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HUNGER IN GAZA 14,000 babies may die in 48 hours

Warns UN; 83 more killed as
Israel eyes 'all of strip'

AGENCIES

At least 14,000 babies in Gaza could die within 48 hours if more aid does not reach the starving communities, the UN warned yesterday, as Israel stepped up its military offensive to take control of "all of the Strip".

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes killed at least 83 people yesterday across the war-ravaged Palestinian territory. At least 91 people were killed on Monday.

However, in a sign that Israel's friends' patience on the more than 20-month-long military carnage in Gaza is beginning to wear thin, the UK government yesterday paused free trade negotiations with Israel and slapped new sanctions on West Bank settlers.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy also announced his ministry was summoning the Israeli ambassador over Israel's expansion of its military operations in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"There are 14,000 babies that will die in the next 48 hours unless we can reach them," UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said while speaking to the BBC's Radio 4 Today programme.

He said five aid trucks entered Gaza on Monday, a "drop in the ocean" after an 11-week blockade by Israel, and were yet to reach the communities in need.

The aid was allowed to enter Gaza following widespread condemnation of Israel's total blockade.

The World Health Organization said that Gaza's "two million people are starving".

The developments came after Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on Monday vowed to take control of "all areas of the Strip".

Netanyahu also said it was necessary for Israel to prevent a famine in Gaza for "diplomatic reasons", after his government announced it would allow limited food aid into the territory.

He said aid had resumed because "images of mass starvation" could harm the legitimacy of the war effort.

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- UK pauses trade talks with Israel, summons envoy
- WHO says two million in Gaza starving
- UN says extended Israeli offensive may leave Gaza 'unlivable'
- Netanyahu says 'images of mass starvation' can harm Israel's war



Mourners carry the bodies of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes from Al-Ahli Arab Baptist hospital for their funeral in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

PUSH FOR MAKING ISHRAQUE MAYER DSCC workers threaten strike

Half of Dhaka faces disruption in
garbage collection, mosquito
control, street lamp services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly half of Dhaka city is likely to see disruptions in garbage collection, mosquito control and even street lamps as five employee unions of Dhaka South City Corporation are set to go on strike unless BNPL leader Ishraque Hossain is pronounced mayor by 10:00am today.

The unions, expressing solidarity with Ishraque supporters, issued the ultimatum at Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

"We tell the government: Make arrangements for Ishraque Hossain to assume the mayoral office immediately. Otherwise, we will bring Dhaka to a standstill. You can't even imagine what we are capable of doing," said Arif Chowdhury, president of the DSCC Workers' Employees Union, at a demonstration.

The other associations expressing solidarity with the strike are DSCC Employees' Union, Scavengers and Workers' Union, Transport Drivers and Workers' Union, Electricity Workers' Social Welfare Committee and 4th Class Workers' Social Welfare Committee.

"If our demand is not fulfilled, we will halt all civic services -- from waste collection and cleaning operations to electricity-related services," Arif said.

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1.5 lakh Rohingyas arrived in months

Says WFP, fears 50,000 more may come by year end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An estimated 1,50,000 new Rohingya have arrived in Bangladesh in the recent months and 50,000 more are expected to join them by this year end, putting further strains on Bangladesh.

The Rohingya continue to flee the Rakhine State of Myanmar due to escalating violence, said the UN World Food Programme in its country brief published on May 19.

With the new arrivals, the total number of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and Bhashanchar will be close to 12.5 million by the year end.

The highest number of Rohingya, around 7.5 lakh, fled to Bangladesh in 2017 following a military crackdown in 2017.

Despite several attempts, none of them volunteered to return to Myanmar citing lack of safety and guarantee of citizenship.

With the escalation of conflicts between the Myanmar military and Arakan Army since 2023, more Rohingya members fled to Bangladesh, especially in July-August last year.

"This trend of continued arrivals of new Rohingya will create a difficult situation for us," Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to officials handling the Rohingya crisis, 30 to 40 Rohingya members are entering Bangladesh every

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People stand amid the debris of a razed residential settlement that authorities say belonged to illegal Bangladeshi nationals near Chandola Lake in Ahmedabad, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Italy PM may visit in late Aug

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is likely to visit Bangladesh in late August to strengthen bilateral ties, said a foreign ministry official.

"The schedule is almost confirmed. We're now working to finalise the agenda," the official said, adding that the two-day visit is expected to begin on August 29.

He said key topics may include safe migration, trade and investment.

Earlier this month, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi visited Dhaka and signed an MoU on migration and mobility to promote legal migration and curb illegal migration and human trafficking.

"We've been working to arrange the prime minister's visit, a major event for us. It became possible due to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus's strong ties with Italy," a diplomatic source in Dhaka said.

After the UK, Italy is the second-largest European destination for Bangladeshis. As of January 1, 2023,

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Editor's Council concerned over a clause of anti-terror ordinance

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said entity or in support of it, or any kind of campaign through media, online, social media or any other means, or organisation of rallies, meetings, press conferences or public speeches shall be prohibited."

In a statement issued yesterday on behalf of the Editors' Council, its President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud said the application of such a clause could confine the space for public expression and press freedom in the country.

"The addition of a provision that creates scope for potential misuse is not expected from the interim government," the statement read.

The council demanded that the clause be suspended and reconsidered.

Yunus holds high level meeting on law and order

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attended the meeting as well.

The meeting reviewed the law and order situation across the country based on reports presented by senior security officials.

Prof Yunus stressed the need to maintain a stable security situation in the capital and elsewhere in the country. He also expressed appreciation for the efforts by the security forces in some of the high-profile incidents.

14,000 babies may die in 48 hours

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Before the announcement of the punitive measures, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told parliament that he, along with the leaders of France and Canada, was "horrified" by Israel's military escalation.

The leaders of Britain, France and Canada warned on Monday that they could take "concrete actions" against Israel if it did not stop military operations in Gaza and lift restrictions on aid.

However, Israel remained defiant. It said that external pressure will not change its course.

"The world is judging. History will judge them [Israel]," the British foreign secretary said while unveiling the measures, urging Netanyahu to agree to a ceasefire.

"Blocking aid, expanding the war, dismissing the concerns of your friends and partners – this is indefensible, and it must stop," he said.

Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis also condemned the intensified Israeli offensive, saying the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza is intolerably high.

Meanwhile, Sweden's top diplomat yesterday said that the country would work within the EU to push for sanctions against certain Israeli ministers over Israel's treatment of civilian Palestinians in Gaza.

"Since we do not see a clear improvement for the civilians in Gaza, we need to raise the tone further," Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard said in a statement to AFP.

The Israeli army stepped up its offensive in Gaza on Saturday, saying it was aimed at defeating Hamas.

Israeli strikes have since killed

scores of people in the besieged coastal territory, according to rescuers.

In its latest war update, the Israeli military yesterday said it carried out attacks on 100 targets in Gaza in the last 24 hours.

Gaza's health ministry said Israeli attacks have killed at least 83 people and wounded 290 during the past 24 hours.

Israel called up tens of thousands of reservists before expanding its military offensive, and sent in ground troops on Sunday.

Israel's security cabinet approved earlier this month a plan to expand the military operation, which one official said would include the "conquest" of Gaza and the displacement of its population.

Meanwhile, Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency, yesterday warned that Israel's expanding operations could eventually create conditions where Palestinians are not able to live in Gaza.

"What I see for the time being is a continuation of the destruction, of the deaths and killing of the Palestinians in Gaza. And my fear is that we might reach a point where Gaza might not be a land any more for Palestinians to live in," he said in a media interview.

On Friday, President Donald Trump of the United States, Israel's strongest ally and main arms supplier, acknowledged that "a lot of people are starving" in Gaza.

"We're looking at Gaza. And we're going to get that taken care of," Trump told reporters in Abu Dhabi, on a regional tour that excluded Israel.

Yesterday, a UN spokesman said

it had received permission to send "around 100" trucks of aid into Gaza.

The UN has long said Gaza, with a population of about 2.3 million, needs at least 500 trucks of aid and commercial goods daily to tackle the crisis.

However, no aid truck entered into Gaza till evening, reports Al Jazeera.

On the ground, aid agencies said acute hunger is spreading across Gaza.

According to the UN's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), more than 93 percent of children in Gaza -- about 930,000 -- are at risk of famine due to the ongoing war and blockade.

Since early March, at least 57 children have been reported to have died from malnutrition.

Families in Gaza are resorting to eating animal feed, expired flour and flour mixed with sand, while children suffer from hunger-induced illnesses such as diarrhoea and extreme fatigue.

Meanwhile, Qatar's prime minister said Israel's military offensive in Gaza had undermined peace efforts' momentum after the release of US-Israeli hostage Edan Alexander.

Qatar has, alongside Egypt and the United States, mediated efforts to end the war.

"This irresponsible, aggressive behaviour undermines any potential chance for peace," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani said at the Qatar Economic Forum.

Gaza's health ministry said at least 3,340 people have been killed since Israel resumed strikes on March 18, taking the war's overall toll to 53,573.

BNP to press for polls

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believing that guiding the country towards elections will help ease the instability.

On Monday night, the BNP Standing Committee held a meeting to discuss the overall political situation, with a particular focus on the proposed constitutional reforms and the upcoming July Declaration.

Most members expressed concern over what they said was the government's "deliberate attempt to delay the election process".

"We don't want a disgraceful departure for Dr Yunus, which is why we're observing the situation carefully. We want to avoid confrontation, but if we're pushed to the edge, we may be compelled to launch a stronger movement after July," said a Standing Committee member, wishing to remain anonymous.

He added that BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman instructed the Standing Committee members to weigh potential strategies for a broader movement.

However, party leaders acknowledge that a rushed movement carries risks. They fear that if the movement escalates into confrontation, vested quarters may exploit the situation. On the other hand, if they remain silent, they may lose the momentum.

"We could take to the streets right now, but it would likely trigger chaos, and a third force might take advantage of it. But the way the government is proceeding, it appears the government has no intention to hold elections anytime soon," said a second Standing Committee member, also on condition of anonymity.

Recent Standing Committee meetings have explored various movement strategies in detail, although no dates have been finalised.

For now, the party will continue its two-month member collection campaign to strengthen organisational capacity and build grassroots momentum.

In parallel, affiliated and associate organisations are mobilising young members through regional events. Youth rallies and seminars have already taken place in Chattogram

and Khulna, with similar events planned for Bogura and Dhaka. A rally in Dhaka is also under consideration, but a date is yet to be fixed.

Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus has repeatedly said that the election would take place between December this year and June next year, but BNP suspects the government is delaying the electoral process in the name of reforms.

BNP leaders say the government has not announced a clear timeline for elections and that "vague and conflicting statements" by the government raise their suspicion.

BNP plans to counter this through political programmes, first by raising their voice and eventually by holding rallies and mass campaigns, to put pressure on the government to announce a specific election date.

But with Eid and monsoon season approaching, BNP leaders say any protest must be carefully planned. "If we launch a movement too early, it may backfire. People are already weary of constant protests. We have to choose the right moment," said a senior BNP leader.

Top party leaders at Monday's meeting discussed ways to mount pressure on the government without sparking instability.

"We will take to the streets if the election is not held in time. No one can stop or silence us," Zainul Abedin Farroque, a member of the BNP Chairperson's Advisory Council, said at the National Press Club on Sunday.

"We are silent for now on Tarique Rahman's instruction. He wants us to focus on strengthening the organisation first."

He warned that once party activists lose patience, even senior leaders may no longer be able to control the situation on the ground.

"Do you [chief adviser] want to create conflict and misunderstanding over the election?" asked BNP Standing Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed at a rally in Khulna on Saturday.

"Do you want the people to march towards Jamuna [chief adviser's residence]?"

Govt looking to defuse trade

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A representative from a top trade body suggested the government to launch diplomatic and political negotiations with India at the top level.

The commerce secretary-level meeting will help to understand the mindset of the Indian side, he

and imported goods worth \$9 billion, according to the commerce ministry presentation at the meeting.

