



"I have some level of optimism that we may have breakthrough achievements here pretty quickly, hopefully on an end to this..."

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Gaza war

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'Frustrated, Yunus hints at quitting'

Say Nahid, other sources

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Frustrated over recent developments, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is considering stepping down, said sources familiar with what went down at the Chief Adviser's Office and Jamuna yesterday.

During unofficial discussions at an advisory council meeting, he voiced his desire to resign and address the nation through a televised speech. He talked about his worries over aspersions on his government's performance and duties, added the sources.

Meanwhile, as speculations ran rife on social media, Information Adviser Mahfuj Alam, Local Government Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and National Citizen Party Convener Nahid Islam – all frontline leaders of the July uprising – met Yunus around 6:30pm at his official residence, state guest house Jamuna.

Nahid, talking to BBC Bangla afterwards, said the chief adviser was weighing resignation.

He said he went to Jamuna as they had been hearing about Yunus's possible resignation since morning.

According to him, the chief adviser expressed concerns about whether

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BNP escalates its push for polls by December

Wants 2 advisers, Khalilur removed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday asked the government to downsize the advisory council, confine itself to routine works, and unveil a plan for elections by December.

The party demands immediate removal of advisers Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain and National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman in order to protect what the party says is the government's impartiality and image.

As these advisers are known to all as directly or indirectly involved with a new political party, their presence in the advisory council calls into question the nonpartisan identity of the interim government.

Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain
BNP standing committee member



The BNP also calls for a smaller advisory council because the interim government's "responsibility is to organise a national election" and handle the routine administrative tasks, Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, BNP Standing Committee member, said yesterday.

A top-heavy government is not needed, he told a press conference at the BNP chairperson's office in the capital's Gulshan.

Referring to Asif and Mahfuj without mentioning their names,

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SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

City chokes as protests wreak havoc

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and RAJFUL ISLAM

Ninety-six-year-old Nurjahan Begum left her home in Old Dhaka's Mogholtoli for her daughter's house in Banasree around 2:00pm yesterday.

Accompanied by her son, Mizanur Rahman, she could reach near Gulistan's Golap Shah Mazar by rickshaw after an hour.

"It took us an hour just to reach Gulistan. Then we waited another one and a half hours, but there wasn't a single empty auto-rickshaw. I don't know how long it will take to get to Banasree," said a frustrated, Mizanur.

Meanwhile, Nurjahan, struggling to cope with the heat and exhaustion, was seen scolding her son for failing to find transportation.

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Gridlock on both sides of Manik Mia Avenue, which rarely sees prolonged traffic jams. Yesterday's usual heavy traffic was worsened by a downpour and demonstrations that blocked key streets.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

AUG 5 AFTERMATH
ISPR releases list of 626 the army sheltered
Urges all to avoid misleading narratives over settled issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army provided temporary shelter to 626 individuals who sought protection amid the poor law and order situation following the July uprising, said an ISPR statement last night.

Among them were political figures, civil servants, police personnel, and their families who feared for their lives amid escalating violence, said the Inter Services Public Relations.

This humanitarian intervention was undertaken solely to protect lives, it said, adding that protecting lives were prioritised over verification of their identities.

After the fall of the previous government, the security situation rapidly deteriorated as certain conspiratorial groups incited attacks on government offices, police stations, and homes. Incidents of mob justice, arson, looting, and politically motivated assaults created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty across the country, it said.

Against this backdrop, individuals from various backgrounds sought refuge in cantonments, including in Dhaka, said the ISPR release.

Referring to Asif and Mahfuj without mentioning their names,

Public servants won't be forced to retire

Advisory Council also decides to further review proposed public service ordinance

BAHARAM KHAN

The Advisory Council has decided to abolish a provision of the Public Service Act, 2018, which allows the government to send public servants into forced retirement after 25 years of service.

Additionally, a four-member panel of advisers has been assigned to further review several aspects of the proposed Public Service (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, including a possible relaxation of some newly introduced disciplinary provisions.

Under the existing Public Service Act, 2018, the government retains the authority to retire any government employee without justification, as long as the individual has completed 25 years of service.

These decisions were made yesterday at the 29th meeting of the Advisory Council, held at the office of Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

Two highly placed sources in the government confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

"There are four types of major penalties under the Public Service Act 2018. Among them, forced retirement is widely criticised," a highly placed source in the government told this correspondent last night.

Earlier, the Public Administration Reform Commission also recommended repealing this provision, and the Advisory Council has now directed that it be abolished.

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ICT investigation agency granted power to arrest suspects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal has granted its investigation agency the authority to arrest the accused and suspects in cases related to crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The ICT-1 published its amended rules of procedure in a gazette last night, also allowing the investigation agency to carry out necessary operations.

Besides, the prosecutors will be able to execute any arrest warrant issued by the tribunal. The suspect has to be produced before the tribunal or any magistrate within 24 hours of the arrest.

"If the investigation officer has reason to believe that any offence has been committed, he/she shall proceed in person to the spot, investigate the facts and circumstances of the case and may arrest the accused(s)/suspected persons and make necessary discovery. The investigation officer may also seek assistance from the law enforcement agency in causing arrest, discovery and seizure," reads amended rule 6.

"The law enforcement agency or the investigation officer or the prosecutor performing the investigation under section 8(2) of the act shall execute the warrant of arrest issued by the tribunal," according to amended rules.

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Supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain cheer on Hare Road after the High Court yesterday cleared the way for him to be sworn in as mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Ishraque suspends demos after HC order in his favour
Says they'll observe govt actions over next 48hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Ishraque Hossain yesterday suspended the demonstrations for his immediate swearing-in as Dhaka south mayor and said they would observe the government's actions over the next two days before deciding on the next course of action.

He made the announcement while speaking to his supporters near the Kakrail Mosque at 4:15pm.

Just a few hours back, he had urged his supporters to remain on the streets despite a High Court order that rejected a writ petition challenging the Election

Commission's decision to declare him DSCC mayor.

Ishraque also apologised for the public inconvenience and disruptions to civic services due to the eight-day long protests by his supporters.

Following his announcement,

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গণসচেতনতামূলক গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড একটি সংবিধিবদ্ধ সেবামূলক প্রতিষ্ঠান। বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড ও এর আওতাধীন ৮০টি পল্লী বিদ্যুৎ সমিতির প্রায় ৪৫ হাজার কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারী দেশের প্রায় ৩ কোটি ৭০ লক্ষ বিভিন্ন শ্রেণির গ্রাহককে বিদ্যুৎ সেবা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে নিরলসভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। কিন্তু লক্ষ্য করা যাচ্ছে যে, জুলাই অভ্যর্থনার পরপরই উদ্দেশ্য প্রণোদিতভাবে পল্লী বিদ্যুৎ সমিতির কতিপয় বিশুঙ্গলা সৃষ্টিকারী কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারী গভীর ষড়যন্ত্রে মাধ্যমে দেশকে অস্থিতিশীল করার লক্ষ্যে ১৭ অক্টোবর ২০২৪ সাল দেশে ত্র্যাক আউট করে অস্থিতিকালীন সরকারকে বেকায়দায় ফেলে দেশকে অকার্যকর করার উদ্দেশ্যে বিভিন্ন জেলায় বিদ্যুৎ বিপর্যয় ঘটিয়ে জনজীবন বিপর্যস্ত করে, যা রাষ্ট্রদ্রোহিতার সামিল। এ পরিস্থিতিতে পল্লী বিদ্যুৎ সমিতির কতিপয় দুষ্ক্রিয়কারী কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারীকে চাকরিচ্যুত করা হয় এবং তাদের এই দেশদ্রোহী কর্মকান্ডের জন্য সরকার কর্তৃক রাষ্ট্রদ্রোহ মামলায় তাদেরকে গ্রেফতার করা হয়। এরপরেও তারা জামিনে মুক্তি পেয়ে বিভিন্ন বিশুঙ্গলামূলক কার্যক্রম চালিয়ে যাচ্ছে এবং সম্প্রতি তারা অন্তিকাবে নেরাজ্য সৃষ্টির লক্ষ্যে ২১ মে ২০২৫ 'মার্চ টু ঢাকা' কর্মসূচি করে, যার মাধ্যমে জনমনে পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন কার্যক্রম সম্পর্কে বিভাস্তি সৃষ্টি করা হচ্ছে।

প্রক্রতিপক্ষে ৮০টি পল্লী বিদ্যুৎ সমিতির প্রায় ৪৫ হাজার কর্মকর্তা/কর্মচারীদের এই নেরাজ্য সৃষ্টিকারীদের সাথে কোনরূপ সম্পর্কতা নেই। এ বিষয়ে বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ডের সম্মানিত সকল গ্রাহকসহ দেশের সর্বত্তরের জনগণকে তাদের এই বিশুঙ্গল কার্যকলাপ সম্পর্কে সচেতন থাকা ও বিভ্রান্ত না হওয়ার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

৮০টি পল্লী বিদ্যুৎ সমিতির পক্ষে
বাংলাদেশ পল্লী বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড (বিআরইবি)

বাগবিলো/জেল (২৪৩০৫-২২০) ২০২৪-২৫

প্রচারণ - জনসংযোগ পরিদপ্তর



MISSING DHAKA?

One bite of fuchka brings you home

RBR

Fuchka is an unhealthy but delightful bite of sin that we Dhakaites cannot do without. No matter which corner of the globe we live in, our periodic craving for this tangy street food makes us homesick, or perhaps fuchka sick.

Paper thin, hollowed bite-size balls made from flour or semolina dough are filled with a stew of potato and chickpeas. They are topped with garnishes like onions, green chilli, coriander leaves, and boiled egg shavings, but before you pop one into your mouth, you add a spoonful of tangy tamarind water, and that makes all the difference.

A fuchka-purist like myself does not agree with the recent gimmicky experimentation the vendors are coming up with. For example, adding cucumber as a garnish or making the tamarind water sweet is downright sacrilegious. The array of terracotta pots of sweet, spicy and tangy liquid put on the front row in the fuchka carts are also an eyesore.

I first saw these hideous pots in Uttara fuchka carts. Before I elaborate any further, you should know that Uttara is a sham when it comes to fuchkas. Moreover, calling it "pani puri" is not done in my fuchka book. Pani puri and gol gappa are Indian twists on our fuchka, which cannot be a substitute for it as they have a totally different sour flavour.

However, I do enjoy the Indian chaat

variation, called Dahi fuchka, where adding a dollop of chilled zesty yoghurt mix takes it up a notch. This Indian chaat spin made its debut in Dhaka quite a while ago. The addictive chilled yoghurt mixed over crispy fuchka, must be devoured within minutes of serving, or it will go soggy. It is a fun addition to our existing assortment of snacks.

Dhaka fuchkas have an almost perfect recipe; one that does not need improvising. The humble roadside snack has now made a grand entry in fine dining as cocktail snacks, served over a shot glass filled with the tamarind concoction. I love the new posh plating of this quintessential Dhaka's hallmark street food.

Our humble fuchka enjoyed the spotlight when Australian MasterChef's Bangalore contestant Kishwar Chowdhury put up a plate for the judges.

For any food cart to become a hit, the fuchkas must be crisp and not smell of day old fried oil. The potato mix must be fresh and made on the day to avoid going bad. The onions must also be freshly cut right before serving to ensure that it is not grown any bacterial growth from poor storing facilities.

There are quite a few good places that



PHOTO: STAR

serve fresh, crispy fuchkas. The second floor of Pink City is famous among shoppers. Various food stands in New Market and Dhaka University are also good places to find a great fuchka.

But my absolute favourite is Fusion Café, next to the Kumudini store on Gulshan Avenue. One plate of 8 or so stuffed crunchy balls in a tangy spice blend can be easily gobbled up in minutes, and then you always consider another round. The late evening hours

see a rush of customers -- from groups of friends, colleagues, or families -- who crowd the place, while some senior aficionados even sit in the car at late hours and order away.

However, I found a new contender to topple this cart. My friend, who is not a fan of street fuchka for health reasons, took me to Happiness Café, tucked inside the ground floor of Cityscape Tower on Gulshan Avenue.

Aesthetically decorated using vintage cane and wooden furniture, the place offers a cosy and comfortable ambiance. It has an impressive collection of books, and you can read while sipping the gourmet coffee or tea. They have a low table for kids to draw pictures and keep busy while parents chill playing ludo or chess or enjoy their meal.

They serve breakfast, brunch, and delightful seasonal fruit mocktails, but of course, their most popular item is the evening bites of fuchka. The menu offers Dahi fuchka, regular fuchka, and Naga fuchka. These handmade fresh crispy fuchkas are filled with mashed chickpeas, mixed with chopped onions, lime, coriander, and green chillies or naga chili, and comes with a sour dip of yoghurt or tamarind pulp.

This joint has given me the option to treat fuchka to my expat friends without having to feel guilty about the potential health hazards of unhygienic street food. Upscaling fuchka is one of the best things that happened to Dhaka.

'Frustrated, Yunus hints at quitting'

FROM PAGE 1

he would be able to continue working under the current circumstances.

Recalling how the former student leaders had requested him to take charge and carry out reform initiatives after the August 5 political changeover, Yunus expressed discontent about relentless protests over myriad demands.

He said he felt "held hostage" by such demonstrations, Nahid told the British broadcaster.

"I cannot work like this if you, all the political parties, cannot reach a common ground," the NCP chief quoted Yunus as saying.

At that, Nahid urged Yunus not to make such a decision in haste. "He should remain strong. He should ensure unity among all parties. I hope everyone will cooperate with him," Nahid told BBC Bangla.

Ariful Islam, senior joint convener of the NCP and head of the political liaison

committee, told The Daily Star that Nahid met the chief adviser to discuss the current political situation.

However, the chief adviser expressed his willingness to reconsider his role in the present circumstances. At the meeting, Nahid urged him to reflect on the aspirations surrounding the July uprising, national security, sovereignty, and unity before making a final decision.

Lately, political tensions have been rising, fuelled by protests from various parties and increasingly toxic rhetoric on social media and at political gatherings.

The BNP has long been pressing for the election by December. Also, it yesterday demanded a smaller advisory council, with immediate removal of Mahfuj, Asif and National Security Adviser Khalilur Rahman.

Leaders of the NCP demonstrated on Wednesday, saying they would not take part in any polls under the current Election Commission. Accusing the EC of

bias and terming it a "party office" of the BNP, they demanded its reconstitution. They also demanded the resignation of Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, and Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud.

They, along with Jamaat-e-Islami, want the election only after reforms are carried out and trial of the banned Awami League leaders.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz Zaman said the national election should be held by December this year.

"Bangladesh needs political stability. This is only possible through an elected government, not by unelected decision-makers," one source quoted the army chief as saying in an Officers' Address.

Yesterday morning, after holding the regular advisory council meeting at his office in Tejgaon, Yunus asked all but the advisers to leave the meeting. Then he held an almost four-hour-long

meeting with the advisers, according to a government source.

During the discussion, he noted that many people were making differing comments and demands, with some suggesting that conducting the upcoming general election is the sole responsibility of the interim government.

