economic security.

Citing attacks on sex workers last August, Shima alleged government failure to protect them from mob violence. She said women have repeatedly faced assault--including disruption of girls' football matches, harassment for smoking, forced religious conversions, and sexual violence against women and girls from ethnic communities.

"Instead of protecting the victims, the government is sheltering perpetrators," she alleged. Legal action came only

when social media outrage forced attention, she added.

Mushrefa Mishu, president of Garments Sramik Oikya Forum, said certain groups are misusing religion to justify women's oppression. "We will gather on Manik Mia Avenue to demand our rights," she said.

The 50 supporting organisations include:

Bangladesh Student Union, Democratic Student Council, Biplobi Chhatro Moitri, Samajtantrik Chhatro Front, Hill Women's Federation, TSU, CPB Women's Cell, Nari Mukti Kendra, Garments Sramik Oikya Forum, Biplobi Nari Forum, Garments Shromik Mukti Andolon, Bangladesh Garments Sramik Textile Federation, Bipronton, Udiichi, Charon Sanskritik Kendra, Adivasi Union, Cha Shramik Dosh Dofa Bastobayan Committee, Bostibashi Union, Samajtantrik

Mohila Forum, Garments Workers' Union, SPACE - A Foundation for Peace and Care, Doctors' Platform for People's Health, Bangladesh Hawkers' Union, Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra, Shaheed Asad Parishad, Ganosangskriti Kendra, Sanghoti Sanskritik Sangshad, Ronesh Dashgupta Film Society, Women Resource Network (CHT), Biggan Andolon Manch, Bangladesh Theatre, Bangladesh Nari Andolon, Dhaka Drama, Samaj Anushilon Kendra, Progoti Lekhok Sangha, Samaj Chinta Forum, Madol, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani Parishad, Bibortont, Niyagosthi, Songjogar, Dhaboman, Shramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad, Rickshaw Van Easy Bike Workers' Union, Biggan Charcha Kendra, Health Service Forum, Biplobi Nari Mukti, Jonobashya, Biplobi Chhatra Andolon, and Bonhi Shikha.

Patchwork protections fail

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stretches between Muradpur and Bahaddarhat, remain dangerously open and unprotected. The situation is similar on the Muradpur to Sholashahar road as well.

AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF TRAGEDIES

The port city bears a grim tally of at least 10 lives lost to its open drains and unprotected canals since 2017 in a recurring tragedy that intensifies with each monsoon.

Vegetable trader Saleh Ahmed, 50, slipped into the Muradpur Canal's swift current on August 25, 2021, following heavy rain, never to be found despite days of frantic searching by fire service divers.

The same year, on September 27, university student Seherin Mahbub Sadia met a similar fate, falling into an open drain in the Agrabad area.

The pattern repeated on April 18 this year, when six-month-old Sehrish drowned into the Hizra Khal at Kapasgola. Her

body was recovered after a heart-breaking 14-hour search.

Residents stressed that waterlogging during the monsoon heightens the risk of such incidents.

Aiyub Ali, a resident of Bahaddarhat, said, "During monsoon, the roads and drains become indistinguishable for people, and accidents become inevitable."

REPEATED SURVEYS, NO RESULT

Following Seherin's tragic death in 2021, the CCC conducted a survey in October of the same year, identifying a network of death traps".

According to CCC sources, a list of risky drains and canals in the city was compiled afterwards, which included a total of 57 canals (161km) and 765km of drains.

Of this, 19.23km of canal banks were without safety fences, while there were open drains in 5,527 places.

Yet, three and a half years later, comprehensive protection remains elusive.

ACCC-CDA coordination meeting on combating waterlogging was held in 2022, where the two organisations emphasised the construction of safety fences on the banks of canals and drains to prevent accidents.

However, little tangible progress was made three years on.

Meanwhile, the cycle of accidents continued: Md Kamal (2022), Yasin Arafat (2023), and Saidul Islam (2024).

Contacted, CCC Mayor Shahadat Hossain said the CDA is working on 36 canals, while the CCC is handling one canal.

"The projects are progressing rapidly, and we hope to soon install safety barriers along the canals," he added.

"Since the monsoon is coming, temporary protective fences will be provided with bamboo for now. Slabs will be installed over drains as per the survey report," said CCC Chief Engineer Anisur Rahman Sohel.

Sadeq Khan's death anniversary today

CITY DESK

Today is the 9th death anniversary of Sadeq Khan, a Language Movement hero, freedom fighter and senior journalist, said a press release.

Born on January 1, 1933, he passed away at the age of 84. Sadeq Khan was the eldest son of late Justice Abdul Jabbar Khan.

He was an active worker of the then communist party. He was a writer, researcher, and filmmaker. He was also a well-known art critic.

Columnist Sadeq Khan was the contributing editor at Weekly Holiday and chairman of the Gonoshashta Kendra Trust.

Khan was awarded the Ekushey Padak in 2002.

Sadeq Khan was the director and producer of a pioneer Bangla art film, "Nodi O Nari". He was also the chairman of the Press Institute of Bangladesh.

DU VC works

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was stabbed to death near Suhrawardy Udyan on Tuesday.

Rizvi claimed that the VC, Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan, became irritated and angry when JCD leaders approached him to demand justice for Shammo on the night of the killing.