Bangladesh imports industrial raw materials, garment items, fabrics, intermediary goods for industrial uses, food, cotton, chemicals, machinery, processed foods, agricultural items, rice, protein items

and vegetables from India.

Similarly, in recent years, India has turned into a major export destination, especially for garment items and agricultural produce, as Bangladesh enjoys zero-duty benefit on shipments under the South Asian Free Trade Area of the SAARC since 2011.

The photo shows a busy road in a rural area of Bangladesh with several trucks and a signpost indicating directions to different towns.

NCP demands reconstitution of the EC

FROM PAGE 1
in front of the Nirbahan Bhaban at Agargaon at 11:00am today.

The announcement came from a press conference at Rupayan Tower in the capital's Banglamotor. Party leaders, including NCP convener Nahid Islam, member secretary Akther Hossain, and chief coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary, spoke.

The NCP demanded the EC's reconstitution, saying that "the EC neither contested nor appealed in the case filed over the DSCC's mayoral post". The party alleged that the EC was clearly taking the sides of a party and a candidate.

The party came up with the demands and programmes while supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain were demonstrating in front of Nagar Bhaban, demanding that he be sworn in as mayor of DSCC.

"We believe the biased role of the Election Commission is responsible for the situation," said the statement which Akther read out.

Akther said services were being disrupted due to the absence of an

elected public representative.

"It is evident that the biased Election Commission, formed under fascist laws, is incapable of holding local government elections. Therefore, we urge the interim government to immediately consider the proposals of the reform commission, reconstitute the Election Commission, and take steps to hold the polls without delay," said Akther.

At the briefing, Nahid said, "...It's very clear that they [EC] are taking sides with a particular party and a particular candidate. And there's no guarantee they won't do the same when such crises arise in future ... That's why we cannot keep our trust in this Election Commission."

"If our demands are ignored, we will intensify our movement accordingly, but we will do so through democratic means."

He further said, "As a major and established political party, people expect a certain level of maturity from them. But they are failing to demonstrate that."

"Shabagh and the Nagar Bhaban are being blocked, and threats are

being made to lay siege to Jamuna. In various ways, efforts are being made to destabilise the country. That's why I would urge everyone to step back from such positions."

Nahid also called on political parties to resolve the crisis through dialogue.

The NCP in its statement said, "Despite being a defendant in the case of Ishraque Hossain vs Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and others, the Election Commission unprecedently chose not to contest the case. As a result, a one-sided verdict was delivered. It also did not appeal to the higher court against the verdict, which gave special privileges to the complainant."

The NCP added that the EC was making statements that appeared to align with the position of a major political party rather than that of neutrality.

The party said that even before the delivery of judgment in the case, a DSCC administrator was appointed under the relevant law on August 19, 2024, rendering the entire case "ineffective".

Although the EC later sought the law ministry's opinion on gazette

publication, it hastily issued the gazette before receiving the ministry's response, alleged the NCP.

"The overall role of the Election Commission in this matter was clearly biased," he added.

Responding to a question from journalists, NCP leader Nahid said local government elections should be held immediately as a "critical situation" has arisen in the country.

"It is not possible for this Election Commission to hold the local government polls. We cannot place our trust in them because they are acting in a biased way. They have not considered the reform proposals, and there are flaws in the process through which the Election Commission was formed."

"Candidates from those illegal elections are now moving to courts -- for a bit of power, for a post. This has created a crisis-like situation. So, to get rid of this situation, local government elections must be held."

"This government, this administration, and the Election Commission will also be tested on how capable they are to hold a fair election."

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Form task force to draft 'Health Commission Act'

Experts urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should fast track the implementation process of the Health Reform Commission's recommendations, with priority on recognising primary healthcare as a fundamental right, overhauling the essential medicines list, and ensuring fair drug pricing, public health experts urged yesterday.

The call came at a discussion organised by the Institute of Health Economics of Dhaka University at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhavan.

The speakers also urged the formation of a task force to draft a proposed "Bangladesh Health Commission Act".

The Health Reform Commission, formed by the interim government on November 17 last year, submitted its final report on May 5.

The 322-page document outlines 32 major recommendations to reform the country's health system, focusing particularly on strengthening primary care, improving drug affordability, and enhancing governance.

Experts stressed the need for consensus between interim and political governments to ensure effective implementation. While acknowledging flaws in the report – including issues with language and coordination – speakers emphasised the urgency of progressing with actionable items.

Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), who

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Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal staged a protest at the Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday, demanding justice for the murder of Dhaka University student and JCD leader Shahriar Alam Shammo.

PHOTO: STAR

SHAMMO MURDER
JCD again
blocks
Shahbagh
Demands justice,
resignation of VC

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday staged a protest amid rain at the Shahbagh intersection in the capital, demanding justice for the murder of Dhaka University student and Chhatra Dal leader Shahriar Alam Shammo.

Following their previously announced schedule, Chhatra Dal leaders and activists began the blockade around 3:30pm. As a result, vehicular movement through the intersection came to a complete halt. The protest ended around 5:15pm.

Their demands included justice for Shammo's murder, the resignation of the vice-chancellor and proctor, and ensuring a safe campus.

JCD Central President Rakibul Islam Rakib, General Secretary Nasir Uddin Nasir, and leaders

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CONSENSUS ON REFORMS

Political parties yet to find common ground on key proposals

KEY REFORM PROPOSALS: PARTY POSITIONS SUMMARY

	BNP	JAMAAT	NCP
Reintroduction of non-partisan caretaker government	✓ Agree	✓ Agree	✓ Agree
Formation of bicameral parliament	✓ Agree (method unclear)	✓ Agree	✓ Agree
Term limit: Max two terms as Prime Minister	✗ Disagree (return after break)	✓ 10-year lifetime cap	✓ Agree
One person can't be PM, party chief & leader of House	✗ Disagree	✓ Agree	✓ Agree
Formation of National Constitutional Council (NCC)	✗ Strongly Oppose	✓ Agree (exclude president, CJ)	✓ Agree
Shift appointment power from PM to NCC	✗ Oppose	✓ Agree	✓ Agree
Separating Judicial secretariat from executive	✓ Agree (method unclear)	✓ Agree	✓ Agree
Strengthening Anti-Corruption Commission	✓ Agree	✓ Agree	✓ Agree

MID ABBAS

The first round of talks between the National Consensus Commission and 33 political parties concluded on Monday, with broad agreement on several reform principles – including the reintroduction of a non-partisan caretaker government, the formation of a bicameral parliament, independence of the judiciary, and a stronger Anti-Corruption Commission.

However, sharp disagreements remain on key constitutional reforms aimed at decentralising executive power and reshaping top leadership structures.

At the heart of the deadlock is the proposal to limit the prime minister's authority and bar any individual from holding the posts of prime minister, party chief, and leader of the house simultaneously.

The commission also proposed capping a person's premiership to two terms, which BNP rejected. The party instead suggested that a person could

serve two consecutive terms, step aside, and later return.

It also opposed barring one person from holding multiple leadership roles, saying such decisions should be left to internal party mechanisms.

Jamaat-e-Islami proposed a lifetime limit of 10 years for anyone serving as prime minister and backed separating

the roles of PM and party chief. The National Citizens Party supported both the two-term cap and leadership separation.

DISAGREEMENTS OVER NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL

Another flashpoint was the commission's proposal to create a National Constitutional Council (NCC), comprising representatives

from the executive, legislature, and judiciary, to recommend appointments to constitutional positions, including heads of the armed forces.

Currently, the president is constitutionally bound to act on the prime minister's advice in such appointments.

The council would dilute this authority, shifting more

influence to a collective body – a change the BNP strongly opposed, arguing it would weaken elected governments.

Conversely, Jamaat and the NCP welcomed the idea.

However, Jamaat proposed that the president and chief justice be excluded from the council's composition.

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Garment workers blocked the road in front of Kakrail Mosque yesterday afternoon, after police barred them from marching towards the chief adviser's residence at the state guesthouse Jamuna. The workers were demanding their unpaid wages and benefits.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bird strikes on the rise at Dhaka airport

Open garbage spots surrounding airport to blame

RASHIDUL HASAN

Authorities at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport are struggling to deter birds from the runway due to hundreds of open garbage spots and food-water sources in the areas surrounding the airport.

There are many dense bushes around the airport area, which provide a good habitat for grasshoppers and butterflies that attract various birds to HSIA.

Bird or wildlife strikes often lead to flight cancellations and sometimes even damage aircraft engines. In the worst-case scenario, it can even lead to crash landings.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Chairman Air Vice Marshal Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan said, "We are taking every possible measure, but it's a big challenge to deter birds due to uncontrolled waste and garbage being dumped in the areas surrounding the airport."

Annually, airlines around the world bear around \$1.2 billion in costs due to bird strikes, according to aviation websites.

Due to a bird strike on its second engine,

a Turkish Airlines flight had to make an emergency landing at HSIA yesterday.

The flight, carrying 11 crew and 280 passengers, was going to Istanbul. All the passengers, crew, and the aircraft are safe, said Turkish Airlines.

"We have asked Dhaka North City Corporation authorities to close down all open sources of food and water surrounding the airport."

Air Vice Marshal Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh

The aircraft, TK713, had to return shortly after a successful take-off due to a bird strike on its engine 2.

According to the Dhaka Airport Traffic Control, immediately after take-off, its engine 2 caught fire.

The plane was grounded due to an

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GAZA OFFENSIVE

Yemen's rebels threaten Israeli port blockade

AFP, Sanaa

Yemen's Houthi rebels said on Monday evening that they would impose a "naval blockade" of the Israeli port of Haifa in response to Israel's escalation of the Gaza war.

The Houthis would "begin working to enforce a naval blockade of the port of Haifa," said military spokesman Yehya Saree.

"All companies with ships present in or heading to this port are hereby notified that, as of the time of this announcement, the aforementioned port has been included in the target bank," the Houthi spokesman added.

The move was "in response to the Israeli enemy's escalation of its brutal aggression against our people and in Gaza," he said, adding that attacks on Israel would "cease once the aggression on Gaza ends and the blockade is lifted."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced earlier that his country will "take control" of all of Gaza as part of a heightened offensive against Hamas.

The Iran-backed Houthis have regularly fired missiles and drones at Israel since the Gaza war broke out in October 2023, following a Hamas attack on Israel.

The Houthis paused their attacks during a two-month ceasefire in the war that collapsed in March.

They have threatened to resume attacks on international shipping over Israel's aid blockade on Gaza. In response, the US military began hammering the rebels with near-daily air strikes.



Israeli border police officers take position amid clashes with Palestinian protesters during a raid in the Asker refugee camp, east of Nablus, in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia 'trying to buy time' to 'continue war'

Says Zelensky; EU adopts new sanctions against Moscow

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday accused Russia of not seriously engaging in peace talks and of wanting to continue its three-year invasion, despite a US push for a ceasefire.

US President Donald Trump held calls with both Zelensky and Russian leader Vladimir Putin on the war on Monday, and Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Istanbul on Friday for the first direct talks on the conflict in more than three years.

But the Istanbul talks failed to yield a truce, and Zelensky accused Putin of sending "empty heads" to the negotiating table. "It is obvious

that Russia is trying to buy time in order to continue its war and occupation," Zelensky said in a post on social media.

Trump framed his two-hour conversation with Putin on Monday as a breakthrough, as the Republican seeks an elusive deal to end the war that he had promised on the campaign trail to solve in 24 hours.

But Putin again rebuffed the call for a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire, instead saying only that he was ready to work with Ukraine on a memorandum outlining a possible roadmap and different positions on ending the war.

Meanwhile, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas yesterday called

for the United States to take "strong action" against Russia if Moscow does not agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine. Kallas also said the EU has adopted new sanctions against Russia, including measures aimed at Moscow's "shadow fleet" of oil tankers and measures related to human rights and hybrid threats.

Britain added 82 new designations and 18 new specifications under its Russia sanctions regime, a government notice showed yesterday.

Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and has since destroyed swathes of the country's east, killed tens of thousands and now controls around one-fifth of its territory.