Yunus emphasised his commitment to ensuring the best ever election in Bangladesh's history. He questioned the necessity of his role if he was unable to achieve that goal.

While advisers acknowledged his sentiment, some urged him to take a day or two before making a final call.

However, on return to his official residence, Yunus remained firm in his position, with speculations doing the rounds amid a barrage of social media posts by leaders of NCP and other political parties.

ICT investigation

FROM PAGE 1

Section 8(2) reads, "Any person appointed as a Prosecutor is competent to act as an Investigation Officer and the provisions relating to investigation shall apply to such Prosecutor."

Additionally, if deemed necessary, investigation officers may obtain arrest warrants through the prosecution at any stage of an investigation or trial. Such warrants will be executed by the investigating officer, a law enforcement agency, or the prosecutor, as per section 8(2) of the act.

The gazette on International Crimes Tribunal 1 Rules of Procedure, 2010 (amendment, 2025) came weeks after the government included a provision in the ICT Act to hold the trial of political parties or any entity subordinate to, or affiliated to, or associated with such a party, or any group of individuals which, in the opinion of the tribunal, propagates, supports, endorses, facilitates, or engages in the activities of such a party or entity.

On May 10, the interim government amended the act amid protests by several political parties, including the National Citizen Party, to ban the activities of the Awami League and its trial in the tribunal on charges of atrocities committed in July last year.

The gazette further defines an "accused" as any person or organisation identified under section 2(bbb) of the act, against whom an investigation has commenced.

Section 2(bbb) defines organisations as "any political party, or any entity subordinate to, or affiliated to, or associated with such a party, or any group of individuals which, in the opinion of the Tribunal, propagates, supports, endorses, facilitates, or engages in the activities of such a party or entity."

In his reaction, co-coordinator of the ICT investigation agency, Muhammed Shahidullah Chowdhury said the agency's work would be easier now because they would no longer have to depend on law enforcement agencies to arrest a suspect or accused.

ISPR releases list of 626 the army sheltered

FROM PAGE 1

It said many of the 626 individuals who received temporary protection left within one or two days as conditions improved.

Those sheltered included 24 political leaders, five judges, 19 officials of the civil administration, 515 police officers and personnel and 51 women and children (family members), and 12 individuals from various public universities and other backgrounds, day.



read the release.

A few of them were later handed over to law enforcement agencies through proper legal procedures based on ongoing cases or allegations, it added.

The ISPR clarified that this matter had been addressed in an official statement issued on August 18, 2024, and a list of 193 individuals, excluding over 400 police personnel and one NSI official, was sent to the home ministry the same

Despite the issue being resolved, some vested quarters have continued to circulate misleading and politically motivated narratives in an attempt to tarnish the image of Bangladesh Army and erode public trust, it said.

In light of renewed attempts to misrepresent these events, the army has released the full list of all 626 individuals who sought refuge, including police and intelligence personnel.

The army has urged all citizens to remain alert to such disinformation campaigns and not to fall prey to rumours designed to create division and mistrust, read the ISPR release.

Ishraque suspends demos

FROM PAGE 1

protesters vacated the area by 5:00pm.

His supporters began a sit-in at 10:00am, blocking the road from the Nagar Bhaban to Kakrail via High Court area and Matsya Bhaban. This led to massive gridlocks in the surrounding areas.

The protests also disrupted access to State Guest House Jamuna -- the chief adviser's official residence -- with law enforcement deployed in the area to prevent BNP supporters from approaching the premises.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, in a virtual message from Bangkok, described the HC order as the "people's victory," calling it a win for both democracy and justice.

"Undoubtedly, this is another victory for democracy. We know that during the mayoral election, the fascist Awami League government forcibly snatched the results ... The public has declared Ishraque as the 'people's mayor'."

He urged the local government ministry to take immediate steps to facilitate Ishraque's oath-taking.

The HC bench of Justice Md Akram Hossain Chowdhury and Justice

Debasish Roy Chowdhury passed the order in the morning after concluding the hearing on the petition that sought a stay on the EC's decision to declare Ishraque mayor.

Barrister AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, who argued on Ishraque's behalf in court, told reporters that there is no legal bar preventing the authorities concerned from administering the oath to Ishraque as the DSCC mayor following the HC order.

"If they [the government] don't administer him the oath, a contempt-of-court proceeding will be initiated against them," he said.

Meanwhile, the writ petitioner's lawyer, Mohammad Hossain Lipu, told The Daily Star, "Our client has instructed us to move a petition before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, seeking a stay on the High Court order. We will move the petition this afternoon or on Sunday."

On March 27 this year, Dhaka's First Joint District Judge and Election Tribunal Judge Md Nurul Islam overturned the 2020 DSCC election result, declared Ishraque the winner, and ordered the Election Commission to issue a gazette within 10 days.

On April 27, the EC issued the notification declaring Ishraque the DSCC mayor.

On May 14, DSCC resident Mamunur Rashid filed the writ petition with the HC, challenging the tribunal's verdict and the EC's gazette.

Just after the HC passed the order rejecting the petition yesterday, Ishraque, in a Facebook post, urged protesters not to leave the streets and to intensify their movement.

"To my fellow protesters, I say -- you can tame donkeys with radish, but not us. The fight continues until we hear the news of the resignation of the two student representative advisers. Don't leave the streets -- rather, intensify the movement further," he wrote.

After joining the protests in Kakrail and announcing the suspension of the demonstrations, he reiterated that they would continue to press for the resignation of the two advisers.

Meanwhile, all public services in the DSCC remained suspended yesterday as well, DSCC Administrator Md Shahjahan Miah confirmed to The Daily Star. He said if they can resume work on Saturday, they would focus on Eid-related activities.

City chokes as protests wreak havoc

FROM PAGE 1

"I'm in unbearable pain, please do something," Nurjahan was overheard telling her son, as drops of sweat rolled down her forehead.

Like Nurjahan, her son, and city dwellers have been bearing the brunt of gridlock caused by repeated blockades, particularly at Shahbagh and Kakrail -- two major thoroughfares of the capital -- over the last couple of days.

Yesterday, supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain staged a sit-in from Matsya Bhaban to Kakrail, demanding that he be sworn in as Dhaka South City Corporation mayor.

Simultaneously, activists of the Jatiyatabdhi Chhatra Dal occupied

Purana Paltan, and Gulistan, Motijheel, and Jatrabari, had standstill traffic.

Metro rail saw a spike in passengers and huge lines were seen in front of the ticket counters and on the platforms.

At Purana Paltan intersection, 50-year-old Shahana Begum waited for nearly an hour for a bus to Shyamoli. However, she could not board any buses, as they were full of passengers and relatively few were available yesterday.

"They've resumed blocking roads after a few days. Men, somehow, manage to reach their destinations, but for women, it's a nightmare. These blockades affect the female commuters most," she told The Daily Star.



Holding his 96-year-old mother, Mizanur desperately looking for an auto-rickshaw near Golap Shah Mazar in Gulistan yesterday.

the Shahbagh intersection and the road in front of the InterContinental Hotel, demanding justice for the killing of JCD leader Shahriar Alam Shammo, a Dhaka University student.

With key streets blocked on the last weekday and a huge crowd in Old Dhaka for Eid wholesale shopping, city dwellers suffered immensely throughout most of the day yesterday.

Thousands had no choice but to walk long distances. Many were seen stuck in vehicles for hours, as drivers had no way to move forward or turn back.

Some patients even left their vehicles in the Banglamotor area, where police diverted traffic towards Moghbazar, and started walking to Bangladesh Medical University and Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

From morning till afternoon, different parts of the city, including Shahbagh, Kakrail, Matsya Bhaban,

As she spoke, a bus packed with passengers appeared. Desperate, Shahana competed with several males and managed to grab the door handle.

The increasing frequency of such blockades has left citizens exasperated, especially as temperatures continue to rise. For the elderly and women, particularly those travelling alone or with children, their sufferings have been even more severe.

"This city feels like a trap during these protests," said Shafiqul Islam, a commuter spotted at Banglamotor while walking from Motijheel to Farmgate.

"You either walk for hours or stand in one place, hoping that traffic will move."

The traffic situation began to improve after 5:00pm, when supporters of Ishraque and JCD leaders and activists left the streets.



DHAKA'S RAINY MORNING WOES

People from all walks of life were forced to navigate through waterlogged streets in the capital yesterday, following a relentless spell of early morning rain that lasted for about two hours. The downpour disrupted daily routines and caused significant delays in the morning commute, plunging the city into disarray. According to the BMD, Dhaka recorded 20mm of rainfall in the morning. The photos were taken in the New Market, Malibagh, Green Road and Siddheswari Circular Road areas.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, ANISUR RAHMAN, FIROZ AHMED



Bird strikes cost Biman Tk 28.46cr in 2 years

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has said it faced a direct financial loss of Tk 28.46 crore -- excluding minor or indirect costs -- from September 2022 to October 2024 due to bird strikes.

In a recent letter, Biman Managing Director and CEO Md Shafiqur Rahman placed these statistics before Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAA) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Monjur Kabir Bhuiyan.

In the letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Daily Star, the Biman MD said this is a critical safety concern affecting all airlines in Bangladesh.

"As the largest carrier of wide-body aircraft in the country, Biman Bangladesh Airlines is especially vulnerable to this issue and faces significant financial consequences as a result," reads the letter.

The Biman MD called upon the CAA chairman to take timely

action on this matter, saying this could not only prevent substantial financial losses for Biman but also enhance the safety and comfort of the passengers.

"We contend with frequent flight delays and operational disruptions stemming from bird strikes," the letter said.

Bird strikes are a prevalent phenomenon within the aviation industry worldwide.

According to Biman, a total of

17 incidents of bird strikes took place on Biman flights in the three international ports -- Dhaka, Sylhet and Ctg -- with HSIA topping with 12 incidents in 16 months since March 2022.

17 incidents of bird strikes took place on different flights of the national flag carrier in the three international ports -- Dhaka, Sylhet, and Chattogram -- with Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport topping with 12 incidents in 16 months since March 2022.

In the latest incident, on May 19, a Turkish Airlines flight narrowly escaped disaster as it successfully

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Diliruzzaman removed as HC judge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman, one of the 12 High Court judges barred from judicial duties since October 20 last year, has been removed from office.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin removed him on May 21 under Article 96(6) of the Constitution, following a recommendation from the Supreme Judicial Council.

The Supreme Court issued an online notification yesterday in this regard, but did not mention any reason for the removal.

Earlier, on March 18, the president removed Justice Khizir Hayat, another HC judge, based on a similar recommendation from the council.

These actions followed mass protests on the Supreme Court premises on October 16, where

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

WOMEN'S AFFAIRS REFORM COMMISSION'S REPORT Backlash rooted in gender bias: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The extremist backlash against the Women's Affairs Reform Commission reflects deep-rooted gender inequality in society, said Sharmin S Murshid, adviser to the women and children affairs ministry, yesterday.

Speaking at a dialogue titled "Her Dignity, Her Rights: Unite for Stopping Violence Against Women and Children," Murshid said the recent controversy shows who is against equal rights and how political and religious ideas are being used to block women's empowerment, especially during a time of national unrest.

"The gender divide is not just on the streets or in the fields; it is something we confront daily in our personal and professional lives," she said.

The event was jointly organised by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and eight partner organisations -- BRAC, Educo, and Sightsavers Bangladesh.

This [women's affairs] commission has been, and continues to be, critically important -- more so than many others.

Sharmin Murshid
Women and Children Affairs Adviser

While punishment can be a deterrent to violence against women, the deeper and more lasting solution lies in transforming the values of society itself.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan
Environment Adviser

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), NETZ Bangladesh, Oxfam in Bangladesh, Plan International Bangladesh, Save the Children-Bangladesh, and Sightsavers Bangladesh.

It was held at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation Auditorium, Parjatan Bhaban, capital's Agargaon.

Referring to the backlash against around 10 out of the 423 recommendations made by the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, she called for "rational, evidence-based discussions involving experts and scholars," rather than emotionally charged or politically manipulated narratives.

"This commission has been, and continues to be, critically important -- more so than many others," she said.

Murshid also said 413 of the 423 recommendations have received broad support and are under active consideration.

"My ministry, along with relevant experts, is currently selecting which of these can be realistically implemented within the limited time we have. We are committed to enacting as many as possible."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

NATIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICE
999

Since its launch on December 12, 2017, until April 30, 2025, the helpline received 6,23,80,907 calls. Among these, 2,72,79,886 calls -- 43.73 percent -- were genuine emergency requests.

999 swamped with prank calls

Police say over half of calls are non-emergencies, delaying crucial response times

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 56 percent of calls made to the National Emergency Helpline 999 are blank, prank, or missed calls, causing delays in emergency responses and putting extra pressure on call handlers, said Bangladesh Police in a press release.

Reducing such calls would ensure a faster service from the 999 helpline, which is operated by the police and provides 24/7 service to people in critical situations, said the press release.

Since its launch on December 12, 2017, until April 30, 2025, the helpline has received a total of 6,23,80,907 calls. Among these, 2,72,79,886 calls -- 43.73 percent -- were genuine emergency requests for police, fire, ambulance, or information-related services.

The remaining 3,51,01,021 calls -- 56.27 percent

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

A deathtrap for wildlife

Uncovered electric lines running through Juri, Barlekha ranges killing endangered species

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

At least 10 endangered primates, including seven Phayre's Langurs (Trachypithecus phayrei) and three Spectacled Langurs (Semnopithecus entellus), have died of electrocution since May 2024 in Moulvibazar's Juri and Barlekha ranges, raising serious concerns among conservationists.

The latest incident occurred on May 12 near the main gate of Madhabkunda Eco Park, where the body of an adult Phayre's Langur was found. Similar deaths were reported on March 31 and April 26 this year in the same area.