"You [VC] became irritated, angry, and even addressed them disrespectfully. Why? Just because Shammo was from Chhata Dal? We already know your political philosophy."

"You and the proctor are both working to implement a particular ideology. The current interim government has appointed such VCs to several universities who are doing this. Their intention is simply to implement the philosophy and ideology they believe in."

"But when he is the head of an administration, he is a teacher, and to him, every student and every student organisation should be treated with equal respect."

He should talk to everyone to maintain peace on campus. But if he becomes rigid, if he starts working to establish his own ideology, then the university will never be peaceful..."

He also said Shammo was killed after he made his position clear over the ongoing debate over the national anthem.

"There was a movement in Shahbagh to ban the national anthem, and Shammo made a Facebook post supporting the anthem. Is that why he was killed?" Rizvi asked.

He said Shammo's killing reminded him of the killing of Buet student Abrar Fahad. "Who are the political enemies involved in Shammo's murder? We're getting some hints," he added.

Rizvi also criticised the interim government, saying, "You warmly receive NCP leaders, but you charge batons and throw sound grenades at Jagannath University students when they ask for dormitories."

B-R Powergen Ltd.

(A Government Owned Power Generation Company)
IEB Bhaban (8th Floor), 8/A, Ramna, Dhaka-1000

Memo No. 27.31.0000.005.23.013.25.187

Date: 15.05.2025

Re-Advertisement CAREER OPPORTUNITY

B-R Powergen Limited (BRPL), a government owned power generation company under Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources is inviting applications for the post of Managing Director from qualified professionals with strong leadership skills and the ability to drive a large organization.

Job Description

Report to the Chairman and the Board of Directors of the Company and accountable for the Company's entire day-to-day operations, profitability and growth. The Managing Director is the Chief Executive of the company. Subject to the supervision and approval of the board, the Managing Director will be responsible for overall management, e.g. administration, corporate planning, business development and ensuring the compliances of law, rules and regulations and for good governance. He is also responsible for supervision of all technical, financial & welfare aspects, negotiation for project financing issues with donors/development partners, government. Moreover, also responsible for listing the company in the stock exchanges and comply all formalities with stock exchanges and securities regulators.

Forge strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders of the Company to win support for the Company's growth initiatives.

Educational Qualification and Requirements

- Graduation degree in Civil/Mechanical/Electrical Engineering or post-graduation degree in Business Administration/Economics/Management/Finance from reputed universities;
- Candidates passed in the grading system must possess at least CGPA 3.5 on a scale of 5.0 and CGPA 2.5 on a scale of 4.0. Candidates passed in the conventional system (Class/Division) must possess at least 2nd class/division. No third Division/Class at any stage of the academic career shall be acceptable;
- In case of Public Sector (GoB/SOE's/Autonomous Bodies), the candidate should have at least 20 years of experience of which at least 3 years in a senior management position (National Pay scales substantive grade 4 & above) in power sector;
- In case of State-owned companies (SOCs) of the power sector, the candidate should have at least 20 years of experience, of which at least 3 years in a senior management position (Chief Engineer or equivalent & above) in power sector;
- In case of private sector, the candidate should have at least 20 years of experience, of which at least 3 years in senior management/leadership position in well reputed organizations in power sector. Moreover, the candidate's experience certificate must include detailed job responsibilities authorized by competent authority;
- Must be able to demonstrate knowledge about relevant Govt. rules & regulations.
- Must be able to demonstrate knowledge in company law, labor law, Total Quality Management (TQM), Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), corporate Governance, etc.;
- Must demonstrate strong participatory leadership ability and possess adequate knowledge in corporate Management;
- Able to express information, in both English and Bangla, to individuals or groups effectively; make clear and convincing presentations, write concisely, and convincingly for the intended audience;
- In-depth knowledge of the electricity industry, including regulatory requirements, market dynamics and technical advancements.
- Strong business acumen with a deep understanding of financial management, Procurement, strategic planning, and operational management.
- Proficiency in project management, including planning, execution and evaluation of large-scale projects. Project Management Professional (PMP) certification will be an advantage.
- Excellent Negotiation skills with government agencies, development partners and private investors will be an advantage.

Age

Between 50-62 years of age as on 04/06/2025.

Tenure of Appointment

The initial contract will be for 3 years subject to the maximum age limit of 65 years; it can be extended for two more terms of 3 years subject to the maximum age limit of 65 years in case of competent candidate.

Salary and Allowances

Basic pay Tk 1,75,000/- (One lac seventy-five thousand) only per month plus house rent 50% of basic pay, 2 (two) festival bonus, Boishakhi allowance (20% of basic) per year, gratuity, contributory Provident Fund, group insurance, leave encashment, reimbursement of medical expenses and other fringe benefits will be admissible as per provisions of the company. He/She will also be entitled to a full-time transport with fuel and driver. Income tax shall be paid by the incumbent

Submission of Application

- Candidates should apply through specific application form (available at www.brpowergen.gov.bd), 3 copies of passport size photographs, national ID, attested copies of all educational certificates and professional/job experience certificates;
- Candidates still serving in GoB/SOEs/Autonomous bodies/SOCs should attach an NOC (No Objection Certificate) from the authority.
- Application (hard copy) must be submitted on or before 04-06-2025 within office hour to the Company Secretary, B-R Powergen Limited (BRPL), IEB Bhaban (8th Floor), 8/A, Ramna, Dhaka-1000.