Record May heat scorches north, central China

AFP, Beijing

Swathes of northern and central China are sweltering this week under record May heat, state media reported yesterday, as the country braces for another summer of extreme temperatures.

China has endured spates of extreme weather events, from soaring temperatures to drought, downpours and floods, for several summers running.

The country is the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, but also a renewable energy powerhouse seeking to cut carbon dioxide emissions to net zero by 2060.

State broadcaster CCTV reported yesterday that multiple cities logged all-time May highs this week as the mercury rose well above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit).

They included Zhengzhou, a metropolis of 13 million people in central Henan province, which saw a high of 41C on Monday, CCTV said.



EU seeks to relax rules on turning away asylum seekers

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday unveiled plans to make it easier to send asylum seekers to certain third countries in the latest overhaul aimed at reducing migration to the bloc, sparking criticism from rights groups.

The European Commission said it proposed broadening the so-called "safe third country" concept, which allows member states to "consider an asylum application inadmissible when applicants could receive effective protection" elsewhere.

"EU countries have been under significant migratory pressure for the past decade," said migration commissioner Magnus Brunner, describing the proposal as "another tool to help member states process asylum claims in a more effective way."

Brussels has been under pressure to clamp down on arrivals and facilitate deportations, following a souring of public opinion on migration that has fuelled hard-right electoral gains in several states.

WHO adopts global pandemic agreement

Absence of US cast doubt on its effectiveness

REUTERS, Geneva

Members of the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted an agreement yesterday to better prepare for future pandemics following the disjointed global response to Covid-19, but the absence of the US cast doubt on the treaty's effectiveness.

After three years of negotiations, the legally binding pact was adopted by the World Health Assembly in Geneva. WHO member countries welcomed its passing with applause. The pact was touted as a victory for members of the global health agency at a time when multilateral organisations like the WHO have been battered by sharp cuts in US foreign funding.

"The agreement is a victory for public health, science and multilateral action. It will ensure we, collectively, can better protect the world from future pandemic threats," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The pact would ensure that drugs, therapeutics and vaccines are globally accessible when the next pandemic hits. It requires participating manufacturers to allocate a target of 20 percent of their vaccines, medicines, and tests to the WHO during a pandemic to ensure poorer countries have access.

However, US negotiators left discussions about the accord after President Donald Trump began a 12-month process of withdrawing the US - by far the WHO's largest financial backer - from the agency when he took office in January.

Given this, the US, which poured billions of dollars into vaccine development during the Covid pandemic, would not be bound by the pact. And WHO member states would not face penalties if they fail to implement it.

The deal was reached after Slovakia called for a vote on Monday, as its Covid-19 vaccine sceptic prime minister demanded that his country challenge the adoption of the agreement.

Talks with US unlikely to 'lead to any outcome'
Says Khamenei

AFP, Tehran

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said yesterday that nuclear talks with the United States were unlikely to yield any results, amid a diplomatic standoff over the Islamic republic's enrichment activities.

"We don't think it will lead to any outcome. We don't know what will happen," said Khamenei during a speech, adding that denying Iran's right to enrich uranium was "a big mistake".

Iran and the United States have held four rounds of Omani-mediated nuclear talks since April 12, the highest-level contact between the two foes since Washington abandoned the 2015 nuclear accord.

They had confirmed plans to hold another round of discussions during their last meeting on May 11, which Iran described as "difficult but useful", while a US official said Washington was "encouraged".

Iran currently enriches uranium to 60 percent, far above 3.67-percent limit set in the 2015 deal but below the 90 percent needed for a nuclear warhead.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Health Services Division
Directorate General of Health Services
Central Medical Stores Depot
Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208
www.cmsd.gov.bd

Corrigendum-2

IFT: CMSD/GR-2420/ICT/2024-25/Proc.D-4/1, Dated: 25/03/2025

Procurement of "Radiology Equipment"

Lot-1: Combined Digital Radiography (1000 mA X-Ray) with Remote Fluoroscopy-01 No. and Lot-2: Premier End 4D Color Doppler Ultrasonography with 5 (five) Transducers & Biopsy devices-01 No. The relevant portion of the Tender documents under abovementioned IFT No. is hereby amended as per observation raised by the prospective tenderers. Please read as under:

Reference	Existing Entries	Amended Entries
TD's Section 2, Tender Data Sheet (TDS): ITT 36.1, ITT 42.2 & IFT Row No. 9 10 & 11.		
Tender last selling date:	Date: 25/05/2025 (During Office hours)	Date: 01/06/2025 (During Office hours)
Tender submission date & time:	Date: 26/05/2025 and Time: 11:00am [11:00 Hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST+GMT+ 6 hrs.)]	Date: 02/06/2025 and Time: 11:00am [11:00 Hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST+GMT+ 6 hrs.)]
Tender opening date & time:	Date: 26/05/2025 and Time: 11:00am [11:00 Hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST+GMT+ 6 hrs.)]	Date: 02/06/2025 and Time: 11:00am [11:00 Hours Bangladesh Standard Time (BST+GMT+ 6 hrs.)]

Sd/-

Md. Huzur Ali
Director (Additional Secretary)
Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD)
Directorate General of Health Services
Health Services Division
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Telephone: +8802222244087, E-mail: cmsd@cmsd.gov.bd

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Department of Public Health Engineering
Office of the Executive Engineer
Survey Investigation and Research Division
14, Shaheed Captain Mansur Ali Sarani, Kakrail, Dhaka.

Invitation for Tender for Outsourcing of Manpower

Tender Notice No. 46.03.2600.074.07.406.25-983

Date: 20.05.2025

1. Ministry/Division	Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives
2. Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3. Procuring Entity Name	Executive Engineer, Survey Investigation and Research Division, DPHE, Kakrail, Dhaka.
4. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5. Invitation for	Procurement of Non-consulting Services (Outsourcing of Manpower)
6. Invitation Reference Number	46.03.2600.000.071.18-8821
7. Date	12.05.2025
8. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
9. Budget & Source of Funds	GoB Development
10. Development Partners	None
11. Project Code	224132700
12. Project Name	Urban Water Supply and Sanitation in 23 Paurashavas Project (GOB-IDB).
13. Tender Package No.	SIR- M0-25/01
14. Tender Package Name	Outsourcing of Manpower for Urban Water Supply and Sanitation in 23 Paurashavas Project (GOB-IDB).
15. Tender Publication Date	20 May, 2025
16. Tender Last Selling date	15 June 2025 by 5:00 pm
17. Tender Last Submission Date & Time	16 June 2025 by 12:00 pm
18. Tender Opening Date and Time	16 June 2025 by 12:00 pm
19. Name and Address of the Offices	<p>a. Selling Tender Document 1. Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE, SIR Division (3rd Floor), DPHE Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. 2. Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE, Store Division, 9/A, Dr. Ibrahim Sarani, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.</p> <p>b. Receiving Tender Document Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE, SIR Division (3rd Floor), DPHE Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000.</p> <p>c. Opening Tender Document Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE, SIR Division (3rd Floor), DPHE Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka-1000.</p>
20. Eligibility of Tenderers	Bidders that fulfill the criteria described in the bidding document
21. Brief Description of services	Supply of Outsourcing of Manpower for Urban Water Supply and Sanitation in 23 Paurashavas Project (GOB-IDB). Driver-03, MLS/Office Sohayok-02 & Guard/Chowkidar-02 for the project period or 20 months (Whichever Comes First) based on consolidated salary.
22. Price of Tender Document	Tk. 1000 (Taka One Thousand only)
23. Tender Security	Tk. 75,000/- (Taka Seventy Five Thousand only) through Pay order
24. Completion Time (weeks/Months)	For the project period or 20 months (Whichever Comes First) from the date of contract signing.
25. Name of Official Inviting Tender	Shishir Kumar Biswas
26. Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Executive Engineer
27. Address of Official Inviting Tender	Survey Investigation and Research Division, DPHE Bhaban, Kakrail, Dhaka.
28. Contact Telephone of Official Inviting Tender	Email: ee.sir@dphe.gov.bd Office Contact No.: 02-55130524
29. The procurement Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Tenders.	

20/05/2025

(Shishir Kumar Biswas)

Executive Engineer

Survey Investigation and Research Division

Department of Public Health Engineering, Dhaka

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

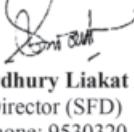
12 Name of the official inviting EOI
13 Designation of the official inviting EOI
14 Address of the official inviting EOI
15 Contact details of the official inviting EOI

This Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) is in compliance with relevant government rules and regulations e.g. Public Procurement Rules-2008 and Procurement Guidelines for AFD-Financed Contracts in Foreign Countries, 2024. By responding to this EOI, consultant firms are conforming to those rules and regulations. The Procuring Entity reserves all right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

The details EOI is available at <https://www.bb.org.bd/aboutus/tenders/tenders.php> and <http://afld.dgmarket.com>.

DCP: 48/2025-1312

Date: 19-05-2025


Chowdhury Liakat Ali
Director (SFD)
Phone: 9530320
E-mail: chowdhury.ali@bb.org.bd

GD-1222

Promising start to financial justice

Govt must stay the course to recover stolen assets

We commend the government's decision to create a fund to compensate victims of financial irregularities using the money and assets recovered from alleged embezzlers and money launderers. According to the Bangladesh Bank governor, frozen assets of the accused, including shares held in various banks and companies, will also be included in the fund. He further stated that substantial sums deposited in various banks by individuals under investigation or facing trial have already been seized, along with control of shares owned by fugitives and those facing charges. This suggests that the government has already begun to make some progress in recovering stolen assets, which is indeed encouraging.

The governor said the fund would be used in the public interest, with priority given to compensating victims—chiefly depositors harmed by financial irregularities. He also stated that it would be used to provide some relief to the poor. Although estimates vary regarding the amount of assets stolen and syphoned out of the country during the Awami League regime, the White Paper on the state of Bangladesh's economy indicates that Tk 28 lakh crore was laundered per year between 2009 and 2023, amounting to \$234 billion. That is a staggering amount. For the government to stand any chance of recovering this money, or a substantial portion of it, it must act swiftly.

Previously, the central bank governor himself acknowledged that the authorities were racing against time to recover the stolen billions, warning that the funds could vanish if not located quickly. More recently, while discussing the progress made by the joint investigation team into 10 business groups and the family of the ousted prime minister, he said new assets were still being discovered and investigated. In the meantime, cases have been filed based on the assets identified so far, and those assets have been seized, although the total value has not yet been disclosed.

According to the chief adviser's press secretary, since the interim government took charge, immovable assets of the 10 business groups and Hasina's family—worth Tk 1,30,758 crore domestically and \$164.03 million abroad—have been attached. Additionally, Tk 42,600 crore in movable properties has been frozen. It was further revealed that the central bank is working with foreign institutions through mutual legal assistance to recover laundered money. Even though the entire process—proving that the money was illicitly obtained and tracing it to specific individuals—is complex, there is a strong possibility that foreign countries will be able to assist us.

While we are encouraged by the government's actions in locating and recovering stolen assets so far, much remains to be done. We urge the government to act swiftly and in close collaboration with foreign countries and institutions to ensure that most of the syphoned assets are recovered, those responsible are held accountable, and the victims receive justice.

Repair risky bridges and culverts urgently

RHD must keep up inspections, ensure accountability for shoddy work

It is concerning that 712 out of the 15,437 bridges and culverts inspected by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) so far have been found to be highly risky and in urgent need of repairs. This revelation came from an ongoing survey that RHD has been conducting since 2021 on all 21,492 bridges and culverts under its jurisdiction. Although over two-thirds of the structures have been inspected so far, another 6,145 bridges and culverts across four of RHD's 10 zones are yet to be examined.

In a country where public construction costs are often among the highest globally, one would expect such expensive ventures to be durable and resilient to wear and tear. Instead, we often see bridges and culverts collapsing, or cracks appearing on roads just a few years after construction. Rampant corruption in public construction projects—particularly during the Awami League regime—is a major factor behind such premature deterioration. Over the years, many projects were approved without feasibility studies or proper planning. Questionable bidding processes and bribery in project awarding practices further sealed the fate of these structures. There was virtually no accountability in most cases; contractors could use substandard materials, or delay project completion and profit from escalated costs, without facing any consequences.