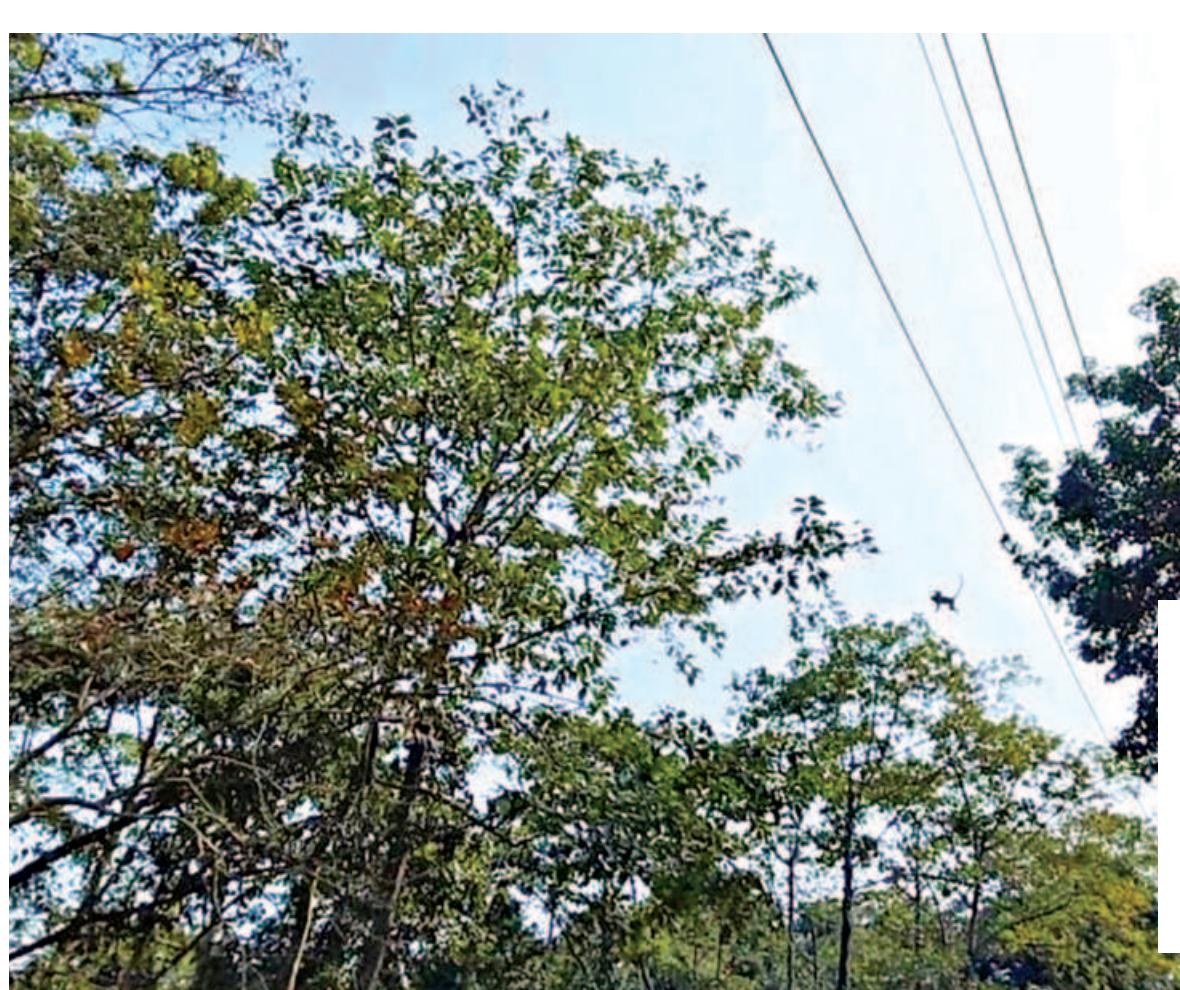
Forest officials and environmental activists identified uninsulated electrical lines running through key monkey habitats as the cause behind these recurring fatalities.

According to the Forest Department, a stretch of road about 0.5 kilometres adjacent to the main gate of Madhabkunda Eco Park serves as a vital habitat for endangered monkeys.

Several primates have been electrocuted by low-hanging or exposed power lines along this corridor.

So far this year, three more Phayre's Langur have been found dead in the Lathitala forest area, with another

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



These trees serve as key monkey habitats in Moulvibazar's Juri and Barlekha ranges. However, lurking among these trees are uninsulated electrical lines, which has reportedly caused the deaths of at least 10 endangered primates since May last year. Several primates have been electrocuted along a stretch of road about 0.5 kilometres adjacent to the main gate of Madhabkunda Eco Park.

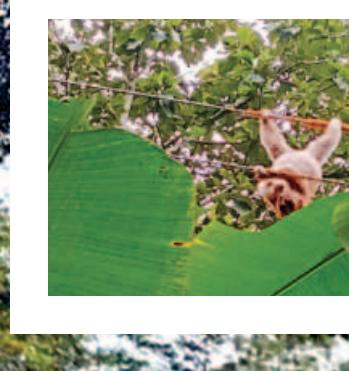


PHOTO: STAR

Momtaz on 6-day remand in two cases

Eggs hurled as she was being escorted to prison van from court

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Manikganj

A Manikganj court yesterday granted a six-day remand for former MP and singer Momtaz Begum in two cases -- one filed over a murder in Singair and another over assault and vandalism in Harirampur upazila.

Eggs were thrown at her when she was being taken to a prison van after the court proceedings.

Judge Mohammad Abdun Noor of Manikganj Chief Judicial Court-1 granted a four-day remand in the Singair upazila murder case around 10:30am.

Later, Judge Ivy Akhter of Chief Judicial Court-3 granted a two-day remand in the case filed over attack, assault, and vandalism in

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Met office forecasts more rain in next 4 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has forecast rainfall across the country for five days starting from 9:00am yesterday.

In its regular weather bulletin issued yesterday morning, the BMD also said rainfall may intensify in the following five days after this initial period.

It also said day and night temperatures may rise slightly over the country today. Additionally, it is likely to remain unchanged over the next three days.

According to the bulletin, the southwest monsoon has advanced up to Akyab coast of Myanmar and conditions are favourable for further advancement.

A low pressure area is likely to form over the South Bay by May 26, it also said.

A trough of low lies over West Bengal to North Bay

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

TO-LET
City Centre, Level-14(13-D), 90/1, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka Area 3450 sft. (With Car Parking)
Please Call: 01710878300



A man casts his net into the water, taking advantage of the rising water levels in the haor following several days of rainfall. The increased depth has also made fishing easier. The photo was taken in Humaipur of Bajitpur upazila, Kishoreganj recently.

PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

BHUANPUR IN TANGAIL Jamuna's erosion sparks panic among locals

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

With the Jamuna river's water level rising over the last couple of weeks, erosion has started in Tangail's Bhuanpur upazila, leaving riverside residents in distress.

Locals alleged that illegal sand lifting from the river using dredgers during the previous Awami League tenure has made the riverbank areas highly erosion prone, especially during the monsoon.

This year, the river has already devoured vast stretches of cropland in Jigatala, Gopinpur, Rampur and Basudebkhola areas.

Local farmers, who have cultivated maize, oilseed, jute and paddy in the affected areas, are facing the prospect of heavy losses.

Residents of Konabari, Patitapara, Matikata, Kosthaphara, Chituliapara and Bhalkutia are panicked, fearing significant damage from erosion like in previous years, said Farman Sheikh, a local rights activist.

Residents alleged that their long-



standing demand for the construction of a dam to protect the localities from erosion has been ignored for years.

They said each year,

the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) only dumps some geo-bags when erosion intensifies, which hardly makes any difference.

"Earlier, locally influential Awami League men continued illegal sand lifting for years under the patronage of former local lawmaker Chhoto Monir, who is now on the run. The villagers could

not protest the ill practice fearing retribution from the vested group," said Saiful Islam of Jigatala village.

Contacted, Bhuanpur UNO Abu Abdullah Khan said BWDB will take necessary steps to prevent erosion.

Shamim Miah, a sub assistant engineer of BWDB in the upazila, said they are monitoring the situation.

Md Matiur Rahman, executive engineer of BWDB in Tangail, said an economic zone is supposed to be developed nearby and a plan for the construction of a river protection embankment for it has been submitted to higher authorities.

At the rally, union

Shipbreaking workers want Eid bonuses by May 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Ctg

Shipbreaking workers yesterday urged yard authorities to ensure disbursement of salaries and Eid-ul-Azha bonuses by May 31.

The workers, under the banner of Shipbreaking Workers Trade Union Forum, held a rally yesterday morning at the gate of Hafiz Jute Mill in Sonaichhari area of Chattogram's Sitakunda to press home their demand.

At the rally, union

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

999 swamped with prank calls

FROM PAGE 3

-- were not related to any emergencies. These included blank, prank, and missed calls.

This high number of unnecessary calls increases waiting times, delays responses to genuine emergencies, and puts added pressure on call handlers.

This hampers the effective delivery of emergency services, said the press release signed by

Mohiul Islam, additional DIG (telecom) of police and chief of the 999 service.

Although Section 70(1) of the Telecommunications Regulation Act, 2001 allows a fine of up to Tk 1 lakh, or six months' imprisonment in default, for making nuisance calls, no legal action has been taken so far by the 999 service.

Instead, the helpline has focused on public

awareness, said the press release.

However, the press release noted that due to growing public trust and awareness efforts, the number of unnecessary calls has been gradually decreasing.

In order to bring this number down to zero, the 999 team urged citizens and the media to help further raise awareness and reduce such calls, said the press release.

বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ (বিআরপিএল)
(সরকারি বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনকারী কোম্পানি)
আইইবি ভবন (৩ম তলা), ৮/এ, মুন্সুরা, ঢাকা-১০০০

ভার্ডায় ০১ (এক) টি মাইক্রোবাস সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদৰা বাংলাদেশের প্রস্তুত ভার্ডা গাড়ি সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান সম্মুহকে জানাবে যাচ্ছে যে, বি-আর পাওয়ারজেন লিঃ এর শীর্ষীর ১৫০ মেগ ও ৫ বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্রের নির্মাণ ০২ (পুরুষ) বর্ষের জন্ম ০১ (এক) টি মাইক্রোবাস ভার্ডা করার লক্ষ্যে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। এ সংক্রান্ত পূর্ণাঙ্গ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি বিআরপিএল এর ওয়েবসাইট (www.brpowergen.gov.bd) এ প্রকাশ করা হচ্ছে। দরপত্র দলিল নির্মাণী পরিপালক (অর্থ ও হিসাব), বিআরপিএল এর দপ্তর হতে আগামী ১৭/০৬/২০২৫ তিথি, বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত সংশ্রহ করা যাবে।

(৩৫×২.৫')
GD-1249

(মোঃ ওয়াহিদুর রহমান)
জিএম (এইচআর ও এডমিন)
মোবাইল ০১৭১৯১০৮০৩৭

Janata Bank PLC.
Head Office
IT Procurement, Security, Compliance and Maintenance Department
110, Motijheel, C/A, Dhaka-1000
Tel: +02223356514, Fax: 88-02-9564644, Telex: 675840 JBD BJ
Website: www.jb.com.bd

Invitation for e-Tender

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

SL No.	Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Description	Tender Publish Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
01	1114845	JB/IT-Proc-33/OTM/Virtualization Solution /2025	Tender for procurement of Virtualization Solution (Supply, Installation & Commissioning) for Janata Bank PLC. following Open Tendering Method.	21.05.2025 04.00PM	17.06.2025 12.15 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal and e-GP Help Desk (Email: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/
(Mohammad Shahakawat Hossain)
Deputy General Manager

পাওয়ার প্রিড বাংলাদেশ পিএলজি
POWER GRID BANGLADESH PLC
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

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স্মারক নং- ২৭২১২৬০৮৪৬৬১৪৬০২৫৯২৩০

তারিখঃ ২২/০৫/২০২৫

বিদ্যুৎ ব্যাহতির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

"পূর্বাঞ্চলীয় ট্রান্সমিউন্ট নেটওয়ার্কের পরিবর্ধন এবং ক্ষমতাবর্ধন প্রকল্প" এর আওতায় নির্মাণাধীন ট্রোমুহুনী ২৩০/১৩২ কেন্দ্র জিআইএস উপকেন্দ্রের ১৩২ কেন্দ্র জিআইএস অংশ চালুর লক্ষ্যে বিদ্যুৎ মুহূর্তী ১৩২/১৩২ কেন্দ্র এআইএস ট্রান্স উপকেন্দ্রের ১৩২ কেন্দ্র মেইন বাস আগমী ২৪/০৫/২০২৫ তিথি, শনিবার, সকাল ০৬:০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত শার্টডাউন অবস্থায় থাকবে। শার্টডাউন চলাকালীন বিদ্যুমান ট্রোমুহুনী ১৩২/১৩২ কেন্দ্র প্রকল্পের আওতায় নেয়ার্থকীয় ও লক্ষ্যপূর্ণ জেলের কিছু এলাকার অংশিক ক্ষেত্রে প্রায় ১০০ ক্ষেত্রিক ক্ষেত্রে হতে পারে।

প্রকল্প পরিচালক ও প্রধান প্রকৌশলী (অংশ দায়িত্ব):
পূর্বাঞ্চলীয় প্রিড নেটওয়ার্কের পরিবর্ধন এবং ক্ষমতাবর্ধন প্রকল্প

Kuet VC submits resignation letter to edn ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kuet acting vice-chancellor Md Hazrat Ali yesterday submitted his resignation to the education ministry following teacher protests.

Anisur Rahman Bhuiyan, registrar of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (Kuet), confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

However, no official reason for the resignation has been disclosed yet.

The teachers have been abstaining from academic activities since May 4. The university has been closed since February 18 due to a series of protests.

The impasse began on February 18 when several students were assaulted on the campus, allegedly by outsiders. Several teachers were also assaulted. Seeking justice over the incident, students started demonstrations and at one stage, it turned into a demand for the resignation of the then VC.

On April 24, the education ministry relieved previous VC Prof Muhammad Masud and Pro VC Prof Sheikh Shariful Alam of their duties. At that time, Prof Hazrat Ali was made the acting VC.

But protests broke out again on May 15 when the Kuet Teachers' Association sought justice for assaulting the teachers.

'FALSE AFFIDAVIT' IN POLLS ACC seeks legal action against action against Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ACC has formally requested the Election Commission to take legal action against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina for allegedly providing false information in her asset declaration during the 9th national election in 2008.

Discrepancies were found between Hasina's affidavit submitted to the EC and the actual asset records verified by the commission, said ACC Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen at a press briefing at his office in Segunbagicha yesterday.

"There are two parts..." he said. "One has been referred to the EC. The other -- concerning inconsistencies between her affidavit and asset declaration submitted to the ACC -- will be dealt with later."

According to the ACC, during an investigation in 2007, Hasina submitted a statement of assets to the commission. That declaration and the affidavit submitted to the EC on November 19, 2008, ahead of the 9th parliamentary polls, were later reviewed.

The review found that Hasina declared 6.50 acres of agricultural land worth Tk 1.75 lakh in her EC affidavit. However, the ACC found that she actually owned 28.41 acres of land at the time, valued at Tk 33.66 lakh.

কনসালটেশন ফার্ম নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ডেনমার্ক প্রার্টেন্ট মন্ত্রণালয়ের অর্থায়নে এবং ব্র্যাক জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন কর্মসূচি কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়িত 'রেইন ফর লাইফ' প্রকল্পের বেসলাইনের জন্য যোগ্য কনসালটেশন ফার্মদের কাছ থেকে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

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Livelihood Enhancement of the Small Farmers in
SAARC Region through

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Ex-general slain in attack claimed by anti-coup fighters

AFP, Yangon

A retired Myanmar general who formerly served as ambassador to Cambodia was shot dead yesterday, two military sources said, in an attack claimed by anti-coup fighters.

Myanmar's military seized power in a 2021 coup, sparking a civil war pitching it against pro-democracy guerrillas and resurgent ethnic armed groups that have long been active in the Southeast Asian country's fringes.

Most combat is confined to the countryside and smaller settlements, although sporadic grenade and gun attacks on police and junta-affiliated targets are regularly reported in the largest city Yangon.