Please note that only short-listed candidates will be called for interview. No fee is required for submitting this application. No TA/DA will be given to participate in the interviews.

The authority of BRPL reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

"Note: Candidates who have submitted their applications earlier need not apply again".

LAW AND COMMERCE

Strengthening the legal protections of foreign investment

As Bangladesh positions itself on the global investment map, it must ensure that the legal foundations are just as strong and inviting as the economic incentives. After all, capital does not just chase incentives—it chases certainty. And certainty comes from the legal framework.

FORHAD AHMED

Promotion, protection, and dispute resolution are the three core structures of an international investment agreement (IIA). While investment facilitation, policy incentives, and infrastructure readiness dominate the headlines, it is essential to remember that legal certainty remains the bedrock of investors' confidence.

Foreign investors, particularly institutional or strategic ones, always look beyond short-term policy incentives. They want to know what would protect them if policies shift, or where they can go to seek remedies if disputes arise. These are not just hypothetical concerns. They are addressed by tangible legal frameworks—domestic investment laws and, more importantly, the IIAs e.g. bilateral investment treaties (BITs).

Bangladesh, so far, has signed 34 BITs with countries including the United States,



Tabular Breakdown of the status of Bangladesh's BITs

Status	Number of Bangladesh's BITs	Remarks
In Force	25	These BITs are currently legally binding and operational.
Signed (Not in Force)	7	Awaiting ratification or implementation.
Terminated	2	Treaties officially dismissed.
Total	34	Among these, 22 BITs were signed between 1980 and 2000.

SOURCE: UNCTAD

the United Kingdom, Germany, China, and the Netherlands. Most of these treaties were signed during the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting Bangladesh's early integration into the global investment regime. These BITs typically promise investors protection against expropriation, guarantees of fair and equitable treatment, and access to Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanisms such as ICSID or UNCITRAL arbitration.

However, many of these BITs have grown outdated. They lack clauses on sustainable development, responsible business conduct, and the host state's right to regulate in the public interest. Moreover, they do not appear to be publicly discussed or promoted as part of Bangladesh's overall investment narrative.

Additionally, Bangladesh's investment climate has already faced international legal scrutiny. A prime example is *Saipem S.P.A. v The People's Republic of Bangladesh* (ICSID Case No ARB/05/7), where the tribunal ruled that Bangladesh had indirectly expropriated the investor's rights through judicial interference. Although Bangladesh ultimately prevailed in other proceedings, the case set a precedent that judicial actions can trigger treaty-based liability.

Similarly, in the commercial arbitration involving *Chevron Bangladesh Block Twelve Ltd* and BAPEX, disputes emerged over gas-sharing agreements. While not a treaty-based dispute, it nevertheless signaled the complexities in contractual enforcement within the country. These experiences have shaped international perceptions of Bangladesh's legal reliability and dispute resolution landscape.

Furthermore, with ISDS mechanisms embedded in many BITs, foreign investors often prefer destinations where they know disputes can be resolved at neutral international forums rather than relying solely on domestic courts. As Bangladesh aspires to become a regional manufacturing and logistics hub, especially in light of its LDC graduation, it is imperative to reform and modernise its investment treaties and legal infrastructure. As noted above, many of the existing BITs signed decades ago are outdated and lack sustainable development considerations or balanced dispute resolution frameworks.

Countries such as India, South Africa, and Morocco have adopted new Model BITs or investment laws that better align with contemporary global standards. Bangladesh, too, should consider adopting a Model BIT in order to recalibrate and negotiate the BITs accordingly, and invest in legal capacity building within BIDA and relevant ministries. Careful evaluations of existing laws including the Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act 1980 are necessary in order to modernise and standardise the procedures.

Legal certainty is not just a post-investment concern. It is, in fact, a pre-investment requisite. However, the presentations and agenda materials of the recently held investment summit in Bangladesh appeared not to address the legal aspects sufficiently. To make our investment pitch truly robust in the investment forums, the authority can dedicate a showcase session on legal aspects for investments. Moreover, the relevant authority may initiate expert consultation on revising existing BITs to align with the best global practices, enhance transparency by publishing all IIAs and dispute outcomes, establish a legal helpline or unit within the authority to guide foreign investors on legal matters. Therefore, the legal experts, international negotiators, and foreign investors should be able to discuss not just the "how" of investing in Bangladesh, but also the "under what legal terms" as well.

As Bangladesh positions itself on the global investment map, it must ensure that the legal foundations are just as strong and inviting as the economic incentives. After all, capital does not just chase incentives—it chases certainty. And certainty comes from the legal framework.

The writer is Lawyer and Researcher in International Investment Law.