Another significant factor behind the deterioration of bridges and culverts—besides overloading and the impact of climate change—is the lack of proper maintenance. According to an RHD official, the budget for maintenance has been consistently inadequate. Unfortunately, maintaining bridges and culverts has never received the same level of attention or interest as constructing new ones, presumably because new projects offer more opportunities for financial manipulation.

What's even more shocking is that, in the country's 54-year history, this is the first time that the RHD is conducting a comprehensive inspection of all the bridges and culverts under its authority. This is likely why so many high-risk structures have now come to light. We hope that the department will continue such inspections on a routine basis. We also urge the government to repair the high-risk structures without delay. Furthermore, any lapses during the construction phase of these 712 bridges and culverts must be investigated, and responsible contractors, project officials, and relevant RHD authorities must be held accountable.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Rajiv Gandhi assassinated

On this day in 1991, Indian politician Rajiv Gandhi, who served as the country's prime minister (1984-89), was assassinated in a suicide bombing attack.



Nusraat Faria's arrest sends an ominous message to the people



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

After the shocking news of popular actress Nusraat Faria being arrested at Dhaka airport in an attempted murder case and sent to jail, it is a relief to know that she finally got bail yesterday. Even in this current environment where arbitrary murder cases are being filed against hundreds of individuals thought to be Awami League sympathisers or beneficiaries, this arrest was particularly jarring.

Nusraat Faria has been accused in an attempt-to-murder case along with 265 other people, 17 of them actors. The victim, who filed the case, suffered bullet injuries on July 19 last year during the student-led mass uprising.

How believable is this accusation—that Nusraat was somehow involved in causing the bullet injuries of a man in the Vatara area?

Apparently, the allegations against Nusraat and the 264 other accused include financing the AL during the quota reform protests. First of all, what does this mean? Did they pay money to the AL regime to help them shoot down protesters? Does this not sound illogical, if not ludicrous? If any of the accused have had underhanded deals with the AL regime that benefited them financially, then they should be accused of corruption, and cases can be filed on that basis. But to file cases against hundreds of individuals whose links to the killings of protesters are downright flimsy, if not preposterous, leads to only one conclusion: that these individuals are being harassed due to some link or the other with the AL regime or because of someone's personal grudge.

In Nusraat's case, it could be mere professional jealousy, or it may be because she played Sheikh Hasina in a biopic on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, or both. Does this mean any actor or anyone associated with this movie can be accused of being involved in Hasina's brutal crackdown on protesters? Will this bring justice for those killed or solace to those grieving their loved ones? Can we equate those who actually pulled the trigger and those who ordered them to do so with those who may or may not have had ties to the ousted regime?



The images of a young actress, who wasn't even in the country during the July uprising, being escorted to the court and jostled by the crowd have been distressing.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

We are treading on a dangerous path here, where the legal system is being manipulated with the intention of getting revenge rather than justice. This will make the entire legal system questionable and erode people's trust in it.

Now, why does that ring a bell? Because it reminds us of the arbitrary cases filed against members of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami by the Awami League regime. According to BNP's case record preservation cell, 141,636 cases were filed against 4,926,494 leaders and activists of the party and its affiliated organisations between 2009 and September 2023. Cases that had been hanging for years were fast-tracked at an extraordinary speed just before the 2024 election to make sure that opposition candidates could not participate. A report by *The Daily Star*

the feeling of unease still exists. We really don't know why or how these cases are being filed, who gives the order to arrest, or who will be next.

At a function commemorating National Legal Aid Day on April 28, the law adviser agreed that lawsuits were being filed out of malicious intent, to harass people, or to occupy someone's property and businesses. When asked about the case filed against Fazl Zaker, he asked the journalist to expose the plaintiffs and see whether the cases were filed due to enmity or ulterior motives.

The home adviser's comments about Nusraat Faria's case were hardly reassuring. "Now, if there's a case against her, what should we do? If we let her go, then you would say, 'Sir, you spared her.'"

Both the law and home advisers

have said that though cases have been filed (and there's really nothing they can do about that; anyone can file a case against anyone, it seems), the government has instructed the law enforcement agencies to make sure no innocent person is unnecessarily harassed. Unfortunately, these statements do not translate into ground realities. It seems arrests are

made because of rivalry or revenge rather than actual suspicion of committing the crime.

The images of a young actress, who wasn't even in the country during the July uprising and who has shown her sadness over the deaths of protesters on social media, being escorted by law enforcers to the court and jostled by the crowd have been distressing, to say the least. Even though she has been granted bail, nothing will erase the trauma of being arrested for attempted murder and spending a night in jail. If the purpose of this ordeal was to punish her for playing the role of Sheikh Hasina in a film, that is just vengeance, not justice. The filing of cases on the basis of personal vendetta must stop immediately. It is making a mockery of our legal system.

Why Bangladesh Competition Commission needs reform



Shuvadeep Paul
is an attached officer (senior assistant judge) at the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs of Bangladesh and MEXT (YLP) fellow at Kyushu University, Japan. He can be reached at pshuvu97@gmail.com.

SHUVADEEP PAUL

History has given us multiple chances to reform our institutions, nonetheless, we could not grab those opportunities to build strong, accountable ones or enhance their capacities. Our economy and market are very much interconnected with a competition-friendly market where all stakeholders can compete, buy, and sell according to their own choices and abilities. However, have there been any major changes in this field since our independence, except for the introduction of a new act by repealing an old one? It should be noted that The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Ordinance, 1970 was the earliest legislative effort which was never implemented. Therefore, the Competition Act, 2012 marked a substantial shift, influenced by structural reforms advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Bangladesh Competition Commission (BCC) came into action in 2016, and since its inception, no major impacts have been seen. Hence, BCC requires significant reforms in line with global competition policies and best practices.

At present, BCC is working under the Ministry of Commerce, but we have to introduce some checks and balances to ensure its impartiality and transparency. In this regard, the High

Court should be the appellate authority forum and not the government as currently stipulated in section 29 (1) (b) of the act. Even in India, they have a competition appellate tribunal to try appeal cases. Excessive control of the Ministry of Commerce over BCC's decisions is affecting its operational autonomy. So, this change will create operational independence and judicial

accountability. To erase institutional gaps and governance constraints, there should be some changes in BCC's structural body. The appointment criteria of BCC members should be more transparent. A superior selection board comprising the chief justice, attorney general, cabinet secretary, and a renowned academician should nominate the chairperson and other BCC members, prioritising people with knowledge of the competition

field. Officers working in the BCC are currently only from the administration cadre but judges from the district judiciary, lawyers, and expert academicians should be included.

The investigation department is the nucleus of BCC's operation. According to the 2022-2023 Annual Report of BCC, the total number of cases is 66; among them, 47 are in the hearing stage, and 19 are under investigation. BCC's capacity should be improved by using technology to detect anti-competitive content and a separate investigation wing without the involvement of any BCC member. Since the commission plays both prosecutorial and adjudicatory roles, its slight involvement in the investigation stage should not be expected.

According to the statistics of

Newspaper reports frequently inform us about the market syndicates behind the price fixing of daily necessities in Bangladesh. To address this cartel issue, our anti-cartel enforcement mechanism has to be more comprehensive. Along with public enforcement, there should be a private enforcement mechanism as well, so that the aggrieved party can seek remedies before the authority.

2022-2023, 48 cases were filed before BCC, and only six were filed upon a complaint, and the rest on suo moto basis. In this regard, global methods for tracing anti-competitive issues must be incorporated. First, we should introduce "dawn raids," which are frequently used by antitrust authorities globally, such as the European Commission, Singapore, India and Japan. If BCC can authorise the investigation unit to conduct dawn

raids, it will raise fear in the minds of market syndicates playing behind the screen.

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According to the statistics of

Newspaper reports

INDIA'S 'PUSH-IN' POLICY

What is the message for Bangladesh?



H.M. Nazmul Alam
is an academic, journalist, and
political analyst. He can be reached at
nazmulalam.rijohn@gmail.com

H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

In a region already riddled with border disputes, demographic anxieties, and geopolitical tensions, India has added a controversial new chapter to its neighbourhood diplomacy. Over the past few weeks, New Delhi has unleashed a wave of "push-in" operations, forcibly expelling alleged illegal migrants—mostly Bangla-speaking Muslims—into Bangladesh, without due process, verification or diplomatic coordination. These actions are not just inhumane or unlawful; they are a clear violation of international norms, aimed at pressuring Dhaka and reasserting regional dominance at a time when Delhi's Kashmir calculus lies in tatters. How else would you describe the situation when poor, vulnerable people were flown across states and dropped at the border of a sovereign nation? In any other global context, this would have made headlines: mass deportations without trial, detentions without court appearances, and midnight border dumps of children, women, and even Rohingya refugees protected under UNHCR mandates.

But when it comes to India, global outrage has a strange habit of taking a sabbatical.

Let us connect the dots. Despite its muscular rhetoric, Delhi's realpolitik ambitions are facing diminishing returns. Having failed to assert itself against Pakistan, and amid increasing tensions with China, it seems India now sees Bangladesh as the safer punching bag—the soft target next door.

Push-in operations are not just about a few hundred unfortunates being kicked across the barbed wires. They are political signals—of frustration and control. It is a continuation of a pattern, an imperial hangover dressed as a "regional security policy."

The absurdity of India's push-in narrative lies in its shifting justifications. According to Indian sources, the "illegal migrants" being expelled are Bangladeshis. Yet, several media reports suggest that among those detained in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Tripura are Indian Bangla-speaking Muslims—some allegedly with valid Aadhaar cards, voter IDs, and decades-long residence records. In many cases, entire families were picked up in random raids, herded into detention centres, and dispatched to border areas, as though they were disposable items in a political experiment.

Consider the grotesque irony: India, a country that has hosted Tibetan refugees, Sri

Lankan Tamils, and Afghans, is now unable—or perhaps unwilling—to distinguish between its own marginalised citizens and foreign nationals. Bangla-speaking Muslims from West Bengal and Assam have been allegedly rounded up alongside suspected Bangladeshis. This is not immigration enforcement; it is demographic profiling, cloaked in the BJP's nationalist jargon.

One such detainee, Obaidul Khandaker from Cooch Behar, testified to the BBC that he showed his Indian identity documents, only to be told they needed "verification." After 10 days in detention—with barely any food, no legal hearing, and no information to his family—he returned home to find his house looted and his power line cut. He says he will never again work in India's western states. So we ask: is this the "vishwaguru" that India claims itself to be?

Intelligence reports warn that India's push-in game bears eerie similarities to Myanmar's infamous ethnic cleansing of the Rohingyas. Like the generals in Naypyidaw, Delhi "seems to believe that forcibly transferring "unwanted" populations into a neighbouring country will help clean up its demographic and security problems. In fact, at least five Rohingya refugees with verified UNHCR cards from India were among those recently pushed into Bangladesh. Some

India's actions shred the very spirit of neighbourly cooperation. India did not consult Dhaka. It did not provide proper documentation. And when approached through diplomatic channels, its Ministry of External Affairs replied with radial silence. India has not even confirmed whether those expelled are verified Bangladeshis.

were blindfolded, airlifted from Gujarat, and dumped near border char lands in Shyamnagar, ill and injured.

It also speaks volumes about India's evolving security doctrine, which no longer sees soft power and cooperation as tools of



VISUAL: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

influence in South Asia. Today it's push in, forcibly into its neighbour. Tomorrow it may be "push-out" of bilateral trade deals, water treaties, and transit arrangements.

The 4,096-km Bangladesh-India border is already among the most militarised in the world, with more than 3,200 km fenced. One would assume such a landscape was meant to prevent illegal crossings. Instead, it's now a human conveyor belt where the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) plays the role of a forceful usher, marching off detainees and dumping them unannounced on Bangladeshi soil.