A source close to the military said former general and Cambodia ambassador Cho Tun Aung "was shot and killed" outside his Yangon home around 8:30 am as he gave alms to monks collecting donations.

"He used to donate meals every morning," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The shooters used this opportunity to assassinate him." A military officer confirmed Cho Tun Aung had been shot and killed without providing further details.

Pakistan won't get water over which India has rights

Says India's Modi

REUTERS, New Delhi

Pakistan will not get water from rivers over which India has rights, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said yesterday, a month after a deadly attack in Indian Kashmir led New Delhi to suspend a key river water-sharing treaty between the neighbours.

The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, negotiated by the World Bank in 1960, was among a slew of measures announced by India against Pakistan last month after the April 22 attack that killed 26 men.

New Delhi had said the attack was backed by Pakistan – an accusation Islamabad denied – and the nuclear-armed neighbours were involved in their worst military fighting in nearly three decades before agreeing to a ceasefire on May 10.

"Pakistan will have to pay a heavy price for every terrorist attack... Pakistan's army will pay it, Pakistan's economy will pay it," Modi said at a public event in the northwestern state of Rajasthan.

The Indus treaty provides water for 80 percent of Pakistan's farms from three rivers that flow from India but Pakistan's finance minister said this month that its suspension was not going to have "any immediate impact".

The ceasefire between the countries has largely held, with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar saying that there is no exchange of fire currently and "there has been some repositioning of forces accordingly".



Palestinians inspect the destruction caused by Israeli strikes in Jabalia's Saftawi neighborhood in northern Gaza yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia downs 105 Ukrainian drones, fires Iskander missile

Flights at Moscow airports briefly halted

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia said yesterday it had shot down 105 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, including dozens heading towards Moscow, as the war in Ukraine heats up even as major powers talk about ways to end Europe's deadliest conflict since World War Two.

US President Donald Trump is pressuring Russia and Ukraine to end the more than three-year war but the two sides remain far apart. But while leaders talk of the prospects for peace, the war is intensifying: swarms of drones are being launched by both sides while fierce fighting is underway along key parts of the front.

Russia's defence ministry said 105 drones had been shot down over Russian regions between midnight and the early morning yesterday, including 35 over the Moscow



region. The previous day, Russia said it shot down well over 300 Ukrainian drones.

Sergei Sobyanin, Moscow's mayor, said multiple drones had been shot down heading towards the capital, which along with the surrounding region has a population of 21

million people. Moscow's Domodedovo and Zhukovsky airports briefly halted flights.

Separately, Russia said yesterday it had fired an Iskander-M missile at part of the city of Pokrov, formerly known as Ordzhonikidze, in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, destroying two Patriot missile launchers and an AN/MPQ 65 radar set.

Ukraine's air force reported damage in the Dnipropetrovsk region after an attack but did not specify the type of weapon.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces were advancing at key points along the front, and pro-Russian war bloggers said Russia had pierced Ukrainian lines between Pokrovsk and Kostiantynivka in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his nightly video address that the heaviest frontline battles were around Pokrovsk.

Thai court orders ex-PM to pay for rice scheme

AFP, Bangkok

A top Thai court yesterday ruled that former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra must pay more than \$300 million compensation over a controversial rice subsidy scheme during her time in office.



(nearly \$1.1 billion) in compensation. The Central Administrative Court then revoked the order, but the ministry appealed, leading to yesterday's ruling by the higher court.

The court said yesterday that Yingluck had failed to respond to warnings by anti-graft bodies pointing to corruption in the rice scheme.

Her negligence caused losses to the finance ministry and she should pay damages of 10,028 billion baht (\$300 million), the court said. Norawit Lalaeng, Yingluck's lawyer, said they will discuss whether to request a new hearing.

Yingluck fled Thailand shortly before her jail sentence in 2017 and has lived in exile since. She said yesterday that the order to pay 10 billion baht was excessive. "Even if I repaid it my entire life, it would never be enough," she said on social media. "I will continue to demand and fight for justice."



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

EDCL invite an International Press Tender for Importation of following Machine for Khulna Essential Latex Plant (KELP) on C&F© Chittagong by Sea basis:-

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP/Machine/KELP/04 /2024-2025 Dated 22/05/2025	Oil Injected Variable Speed Drive Rotary Type Screw Air Compressor with Air Dryer. (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 1250.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 11.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 25/06/2025 At 11.00 AM Opening : 25/06/2025 at 11.30 AM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tender will be accompanied by a amount of Earnest Money mentioned above in the form of Bank Draft/Pay order from any schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of " Essential Drugs Company Ltd" without which the Tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever

N.B: This Information is also available at our Website: www.edcl.gov.bd

(5" X 4)

General Manager (CC).
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chief Adviser's Office
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority
BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06,
Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205
(www.bepza.gov.bd)

Date: 20th May 2025

Re-Tender Notice
No.04/2024-2025

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the eligible sellers/suppliers/contractors for the following Goods as per terms & conditions stated below:

1 Ministry/Division	Chief Adviser's Office			
2 Agency	Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA)			
3 Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA)			
4 Procuring Entity District	BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205			
5 Invitation for	Tender for Supply of Goods at BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205			
6 Invitation Ref. no and Date	04/2024-2025, Date: 20th May 2025			
KEY INFORMATION				
7 Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)			
FUNDING INFORMATION				
8 Budget and Source of Funds	Self-Finance of BEPZA			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
9 Tender Publication Date	On or before 26th May 2025			
10 Tender Last Selling Date	02nd June 2025 During office hour			
11 Tender Closing Date & Time	03rd June 2025 at 12:00 Noon			
12 Tender Opening Date & Time	03rd June 2025 at 12:30 PM			
13 Selling of Tender Document	Accounts Section BEPZA, BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205			
14 Receiving of Tender Document	Additional Executive Director (Common Service), BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205			
15 Opening of Tender Document	Additional Executive Director (Common Service), BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
16 Eligibility of Tenderer	The Invitation for Tender is open to all eligible Tenderers who satisfy the following: a) The minimum of year of general experience of the Tenderer as Supplier shall be 03 (three) Years. b) Other Criteria mentioned in TDS separately in Tender Documents. c) The minimum specific experience in supply of goods of at least 01 (One) similar nature of contract successfully completed within the last 05 (five) years with a value of at least Tk. 8.00 lac in Govt./Semi-Govt./Autonomous Bodies only. The work completion certificate is to be issued by an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent Officer of concerned Department/Organization. d) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e working capital or credit line(s) of the Tender shall be Tk.12.00 lac. e) Up-date trade license, Income Tax Clearance Certificate, Vat Registration certificate shall be submitted.			
17 Brief description of goods	Supply of Goods as specified in TDS;			
18 Price of Each Tender Documents	Tk. 1000.00 (Taka One Thousand)			
19 Lot No.	Name of Tender	Location	Tender Security Amount (in favour of BEPZA)	Completion Time
Single Lot	Supply of Camera to BEPZA Executive Office and Governed EPZs	BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205	Tk.40,000.00 (Forty Thousand) by Pay Order.	90 Days from the date of signing contract
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
20 Name of Official Inviting Tender	Rabeyan Nahar			
21 Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Executive Director (Common Service)			
22 Address of official Inviting Tender	BEPZA Complex, House No.19/D, Road No. 06, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205			
23 Contract details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone: +880241060176, E-mail: aed.cs@bepza.gov.bd			
24 Special Instruction:	a) Eligible Firms/Authorized Representative/Dealers may purchase the Tender Documents from the Office mentioned in Sl no-13 on submitting written request in their Letter Head Pad. b) Any false, forged, fabricated and misleading documents furnished by Tenderer shall result in rejection of the Tender. c) In case of any confusion arises due to printing mistakes or other reason the Public Procurement Rules-2008 will be governed. d) Tender should be submitted in original copy. e) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender Proceedings.			
25	20.05.2025 Rabeyan Nahar Additional Executive Director (Common Service) Phone: +880241060176 E-mail: aed.cs@bepza.gov.bd			

Israeli military intercepts Houthi fired missile

AFP, Jerusalem

Air raid sirens sounded in Jerusalem, where AFP journalists reported loud booms overhead, as the Israeli military announced it had intercepted a missile launched from Yemen yesterday for the second time in less than 12 hours.

"Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in several areas in Israel, a missile launched from Yemen was intercepted," the army said in a statement just before noon (0900 GMT).

Early yesterday morning, the military also said it had downed a missile fired from Yemen, whose Houthi rebels have launched repeated attacks they say are in response to Israel's Gaza offensive.

Israel's Magen David Adom emergency service said there were no casualties from either launch, though one man was hurt while seeking shelter from the first.

The Houthi claimed a missile attack targeting Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport, though it was unclear to which launch they were referring.

They also said they had launched drones at targets in Tel Aviv and Haifa.

VISA RULE CHANGES

UK net migration halves in 2024

REUTERS, London

Long-term net migration to Britain fell by 50 percent in 2024, official data showed yesterday, as fewer people arrived on work and study visas following rule changes to cut the number of arrivals.

Net migration – an estimate of the number of people migrating to Britain minus those leaving – dropped to 431,000 from 860,000 in 2023, the Office for National Statistics said.

The data will offer some relief to Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who earlier in May promised to reduce migration significantly over the next four years, under pressure from Nigel Farage's right-wing, anti-immigration Reform UK party.

Starmer became prime minister in July 2024. The Conservative Party, in government prior to Starmer's election, said the decrease reflected changes to visa rules they brought in.

The government welcomed the drop and said changes announced earlier this month would drive net migration even lower.

Resolve NBR reform crisis without delay

Protests by tax, customs officials disrupting services

We are concerned by the continued turmoil at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) which puts a question mark not only on the viability of any tax reforms but also the future of proposed institutional reforms in other sectors. According to a report, the turmoil deepened on Wednesday as disgruntled tax, customs, and VAT officials launched a fresh five-day protest demanding the NBR chairman's removal and the repeal of the May 12 ordinance that split the NBR into separate entities for tax policy and revenue collection. The protests were triggered in particular by a clause in the ordinance that allows officers from the general admin cadre to lead the new divisions, raising fears of marginalisation of revenue cadre officers.

The government argues that the structural overhaul is aimed at preventing conflicts of interest between policymaking and implementation, but revenue officials say some provisions of the ordinance are discriminatory. However, while their grievances seem to have a point, their methods of expression—an initial five-day pen-down strike, and the subsequent escalation of protests after a failed talk with higher authorities on Tuesday—are unacceptable considering their disruptive effects across the tax administration. Reportedly, the protests have considerably hampered customs clearance and trade operations, leading to delays in tariff assessments and goods release, which in turn is disrupting supply chains and affecting businesses. The unrest also threatens the government's ability to meet its revenue collection target of Tk 463,500 crore, with Tk 178,500 crore still to be collected in the final two months of the current fiscal year.

The protesters, organised under the banner of NBR Reform Unity Council, insist they are not opposed to NBR reform or the separation itself, but want transparency, fairness, and proper inclusion of experienced revenue officers in the restructured framework. But if their protests escalate into a full work stoppage as planned, it would have a disturbing consequence on trade, revenue collection, and public finance overall. Clearly, there can be no justification for the way the protesters chose to make their point, exploiting their privileged position as government employees to bring vital public services to a halt. But the government also must take responsibility for failing to anticipate this crisis, and urgently initiate meaningful dialogue to resolve it.

Given the objections raised by the protesters, we think it is only fair that a comprehensive review of the ordinance is conducted, incorporating inputs from the NBR reform committee's report as well as international best practices. It is also crucial that institutional reforms like this do not become a battleground for bureaucratic turf wars. Nor should they create an environment in which vested interests can resist necessary change. Given that Bangladesh has one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios in the world, it is extremely important that the long overdue reform of its tax administration goes on uninterrupted.

Make highway travel safe, esp for women

Another bus robbery raises questions about preventive efforts

The similarity between the highway robbery on the Dhaka-Tangail route on Tuesday night and the one that occurred over three months ago on the same route raises troubling questions about what the authorities are really doing to maintain law and order. According to a case filed by a victim of the recent incident, the robbers boarded the bus posing as passengers, took control of it using knives and machetes, looted passengers, and sexually assaulted several female passengers. The case statement also said the robbers drove the bus for several hours before disembarking at different points along the highway.

Victims of the February 17 robbery, where several women were also assaulted, also described similar tactics used by robbers. Following that incident, protests were held demanding safety for women in public spaces, including public transport. Yet, harassment and assault of female travellers by criminal gangs or the so-called "moral police" continue to occur, with the relevant authorities often unaware of or unmoved by these crimes until they cause a stir on social media.

In response to the February incident, the government deployed additional police forces along the routes to the northern districts. However, the occurrence of the recent robbery suggests that such measures, even if implemented dutifully, are not sufficient. We also need stronger surveillance and swifter, stricter legal action against perpetrators to deter prospective criminals. According to a *Prothom Alo* report, similar incidents occurred in 2023 and 2022 as well, but trials have yet to begin due to procedural and legal loopholes. This lax enforcement clearly emboldens criminals.

At the same time, the effectiveness of increased patrols should also be questioned. As a report published in this daily a month after the February 17 robbery revealed, the highway police lack adequate logistical support and modern, technology-driven policing systems. Are there enough CCTV cameras installed along highways? Are there properly staffed control rooms to monitor vehicle movement? Are officials capable of identifying erratic or off-route bus movement? The answers are not hard to guess.

Therefore, to prevent such attacks, the government must not only increase police presence but also work with stakeholders, especially transport owners' associations, to find sustainable solutions to highway robberies and ensure that long-distance travel is safe, particularly for women. With Eid-ul-Azha only about two weeks away, it must act fast. During such festivals, many unauthorised buses operate on long routes to meet heightened transport demand, increasing chances of untoward incidents. So, such operations must be strictly monitored and brought under control. Whether by road or river, long-distance journeys must be safe for all.

We must save the youth from losing their way



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ABU AFSARUL HAIDER

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has repeatedly emphasised the importance of youth and their potential to drive positive change. He believes that young people are passionate about building a better world and should be central to strategies for addressing global challenges. Today, Bangladesh stands at the edge of a demographic paradox. With over 27.96 percent of its population aged between 15 and 29 years, the nation ought to be thriving on youthful energy, innovation, and resilience. Yet, beneath the surface of this demographic dividend lies a troubling reality: a growing crisis of ethics and civic responsibility among a section of our younger generation. The signs are all around us.

The rise in drug addiction is perhaps one of the most alarming aspects of this crisis. According to the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), around 75 lakh people in the country are addicted to drugs, with approximately 80 percent of them aged between 15 and 30. In recent years, law enforcement agencies have seized drugs such as cocaine, LSD, crystal meth (ice), yaba, heroin, phensedyl, cannabis, and injectable substances like buprenorphine, etc. A survey on street children conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), in collaboration with UNICEF, found that over 34 lakh homeless children were without parental care. In another research, the DNC estimated that 58 percent of the street

children use one or another type of drug, and 21 percent are being used as drug carriers.