LAW ADVOCACY

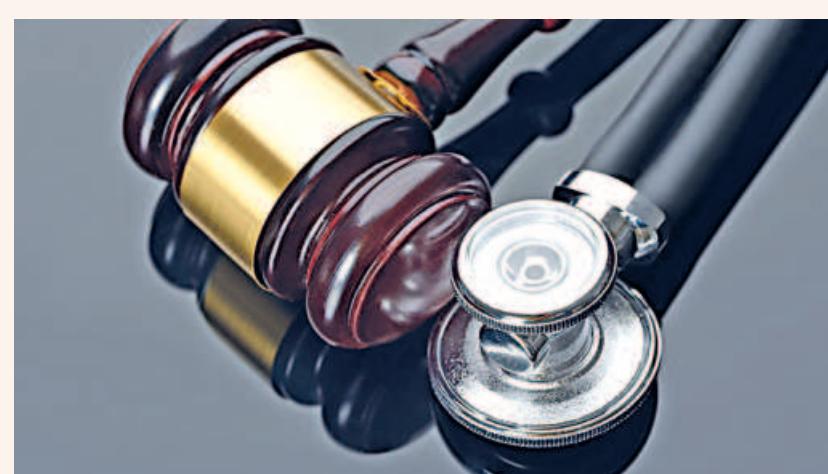
Need for a Doctors' Protection Act?

JOYDEEP CHOWDHURY

In Bangladesh violence against doctors has become quite a common phenomenon. The violent confrontations between doctors and patients or their attendants often stem from delays in treatment, adverse outcomes, or sheer frustration with an overstretched healthcare system. However, behind most incidents lie a deeper reality: public expectations collide with systemic failures, and doctors, stranded between institutional neglect and human despair, become the easy targets. While medical negligence is a reality, but violence can never be a solution to that. We need frameworks to manage grievances on both sides. Indeed, while we need laws to deal with medical negligence, we also need laws to protect the doctors from violence and threats of violence.

The public often sees doctors as authoritative, privileged, and well-positioned. Yet beneath that perception often lies a very different reality. Overburdened government hospitals, under-equipped facilities, and a critical lack of staff define the everyday realities for the public sector physicians in Bangladesh. A government doctor may face three times the recommended patient load and still be expected to deliver care that meets adequate standards. When outcomes disappoint, as they often will under such strained conditions, the blame falls solely on the doctors.

This blame often transforms into hostility. Verbal abuse has already become commonplace, and physical intimidation is no longer



rare either. The culture that permits such acts sees violence not as a breakdown of civil norms but as an understandable outburst—one that medical professionals must tolerate as part of their noble profession and moral bindings. And yet, when these incidents occur, police are hesitant to intervene, hospital authorities look to avoid "unnecessary escalation," and doctors are advised to "let it go." The outcome is impunity and frustration, leading to systemic failure.

The legal architecture, meanwhile, remains indifferent. The Penal Code 1860 criminalises assault on public servants (section 353). However, this provision is unevenly applied to doctors, particularly those in private or semi-government institutions. Even where it does apply, enforcement is sporadic, and few cases proceed to court. In the absence of a targeted legal mechanism, doctors remain legally vulnerable—and are often left

practically unsupported. The Penal Code's general provisions were never tailored to the unique pressures and vulnerabilities of the medical service. Without a targeted statute, enforcement agencies lack clarity, institutions lack obligations, and victims lack avenues for swift recourse. This inadequacy does not merely leave doctors unprotected; it normalises their exposure to risk as an inevitable cost of their profession and also affects the structural fiduciary relationship that should exist between the patients and the physicians.

In light of the above, a new law can be helpful. But what should it look like? At its core, a Doctors' Protection Act should explicitly recognise all registered healthcare professionals—public and private—as protected under the law while on duty. It should criminalise threats, abuse, and physical harm with graded penalties. It should also mandate institutional

safeguards and rapid police responses and provide for fast-track adjudication where necessary.

Some of Bangladesh's regional neighbours have already moved toward such reforms. In parts of India, attacks on doctors are treated as non-bailable offenses under states legislation. In Pakistan, provinces such as Sindh have introduced healthcare protection bills, and Sri Lanka has adopted administrative protocols and hospital-based security frameworks to reduce the risk of violence. Beyond South Asia, several countries have taken bolder legislative steps. In Australia, for instance, many states have made assaulting healthcare workers an aggravated offense with enhanced penalties. In the United Kingdom, under the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018, violence against healthcare staff triggers stricter sentencing. In the United States, numerous states classify attacks on healthcare providers as felonies, recognising their vital societal roles.

Legal reform, of course, is not a panacea. But it is an essential starting point. It can bridge the difference between expecting protection and actually receiving it. A well-drafted, narrowly tailored law can serve both symbolic and practical purposes. It can deter future violence through clear consequences and empower doctors to assert their rights without fear of reprisals.

The writer is Lecturer in Law, Sonargaon University (SU), Dhaka and Advocate, District and Sessions Judge Court, Dhaka.

LAW LETTER

Rights of our Women Workers

Women now make up around 42.7% of the formal workforce in Bangladesh, and all the more in the informal sector, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). In garment industries, which accounts for nearly 84% of Bangladesh's total exports, women represent about 55% of the workforce. Beyond clothing, women workers are also involved in informal domestic work, shrimp farms, and tea gardens, often with minimal legal protection.