Between May 4 and May 15 alone, 370 people were pushed into Bangladesh, including minors, pregnant women, and elderly individuals. Some were tortured, according to a report by *The Daily Star*. Others arrived barefoot, starved, and terrified. These actions are in clear violation of international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights—both of which India is a signatory to.

More importantly, India's actions shred the very spirit of neighbourly cooperation. India did not consult Dhaka. It did not provide proper documentation. And when approached through diplomatic channels, its Ministry of External Affairs replied with radial silence. India has not even confirmed whether those expelled are verified Bangladeshis. India's Ministry of Home Affairs, under whose directive the detentions have intensified post-Pahalgam attack, has yet to clarify why Bangladeshi Muslims from West Bengal and Assam were caught in this dragnet. Instead, Rajasthan Law Minister Jagaram Patel publicly bragged about flying "Bangladeshis" to Kolkata.

Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who has a history of making inflammatory anti-Muslim statements, has endorsed a "pushback mechanism" to "check infiltration." Dhaka must not remain silent. The

Bangladesh foreign ministry's timid letter to New Delhi, regarding India's attempt to push in people into Bangladesh, is hardly adequate. What we need is vocal, strategic, and multilateral diplomacy. We must raise this issue at the UN, UNHCR, and other international human rights forums. Bangladesh must also demand clarity on these operations from India. The government should document and archive each push-in case, and explore legal avenues to hold India accountable.

Additionally, the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) must enhance surveillance and refuse entry to any individual not processed through bilateral mechanisms. Bangladesh should not be made the dumping ground for India's communal anxieties. Let it be said clearly: if India wants to be the regional leader it claims to be, it must first stop such disruptive actions. Friendship cannot be built on fear, nor can neighbourhood policy be guided by electoral calculations or RSS paranoia.

Debunking the Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh's role, and the ASEAN summit



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IMTIAZ A HUSSAIN

The balance may be shifting. Resolving the Rohingya crisis is being swayed by more external winds than internal thrusts. Dynamics such as Bamar treatment of the Rohingya, humanitarian care of the evicted Rakhine persons, and Bangladesh-Myanmar discussions on repatriating the displaced persons from Cox's Bazar camps have been overtaken by Myanmar's 2021 coup d'état and its civil war consequences, regional spillovers thickening across Southeast Asia, and an independent resurgence of "democracy" inside Bangladesh, splashing externally.

In reverse order, Bangladesh Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is more cited globally today not so much for his trademark microfinance contributions as his democracy-salvaging attempts since the historic ouster of the Awami League regime through a student-led democratic uprising last year. In comparison to Bangladesh's efforts in reviving democracy, Myanmar's deficiency of democracy has emerged more despicably.

Democracy is a reform movement in deficient countries. The other side of this movement defends the status quo to keep narratives in the same ballpark. Bamar, the largest ethnic group in Myanmar, who represent that "other" Rohingya side, controlled all of Myanmar from Naypyidaw through the Tatmadaw armed forces. Under today's civil war, reportedly, less than one quarter remains in their hands. The National Unity Government (NUG), a mixed group, influences the rest. Its reformers, the National League for Democracy (NLD), a party of former Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, replaced military rule with

greater intra-NUG salience. It has evicted Naypyidaw military forces across Rakhine and finds support from the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). Bangladesh unofficially satisfies two ULA/AA conditions for a Rohingya solution: recognition of the ULA/AA, and mobilisation of UN-based global support.

NUG's "reformer" claim is, however, tainted. The 2017 Rohingya eviction was an NLD

on May 26-27. That summit's theme of "Inclusivity and Sustainability" cannot but prioritise the Rohingya issue.

Prof Yunus's democratic ideologies pushed Gen Hlaing to announce Myanmar's election this year. This is an ASEAN membership requirement. When Prof Yunus attended the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok in April, he articulated his "Three Zeroes" agenda and called on the member states to promote dialogue between conflicting parties in Myanmar to resolve the Rohingya issue.

Democracy is not a new ASEAN issue since the 2008 ASEAN Charter's preamble emphasised "democracy, law, and good governance." Article 1 targets "strengthening democracy," and Article 2 "democracy principles." Even right after Gen Hlaing's February 2021 coup, ASEAN prepared a five-point consensus to end violence, begin dialogue, not only appoint a special ASEAN envoy to Myanmar but also visit Myanmar, and provide humanitarian assistance. Myanmar's civil war made it irrelevant.

Ever since 2021, ASEAN summits have treated the Rohingya issue. Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen emotionally posted the Rohingya issue when he hosted/chaired the 2022 summit, but his meeting with only Hlaing offended NUG leaders. Indonesia's President Joko Widodo organised many meetings and supplied lots of humanitarian aid, but could not convert sentiments into substance at the 2023 summit. The same thing happened in Laos in January 2024 when the country's foreign minister met Hlaing. Opening that closed Rohingya door becomes more urgent constantly.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim faces similar clouds this year. A harsher global context awaits him: a new US administration's tariff policies have

deepened ASEAN trade relations with China, widened Myanmar's own policy options and doors, and with India preoccupied in Kashmir, China faces less Southeast Asian constraints. So, the obvious question arises: why break Myanmar's status quo?

After all, Myanmar's top foreign investors (particularly China, India, and Japan) remain better off with the status quo. China influences ethnic NUG partners, because of those groups overlapping China's borders, since the country itself remains a stranger to democracy, to push Myanmar in that direction. In short, Malaysia's ASEAN summit this month would toss between these ill winds and the hopes that the vanguards of democracy that Anwar and Yunus symbolise. Riddled with mines, those remain the only salvaging elements for a Rohingya resolution. Without intra- and inter-boundary dialogues, no resolution seems feasible, including any "humanitarian corridor," and when displacement camps only grow, creating such passages misses a crucial beat.

Yunus mobilised another exogenous platform for a Rohingya solution: the UN. Its outgoing secretary-general, António Guterres, not only visited Dhaka, but also shared iftar with nearly 100,000 Rohingya in the Kutupalong camp in March, giving the neglected Rohingya what they most deserve: inclusiveness internationally, on an equal foot, not out of "noblesse oblige."

Bangladesh's exogenous reputation depends upon its endogenous treatment of its own election. Squaring the Rohingya circle fortifies two other global wishes: reformers, particularly the expressive youths who voted in 75 countries in 2024 (the most ever in any one year), shifting to negotiations via more streetside protests; and historically discriminated/persecuted groups replacing survival instincts with betterment. Peace, after all, is the springboard of reforms, and the postulated target of all conflicts, meaning zero-sum insulated approaches beg for collaborative, inclusive, and external counterparts—a shift too historically unprecedented to instantly change the ballgame.

decision to let China complete its economic corridor across Rakhine and Kyaukphyu port in the Bay of Bengal. Such evictions go back to 1785 for ethnic discrimination, not geopolitics.

Resolving a national crisis, such as Hlaing's eviction and Rohingya repatriation without fixing local fissures, weakens any Rohingya solution. Without exogenous platforms and management, this may be impossible given the depth of local distrust. If Myanmar's democracy is to work, attention must shift from one Nobel Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, the 2017 eviction perpetrator, to another, Yunus, whose "democracy" bonds extend to Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. The Malaysian politician visited Prof Yunus on October 4, 2024, and will host/chair the 46th ASEAN annual summit

Restored 'Aranyer Din Ratri' returns to Cannes with Wes Anderson, Sharmila and Simi

Satyajit Ray's *Aranyer Din Ratri* returned to the global stage at the 78th Cannes Film Festival, screened under Cannes Classics in a 4K restoration.

The revival was led by Wes Anderson, a longtime admirer of Ray's work, with support from The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project, Film Heritage Foundation, Janus Films, Criterion Collection, and L'Immagine Ritrovata.

Sharmila Tagore and Simi Garewal, stars of the 1970 film, attended the screening. Adapted from Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel, the film explores urban alienation, caste, and gender politics.

Anderson called it "a special gem". Sharmila portrayed Aparna, while Simi played Duli, in a story still resonant for its portrayal of modern identity and human vulnerability.



Manu Mia declines Khairul Basar's offer to buy him a horse

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Actor Khairul Basar has pledged to buy a horse for Manu Mia, a 70-year-old grave digger from Mithamain upazila in Kishoreganj, who has dug over 3,000 graves over the past five decades without ever demanding payment. The gesture follows a widely circulated video report published by The Daily Star, which highlighted Manu Mia's lifelong service and recent personal loss.

Manu Mia is currently undergoing treatment at a hospital due to age-related complications. His health setback was compounded by the death of his horse, the only means by which he travelled across villages to dig graves. Out of concern for his emotional well-being, his family initially withheld

the news of the horse's death.

In response to the report, popular actor Khairul Basar paid him a personal visit. During their conversation, Basar offered to buy Manu Mia a new horse. To his surprise, Manu Mia firmly yet politely declined the offer. When Basar tried to persuade him, Manu insisted that once he recovered, he would be able to afford not just one, but seven horses.

What truly struck Basar was Manu Mia's emotional strength. The death of his horse hadn't broken him—in fact, he expressed no sorrow. Manu Mia viewed it with stoic acceptance, saying, "What we own can leave us. That's just how life works." Basar realised that Manu Mia is a man of principle, someone who prefers self-reliance over charity.



WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Rehana Maryam Noor'

Filmmaker Abdullah Mohammad Saad's internationally acclaimed film *Rehana Maryam Noor* will be screened this Friday as part of Drishyapatra Film Society's third open film screening. The film follows an assistant professor at a medical college who confronts a moral dilemma after witnessing a sexual assault.

DATE: FRIDAY | MAY 23

TIME: 5PM ONWARDS

VENUE: TSC, UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

STOLEN JIM MORRISON GRAVE BUST found in paris after 37 years

A marble bust of Jim Morrison, stolen from his grave in Paris's Père-Lachaise cemetery in 1988, has been recovered after 37 years, French police confirmed.

The statue, created by Croatian artist Mladen Mikulin, was found during an unrelated financial investigation by Paris's anti-corruption unit. It had been installed in 1981 to mark the 10th anniversary of The Doors frontman's death.

A photo released by police shows the bust damaged, with its nose and mouth missing, as before its disappearance. No suspects have been named.

The cemetery curator said police have not contacted them about its return. A Morrison estate representative welcomed the news, calling the bust a "piece of history" and expressing hope it will be restored to the grave.



Sabina Yasmin to perform in 'Anandamela'



Legendary singer Sabina Yasmin is set to perform on Bangladesh Television's (BTV) Eid special magazine show *Anandamela*. The recording will take place on May 28 at BTV's in-house auditorium.

Despite health challenges, Yasmin continues to perform, most recently at the 8th Bangladesh Festival in Toronto, where she was honoured with a special tribute.

This year's *Anandamela* will also feature performances by band Miles, alongside appearances from film stars Shakib Khan, Puja Chery, and Dighi. The show will include dance, skits, and musical segments, and will be hosted by Nusrat Imrose Tisha and Intekhab Dinar.

Produced by Shahriar Hasan, Hasan Riad, and Maman Mahmud, the programme will air on Eid night. According to Mahmud, Yasmin's participation will be one of the event's major highlights.

NEWS

3 detained by cops released

FROM PAGE 12

A video of the incident went viral on Facebook.

Shah Mostafa Tariquzzaman, assistant commissioner (Dhanmondi) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said, "The three individuals were released after Hannan Masud took their responsibility. He gave a bond. Since we received an undertaking and no cases have been filed, we released them in accordance with the law."

Hannan told reporters at Dhanmondi Police Station that there was a misunderstanding that he "came to help resolve".

He added, "Looks like certain groups are trying to use our people for their personal interests.... I received a message from our student coordinator and came to check. We will investigate [the men] internally

and take action."

DMP STATEMENT

Someone called the national emergency helpline (999) around 12:30am on May 20, reporting that several individuals were trying to break into a house on road 4, Dhanmondi, said a DMP statement.

Police responded swiftly and found 15-20 people attempting to enter the premises by force. Officers tried to calm the situation, but the group became aggressive and insisted that police arrest one Golam Mostafa.