Another worrying issue is the growing lack of respect for law and order. More and more young people are taking the law in their own hands, using violence to punish others. There have been several media reports of young individuals harassing or attacking people in public over matters like clothing or personal relationships. Young girls have been targeted in public places, their attackers often claiming to be defending "cultural values." One

in extortion, street violence, drug peddling, and turf wars.

Technology, though a powerful tool, has become a double-edged sword. While it has connected young people to global ideas, it has also distanced many from their immediate responsibilities to their families, communities, and society. Unregulated digital spaces have become breeding grounds for misinformation, hate, lies, and radical content. From toxic YouTube influencers to aggressive social media trends, young people are constantly exposed to content that promotes violence, instant fame, and a disregard for social norms.

Our political system is also failing the youth. Many young people are used as tools in power struggles, whether on the streets, on social media, or within institutions. Moreover, there are frequent allegations that many of them are involved in illegal money-making activities like extortion and land-grabbing. A study by the World



We owe it to our youth to provide them with support and guidance so they can grow up to become citizens with high moral standards, empathy, and a strong sense of civic responsibility.

SOURCE: FREEPIK

Unemployment and economic uncertainty are also major causes of frustration among the youth. At present, Bangladesh has about 26 lakh unemployed people, with 83 percent of them aged 15-29. Some experts believe they are contributing to the rise of teenage gangs, often involved in extortion, street violence, drug peddling, and turf wars.

shocking example took place on May 9, 2025, when a video that went viral on social media showed a youth beating two underage girls with a belt to "discipline" them, on a launch docked at the Munshiganj launch terminal. Even more alarming was that around 50-60 men stood by, filming the incident and even cheering for the youth. Such actions not only endanger public safety but also weaken the rule of law and damage the social fabric.

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Economic Forum found a staggering 82 percent of young people aged 15-29 having no intention of living in Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, it is the utter failure of our political leadership that it has created a sense of disillusionment and disengagement among our young people.

Education, which should be the foundation for moral development, has also failed in its duty to instil ethical principles in the younger generation.

Although literacy rates have improved, our education system does not effectively promote critical thinking, compassion, or civic responsibility. Schools and universities have, in many cases, become platforms for political indoctrination rather than spaces for moral growth. Public universities

are frequently dominated by student organisations aligned with political parties. These groups, often backed by institutional powers, operate with impunity, suppressing academic freedom and fostering a culture of fear, bullying, and violence. Political activism, once considered noble, has become a tool for intimidation, power, and control.

One of the most consequential changes, particularly in recent decades, is the deterioration in the bond between parents and children. In the rush to make a living, many parents are unable to provide their children with adequate emotional support or guidance. Instead of spending time with their children, they offer gadgets and unlimited freedom. As a result, many children grow up knowing how to use a smartphone or computer, but not how to care for others or show kindness. They are growing up with weak parental attachments.

We must acknowledge the severity of the situation. The problem is not simply that young people are losing their way. They are being let down, by political leaders who exploit their frustrations, by schools that fail to nurture their conscience, by families too overwhelmed to connect, and by media that misguides more than it mentors. The path to recovery requires a bold and coordinated national response. Families must reclaim their role as emotional anchors, not merely as providers. Schools must embed moral education at their core, teaching respect, responsibility, and empathy as essential life skills. Political leaders must stop exploiting the youth for short-term gains and instead involve them meaningfully in democratic processes through dialogue, policymaking, innovation, and volunteering.

Law enforcement agencies must operate with fairness and impartiality, free from political interference. Crimes such as gender-based violence, gang activity, and online abuse must be addressed promptly and transparently. No cultural or political justification should be allowed to shield wrongdoers. Media platforms—both traditional and digital—have a pivotal role in reshaping youth aspirations. Rather than sensationalising violence and rebellion, they must spotlight role models who embody ethics, service, and integrity.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future. Those who abuse them tear at the fabric of our society and weaken our nation." Bangladesh cannot afford this erosion. If we continue to neglect the moral and emotional nourishment of our young generation, we may end up with a socially bankrupt nation.

Education in a world of AI



EDUCATING EDUCATION

Dr Rubaiya Murshed
is an education economist and assistant professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Dhaka.

RUBAIYA MURSHED

"Don't use Google"—that was the warning in our time. When the internet was just beginning to spread its wings, teachers feared this new tool would lure us away from books and "real" learning. Ours was perhaps the last generation to straddle two eras: the analogue world of TV guides in newspapers and the digital age of streaming and smartphones.

Today, the fear isn't about Google anymore. It's about AI, digital classrooms, and how technology is reshaping education. What is the future of learning in a world where AI evolves rapidly and knowledge is freely available online? Can digital education replace classrooms, or should it only support them?

When it comes to education, we need clear guidelines to navigate these uncharted waters. Tools like ChatGPT offer possibilities, but we must decide how—and how much—to rely on them. Especially for children, we must distinguish what helps from what could harm. For students' sake, we must learn how to control technology, not let it control us.

For countries like ours, the digital divide is real. It's never just about

buying tablets for online classes. We must think about every child—the one in a remote village, in a slum, and in a Dhaka apartment. If we are serious about equity, we must ask: is this the time to prioritise digital education? Is EdTech truly the best solution to deepening educational inequality?

The truth is, we don't know yet. But we must not ignore the reality of AI and EdTech entering our teaching-learning spaces. Students will use AI; teachers will, too. How do we ensure that we become more productive, creative, and efficient with AI, rather than lazier, more corrupt, and quick to cut corners?

Soon, every educational institution will need AI experts, just as they need mental health professionals. We must consider AI training to inform us of the pros and cons in our educational and daily lives. We also need to listen to scholars studying AI and EdTech—like the stimulating work being done by Global South researchers on what it means to decolonise our thinking and perceptions in the age of AI, with all its embedded biases.

Let's be honest. AI does hold potential—if used wisely. One powerful

promise of AI is its ability to level the playing field. In a deeply unequal society, AI tools can offer students from less privileged backgrounds access to explanations, resources, and support they wouldn't otherwise get. A student in a rural school can now ask questions, practise problems, and receive feedback—all for free. AI won't erase inequality, but it can offer

When it comes to education, we need clear guidelines to navigate these uncharted waters. Tools like ChatGPT offer possibilities, but we must decide how—and how much—to rely on them. Especially for children, we must distinguish what helps from what could harm.

opportunity based on curiosity and ability, not just privilege. Still, we must brace ourselves. AI in the hands of someone unable to think critically is like handing a sharp knife to an unknowing child. And teaching someone to think critically isn't just about teaching someone new tricks—it's about helping them lead more meaningful lives.

The reality is that education is more than content delivery. A strong system must also be engaging. The

popularity of digital platforms among students reflects real gaps in our traditional classrooms: gaps in excitement, motivation, and relevance. Until students enjoy learning and want to go to school—not just have to—we can't blame them for turning to the internet for what schools fail to provide. Yet, no matter how good online material is, education is more than learning facts. A classroom offers discussion, debate, and interaction, not just with teachers but with peers. A 10-minute video might teach you something. But it's not the same as being in a classroom.

With AI already popular and accessible, it's time to stop being in denial and accept that it's naive to say, "Don't use AI" and expect to be obeyed. If we embrace AI wisely—with rules, access, equity, and intention—we can harness its strengths without losing the essence of what education really is. In this new world, our challenge is not to resist change, but to shape it. To ask the right questions. To pause before we leap. To make sure that, in fixing education, we don't forget its purpose. Let's not forget that education is not just about what we learn; it's also about how we learn, whom we learn with, and the journey it takes us on.

The key is to stay critical and vigilant, but also realistic. We couldn't stop the internet from taking over our lives, and we won't stop AI either. The challenge is to figure out how to co-exist—and how to use these new tools for better, not worse. Learning where to draw the line remains the greatest lesson.

Tracing women's rights through Islamic legal history



Sarzah Yeasmin
is a policy analyst working on the intersections of education and development economics. She is an alumna of Harvard University.

SARZAH YEASMIN

Across Muslim-majority societies today, women's rights remain a topic of fraught public discourse. Inheritance, divorce, guardianship, and participation in civic life are debated not only in legislatures and courts, but also across digital platforms and drawing rooms. Beneath these debates lies a larger, more enduring question: can Islamic law serve as a foundation for gender justice in the modern world? Or is it irreconcilably tethered to a legacy of interpretive hierarchies shaped by historical legal and social conventions? These are not new questions, but they have acquired fresh urgency as legal reforms and feminist movements intersect with religious sentiment and political manoeuvring.

To understand how Islamic law became both a site of contestation and a source of potential empowerment, one must look beyond the present moment and revisit the intellectual and historical traditions from which it arose.

Islam articulated a bold vision for women's dignity and autonomy in its earliest revelations. The Quran, in seventh-century Arabia, introduced legal and ethical reforms that were nothing short of revolutionary at that time. It banned female infanticide, recognised women as moral agents, and granted them rights to property, inheritance, and divorce. These entitlements were not merely symbolic. Daughters were allocated fixed shares of inheritance (Quran 4:11), wives could retain their dowry, and the requirement of their consent in marriage was codified. While women received a smaller share than men, this discrepancy was justified contextually by men's financial obligations to the household. Importantly, the Quran emphasised that women's wealth was their own, untouchable even in marriage.

Similar contextual logic applied to the issue of polygamy. The Quranic provision permitting up to four wives (Quran 4:3) was revealed during wartime, when many women and orphans had been left without support. However, this allowance came with

a caveat: only if justice could be maintained among wives—a condition the Quran itself acknowledges is nearly impossible to meet (4:129). Early Islamic jurists recognised these conditions as manifestations of legal reasoning rooted in purpose—what Islamic legal theory refers to as *ratio legis* or 'illah'.

Yet, as Islamic jurisprudence evolved, the early spirit of reform was gradually circumscribed by patriarchal interpretations. By the 10th century, many Sunni scholars declared the "gates of *ijtihad*" closed, effectively cementing a legal canon that reflected the sociocultural norms of medieval societies more than the ethical imperatives of the Quran. Women's roles, legal capacities, and public visibility became increasingly confined within juridical constructs developed almost exclusively by men.

It is often forgotten that in Islam's formative centuries, women played prominent roles as scholars, jurists, and transmitters of Hadith. Aisha bint Abu Bakr, wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), was among the most prolific narrators of Hadith and was regularly consulted on complex legal matters. Over time, however, the institutionalisation of religious education marginalised female voices. The contemporary resurgence of women scholars in Islamic legal discourse thus represents not an innovation, but a return to a neglected tradition.

Contemporary debates over women's rights in Islamic contexts often centre on family law. Tunisia, for example, offers one of the most robust examples of Islamic legal reform. Following independence in 1956, the Tunisian state introduced a Personal Status Code that abolished polygamy, mandated judicial divorce, and enhanced women's rights within the family. These reforms were justified not by abandoning Islam, but by invoking its *maqasid*—the higher objectives of Shariah, including justice, welfare, and dignity. More recently, a proposal to equalise inheritance sparked widespread debate. While it ultimately failed, it forced

a public reckoning with the distinction between immutable revelation and mutable interpretation. Similar questions have arisen elsewhere.

In Egypt, inheritance laws remain grounded in Islamic principles, but legal disputes have emerged, particularly among religious minorities, challenging the unequal distribution of property. A notable case involved a Christian woman successfully petitioning for equal inheritance under her community's doctrine, marking a rare legal acknowledgement of intra-faith pluralism. In Morocco, reforms to the family code have allowed families to distribute property through lifetime gifts or discretionary wills, offering women a more equitable share without formally altering Quranic inheritance prescriptions. These creative legal solutions

promoting gender equality. This move, criticised by many civil society groups, reflected growing tensions between international human rights norms and domestic political currents shaped by cultural and religious narratives. As with many Muslim-majority contexts, the legal text is only part of the story; institutional will, judicial discretion, and social attitudes play equally decisive roles.

Marriage and divorce remain particularly salient. In many classical interpretations, men retain the unilateral right to *talaq* (divorce), while women must seek judicial intervention. However, reforms in countries like Egypt and Morocco have introduced provisions for *khul'* (no-fault divorce) and placed restrictions on polygamy, often requiring the consent of the existing wife and approval from a court. In

financial responsibility, not ontological hierarchy. When read alongside Quranic principles of mutual consultation (*shura*), compassion (*rahma*), and equity (*adl*), *qiwanah* can be reinterpreted as a model of partnership rather than patriarchy.

This interpretive turn is not unprecedented. Islamic law has always been pluralistic and context-sensitive. Jurists across the centuries have disagreed over matters ranging from the age of marriage to the permissibility of women leading prayers. What distinguishes the current moment is the unprecedented access women have to religious education, digital platforms, and transnational networks—tools that allow them to participate directly in the production of religious knowledge.

And yet, structural challenges remain. Legal reform, however eloquent on paper, often stumbles in implementation. Surveys across Muslim-majority countries continue to show alarmingly high rates of domestic violence, unequal access to justice, and limited female representation in legal institutions. In some contexts, religious authorities have resisted reforms, framing them as Western impositions rather than endogenous responses to ethical demands.

It is tempting to frame the conversation as a binary: tradition versus modernity, faith versus feminism. Yet, such oppositions oversimplify a far more complex reality. At its core, the debate reflects deeper questions of political legitimacy and institutional control. Interpretive authority over Islamic law is often embedded within state bureaucracies, religious establishments, and legal elites whose interests may not always align with broader societal needs. Competing visions of religious authenticity, national identity, and legal reform intersect with shifting power dynamics, leaving little consensus on who gets to speak for the tradition and to what end.

In this context, the authority to define religious meaning—and to shape how law reflects it—is not fixed but contested. The future of Islamic legal reform may well depend on whether this contestation is navigated through dialogue, intellectual humility, and a shared commitment to justice. The Quran, after all, initiated an ethical discourse premised on human dignity and accountability. To sustain that vision in the present requires not a break from tradition, but a re-engagement with its interpretive possibilities.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

illustrate how states are negotiating between fidelity to tradition and the pursuit of justice in contemporary contexts.

Elsewhere, the trajectory has been more circuitous. In early 20th-century Turkey, sweeping reforms replaced Islamic law with a secular civil code, granting women formal equality in marriage, inheritance, and education. Yet, recent decades have seen a reassertion of religious and nationalist values, accompanied by contested legal interpretations and rising gender-based violence. A notable flashpoint was Turkey's withdrawal in 2021 from the Istanbul Convention, a landmark treaty aimed at preventing violence against women and

Malaysia, Islamic family courts now include women judges who oversee cases involving marriage, divorce, and custody, marking an important institutional step towards inclusion. The country has also launched initiatives to provide legal aid and mediation services through Shariah courts, making them more accessible to women. These reforms draw on Islamic jurisprudence while responding to evolving social realities.

Perhaps no concept has generated as much debate as *qiwanah*, commonly translated as male authority or guardianship. Quran 4:34 is often invoked to justify male superiority within the household. Yet, a growing number of scholars argue that the verse speaks to

Escaping the shadows of a broken education system



Bobby Hajjaj
is the chairman of Nationalist Democratic Movement (NDM) and a faculty member at North South University. He can be reached at bobby.hajjaj@northsouth.edu.