Indeed, behind these encouraging statistics lie the harsher truth—women workers in our

As Party to several ILO conventions, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, and an array of other human rights instruments, Bangladesh is obligated to uphold inclusive labour protections, and it must be held accountable for not meeting these commitments.

country face unsafe workplace conditions. In fact, a 2022 study by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) reported that nearly 40% of female garment workers encounter some form of verbal, physical, or sexual harassment at work. Moreover, essential rights such as maternity leave are often denied, especially in smaller or subcontracted factories operating beyond the regulatory radar.

Furthermore, wage inequality is pervasive across different parts of Bangladesh. For instance, in the Rangpur district, female agricultural workers were reported to receive only half the wages paid to male workers despite working the same hours: while men were paid 180-300 BDT per day, women workers received only 90-150 BDT, despite legislation mandating equal pay. The lack of female representation in trade unions further escalates the crisis. Interestingly, although the majority of workers across many industries



are women, they are still underrepresented in leadership positions, limiting their ability to advocate for safer workplaces and fairer wages.

Theoretically, Bangladesh's labour laws provide some protections. The Labour Act 2006, for instance, addresses important issues, such as workplace safety, maternity benefits, safeguards against wrongful termination, etc. Additionally, Bangladesh has ratified several important ILO conventions, such as Convention 111—Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958, and Convention 87—Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention 1948. However, there is still a huge discrepancy between rights as they exist on paper and those that are exercised in practice.

Labour inspections are irregular, and enforcement measures are inadequate. Female workers in many factories, especially those in the informal sector, are not even aware of their legal rights. Even when they are, they are afraid of reprisals, which keeps them from speaking up. Moreover, complaints mechanisms at the workplace are mostly not discreet.

Fortunately, women-led workers' organisations have brought in important structural reforms over time. Led by former garment workers, groups like the National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) have fought tirelessly for labour rights, fair wages, and safer working conditions. Thousands of garment workers, many of whom are women, regularly demonstrate for higher wages and better working conditions. Although many demands are still unfulfilled, their activism has resulted in several changes within the overall system.

In a promising development, the Labour Reform Commission of Bangladesh has recently submitted its report to the interim government, bringing new hope for women workers across the country. This report outlines extensive reform proposals aimed at improving the legal framework, including a specific focus on gender equality in the workplace. As party to ILO conventions, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, and an array of other human rights instruments, Bangladesh is obligated to uphold inclusive labour protections, and it must be held accountable for not meeting these commitments.

Kohinoor Akter, Law student, American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB).

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

The UAE series beginning Saturday will provide an answer as to how Bangladesh actually see themselves in the shortest format -- a side that goes with a progressive mindset or a side that quivers and goes back to the shell of insecurity.

Much of that conversation centres around Najmul Hossain Shanto, who recently stepped down from captaincy, handing the reins to Liton Das. Yet, despite a dreadful run of form, Shanto has retained his place in the squad for the UAE and the subsequent Pakistan tours, both featuring only T20Is.

During his captaincy stint that ended in January, Shanto amassed 394 runs at an average of 18.76 and a strike-rate of 104.23 in 24 matches, throughout which he only managed a solitary half-century. Interestingly, these numbers are not far off from his career stats, with a career average of 22.85 and strike-rate 108.35.

When Shanto was the skipper, his inclusion in the eleven was inevitable. The irony, however, is that now the shield of captaincy has worn out, Shanto does not even merit a place in the side considering his T20 figures, as well as the



act of balancing out the eleven.

The only way that Shanto might be able to crack the eleven is if the Tigers go in with an extra batter, meaning they would play seven batters, sacrificing a regular bowling option against a side that are six spots below the ninth-ranked Bangladesh in T20Is.

Bangladesh possess Tanzid Tamim, Parvez Emon, Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das who could open the batting. For Shanto to come in, Soumya, given his all-round credentials, would have to start at the top alongside any of the aforementioned four.

With Soumya in, Liton would drop

down to number three -- a position the team management is already pondering with the right-hander in mind.

And that would also mean Bangladesh go with four genuine bowling options -- predictably two pacers, including any one of Mustafizur Rahman, Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam and Tanzim Sakib -- alongside leg spinner Rishad Hossain and all-rounder Mahedi Hasan, with Soumya and someone like Shamim Hossain having to share the responsibility of a fifth bowler.

It would not be surprising if Bangladesh go down this conservative route of going in with an extra batter even against a low-ranked side, especially given their collapse against UAE back in 2022. But such a strategy may not serve them well in the long run, with 16 T20Is scheduled before this year's Asia Cup.

As it seems, the dilemma for Bangladesh remains: is Shanto worth the tactical compromise? If he fails again, the decision to include him will be under scrutiny. Or, will Bangladesh finally take the bold step of leaving him out and backing a lineup that aligns with the demands of the ever-evolving format?

Mustafizur, Shakib to be granted NOCs for IPL, PSL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's left-arm paceman, Mustafizur Rahman, could get NOC (No Objection Certificate) for two matches out of the remaining three league-phase matches of the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Delhi Capitals, who confirmed the signing of the pacer on Wednesday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) could also grant Shakib Al Hasan NOC to play for Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

The IPL is set to resume on May 17 after being suspended due to the recent India-Pakistan conflict. Delhi are scheduled to play Gujarat Titans on May 18, Mumbai Indians on May 21, and Punjab Kings on May 24 in their final three league-phase matches.