"As no complaint had been filed against the man, an arrest was not legally possible," the statement read. "To prevent disorder, three individuals were taken into custody and released around 3:30pm [Tuesday]."

The DMP urges people not to take the law into their own hands, it added.

Italy PM may visit

FROM PAGE 2

162,641 Bangladeshis were legally residing in Italy -- 4.4 percent of the country's immigrants.

The number of Bangladeshis in Italy, both documented and undocumented, is currently estimated at 300,000.

According to Italian government data last updated on May 6, over 6,500 Bangladeshi nationals have arrived in Italy this year, making them the largest group by nationality entering through North Africa.

"Italy wants to promote safe migration but is unwilling to accept more arrivals via the Mediterranean," the source added, noting that Italy also plans to repatriate undocumented Bangladeshis.

Prof Yunus and Meloni briefly met in New York in September last year on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

metres and can serve up to three rooms in a multi-storey building.

Taiyeb said that the government is working to create a financial package to make Starlink available to those who will provide citizen services. "We are planning to facilitate financing through microcredit authorities, financial organisations, and banks," he added.

Reassuring local internet providers, he said Starlink's entry will not disrupt existing broadband infrastructure or ongoing projects.

The initially proposed monthly fee was Tk 7,000, but the government negotiated a lower rate. Each terminal is expected to cover a radius of 20-30

Nusraat Faria out on bail

FROM PAGE 12

that Nusraat Faria was not present in the country during the time of the incident.

According to the report, she was in Canada from July 9 to August 14 last year.

Although the charges in the First Information Report (FIR) are non-bailable, the court observed that without the full police report, it was not possible to determine the precise allegations brought against the accused.

"Under these circumstances, considering all aspects, bail is granted to the accused on a bond of Tk 5,000, under the custody of her appointed lawyer and one local person, until the police report is submitted," the judge noted.

The actress, who was sent to jail on Monday following her arrest, was released from Kashimpur Female Central Jail at 3:28pm, Kawalin Nahar, senior jail superintendent of the Kashimpur Female Central Jail, told the newspaper.

Faria was arrested at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on

Sunday just before boarding a flight.

She was then taken into custody and produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on Monday morning amid tight security.

On March 27 this year, one Enamul Haque -- who suffered bullet injuries on July 19, 2023, during protests in Dhaka's Bhatara area -- filed a case with the court against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 265 others, including Faria and 16 actors.

In line with the court's directive, Bhatara Police Station's officer-in-charge registered the complaint as an FIR on April 29.

After her release, the actor, on her official Facebook page, expressed gratitude to the people for the support.

She also opened up about her physical and emotional ordeal during her 2 day stay in jail.

"I've gone through the most critical time of my life over the past two days. I was mentally shattered. But during this period, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who stood by me. From my colleagues to everyone in the industry, and even the

countless ordinary people who spoke on my behalf, stood up for justice, and supported me -- I will remember this support and love for the rest of my life."

"Had you not been there, perhaps I wouldn't have been able to return to you all so soon. I especially want to thank our media professionals -- your support meant the world to me. I will always remember the love you've shown me," the post added.

News of her arrest sparked a strong backlash on social media. Prominent cultural figures -- including directors Ashfaque Nipun and Shihab Shaheen, and actors Azmeri Haque Badhan and Khairul Basar -- condemned her arrest and expressed solidarity with her.

Actors Equity, the professional organisation of performers, also issued a public statement yesterday strongly denouncing the recent wave of arrests and lawsuits targeting artists.

The organisation called for the protection of creative freedom and demanded fair and lawful treatment of individuals working in the cultural sector.

Starlink launches

FROM PAGE 12

reports UNB.

At a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy, Taiyeb said Starlink would provide a reliable internet option in areas where fibre connectivity is unavailable. He said the service could particularly benefit NGOs, freelancers, and businesses in remote regions. While acknowledging the service is relatively expensive, he described it as a premium, stable, high-speed connection, UNB reports.

to address data sovereignty concerns, Taiyeb assured that all Starlink traffic will be routed through local gateways in compliance with national regulations. "All necessary approvals were granted after thorough review," he said, adding that Starlink will pay the government \$1 per terminal under its licensing terms.

The initially proposed monthly fee was Tk 7,000, but the government negotiated a lower rate. Each terminal is expected to cover a radius of 20-30

metres and can serve up to three rooms in a multi-storey building.

Taiyeb said that the government is working to create a financial package to make Starlink available to those who will provide citizen services. "We are planning to facilitate financing through microcredit authorities, financial organisations, and banks," he added.

Reassuring local internet providers, he said Starlink's entry will not disrupt existing broadband infrastructure or ongoing projects.

Conspiracy afoot to delay national polls

FROM PAGE 12

"...BNP leaders and activists must ensure that no one can undermine the country's independence and sovereignty or suppress democracy through autocracy and fascism."

The meeting was held at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office with the participation of top leaders from the party's various associate bodies.

At the joint meeting, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced an eight-day programme to commemorate the 44th martyrdom anniversary of its founder and late president Ziaur

Rahman from May 26.

At another event, Rizvi alleged that the interim government, like ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina, continues to make excuses over holding the next national polls.

"They [the government] are straying from their assigned responsibilities and engaging in other matters. If they were working honestly, they would have already announced the election date," he said while talking to reporters after visiting BNP activist Rakibul Hasan in Khilkhet, who was injured during the July uprising.

Speaking at a discussion at the

Jatiya Press Club, BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan said, "I'm hearing that some people are now demanding local government elections under a caretaker government. That is not possible. An interim government is formed solely for the purpose of holding the national election.

We all know that conducting local government elections takes over a year. Saying such things only means an attempt is being made to delay the national election."

He added that various obstacles were being created in the way of restoring democracy.

1.5 lakh Rohingyas arrived in months

FROM PAGE 2

day, despite increased surveillance by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to stop their arrivals as the Rohingya are using remote and hard-to-monitor routes.

They said brokers from Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities are helping them reach refugee camps in Teknaf and Ukhiya.

Rohingya who arrived in the Cox's Bazar camps said the Rohingya in Rakhine State are facing different forms of oppression including forced labour and frequent raid in their houses by the Arakan Army, which now controls over 80 percent of Rakhine State.

UNDP in its November 2024 report said the Rakhine State was likely to face a famine-like situation this year.

RRRC Mizanur said over last couple of days nearly 70 Rohingya refugees, who have been pushed in by the Indian authorities, have also been sheltered in the Cox's Bazar Rohingya

camps.

"I am worried over the continued pressure imposed on Bangladesh," he said, noting that the funding has already been diminishing and how it fares in the days to come is unknown.

According to the Joint Response Plan 2025, the total need is \$934.5 million, but only \$140.6 million or 15 percent has so far been met.

In 2024, the total requirement for the Rohingya and host community was \$852 million, but only 68 percent of it was met.

As the sole provider of monthly food assistance for the Rohingya population, WFP requires US\$86 million to sustain full food rations for those already in the camps for at least a year, along with an additional US\$2.9 million per month to support the growing number of new arrivals.

"How is the funding going to be met is a serious question," Mizanur said.

Pak, India agree to withdraw troops

FROM PAGE 12

and to the general public today at the Attari-Wagah land border in the northern state of Punjab.

Pakistan said it never stopped the ceremony, with its troops marching on its side of the border alone.

The ceremony however is expected to be a low-key affair with diplomatic measures against Pakistan still in place, including the closure of the land border.

More than 70 people were killed in the four-day conflict, which was sparked by an attack on tourists by gunmen in Indian-administered Kashmir last month that New Delhi accused Islamabad of backing -- a charge it denies.

The military confrontation involving intense tit-for-tat drone, missile, aerial combat and artillery exchanges came to an abrupt end after US President Donald Trump announced a surprise ceasefire, which is still holding.

LAW IN PRACTICE

Looking at the new CPC through lenses of civil court practices

SHAPON HOSSAIN

The Code of Civil Procedure (CPC), the century-old go-to apparatus for the civil law practitioners in Bangladesh, have gone through significant amendments. The amendments by and large aim to streamline civil court's processes, expedite the disposal of civil suits, and ensure more effective and speedy remedy for the litigants.

The most significant change is the introduction of digital methods for the issuance and service of summons upon the defendant/s. This amendment will allow the summons to be issued and served upon the defendant/s by means of SMS, Voice Calls or Instant Messaging service such as WhatsApp, telegram etc. Until now, the archaic method of issuing and serving summons upon the defendant/s is still in practice that, most of the time, protracts the trials. Sometimes, it takes years to complete the service of summons when the number of defendants is many, the addresses provided are either faulty and incomplete, or when the defendants



The new method of serving summons as introduced by the amendment will expedite the processes of the Court. However, the persisting digital divide is quite real, and moreover, due care must be taken so that no court staff can harass, annoy or threaten any party to the suit in the name of serving summons digitally.

situate in remote areas where the process servers are less interested to go because no allowance is given, and the defendants intentionally avoid summons or cannot be found. The new method introduced by the amendment will expedite the processes of the Court. However, the persisting digital divide is quite real, and moreover, due care must be taken so that no court staff can harass, annoy or threaten any party to the suit in the name of serving summons digitally.

Adjournment remains one of the most misused mechanisms for delaying civil suits. Previously, parties could seek up to six adjournments before the peremptory hearing (PH) without incurring any cost, and three more during the PH with costs. However, the recent amendment has reduced the number of permissible adjournments before the PH to three and introduced a condition precedent requiring a payment of Tk 300 for adjournment requests during the PH. Additionally, the court retains discretion to impose further costs of up to Tk 2,000. While these changes aim to discourage unnecessary adjournments, the minimal CP cost may still enable parties to exploit the provision.

Most of the people coming in the precincts of the civil courts are not educated and are also unable to present their cases before the bench, with majority depending upon their

appointed lawyers. This mostly happens when the plaintiff's witness-1(PW 1) or defendant's witness-1 (DW 1) stands at the dock to present the case in light of the Pleadings. However, most of the time the PW 1 or DW 1 cannot spell out the main matters of dispute let alone the genealogy, in-between transactions and other information required to make out the case averred in the pleadings. The new amendment will allow the PW 1 and DW 1 to submit the statement of the pleadings by presenting affidavit. This will save the court's time and expedite the recording of evidence. The other party may contradict such witness in cross-examination. However, this method may become problematic when if the court proceeds ex parte (in absence of either party) in any case, regard being had to the fact that the absent party will not be there to cross examine the witness to contradict his statement of

pleadings. Helpfully, the amendment has integrated the original suit with its execution. Under the CPC, a separate suit, named Execution Suit (ES), was to be filed after obtaining decree in the original suit for the purpose of bringing the obtained decree into effect on the ground. If the ES is filed after two years, notice was to be issued upon the decree-debtor/s. This ES was another means of procrastination and protraction of a civil suit to be finally decided and disposed of. Moreover, the ES was also the reason for the increased sufferings of the parties to the suit, a potential tool of aggrandisement for the lawyers, the court staff, and clerks. With the new integration, the long-drawn complexities of a civil suit are expected to come down to some extent. As per the amendment, the decree-holder will now be able to file an application directly after the declaration by the

court of a decree to execute the same. Moreover, the amendment has also introduced a provision for the delivery of immoveable property directly to the decree-holder.

The procedure for execution of a decree in a money-suit was quite complex and time-consuming under the CPC with the provision of attachment of the property or civil arrest of the person against whom a decree was made. As per the original provisions, the subsistence allowances required for the maintenance of such person in the civil prison were to be borne out of the pocket of the person in whose favour the decree was passed. This was quite an absurdity introduced by the colonial law makers. Through the new amendment, all such provisions have been omitted, and new provision has been inserted to provide that all such allowances required for the maintenance of such person in the civil prison shall be borne by the government. Besides, the civil court's judges have been given the power of 1st class magistrate as enshrined in the Code of Criminal Procedure to execute the decree of a money suit. This will likely speed up the process of execution in the money suit.