BOBBY HAJJAJ

Of all the reforms that Bangladesh must undertake in this transitional moment of its history, none is more foundational—or more urgent—than education reform. For it is not roads, ports or policies that build a democracy; it is the people. And an educated people, one capable of reasoned thought and civic discernment, don't easily fall prey to the charms of authoritarianism. The previous regime knew this all too well. To manipulate curricula, politicise history, silence inquiry, and reward mediocrity was not mere negligence; it was strategy. A docile, underinformed populace is easier to rule, easier to deceive. The antidote to such decay is not only political change—it is intellectual renewal.

Bangladesh today stands at the threshold of a decisive transformation, its youthful population brimming with promise, and its future increasingly defined by a single question: what kind of education shall we offer the next generation?

For too long, our education system has remained trapped in a model better suited to a bygone era. A culture of rote memorisation, outdated textbooks, opaque assessments,

and politicised curricula has left students ill-prepared for the world beyond the classroom. In a global age that rewards adaptability, creativity, and technical skill, we have been preparing our children to recite, not to reason.

The consequences are stark. Over 40 percent of our youth aged 15–24 years are classified as NEET (not in education, employment, or training). Unemployment among university graduates remains stubbornly high, while technical and vocational training, long viewed as a secondary track, remains marginal in both policy and perception. In our collective failure to reform the education system, we have left too many young people behind.

This failure is not accidental. Over the past decade, the politicisation of education has undermined both content and credibility. Textbooks have become vehicles for ideological reinforcement rather than vessels for intellectual discovery. Even history, that sacred archive of a nation's soul, has been edited to serve political ends. Meanwhile, allegations of plagiarism in school materials and leaks of public examination papers have

further eroded public trust.

Yet, we are not without a way forward.

A new policy vision—comprehensive in scope and pragmatic in its ambition—offers Bangladesh a rare opportunity to rebuild its education system from the ground up. It proposes a market-aligned, skills-focused curriculum that connects learning with life and education with employment. It calls for integrating project-based learning, critical thinking, digital literacy, and personal finance into the core curriculum—subjects considered extracurricular luxuries rather than essentials for too long.

To begin with, the reform must be grounded in equity. Rural schools, which continue to operate with insufficient infrastructure and undertrained staff, must be brought up to parity with their urban counterparts. Access to electricity, internet, and digital tools is no longer optional—it is foundational. Satellite learning platforms and mobile classrooms can help bridge geographic divides.

Teacher training, too, must be revisited. An ambitious retraining programme—with periodic recertification, international best practice modules, and incentives for performance—will be essential if we are to break the cycle of mediocrity. Teachers must be empowered not only to deliver content, but to inspire curiosity and foster independence of thought.

Early childhood education must receive special attention. It is in these formative years that children learn not only to read and count, but to empathise, reflect, and imagine. Ethical instruction—emphasising empathy, fairness, and integrity—should be woven into

the curriculum. This is not a sentimental luxury; it is a national necessity in a society grappling with corruption and declining civic norms.

At the secondary and tertiary levels, vocational and technical education must be mainstreamed. In too many cases, students leave school with credentials but no skills. We must align education with industry demand, develop public-private training partnerships, and introduce programmes on entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital fluency. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) schemes, inspired by India's National Skill Development Corporation, could help validate the informal knowledge of millions who remain outside formal education channels.

One of the most compelling and under-acknowledged reforms needed is linguistic. Bangladesh must embrace multilingual education at the primary level—not only to preserve its own cultural diversity, but to prepare its children for global competition. English alone is no longer sufficient. Early exposure to multiple languages improves cognitive flexibility and opens the mind to the wider world. A multilingual child is a child prepared not merely to work in the world, but to lead in it.

To implement this vision, political will must be matched with financial commitment. Bangladesh currently spends just over one percent of its GDP on education—well below the regional average and far below the UNESCO recommended four to six percent. Without increasing the education budget, talk of reform will remain just that: talk. Investing in libraries, labs, classrooms, and

digital infrastructure is not just an economic imperative, but a moral one.

We must also move beyond the obsession with high-stakes examinations. Competency-based, continuous assessments offer a fairer and more holistic picture of student growth. At the same time, measures must be taken to secure the integrity of public assessments. Encrypted digital systems, randomised question banks, and independent oversight are essential to ending the cycle of question paper leaks and corruption.

Finally, education must be protected from political interference. Textbooks should be written and reviewed by independent scholars, not partisan appointees. History should be taught in its full complexity. To give students a curated version of the past is to rob them of their intellectual freedom in the present.

We can draw inspiration from beyond our borders. Finland's student-centred pedagogy, China's vocational-industrial alignment, and India's gender-focused training programmes offer rich lessons. But imitation is not enough. Reform must be adapted to our own social and economic realities. The goal is to create a generation of Bangladeshis who can think critically, compete globally, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

In the end, a nation's character is etched most clearly not on its monuments or manifestos, but on its blackboards. If we are to build a Bangladesh that is prosperous, just, and confident in its place in the world, then education reform must be more than a policy debate—it must be a national mission. The time to act is not tomorrow, but now.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Art class staple
 - 6 Simmer
 - 10 Zodiac ram
 - 11 Bones near radiuses
 - 13 Pick up the tab
 - 14 Intensify
 - 15 Sty resident
 - 16 Target
 - 18 "... man – mouse?"
 - 19 Expert at cajoling
 - 22 – "Miserables"
 - 23 Snaky fish
 - 24 Parcels out
 - 27 Out of style
 - 28 Rock's Clapton
 - 29 Broadcast
 - 30 Feud participant
 - 35 Historic time
 - 36 Band blaster
 - 37 Use deceit
 - 38 Less common
 - 40 Sports spot
 - 42 Miniature
 - 43 Low cards in pinochle
 - 44 Woes
 - 45 Brainy
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Ways to go
 - 2 Cupid's missile
 - 3 Long attack
 - 4 Pot brew
 - 5 Manor settings
 - 6 Other name for
 - 35 Historic time
 - 36 Band blaster
 - 37 Use deceit
 - 38 Less common
 - 40 Sports spot
 - 42 Miniature
 - 43 Low cards in pinochle
 - 44 Woes
 - 45 Brainy
 - 46 " – deal!"
 - 47 Put in office
 - 48 Get smart
 - 49 Excludes
 - 50 Folding craft
 - 51 Not figurative
 - 52 Crust holders
 - 53 Sleeve filler
 - 54 Some nobles
 - 55 Justice Kagan
 - 56 Pit worker
 - 57 Bread-making need
 - 58 Building wing
 - 59 Brink



MAY 12 ANSWERS

C	A	S	T	C	L	O	G
R	I	S	E	A	E	S	O
I	N	T	R	T	O	W	A
P	E	R	F	U	M	E	A
U	M	A	P	R	P	L	E
P	A	L	L	E	E	D	Y
A	S	H	O	A	S	H	O
S	H	A	G	A	N	K	A
P	E	R	S	O	R	B	O
A	B	C	P	E	R	S	I
T	R	A	C	E	O	H	A
S	E	D	A	N	L	O	N
W	E	D	S	4	5	6	7

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HRW slams ban on AL activities

FROM PAGE 12
abused legal powers to silence political opponents, but using similar methods against the supporters of her Awami League party would also violate those same fundamental freedoms," said Meenakshi Ganguly, deputy Asia director at HRW.

The ban on the Awami League will apply until party leaders have faced trial for abuses committed during their 15 year rule, a process that could last years, thus effectively proscribing the party, said the New York-based international rights body.

These moves came in the wake of the interim government's ordinance amending the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, which gives the Tribunal powers to prosecute and dismantle political organisations.

The new provision defines "organisation" expansively to include any political party or affiliated group, or individuals who are deemed to propagate or support their activities.

Because these powers are drafted so broadly, they could contravene international standards of due process and freedom of association.

Additionally, the Tribunal is empowered to punish "any group of individuals which, in the opinion of the Tribunal, propagates, supports, endorses, facilitates, or engages in the activities of such a [banned] party or entity".

Those accused of committing crimes under Hasina's government should be appropriately prosecuted but imposing a ban on any speech or activity deemed supportive of a political party is an excessive restriction on fundamental freedoms that mirrors the previous government's abusive clampdown on political opponents, HRW said.

India pushed 109 more into Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12
Nayek Subedar Abdul Matin of BGB-61 Battalion's Dhabsuti BOP (border outpost) said they were handed over to Patgram police after initial interrogation, adding their statements suggest they were pushed in by BSF late at night.

In Moulvibazar, seven individuals were detained near the Muroichhara border in Kulaura upazila yesterday.

Lt Col ASM Zakaria, commander of BGB-46, said they are all Bangladeshi citizens and will be handed over to Kulaura police.

In Feni, 39 Bangladeshis were detained near the borders in Chhagalnaiya and Fulgazi on Wednesday night, said Lt Col Md Mosharraf Hossain of BGB-4.

After verifying their documents, 12 were handed over to Fulgazi police and another 12 to Chhagalnaiya police. The BGB could not immediately decide what to do with the remaining 15.

In Cumilla, 13 Bangladeshis were detained near the Golabari border yesterday.

They are currently in the BGB custody, Lt Col Mir Alf Ejaz, commander of the BGB-10, said.

In Thakurgaon, two women were detained near Boirchuna border in Pirganj upazila and two others near Ramchandrapur border in Birol upazila early yesterday.

The Indian police detained them about a month ago and handed them

already a wide range of people including actors, lawyers, singers and political activists have been arrested on politically motivated murder charges, with prosecutors justifying the arrests by accusing them of backing the "rule of fascist Hasina".

Meanwhile, there is growing concern over delays in addressing serious abuses that occurred under the Awami League government.

On August 27, 2024, the interim government established a commission to investigate enforced disappearances under Hasina's rule.

The commission recorded 1,676 complaints, with some 200 victims still missing, revealing a systematic pattern targeting political opponents and uncovering evidence of torture at secret detention sites run by security agencies.

However, the proposed legislation on enforced disappearances does not mention any role for the commission's findings, and excludes enforced disappearances committed in a "widespread" or "systematic" manner, leaving them to the jurisdiction of Bangladesh's under-resourced and controversial International Crimes Tribunal.

While the proposed disappearance law would establish a new National Commission on the Prevention and Remedy of Enforced Disappearances, there are no provisions to ensure its independence.

Criminal cases of those suspected of enforced disappearances would be prosecuted by a new Tribunal for Prevention and Remedies of Enforced Disappearance.

However, neither body would have jurisdiction over "widespread or systematic" enforced disappearances that constitute crimes against

humanity, which constitute most cases committed under the previous government.

While the legislation would criminalise anyone who aids, abets, instructs, orders or conspires in a disappearance, it sets a stricter threshold for the application of command or superior responsibility compared to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The interim government should reverse its actions to protect the rights of freedom of expression of the AL members and supporters and focus instead on prosecuting members of the former government accused of crimes based on credible evidence.

I should refrain from politically motivated pretrial detentions and ensure that they remain the exception only when necessary in an individual case and not the rule.

The priority should be to deliver justice for human rights violations, particularly unlawful killings and enforced disappearances.

The government should use evidence gathered by the commission of inquiry to investigate enforced disappearances to prosecute alleged perpetrators, remove suspects in the security forces from active duty and reveal the fate of the missing.

"There is widespread anger against the Awami League for the many abuses committed during Hasina's rule, but stripping supporters of opposition parties of their rights isn't a way forward."

Instead, the interim government should ensure progress on revealing what happened to the disappeared and holding perpetrators accountable through fair trials, Ganguly added.

over to the 63 BSF Battalion, who later pushed them into Bangladesh, said Lt Col Abdullah Al Moin Hasan, commanding officer of BGB-42.

BSF officials denied their involvement when BGB protested the push-ins in two separate company commander-level flag meetings, he added.

In Khagrachhari, five people, including a child, were detained near the Ramgarh border, reports Prothom Alo.

During questioning, the detainees said they had been working as labourers at a brick kiln in Haryana, Ramgarh Upazila. Nirbahi Officer Ismat Jahan told Prothom Alo.

LETTERS TO NEW DELHI
Bangladesh has recently sent at least four letters to India requesting to stop any push-ins, saying it violates existing bilateral frameworks, including the 1975 India-Bangladesh joint guidelines for border authorities, the 2011 Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP), and decisions made during director general-level talks between the BGB and BSF.

The letter reiterated that Bangladesh would accept individuals confirmed as Bangladeshi citizens and repatriated through proper channels. Any deviation from this, it said, would harm mutual understanding between the two countries.

"Any perceived delay of verification cannot be used as a factor for push-ins," he added.

Recently, New Delhi sent a letter to Dhaka seeking to expedite the verification process of illegal Bangladeshis in India so that they can be sent back home at the earliest.

Responding to a question, Indian External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told the weekly media briefing yesterday that any foreigner living illegally in India -- whether Bangladeshi or others -- is dealt with as per law.

"We have a large number of Bangladeshi nationals here who are required to be deported. We have asked Bangladesh to verify their nationality. There is a pending list of 2,369 [Bangladeshi] nationals. In many cases, the people have completed their jail sentence and are waiting to be deported," he said.

In many cases, the nationality verification required to be done by the Bangladeshi side has been delayed since 2020, he added.

Speaking on the matter, a foreign ministry official told this newspaper yesterday that the letter sent by New Delhi does not explain why the push-ins would take place.

"If we are to receive illegal Bangladeshis from India, it has to be done under a process. We do it on a regular basis. This is applicable for both countries," said the official, wishing to remain unnamed.

"Any perceived delay of verification cannot be used as a factor for push-ins," he added.

in section 21 and "Cyber Protarona" (cyber deception) in section 22, describing it as a potentially problematic overlap that should be addressed. He elaborated that while fraud is a broad term encompassing dishonest actions for unfair advantage, forgery is a more specific type of fraud involving falsified documents or signatures. Essentially, forgery is a tool to commit fraud.

In his view, section 23 "incorrectly" categorises identity fraud or theft under the same umbrella as cyber terrorism, Hossain said. He recommended moving identity theft to section 21 or 22, as it does not equate to acts of terrorism in severity or intent.

He praised section 8 for requiring a cyber tribunal's approval within three days after removing or blocking any content. The content must be restored if such an approval is not secured within the stipulated time. This, Hossain said, provides a necessary safeguard against arbitrary censorship. He also welcomed the provision mandating the government to make the list of blocked content public, calling it a step towards transparency and public awareness.

About section 26, Hossain commended the replacement of vague language like "hurting religious values" with a more precise term: "inflicting religious and communal hatred". He said this brings clarity and improves legal interpretation.

He also welcomed the inclusion of crimes such as revenge porn, digital sexual abuse of minors, and

sextrortion under section 25. These additions, he believes, will have both immediate and long-term benefits for victims and enable law enforcement to take decisive action. The provision covering blackmail using such materials, he added, will serve as protection against honey trapping and assist in faster responses from authorities.

Hossain expressed support for section 40, which requires the affected individual, not others, to file a complaint under the ordinance. Citing past misuse of this provision under the previous law, he said the change, coupled with the removal of libel as a cybercrime, will help prevent abuse. It also shifts the burden of proof onto the complainant to demonstrate actual harm or impact.