Mustafizur, who is now with the Bangladesh team in the UAE, had asked the BCB for NOC for Delhi's last three league matches.

"We [Bangladesh] have matches on May 17 and 19 against the UAE. After the national team assignment, Mustafizur won't have any problem playing the remaining two matches," Iftekhar Rahman Mithu, chairman of BCB's media and communication department, told The Daily Star yesterday. Meanwhile, in Shakib's case, BCB seems to be positive about granting him NOC.

"As far as Shakib is concerned, I'm okay with his participation in the PSL," Mithu said. Lahore Qalandars yesterday confirmed the signing of Shakib, who will replace the injured Daryl Mitchell and is set to join the squad on May 17.

Sohan's quickfire century keeps contest even

SPORTS REPORTER

Nurul Hasan Sohan wafted left-arm spinner Jayden Lennox over deep mid-wicket for six to complete a morale-boosting ton as Bangladesh A gained further ground on day two of the first four-day match against New Zealand A at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

However, a late collapse saw the game hang in the balance, with the hosts finishing the day at 249 for 8, still trailing by seven runs.

Resuming the day with New Zealand A at 254 for 8, pacer Khaled Ahmed polished off the tail to end with figures of six for 63 as the visitors folded for 255. Anamul Haque chipped in with three for 32 while Ebadot Hossain took one, as all 10 wickets went to pace.

Bangladesh A, however, were soon in trouble at 81 for four following a rain interruption, with Zakir Hasan (12), Mahmudul Hasan Joy (18) and Anamul Haque (24) all falling cheaply. When Amite Hasan perished for 25, the hosts looked vulnerable at 97 for five.

That's when skipper Sohan joined Mahidul Islam in a defiant 132-run stand that tilted the momentum back. Sohan was aggressive from



the outset, reaching his century off just 74 deliveries, peppered with 11 boundaries and five sixes.

Once Mahidul departed for a gritty 34, Sohan followed shortly after for 103, and the Tigers stumbled again. Yasir Ali Ankon's 25 off 79 balls brought New Zealand A back into the contest.

Nayem Hasan's 20 and Hasan Murad's unbeaten 13 helped Bangladesh A close in on parity by stumps, setting up an intriguing third day.

TIGERS' TOUR OF PAK BCB gets govt nod, awaits players' consent

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has received initial government clearance for the national team's upcoming tour of Pakistan later this month.

Iftekhar Rahman Mithu, chairman of BCB's media and communication department, confirmed to The Daily Star on Thursday that the government has given the green signal via email.

"Now, we are waiting for an official letter from them," he added. "After receiving the letter, we will ask for players' consent. We are now going step by step in this matter."

The Tigers are scheduled to play five T20Is against Pakistan, with the series now set to begin on May 27 in Faisalabad.

Originally, the opener was scheduled for May 25, but the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) revised the itinerary after the Pakistan Super League (PSL) final was rescheduled for May 25 due to the league's recent pause and subsequent resumption on May 17.

Earlier this week, the BCB formally sought government clearance for the tour. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh team is currently in the UAE for a two-match T20I series against the hosts, with matches scheduled on May 17 and 19 in Sharjah.

If the Pakistan series proceeds as planned, the Tigers will depart directly from the UAE. Otherwise, they will return home.

Tigers to bag \$720K

Bangladesh are set to bag \$720,000 for finishing seventh in the 2023-25 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle, as the International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed a massive increase in prize money for the competition on Thursday. Bangladesh experienced their best-ever run in the WTC, winning four out of 12 Tests in the latest cycle. Three of those wins came away from home (two in Pakistan and one in West Indies). They also beat New Zealand at home.

WTC PRIZE MONEY

Position	Team	Prize money (USD)
Winner	Australia/South Africa	3,600,000
Runners-up	Australia/South Africa	2,160,000
Third	India	1,440,000
Fourth	New Zealand	1,200,000
Fifth	England	960,000
Sixth	Sri Lanka	840,000
Seventh	Bangladesh	720,000
Eighth	West Indies	600,000
Ninth	Pakistan	480,000

U-19s face Nepal for place in SAFF final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will look to book a place in the SAFF U-19 Championship final when they face Nepal in the first semifinal of the regional tournament in Arunachal Pradesh, India, today.

Kick-off is scheduled for 4 pm (Bangladesh time) at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Yopia.

The men in red and green, champions of last year's SAFF U-20 Championship, are eager to maintain their momentum after a mixed group stage -- a frustrating 2-2 draw against Maldives followed by a commanding 2-0 win over Bhutan secured their place in the last four.

Their opponents, Nepal, are set to present a tricky challenge. The Himalayan nation began with a heavy 4-0 defeat to hosts India but bounced back with a resounding 5-0 win over Sri Lanka.

"We're ready for the semifinal and aiming for nothing less than a win -- though Nepal are tough opponents. The boys are in good shape both physically and mentally," Bangladesh coach Golam Rabbani Choton said in yesterday's video message shared by Bangladesh Football Federation.

Bangladesh's attacking trio of Nazmul Huda Faisal, Rifat Kazi and Mursheed Ali have been in fine form, and coach Choton will be counting on them to lead the charge once again. Defensive lapses, however, remain a concern.