Furthermore, the new amendments have, moderating the rules of dismissal for default, inserted the provision for deciding a civil appeal on merits even if the appellant does not appear on the date fixed, increased the compensatory cost for false and vexatious claims, and lessened the scope of the same defendant to set aside an ex parte decree more than once (i.e., when the decree was passed ex parte because the defendant did not appear).

It is hoped that the implementation of these amendments will facilitate the swift disposal of civil suits, thereby helping to reduce the overwhelming backlog of cases currently burdening the civil courts of Bangladesh.

The writer is Assistant Judge, Bangladesh Judicial Service.

LAW REFORM

Plea bargaining within (a reformed) criminal justice system

PARVEZ RAHMAN

Article 35(3) of the Constitution of Bangladesh enshrines that every person accused of criminal offence shall have the right to a speedy and public trial by an independent and impartial court or tribunal established by law. More often than not, due to various impediments, this article does not get implemented. The prime reasons behind such delay can be lengthy and corrupt investigation processes, outdated recording of evidence, mendacity in making police reports, overwhelming number of cases and last but not the least, long drawn trial processes. In this piece, I argue that to manage, if not eliminate the delay in administering and delivering justice, plea bargaining can potentially be a welcome addendum.

Plea bargaining may be defined as an agreement between the accused and the prosecution through which the accused gets a lesser sentence by admitting his or her guilt. According to the Black's Law Dictionary, plea bargaining is the process whereby the accused and the prosecutor in a criminal case work out a mutually satisfactory disposal of the case, subject to court approval.

This tool is now used in many countries in Europe, Americas, Australia, and South-East Asian Nations. Notably, in the United States, about 90% of criminal cases are disposed of on the basis of plea bargaining. In the context of Bangladesh, where the conviction

rate on average is only 8-10%, plea bargaining can prove to be a useful tool. Section 345 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (CrPC) prescribes the provision for compoundable offences. However, this provision does not apply to serious offenses. We do have provisions in sections 243 and 265E of the CrPC for admission of truth of accusation before magistrate and plea of guilty before sessions judge respectively. However, in these

stages the accused does not usually plead guilty being well conversant with the futility of pleading guilty. Our justice system does not provide the accused with any advantage in this regard. Even if an accused pleads guilty in trial, awarding lesser punishment within law still remains discretionary with the judges.

In general, the principal benefit of plea bargaining is receiving a lighter sentence for a less severe charge that might result from taking the

case to trial and eventually losing. Another clear advantage of plea bargaining for defendants is the potential savings on lawyers' fees. This is particularly beneficial for the socioeconomically marginalised sections of the society who struggle to afford legal defense. The litigation process requires more time and effort to bring a case to trial, whereas plea bargaining resolves cases more expeditiously. The primary goal of this system is to expedite case

When the investigation and prosecution processes are thorough and immaculate, plea bargaining will truly be effective. However, an accused who in fact committed the offence feels more likely to deny than admit guilt, since casting reasonable doubts on the prosecution's narratives are easier due to lack of evidence at the hands of the prosecution due to faulty investigation process.

resolution, ease the burden on courts, and reduce overcrowding in prisons. There are certain inherent flaws too. As plea bargaining is one kind of negotiation, an accused may possibly face pressure from other side. Another important consideration is the overall state of the criminal justice system within which we introduce plea bargaining. When the investigation and prosecution processes are thorough and immaculate, plea bargaining will truly be effective. However, an accused who in fact committed the offence feels more likely to deny than admit guilt, since casting reasonable doubts on the prosecution's narratives are easier due to lack of evidence at the hands of the prosecution due to faulty investigation process. In such situation, the government must play an active role in putting a system in place so that investigation officers or agencies cannot find any scope to manipulate the investigation process. Moreover, by improving the prosecution efficiency, plea bargaining can bring in success. Preliminarily, plea bargaining can be introduced for certain criminal

and special laws and not for serious crimes, crimes against women and children and habitual offenders. Also, police or law enforcement agencies should be kept out of the process to keep it both fair and unbiased.

Pertinently, in India by Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2005 provisions relating to plea bargaining were added in the Criminal Procedure Code by addition of new Chapter XXI-A of Code with restricted application. Standing at a crossroads, while we discuss multifarious reform agendas, it is crucial to ponder if plea bargaining can be introduced within our criminal justice system. Certainly, it alone cannot go a long way, as for India, plea bargaining is not optimistically contributing to the conviction rate. We need to bring in substantive reforms within our investigation and prosecution processes and within a reformed criminal justice space, plea bargaining, if introduced, will bring in the desired success.

The writer studies law at the University of Dhaka.



Tigers' slip sets up tense series decider

SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Liton Das will be under growing pressure to deliver as Bangladesh look to bounce back from a shock defeat to the UAE and avoid further embarrassment in the T20I series decider at Sharjah today.

Despite posting an imposing 205 for five in the second and penultimate T20I on Monday, the Tigers fell apart in the field, suffering their first-ever loss to the hosts in any format.

In the aftermath, the question regarding Bangladeshi players' game sense was raised quite evidently, as they got several opportunities to close the game. However, due to poor execution, the home team eventually crossed the line in the second last delivery of the match.

Bangladesh had capable bowlers to defend such a total -- albeit relatively inexperienced from the series opener, which featured the likes of Mustafizur Rahman and Hasan Mahmud. However, a new-look bowling unit could hardly put a brake on UAE's run flow, allowing them to stay in the

contest despite the hosts having lost regular wickets following a 107-run opening stand between Muhammad Waseem and Muhammad Zohail.

Even the fielding department was below par, as Towhid Hridoy and Liton Das dropped a few regulation catches during crucial junctures of the game, while an overthrow in the penultimate over by Shoriful Islam that had a huge impact on the result of the contest before the indecisiveness of Tanzim Sakib and Hridoy led to missed run-out chances in the final over.

"Look, it's a game of two teams. I think they batted really well and hence they came on top. We batted well too, but again we dropped a few catches and kept them in the game," Bangladesh head coach Phil Simmons told reporters after a match.

From the surface level, Bangladeshi batters have done quite well by posting 191-7 and 205-5 in the opening two games so far, but their performance left room for improvement.

In the opening match, Parvez

Hossain Emon made a blistering hundred, while the rest could only bat at an average strike rate of 100. The next game saw Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Hridoy and Liton make meaningful contributions but the run flow in the middle overs came back to bite them.

Before taking on the UAE in the series decider, captain Liton will be under pressure for a separate reason, as he will be hoping to gain some confidence with some runs under his belt before travelling to Pakistan for a three-match T20I series.

In the second match, Liton was among the run-getters for the Tigers, but he was seen struggling hard during his 32-ball 40-run innings, and it also stretched his fifty-less innings in this format to eight matches.

A strong response is expected from the Tigers as they head into the decider, and much will depend on how they respond under pressure -- both collectively and individually.



'Modern cricket has huge demand for all-rounders'

In 2017, a 19-year-old **Mehedi Hasan Miraz** was picked by Trinbago Knight Riders for the Caribbean Premier League -- his first pick in a foreign franchise league. However, he didn't get a chance to play any game that year. Years passed by and Miraz is now an experienced member of Bangladesh side and it took him eight more years to get a call from another foreign league as Lahore Qalandars picked him for the remainder of the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL).

Before leaving for Pakistan yesterday, the cricketer spoke to *The Daily Star's* **Samsul Arefin Khan** about his excitement regarding the PSL, reasons behind him not cementing a place in the T20I side and other things. The excerpts are as follows:

DS: How much excited are you about your PSL stint?

MHM: It's a great feeling. I was previously selected in a foreign franchise league in 2017 but didn't get chance to play. This is my second time in a foreign league. Of course, there is a huge excitement as PSL is a big tournament.

DS: How did the connection happen between you and Lahore Qalandars?

MHM: My manager, Polash Sokal, made things possible. He made the communication with the Lahore franchise and due to his effort, I'm able to go to the PSL.

DS: You must be happy to have your long-time national teammate Shakib Al Hasan in the same team.

MHM: It's really great. We have been playing for the national team for a long time. As he is vastly experienced, I think I can get to learn a lot of things from him.

DS: You were the player of the tournament in the last Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). Still, you didn't get a place in the national team. You

must have been disappointed.

MHM: I have been in and out of the national T20I side. It's the call of the selectors and the team management on what they plan about me. But I'm always ready to play T20Is. To be honest, becoming the player of the tournament in the BPL is giving me added confidence. If I can play one or two more franchise leagues, it will add to my confidence.

DS: After playing T20Is for more than eight years, you have only played 29 matches. How would you explain this?

MHM: Honestly speaking, I wasn't serious about the format before. I was more serious about Tests and ODIs. It's also difficult to play in all three formats and perform equally. But now, I want to perform in T20s as well in other formats.

DS: The national team has a jam-packed T20I schedule in the coming days. How important will the PSL be for you to make a comeback to the team?

MHM: I think performing in such big will give good confidence. As the next T20 World Cup will be held in India and Sri Lanka, I think it will be a big

opportunity for me. If I can perform well in PSL with both bat and ball like in the BPL, the selectors may think of giving me the opportunity.

DS: Do you think your recent evolution as an all-rounder has attracted the foreign franchises more than previous times?

MHM: I think yes. If you want to play in franchise leagues, you need to be good in both batting and bowling. Secondly, in T20s, there are lot of different moments and it's important to adapt to those quickly. The way the modern cricket is played, there is a huge demand for all-rounders.

DS: Do you think due to the high-expectations from the people for the bar you have set, you came under scanner very often for your T20 performances?

MHM: I have created high expectations by performing regularly. If I couldn't perform, there wouldn't be similar expectations. I have delivered several match-winning performances both with the bat and ball. I have played a lot of match-winning innings for the national team. I think it has raised the bar of expectations of people and my expectations as well. If I can't perform, of course I feel bad. But when I can't win matches for my team, especially for the national team, it feels even worse.

Bangladesh set for trimmed Pak tour

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will go ahead with their scheduled tour of Pakistan later this month, but the T20I series has been shortened to three matches from the originally planned five, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed yesterday.

The tour had faced uncertainty following heightened cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan before agreeing to ceasefire earlier this month.

"Yes, the series has been reduced to three T20Is and will be played in Lahore only," PCB media official Shafqat Shabbir told *The Daily Star* on Tuesday.

The dates of the revised schedule, however, is yet to be announced. The series is expected to begin shortly after the conclusion of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) final, scheduled for May 25.

"PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi held direct talks with the Bangladesh Cricket Board and convinced them of full security arrangements," a PCB press release read.

Pakistan's domestic T20 competition, the PSL, had itself suffered a ten-day disruption due to the conflict, while the Indian Premier League (IPL) also faced a temporary suspension.

Despite initial hesitation from some Bangladesh players over touring, the PCB stated successfully addressing "all concerns raised by the Bangladesh Cricket Board."

The matches are set to add further significance as both nations look to finalise preparations ahead of the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup later this year.

Last shot at redemption for United, Spurs

AGENCIES

Manchester United and Tottenham are floundering near the foot of the Premier League table, but both clubs have a golden opportunity to redeem their seasons in Wednesday night's Europa League final in Bilbao.

United sit 16th and Spurs 17th in the Premier League after campaigns marked by inconsistency, criticism, and historical lows. Yet, a single win could not only deliver long-awaited silverware but also secure a vital place in next season's Champions League -- a lifeline both clubs desperately need.

For United, the stakes are immense. Under-pressure manager Ruben Amorim knows that lifting the Europa League

trophy is the club's only route back to European football. With co-owner Jim Ratcliffe estimating Champions League qualification could bring up to 100 million pounds in broadcast, matchday, and commercial income, the final carries both financial and reputational weight.

Tottenham's Ange Postecoglou, meanwhile, is seeking to cap off a turbulent season with the club's first trophy since 2008, and refrain from this being his final season at the club.

Both managers are under pressure, both squads are reeling, and both sets of fans are desperate for a reason to believe again.

For United and Spurs, it's one final chance to turn despair into redemption.

Manchester United are winless in their last six meetings with Tottenham in all competitions (two draws, four defeats). The Red Devils have never gone seven without a win against Spurs before.