Hossain praised section 43 for granting proper legal status to forensic evidence, calling it a necessary and appropriate update.

Govt to amend NBR ordinance

FROM PAGE 12
implementation of the reforms, it added.

The protesting NBR employees welcomed the government's move in a statement late at night, but vowed to resume their protests on Saturday.

They said their core demands, such as the repeal of the ordinance and the resignation of the chairman, were not touched upon in the government statement.

about section 26, Hossain commended the replacement of vague language like "hurting religious values" with a more precise term: "inflicting religious and communal hatred". He said this brings clarity and improves legal interpretation.

He also welcomed the inclusion

Mahfuj, Hasnat ask July forces

FROM PAGE 12
the divisive slogans and labels of past arrangements -- those that have rendered large segments of the population expendable -- then I believe the future state can be democratic and inclusive."

He added that Bangladesh's enemies are "united and aggressive", and that the country's sovereignty and all democratic institutions are under threat.

"The patriotic people who stood united during the July uprising now face a long test -- a test of unity and patience. We must overcome this test."

Around 7:55pm, Hasnat Abdullah, chief coordinator (South) of the NCP, echoed Mahfuj's message.

In his Facebook post, he wrote, "The division that had unexpectedly arisen among us must be resolved in the interest of the country and the nation. To safeguard the independence and sovereignty of this country, and to free ourselves from the vile, anti-national conspiracies of fallen fascism, we must remain united."

He warned that both domestic and international actors displeased with the fall of "Awami fascism" are exploiting these divisions to destabilise the country.

"It was because we stood united that we could dismantle a powerful fascist regime of over fifteen years. If we become fragmented, that fallen fascism and its local and foreign allies will attempt to tear us apart."

"It was out of a sense of responsibility and love for the country and the nation that we stood together against fascism. Now, for the sake of that same country and nation, we must unite once again to rebuild our homeland."

"This unity is not for the interest of any individual or group -- rather, there is no alternative to our unity for the sake of the country."

UK freezes properties

FROM PAGE 12
"We can confirm that the NCA has secured freezing orders against property in 17 Grosvenor Square, London, and Gresham Gardens, London, as part of an ongoing civil investigation. We cannot comment further at this time," said the NCA.

A freezing order is a court order that prevents an asset from being dissipated, said the FT report.

The FT, quoting Bangladesh's

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Mohammad Abdul Momen, said Salman and Ahmed Rahman are suspects in embezzlement investigations by the ACC.

The properties are owned through offshore companies in the Isle of Man, the filings show.

A spokesperson for Ahmed Rahman said: "Our client denies any involvement in any alleged wrongdoing in the strongest possible

terms. He will of course engage with any investigation which takes place in the UK."

It is well known that there is political upheaval in Bangladesh, where numerous allegations are being made against many hundreds of individuals. We would expect the UK authorities to take this into consideration."

Sheikh Rehana and Salman F Rahman could not immediately be reached for comment, the FT added.

BNP escalates push for polls by December

FROM PAGE 1
Mosharraf said, "As these advisers are known to all as directly or indirectly involved with a new political party, their presence in the advisory council calls into question the nonpartisan identity of the interim government. To protect the government's image, they must be relieved of their duties."

"Khalilur Rahman's comments about BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman on Wednesday sparked fresh controversy. To protect the integrity of the government, he too must be relieved of his duties," he said.

The BNP had earlier demanded the removal of several advisers who are "cohorts of fascists", he said.

On Wednesday, BNP leader Ishraque Hossain at a demonstration urged Asif and Mahfuj to resign as advisers.

The same day, the National Citizen Party demanded the removal of Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed, Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, and Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul.

Addressing a rally in front of Election Commission, NCP's Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwari said the party would continue to demonstrate for their removal, because they were inept.

At yesterday's press conference, Mosharraf said, "We demand immediate announcement of a specific roadmap to the national election, and the election must be held by December 2025.... Otherwise, as a party of the people, it will become difficult for the BNP to continue its cooperation with this

government."

Asked why the advisory council should be smaller, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said the advisers who became controversial must be removed.

"The nation expects an election in December," he said.

If the election is to be held in December, the mode of the government should be caretaker-like, he said, adding that a caretaker administration had 10 advisers.

"We are not insisting on that exact number, but you have to move in that direction," he added.

Party insiders say some advisers are deliberately creating controversy to delay the election. Besides, some have made decisions that should only have been made by elected representatives.

The BNP last month handed the chief adviser a list of advisers who should resign.

At the press briefing yesterday, Mosharraf said the government did not act to meet public expectations. "The government tends to act only under pressure. This has already undermined the government's capacity and dignity, and legitimised similar pressure tactics by others."

"In the interest of the anti-fascist unity, the interim government was supposed to maintain the highest level of neutrality. But it is being observed that implementing the political agenda of certain quarters has seemingly become part of the government's action

plan."

He criticised the NCP for demonstrating in front of the Election Commission.

"Laying siege to the Election Commission demanding local government elections appears intentional and mysterious," he said.

At another press conference yesterday morning at Nayapaltan, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said he wondered where Khalilur, the security adviser, had been during the "one and a half decades of fascist rule".

"Where did he live? In which country? What was his status abroad? What role did he play against fascism? The people must be given answers to all these questions," he said.

On Wednesday, Khalilur said, "If I'm being labelled a foreign citizen simply for residing in the US, then by the same logic, BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman -- who has lived in the UK for years -- could be similarly labelled [a foreigner].

"If you throw a stone at me, it might end up hitting someone else."

The BNP protested and condemned the security adviser's remarks on Tarique Rahman, calling for an immediate withdrawal of the statement. It alleged that certain advisers were attempting to make the return of Tarique Rahman to home unsafe.

According to sources present at a BNP standing committee meeting on Monday night, the party will take to the streets in July.

Public servants won't be forced to retire

FROM PAGE 1
"Now, the Legislative Division will review the matter, and after taking opinions from the four responsible advisers, the next steps will be taken. If the decision is implemented, the number of major penalties will be reduced from four to three."

After assuming office, the interim government has sent dozens of officials from the civil administration and police into forced retirement. Rumours are rife at the Secretariat that more such actions may be on the cards.

Amid this backdrop, the government has moved to finalise the "Public Service (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025".

Stakeholders believe this marks the beginning of a major reform in the country's civil service sector.

Under the existing Public Service Act, 2018, the government retains the authority to retire any government employee without justification, as long as the individual has completed 25 years of service. In such cases, the employee is entitled to full retirement benefits along with other

Backlash rooted in gender bias

FROM PAGE 3
She also said it is important to break social taboos and fear around discussing sensitive issues.

Speaking at the event, Environment Adviser Sveda Rizwana Hasan said the women's rights movement is not the result of just nine months of work but has grown from many years of activism and struggle.

"The issues we haven't been able to resolve in decades cannot be expected to be solved overnight. If a formal process to address them has finally begun, it must be allowed to continue," she said.

As the process unfolds, there will naturally be obstacles, and those will spark debate over whether such resistance is justified or not. It is only through that debate and engagement that real change can take root, she said.

"If we expect immediate, straightforward solutions without working through the process, then there's no guarantee the change will be sustainable," she added.

She said while punishment can be a deterrent to violence against women, the deeper and more lasting solution lies in transforming the values of society itself.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman criticised the interim government's silence amid backlash against the commission's recommendations.

He criticised the key government figures, including the chief adviser, for not taking a clear stance on the issue despite championing women's rights for years.

He asked whether those who led or supported the

violent campaign against the commission now hold political influence within the government.

"If that is the case, has the government become hostage to them?" he asked.

"We strongly protest this and demand a clear and specific response from the government," he added.

Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam said last week, thousands of people -- women and men from both the hills and the plains, including women with disability and sex workers -- united to demand equal rights.

"As long as society does not treat women equally, whether at home, in communities, or at the state level, they will continue to be undervalued and denied their rightful dignity," she said.

The high rates of domestic abuse show that women lack respect in their own homes. Child marriages reveal that young women are not given the honour, dignity, or importance they deserve, and are simply pushed through without care. That's why we demand equal rights," she added.

Legal expert Shahdeen Malik said in the past 12-15 years, "We want the death penalty" has become a common slogan. But research shows that harsher punishments often lead to lower conviction rates.

He pointed out that Bangladesh still follows the 1837 British-era Penal Code. It had six death penalty provisions, which have now grown to 38, showing a trend towards normalising extreme punishments.

"Justice should aim to prevent crime and reform offenders, not take revenge," he said.

He cited a 2016-17 study where rape conviction rates fell to 3 percent after stricter laws were introduced, with 2 percent of those overturned in higher courts.

He suggested that moderate and enforceable sentences, like 7 years in prison, might be more effective than life terms or the death penalty.

Nijera Kori coordinator Khushi Kabir strongly criticised the use of religion to spread misogynistic rhetoric and hate speech through sermons, emphasising the urgent need for a clear and unequivocal stance on the issue.

DIG Taptun Nasreen said while Bangladesh has strong laws to protect women, weak enforcement and slow trials, often lasting 5 to 7 years, are major issues.

Victims and witnesses often drop out due to pressure, lack of support, or delays, Nasreen said.

The event ended with a declaration which called for zero tolerance of violence against women and children, urging legal reforms, faster justice, and an end to misogynistic propaganda.

It demanded safe workplaces, equal pay, stronger child marriage laws, better crisis support, and access to education. It also stressed the need to resist politicisation, strengthen law enforcement, and improve coordination for protection.

The event was moderated by CAMPE executive director Rasheda K Chowdhury and presided over by economist Hossain Zillur Rahman.

Bird strikes cost Biman

FROM PAGE 3
made an emergency landing at the Dhaka airport following a bird strike on its second engine.

The flight, carrying 11 crew and 280 passengers, was going to Istanbul, Turkish Airlines said.

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

In the letter, Biman also said the primary species contributing to this issue is the Black Kite. These scavenging birds are often found around runways and taxiways, where they feed on insects.

The grassy areas surrounding our airfields provide an ideal hunting ground for them, especially after rain.

During the winter months when they congregate on the warm tarmac and runways, this behaviour significantly increases the risk of bird strikes.

To mitigate this hazard, Biman proposed implementing several strategies.

For instance, maintaining shorter vegetation, as practised in airports worldwide,

can reduce the insect population, which is an easy food source for birds.

Additionally, airfields such as Singapore utilise light pesticides to control insect populations, thereby indirectly managing bird activity.

Adopting similar measures at the airports in Bangladesh could markedly decrease the risk of bird strikes, Biman also suggested.

"Additionally, it is essential to highlight the financial implications of bird strikes for Biman. Due to a shortage of aircraft, we often struggle to maintain schedules, leading to substantial indirect costs," read the letter.

Biman said CAAB's prompt action is necessary to address the bird strike hazard, which is crucial for the safety of the airline's operations and its financial health.

Contacted, the CAAB chairman said, "Although we are taking every possible measure, it's a big challenge to deter birds due to uncontrolled waste and garbage places surrounding different places of the airport."

Momtaz

FROM PAGE 4
Harirampur Police Station area around 11:00am.

Momtaz was brought to the court from Kashimpur High Security Central Jail in Gazipur around 8:30am.

As she was taken to the court, BNP lawyers and activists staged a protest demanding her punishment. A scuffle broke out between the activists and police.

Following the remand hearings, eggs and shoes were hurled at Momtaz as she was being escorted to a prison van under tight security, eyewitnesses said.

Met office forecasts

FROM PAGE 4
across Southwestern part of Bangladesh, it added.

The bulletin said a mild heat wave is sweeping over Madaripur, Pabna, Khulna, Jashore, Chuadanga, Kushtia and Satkhira districts and it may continue.

On Wednesday, the country's highest maximum temperature was 37.4 degrees Celsius in Jashore.

Meanwhile, the met office recorded highest 110mm rainfall in Sylhet in the 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday. Dhaka experienced 33mm rainfalls during the period.

Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority

Information & Communication Technology Division
Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology
ICT Tower, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
www.bhtpa.gov.bd

Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI)

Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA) invites sealed Expressions of Interest (EOI) from reputed Dormitory Management Companies (DMC) for the selection and appointment of a company to conduct operation and maintenance services for the Dormitory Building (Hotel, Accommodation and Restaurant facilities), Amphitheater building, Canteen, Pond, Data Centre, IP camera, Total park premises security, Substation, Generator, Gardening, reservation whole premises and other relevant premises at Software Technology Park, Jashore.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division	Information and Communication Technology Division
2	Procuring Entity Name	Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority
3	EOI Ref. No. & Date	Memo: 56.02.0000.006.07.580.25- 216, Date: 20/05/2025
4	EOI Published Date	From 20/05/2025
5	Last Date of Receiving EOI/Application	Date: 16/06/2025, Time: 3:00 PM Head Office of Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, 9th Floor, ICT Tower, Agargaon, Dhaka.
6	Opening of EOI/Applications	Date: 16/06/2025, Time: 3:30 PM, Conference room, BHTPA
7	Scope of Works	The Dormitory Management Company (DMC) will handle the operation and maintenance of the Dormitory Building (Hotel, Accommodation and Restaurant facilities), Amphitheater building, Canteen, Pond, Data Centre, IP camera, Total park premises security, Substation, Generator, Gardening, reservation whole premises and other relevant premises at Software Technology Park, Jashore, under the supervision of Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA). The scope of work includes, but is not limited to, the following responsibilities: 1. Financial Management: Setting rental fees, collecting payments, managing electricity bills, and maintaining financial records. 2. Operations & Maintenance: Overseeing daily operations, repairs, replacement, road maintenance, renovation, periodic maintenance of the building cleaning, and facility maintenance of Dormitory & Amphitheater Building, Canteen and Pond. 3. Security & Safety: Ensuring security measures, safety protocols, and managing security personnel. 4. Guest Services: Handling room reservations, check-in/check-out, and guest satisfaction. 5. Marketing & Branding: Attracting tenants and bookings through strategic marketing. 6. Technology & Reporting: Using management software for efficient operations and reporting. The DMC will ensure high-quality service and contribute to the long-term success of the facility.
8	Experience, Qualifications, Evaluation criteria etc.	To prepare a shortlist of preliminary eligible companies/firms, the submitted EOI/Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria: 1. Legal & Regulatory Compliance: Valid trade license, TIN certificate, BIN, up-to-date income tax certificate, and other relevant documents. 2. Financial & Audit Requirements: Latest annual audit report, Bank solvency certificate, Minimum yearly average turnover of BDT 1,00,00,000/- (Taka one crore) over the last two years 3. Experience & Operational Expertise: Lead partner must have a minimum of 02 (two years) experience in dormitory/resort operation and maintenance, Proven track record in managing similar types of resorts, dormitories, or hospitality establishments, must have overseen at least 50 (fifty) rooms for a minimum of two years 4. Qualified Human Resources: Availability of experienced staff/human resource pool specializing in dormitory/resort management, leasing, maintenance, and tenant relations 5. Technology & Systems: Access to software and tools for efficient dormitory management (accounting, reporting, communication) 6. Marketing & Branding: Demonstrated experience in hospitality marketing & branding for tenant attraction All applicants must meet these criteria to be considered for shortlisting.
9	Address of the Official Inviting EOI	Managing Director, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, 9th Floor, ICT Tower, Agargaon, Dhaka.