"We've analysed Nepal's strengths and weaknesses over the past few days and also worked on our own mistakes," added the Bangladesh coach.

Captain Nazmul said: "We'll give our best in every position and play as a unit to reach the final."

PREMIER LEAGUE

Top 5 hopefuls battle for CL riches

AFP, London

The Premier League race is over and relegation is decided -- but the battle for Champions League qualification remains wide open with just two rounds to go.

Only champions Liverpool are so far guaranteed one of the five places up for grabs in Europe's top club competition next season and second-placed Arsenal look almost certain to join them.

But just four points separate third-placed Newcastle from Nottingham Forest in seventh spot.

Newcastle aim to leapfrog Arsenal

A win for Eddie Howe's Newcastle against Arsenal at the Emirates on Sunday would take the Magpies a point above the Gunners, who have won just one of their past six league games.

"We still have two games to go and lots of twists and turns that could be around the corner," said Howe. "We have to drive forward."

Newcastle's last game, on May 25, is a home match against Everton, while Arsenal travel to bottom club Southampton.

Europa final focus a bonus for Villa, Chelsea

Aston Villa and Chelsea have a chance to steal a march on their top-five rivals, with

Club	PL	W	D	L	GD	PTS
LIV	36	25	8	3	46	83
ARS	36	18	14	4	33	68
NEW	36	20	6	10	23	66
MCI	36	19	8	9	24	65
CHE	36	18	9	9	19	63
AVL	36	18	9	9	7	63
NFO	36	18	8	10	12	62

both in action on Friday, against Europa League finalists Tottenham and Manchester United.

Villa, who have maintained fine form in the league despite Champions League and FA Cup exits in recent weeks, could finish the day in fourth place with a win at home to Spurs.

But Chelsea, who also have 63 points, would move just behind third-placed Newcastle if they win, thanks to a better

goal difference.

United and Spurs sit just outside the relegation zone after terrible league campaigns and their attention will be fixed on next week's Europa League final in Bilbao, with their managers likely to keep some players wrapped in cotton wool.

Last chance for Forest

Two-time European champions Nottingham Forest have been in the top four for most of the season but have stumbled at the worst possible moment and are now outsiders to secure Champions League football.

Forest boss Nuno Espirito Santo is not giving up hope as he takes his team to lowly West Ham on Sunday, with Chelsea to follow in the final game of the season.

Man City eye end-of-season flourish

Man City, currently fourth in the Premier League, have had to reset their expectations after a poor campaign by their sky-high standards.

Despite their surprise 0-0 draw at Southampton last time out, they remain likely to finish in the top five, with matches to come against Bournemouth and Fulham.

Pep Guardiola's men do not play in the Premier League until Tuesday, three days after they face Crystal Palace in the FA Cup final at Wembley.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

Bangladesh Emerging vs South Africa Emerging 3rd one-day Live from 9:00 am (Saturday) STAR SPORTS

SELECT HD1

Premier League Chelsea vs Man Utd Live from 1:15 am (Saturday) SELECT HD2

Aston Villa vs Tottenham

Live from 12:30 am (Saturday) SONY SPORTS 5 Italian Open Live from 5:00 pm

Bologna ended a 51-year wait for a major trophy on Wednesday after winning the Italian Cup with a 1-0 victory over AC Milan, who slumped to yet another painful defeat in a horror season. Dan N'Doye scored the goal in the 53rd minute, which gave Bologna a historic victory, their first honour since last winning the cup in 1974.



PHOTO: AFP

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Bangladeshis in fear amid Tripoli unrest

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Around 10,000 Bangladeshi nationals, along with embassy officials, have been living in fear in the Libyan capital Tripoli and surrounding suburbs, as heavy fighting between government forces and armed militias has continued over the past several days.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Libya Major General AHM Khairul Bashar said he and his colleagues at the embassy have been working from their homes, and have advised all Bangladeshis in vulnerable areas to remain indoors.

The embassy has issued an advisory, urging Bangladeshi nationals not to venture outside unless in cases of emergency.

Speaking to this correspondent about the situation in the Libyan capital, Anwar Hossain, a Bangladeshi resident in Tripoli, said, "The situation is grave. Please [manage to] send us home [in Bangladesh] as soon as possible."

Quoting security sources, Al Jazeera confirmed the killing of Abdel Ghani al-Kikli, widely known as "Gheniwa", who was head of the powerful Stability Support

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FOREST MARBLES ... A magnificent marbled cat spotted in Fatiakhari's Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary. First recorded in Bangladesh in 2014, these rare and elusive felines inhabit the dense evergreen forests of Sylhet, Chattogram, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Remarkably stealthy and agile, they spend much of their lives in the trees as skilled arboreal hunters. Marbled cats are listed as "Near Threatened" by the IUCN, meaning they are on the brink of endangerment, due to deforestation and habitat loss. Conservation efforts are now crucial to keep their populations stable. On **WORLD ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY** today, let us remember that every creature is vital to nature -- and deserves not just to survive, but to thrive.

PHOTO: MD ASHIQUL ISLAM

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Israeli strikes kill over 100 in Gaza Say Palestinian rescuers; US should turn the enclave into 'freedom zone': Trump

AGENCIES

Israeli military strikes killed more than 100 people in the Gaza Strip yesterday, Palestinian rescuers said, as the United States and Arab mediators pushed for a ceasefire deal and US President Donald Trump visited the Middle East.