Ruben Amorim could become only the third manager to win a major trophy in his first season in charge of United, after Jose Mourinho in 2016-17 (EFL Cup and Europa League) and Erik ten Hag in 2022-23 (EFL Cup).

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

Bangladesh vs UAE
Third T20I
Live from 9:00 pm
STAR SPORTS 1 & 2
PSL
Islamabad vs Quetta
Live from 9:00 pm

Mumbai vs Delhi
Live from 8:00 pm
NAGORIK TV
Europa League Final
Man United vs Tottenham
Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)

SONY TEN 2 & 3
Asian Cup Qualifying
Match against Singapore on June 10.
national coach Javier Cabrera excluded Tapu Barman, Anisur Rahman Zico, and Sheikh Morsalin from the squad for FIFA World Cup play-offs and Asian Cup Qualifiers against the Maldives on disciplinary grounds. Another source claimed BFF disciplinary committee chairman Mejahid Uddin Ahmed mistakenly announced a six-match ban, instead of a six-month suspension.

Saad's six-month ban reduced to 22 days!

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings defender Saad Uddin's six-month suspension has been reduced to four matches after the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) disciplinary committee reviewed his petition on Monday.

Saad will now serve a 22-day ban, ending on May 24. On May 16, he was handed a six-month ban under Clause 45 of the disciplinary code for assaulting the match commissioner during the May 2 Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match between Kings and Abahani.

Kings have already played three of their remaining BPL matches without him, with their final two fixtures scheduled for May 24 and 29.

One reason for the reduction could be Bangladesh's upcoming Asian Cup Qualifying match against Singapore on June 10. Last year, national coach Javier Cabrera excluded Tapu Barman, Anisur Rahman Zico, and Sheikh Morsalin from the squad for FIFA World Cup play-offs and Asian Cup Qualifiers against the Maldives on disciplinary grounds. Another source claimed BFF disciplinary committee chairman Mejahid Uddin Ahmed mistakenly announced a six-match ban, instead of a six-month suspension.

The suspension was ultimately reduced to four matches under Clause 45, Article 1.A, which allows for a minimum four-match ban for unsporting behavior toward match officials. However, Saad's actions clearly fall under Clause 45, Article 1.B, which stipulates a minimum six-month suspension for assaulting a match official.

NAT'L SWIM MEET Digital timing set to debut at last

SPORTS REPORTER

The long-awaited debut of electronic timing in swimming competitions is finally set to become a reality as the Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) has completed preparations to host the 37th National Age-group Swimming and Diving Championships under electronic timing at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur from today.

The US-made Daktronics electronic timer, installed by the National Sports Council in late 2019 at a cost of Tk 4 crore as part of an Tk 8.5 crore renovation project, has remained unused in national events for five years due to faulty timekeeping.

At the time, BSF officials said the device failed to produce timings for all lanes simultaneously, forcing them to rely on traditional stopwatches, which frustrated swimmers.

"The electronic timer is now functional and providing accurate timings. We've already used it during the ongoing talent hunt programme at the National Swimming Complex," BSF general secretary Mahabubur Rahman Shahin told *The Daily Star* after a press conference at the BOA auditorium yesterday.

"It has been repaired with parts from different companies. We're not sure how long it will last, but we're happy to finally host the age-group championships using it," he added.

Around 550 swimmers are expected to compete in 100 events across five groups, with four additional diving events. The top three in each event will receive Tk 2,000, Tk 1,000, and Tk 500 respectively, along with medals.

"We'll also identify promising swimmers from this meet for long-term training, alongside those emerging from the 'Search for the Better Swimmers' programme," the BSF general secretary further informed, adding that the federation is also planning to organise the country's first-ever school swimming championships to increase participation nationwide.

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Nusraat Faria out on bail

Expresses gratitude to wellwishes, media for support



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After spending two nights behind bars, actor Nusraat Faria yesterday walked out of jail after securing bail in an attempted murder case tied to last year's July uprising.

Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman passed the bail order around 10:30am after hearing her petition, her lawyer Mohammad Iftekhar Hossain confirmed to The Daily Star.

In the bail order, the judge said the court granted bail as the investigating officer submitted a report confirming

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Starlink launches, starting price Tk 4,200 a month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Starlink has officially launched its satellite-based internet service in Bangladesh, offering unlimited data with speeds of up to 300 Mbps.

Customers can now subscribe to either the Tk 6,000 "Starlink Residential" package or the Tk 4,200 "Residential Lite" plan. Both require a one-time installation fee of Tk 47,000.



Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser for the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, confirmed the launch on Facebook. Starlink also announced the rollout on its official X account.

The company began operations within 90 days of receiving a licence from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) on April 29. Officials say this marks the fastest issuance of a Non-Geostationary Orbit (NGSO) satellite internet licence in the country's history.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus congratulated all those involved in the launch of Starlink in Bangladesh,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Pak, India agree to withdraw troops Says Pak security official; BSF resumes sunset ceremony on its side of Wagah border

AFP, Amritsar/ Islamabad

Pakistan and India have agreed to withdraw troop reinforcements deployed during their recent conflict back to their peacetime positions by the end of May, a senior Pakistani security official told AFP yesterday.

"Troops will be withdrawn to pre-conflict positions by the end of May," the senior security official told AFP on condition of anonymity as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

The official said both countries agreed a phased withdrawal of the additional troops and weaponry deployed, mostly on the already heavily militarised de facto border in Kashmir, known as the Line of Control (LoC).

It comes after the Indian army last week said both sides agreed to take "immediate measures to ensure troop reduction from the borders and forward areas".

"All of these steps were initially planned to be completed within 10 days, but minor issues caused delays," the Pakistani official added.

Meanwhile, India said yesterday it would resume a daily border ceremony with neighbouring Pakistan which it briefly halted earlier this month following the conflict.

India's Border Security force (BSF) said the sunset ceremony on its side was opened to the media yesterday

SEE PAGE 8 COL 6



Supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain block the Golapshah Mazar road at Gulistan for over five hours from 10:00am yesterday as they continued their demonstration for the sixth consecutive day demanding Ishraque be sworn in as the mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Conspiracy afoot to delay national polls: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said that a "well-orchestrated conspiracy" is underway to delay the upcoming national election and deprive citizens of their voting rights.

"Today is one of the most crucial and significant moments. Through the bloodshed of thousands of students and people, a new opportunity has emerged -- to establish democracy and to build a modern state free from fascism. And yet, we see a dark shadow looms," he said.

He made the remarks while virtually addressing a joint meeting of the BNP and its affiliated bodies from Thailand, where he is recovering after undergoing an eye surgery.

A certain group has begun engaging in divisive politics, Fakhrul said. "A plot has begun to pit various government institutions against each other."

The BNP leader accused certain infiltrators within the government of plotting to mislead the country and divert it from its democratic path.

In this context, Fakhrul called on party leaders and activists to stay alert and stand against any kind of conspiracy.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Govt targets lowest budget deficit in 14 years

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The interim government plans to reduce the national budget deficit to 3.6 percent of gross domestic product in the upcoming fiscal year -- the lowest in 14 years -- as it seeks to rebuild fiscal credibility, limit borrowing, and ease pressure from rising debt servicing costs.

The proposed deficit for fiscal 2025-26 marks a sharp departure from more than a decade of looser fiscal policy. Since 2010-11, when the deficit stood at 3.8 percent, Bangladesh has routinely run deficits exceeding 5 percent, with pandemic-era spending pushing it above 6 percent.

Now, a key objective of the new budget strategy is to cut both domestic and external borrowing to reduce the country's debt risk from "moderate" to "lower". Officials say this will help avoid a future scenario where a significant share of the budget is consumed by interest and loan repayments.

"It will be a budget for restoring discipline in the financial sector," said Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud after a high-level meeting this week. "Our objective is to avoid falling into a debt trap, where a significant portion of the budget is consumed by loan repayments -- be it operating costs or interest payments."

The government aims to contain total expenditure at 12.7 percent of GDP, down from 14.2 percent in the original budget for the current fiscal year. As the overall budget size will be smaller, officials say it is designed with macroeconomic stability and long-term sustainability in mind.

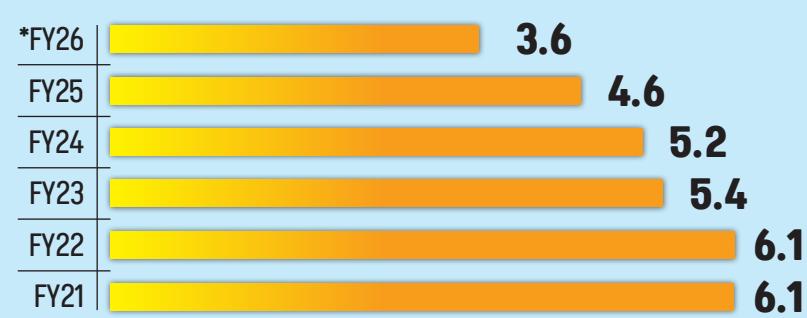
Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed echoed this emphasis on discipline. "We'll

try our best to reduce the budget deficit significantly. While cutting administrative expenses is difficult, the government plans to curb expenditure by dropping large, capital-intensive infrastructure projects," he told The Daily Star in an interview.

with consumer prices remaining above 9 percent since March 2023, even as inflation eased globally.

By narrowing the gap between revenue and expenditure, the government hopes to reduce its reliance on central bank

BUDGET DEFICIT OVER THE YEARS (IN %)



SOURCE: BUDGET DOCUMENTS & ECONOMIC REVIEWS

The revised budget for the current fiscal year has already brought the deficit down to 4 percent, from the originally planned 4.6 percent, setting the stage for further tightening in the next fiscal year starting July 1.

For that year, the government projects a budget deficit of Tk 2,26,000 crore, to be financed through Tk 1,25,000 crore from domestic sources and the remainder from foreign loans and grants.

In recent years, Bangladesh has relied heavily on central bank borrowing to finance its deficit. That dependence exacerbated inflationary pressures,

financing, identified by some economists as a key driver of persistent inflation.

The move to restore fiscal discipline is long overdue. "To break this vicious cycle, revenue must be increased, but expenditure must also remain limited," Mahmud said.

Economists have long warned that Bangladesh's dependence on borrowing and its weak revenue mobilisation pose structural risks. The interim administration's pivot toward consolidation and restraint is being seen as a serious effort to restore macroeconomic balance and strengthen the country's readiness for graduation from LDC status.

3 detained by cops released on NCP leader's bond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three young men, including a now former leader of the Students Against Discrimination, who were detained on Monday night following an altercation with police in the capital's Dhanmondi, were released yesterday.

Police let them go after Abdul Hannan Masud, senior joint chief coordinator of the National Citizen Party, gave an undertaking that the men would not engage in such activities in the future.

One of the three men, Saiful Islam Rabbi, was the coordinator of the Mohammadpur unit of the Students Against Discrimination (SAD).

The SAD, which spearheaded the movement that led to the fall of Awami League regime, wrote on Facebook later that Saiful Islam Rabbi has been relieved of all organisational duties "due to moral misconduct".

Dhanmondi police earlier said they detained Rabbi and two others after they tried to forcibly enter the residence of a publisher, accusing him of being a "fascist agent".

When police went to the scene, they asked officers to arrest the publisher. As police pointed out that there was no complaint against the publisher, the men engaged in a heated argument with police.

The officers then detained them.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



A woman walks past an anti-US mural near the former US embassy in Tehran yesterday. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday said that nuclear talks with the United States were unlikely to yield any results.

Dearness allowance for civil servants on the cards

Salehuddin says announcement may come in next budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering introducing a dearness allowance for public servants in the upcoming national budget, said Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed.

A committee has already been formed to work on the issue, he told reporters after a meeting of the advisory committee on government purchase at the Secretariat in Dhaka yesterday.

However, he did not specify the rate at which the allowance may be offered.

When asked Salehuddin refrained from commenting on the dissolution of the National Board of Revenue, adding that the finance ministry would issue a press release in this regard.

PHOTO: AFP