Most of the victims, including women and children, were killed in Khan Younis in southern Gaza in airstrikes that hit homes and tents, they said.

The dead included local journalist Hassan Samour, who worked for the Hamas-run Aqsa radio station and was killed along with 11 family members when their home was struck, the medics said.

Hamas said in a statement that Israel was making a "desperate attempt to negotiate under cover of fire" as indirect ceasefire talks take place between Israel and Hamas, involving Trump envoys and Qatar and Egyptian mediators in Doha, reports Reuters.

Trump yesterday said he believes the United States should "take" the region and turn it into a "freedom zone."

"I have concepts for Gaza that I think are very good, make it a freedom zone, let the United States get involved, and make it just a freedom zone," said Trump.



SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Season's first mangoes hit the Rajshahi markets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The air was rich with a sweet aroma at Baneshwar, the largest mango market in Rajshahi, yesterday as the season's first Guti, Gopalbhog, and Lakkhanbhog started arriving from all over the region.

With the beginning of the eagerly awaited mango season, traders expressed hope for promising weeks of abundance and trade despite a slow first day.

Depending on quality, Guti mangoes were selling at Tk 800-1,500, Gopalbhog at Tk 1,500-2,400, and Lakkhanbhog at Tk 600-700 per maund.

While harvest of only the Guti variety of mangoes was scheduled to start from yesterday, other popular varieties, including Gopalbhog and Lakkhanbhog, also hit the market.

As per the Department of Agricultural Extension guidelines, Gopalbhog is to be harvested from May 20 and Lakkhanbhog from May 25.

Regarding the early arrival of these varieties, mango growers and traders said the harvest began early due to excessive heat and lack of rain, which caused many mangoes to ripen ahead of schedule.

Rajshahi DAE's Additional Deputy Director (Horticulture) Sabina Begum said, "This year, the heat has been unusually intense, causing mangoes to ripen earlier than expected. When farmers asked for permission to harvest those mangoes, we granted it, considering the

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



The mango season began officially in Rajshahi yesterday, with local markets welcoming the first harvests of several varieties, including Guti, Gopalbhog and Lakkhanbhog. Prices of these mangoes range between Tk 1,000 and 1,700 per maund. The photo was taken in Baneshwar of Puthia upazila, the largest mango market in Rajshahi.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

APPOINTMENTS OF SC JUDGES Merit often took a back seat

HC observes in full verdict

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court, in the full text of a verdict, has said that the appointments of Supreme Court judges were not always made on merit, and many unsatisfactory appointments were made to the High Court on political or other considerations, badly affecting the image of the country's judiciary.

"The scheme of our constitution for appointment of judges to the Supreme Court is, by and large, sound, but some defects or lacunae have come to surface in the actual working of the scheme.

"The impression, nevertheless, has prevailed that the appointment of the judges to the Supreme Court has not been always made on merit and many unsatisfactory appointments were made to the High Court on political, or other grounds with the result that the fittest persons were not appointed, which has badly affected the image of the judiciary of the country," the bench of Justice Md Akram Hossain Chowdhury and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury made the observations.

On April 28, the bench delivered the verdict after disposing of a writ petition that challenged the legality of four sections of the Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance, 2025.

On February 26, Supreme Court lawyer Md Ajmol Hossain Khokon submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC, saying that sections 3, 4, 6, and 9 of the ordinance are contradictory to the constitution.

These sections deal with the establishment of the

7 of a family hurt in 'teen gang' attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven members of a family were injured in an alleged attack by a teen gang in the capital's Mohammadpur early yesterday.

The incident took place around 1:45am in Jafrabad near Ityadi Mor, said Hafizur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of Mohammadpur Police Station.

Quoting locals, police said 10-12 youths armed with sharp weapons stormed the house and hacked the victims before fleeing, spreading panic in the area.

The injured are Abul Kashem, 55; his sons Rabbi, 27, and Sabbir, 30; nephews Swapan, 40, Afzal, 35, and Mamun, 40; and his sister Fatema Begum, 50.

Sabbir and Rabbi are receiving treatment at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation, while Swapan is being treated at a city hospital.

According to family members, Rabbi confronted two youths, who were spotted loitering near the house.

As an altercation broke out, more teenagers, allegedly part of a local gang, joined the two youths. They first attacked Rabbi, and when his family members rushed to his aid, the attackers stormed the house and hacked six more people before

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6

Stay vigilant against banned political parties DMP chief tells police, warns of subversion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sheikh Mohammad Sazzat Ali yesterday instructed members of the police to maintain maximum vigilance regarding the activities and possible subversive acts of banned political parties.

"Extreme vigilance should be exercised regarding the activities and sabotage attempts of banned political parties. We must work with utmost professionalism to ensure public safety and service," he said while addressing the DMP's monthly crime review meeting at the Bangladesh Police Auditorium in Rajarbagh.

Noting that the police are a well-disciplined force governed by laws and regulations, he urged members to discharge their duties with the highest level of professionalism.

"We should be polite in our interactions with the public," he said.

"We must uphold the highest standards in appearance, conduct,

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