10. Other Information, Terms and Conditions:

Revenue Sharing & Financial Terms:

- Revenue generated from room rentals and other dormitory-related income from Dormitory & Amphitheatre Building, Canteen, Pond will be shared between the selected Dormitory Management Company (DMC) and the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA), in accordance with the signed contract's terms and conditions.
- The percentage share of revenue between BHTPA and the selected DMC(s) will be determined through an open competitive process based on proposals submitted by applicant firms but not less than 25%.
- No direct payment will be made to the selected DMCs by BHTPA. Instead, a portion of the collected revenue from guests will be paid to BHTPA. The rental rates (daily/weekly/monthly) for dormitory rooms must be approved by BHTPA.
- All revenue collected from guests and other services will be deposited into a common escrow account, jointly operated by both parties.

Contract Period & Performance Evaluation:

- The contract period will be for seven (07) years, with the possibility of an extension of up to three (03) additional years, based on satisfactory performance.

Application & Selection Process:

- Interested firms must physically visit and inspect the park centers before submitting their EOI/applications. BHTPA will provide necessary cooperation for the inspection process. Contact with signing person.
- Applicant firms must submit all supporting documents in hard copies to validate their competence and eligibility.
- The preliminary evaluation committee will shortlist qualified applicants, after which specific proposals will be invited from them based on finalized Terms of Reference.
- EOI submissions must be in two (02) copies:
 - One marked as "ORIGINAL" & One marked as "COPY"
 - Both copies must be in book-bound format, inside separate sealed envelopes.
- The application language must be English, and submitted applications/EOIs must remain valid for at least 180 days from the last date of submission.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants can be individual firms, Joint Venture firms, Consortiums, or Associations (JVCA). The number of firms in a JVCA must not exceed three (03).
- The lead partner must have at least two (02) years of general experience and two (02) years of specific experience in the relevant sector/hospitality management sector.
- The DMC must ensure access to a network of reliable contractors and service providers for dormitory maintenance and repairs.

Authority Rights & Modifications:

- The inviting entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs, without providing any reason.
- The inviting entity also reserves the right to modify or change the terms and conditions of this advertisement notice at any time. For more details and application format, visit: www.bhtpa.gov.bd



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Office of the Director (DIG)
Central Police Hospital
Rajarbagh, Dhaka.

Invitation for Tender

Sealed tender is hereby invited from the Suppliers/Local Agents in their official pad for the hiring of the following vehicle for Central Police Hospital, Rajarbagh, Dhaka for the financial year 2025-2026.

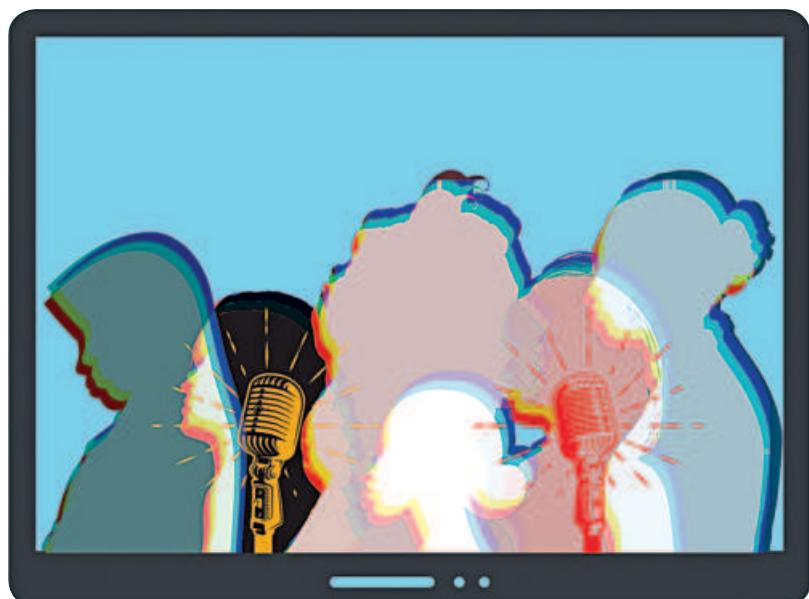
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs/ Public Security Division		
2. Agency	Central Police Hospital, Rajarbagh, Dhaka		
3. Procuring Entity Name	Director, Central Police Hospital, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.		
4. Invitation for	Rent-A-Car for CPH		
5. Invitation Ref No	CPH/Tender-7- 2025-2026/2790		
6. Date	22/05/2025		
KEY INFORMATION			
7. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM); Framework		
FUNDING INFORMATION			
8. Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget (GOB)		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
9. Tender Publication Date	23/05/2025		
10. Tender Last Selling Date	15/06/2025		
11. Tender Closing Date and Time	At 12:00 Noon on 16/06/2025		
12. Tender Opening Date and Time	12:30 pm on 16/06/2025		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
14. Eligibility of Tenderer	1. Photocopy of up-to-date Trade License. 2. Up-to-date Bank Solvency Certificate. 3. Photocopy of up-to-date Income Tax Certificate. 4. Photocopy of VAT Certificate. 5. Original money receipt paid for purchasing Tender document. 6. Photocopy of up-to-date Bank Statement Certificate. 7. Other Documents describe in (PSN).		
15. Brief Description of Goods			
Name	Price of Tender Document	Tender Security in Taka	Completion time in Days
Rent-A-Car	Tk. 1000.00	2,00,000.00 (Two Lac)	7 days
PROCURING ENTITY DE TALLS			
16. Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Humayun Kabir		
17. Designation of Official Inviting Tender	SP (Admin & Finance)		
18. Address of Official Inviting Tender	Central Police Hospital, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.		
19. Contract details of official inviting the tender	Tel 88-02-8312075 Fax 88-02-9342297		
20. Special Instructions-			
a) No Tender will be received after the deadline for submission.			
b) The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceeding.			
c) Bangladesh police will establish framework agreement with the successful tenderer for supply of goods.			
d) All Items will be purchased after allocation of budget.			
e) The tender will be evaluated item by item wise.			

22.05.25
(Md. Humayun Kabir)

Superintendent of Police(Admin & Finance)
For-Director (DIG)
Central Police Hospital
Bangladesh Police, Rajarbagh, Dhaka.
Phone-8312075, Fax

Women's right to free speech is under threat in online spaces

And the perpetrators are thriving on our collective silence



Rape threats, alongside more insidious forms of sexualised violence—such as the non-consensual use of a woman's face to fabricate pornographic videos—are not merely expressions of malice; they are warnings designed to remind women that their presence in public discourse is conditional.

AZRA HUMAYRA

What led me to lock my Facebook profile wasn't an impulse but a slow accumulation of bitter incidents—unsolicited photographs of genitals, strangers lobbing obscenities in the comments and messages that made my skin crawl with the chill of knowing that, as a woman, my very presence online is perceived as an offence. And yet, as a writer, I feel compelled—perhaps even obligated—to speak, to offer my modest two cents on matters that stir me. But even those small offerings are enough to summon a torrent of verbal bile, so wildly disconnected from the substance of my words that it becomes clear: the attack is not on the argument but on the audacity of my expression.

When a woman raises her voice against the status quo, she is not merely heard as a dissenting citizen but first—unfailingly—as a woman, and then, only incidentally, as a rebel. Her defiance is not evaluated for its merit but for its audacity. And in that space where disagreement ought to invite dialogue, a single, brutal word is often flung to end all conversation: rape. The threat of it, the invocation of it, shushes women. It has long served as the most chillingly effective tool in the arsenal of those determined to keep women silent, and still, it works.

When a man dares to speak against the status quo, he may be met with hostility—coarse insults, the promise of a black eye, and perhaps a few garden-variety threats tossed from the safety of anonymity. But rarely, if ever, is he met with the “f-word”. That particular threat is not in the arsenal reserved for men. For women, it comes first—before reason, debate, and consideration of what she has actually said. It is less of a rebuttal and more of a ritual, a brutal way to remind her that before she is a mind, she is a body and a body that can be punished.

Listening to Nourin Sultana Toma, a fourth-year student at Dhaka University, posed a serious concern: how rape threats are used as a tool. She claims, “I have been the target of body shaming, rape threats, and pornographic deepfake videos using my face. These are employed as tools of domination.” According to her, these individuals intimidate

women who attempt to voice their opinions by threatening to rape them. She finds it painful that rape is being used as a political tool.

Rape threats, alongside more insidious forms of sexualised violence—such as the non-consensual use of a woman's face to fabricate pornographic videos—are not merely expressions of malice; they are warnings designed to remind women that their presence in public discourse is conditional.

Nourin recalls two recent instances: one in which she opposed Mostafa Asif Arnab's release after he was charged with harassing a female student on the DU campus and the other in which she objected to the use of elephants in the DU Eid procession. “I have received rape and death threats for talking about these incidents,” she claims. This detracts from the primary concern and deters individuals from engaging in productive discussions.

A familiar pattern runs through these conversations: a woman raises an important issue, only for the focus to shift entirely. Instead

Victim blaming is nothing new to women. When a woman speaks out about the threats she has received, people often respond with a smirk, pointing to the photos she has posted or how she looks—as if to suggest she brought it on herself and the abuse is somehow deserved.

of engaging with her argument, commenters warn her to be careful, imply danger, or hint at something awful that might happen to her (in the guise of concern). The original topic is pushed aside, and suddenly, the conversation becomes about her gender—about misogyny—not the issue she was trying to discuss in the first place.

Asmita Mehefin, a third-year student at BRAC University, says, “The fact that we are reduced to objects and our value in this society

can be taken away by someone else touching us without consent and violating us makes my skin crawl. Sometimes even after being on the receiving end of a crime, you're the one who is blamed and shamed. It makes me really angry and fills me with rage, honestly.”

Victim blaming is nothing new to women. When a woman speaks out about the threats she has received, people often respond with a smirk, pointing to the photos she has posted or how she looks—as if to suggest she brought it on herself and the abuse is somehow deserved.

A graduate student of Jahangirnagar University, Sneha Talukdar, indicated that she had been subjected to bullying, slut-shaming, trolling, and rape threats over the previous seven or eight years. However, recently, there has been an increase in everyday abuse directed at her via bot accounts, bogus Facebook pages, comment sections, and inbox messages. She

no longer dreads the onslaught, since it has become usual.

But what does all this mean for the interviewees' freedom of speech? Are they paralysed by fear, silenced before they can speak—or do they persist, raising their voices in protest despite the threats of sexual violence? The answers, as ever, are varied.

Asmita puts it succinctly, “There are times I have questioned if writing this poem and publishing it would result in slut shaming and rape threats. There is a constant fear that works in favour of misogynists and patriarchal institutions.”

Self-censorship to prevent rape threats means compromised freedom of speech. Asmita adds, “Specifically if I write a poem in a language which is more accessible to people, that makes the fear of receiving threats more prominent. There are times I have watered down my writing to make it more palatable to people so that I don't get threats.”

On the other hand, Nourin realised that to remain in the political realm of a patriarchal country, she would have to continue fighting. She says, “When I started to write online, I witnessed women who spoke online being subjected to harsh consequences, but that did not deter me. These threats could not make me falter. I try not to think about whether I will receive rape threats or not if I post certain things. I have received rape threats for writing the simplest of things. So why should I bother thinking about receiving rape threats?”

But she emphasises the fact of the ever-present existence of rape-threat culture. She laments that the fear of receiving rape threats prevents women from coming forward. Nourin says, “I may have been able to overcome this reality of being a woman living in Bangladesh, but this is an exception.”

These testimonies reveal an ongoing practice of harassment, they also expose a strategy for suppression. An infrastructure of dread created using rape threats, doctored pornography, and the persistent policing of female expression. These women are more than just victims of online harassment; they are the collateral of a society that is alarmed not by violence but by the audacity of a woman speaking her opinion. And in this grim equation, to be a woman and vocal is to court danger; to persist is resistance itself.

But resistance must not be the burden of the silenced alone. If our government claims to uphold the right to free speech as enshrined in our constitution, then it must reckon with the reality that women are being systematically denied that right. Let us not forget that rape threats are political tools.

Authorities must act with urgency and resolve: to investigate these threats, hold perpetrators accountable, and make the online space a terrain where women can speak without fear. Anything less is complicity. And silence, at this point, is no longer neutral; it is violent. Those who stand by, who choose not to take an active stance against such abuse, are not outside the problem—they are part of it, enabling a culture that thrives on their silence. Azra Humayra is majoring in Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka. Find her at: azrahumayra123@gmail.com

What you should know before joining a gym for the first time

NUSRAT MEHERIN FAIZA

You have finally decided you are done being that one person who simply scrolls through fitness posts or videos on social media while muttering “I will start my own fitness journey next week” and are finally ready to hit the gym for real. Suddenly, the doubts start creeping in.

Where do I even start? Can I do this? What if I can't get fit? Such questions are bound to pop up in your mind. But remember that everyone starts somewhere, even the most experienced bodybuilders or fitness junkies were once beginners.

If you're serious about starting your fitness journey at the gym, here are some of the most important things you should know.

Location of your gym

A gym close to your home or university makes it much easier to stick to your preferred fitness routine. Knowing the city traffic, after a long, tiring day, the last thing you want is to navigate traffic across the city just to squeeze in a workout. And often it becomes an excuse to skip the workout.

Choosing a conveniently located gym removes that barrier, making it easier to stay committed.

Equipment, hours, and trainer availability

While location tops the list, equipment, gym hours, and availability of trainers at the gym are just as crucial. Proper, well-maintained equipment matters to let you stick to your routine. Also, check if the gym gets too crowded during peak hours.

Ask if there are certified trainers for enough guidance. When you're just starting, proper advice is crucial to avoid any injury and build a routine that works for you.

Payment plans and flexibility

Membership fees vary depending on the facilities, location, and the overall brand value of the gym. Some require hefty fees or tie you into long term contracts, while some offer a monthly package.

Be clear about things like whether or not you can pause or cancel your gym membership if needed. Also, check if there are any hidden charges, like having to pay extra if you have dedicated trainers.

As a beginner, always opt for a gym that offers flexible payment plans, one that doesn't stress you out financially.

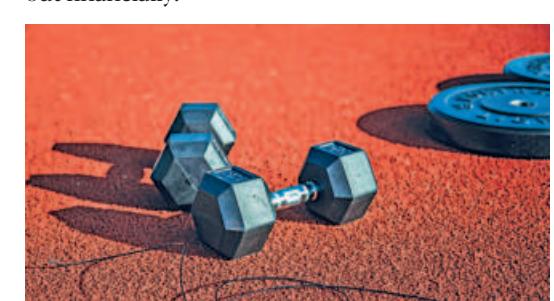


PHOTO: UNSPLASH

Hygiene and cleanliness

Cleanliness in a gym is an absolute necessity. Observe how well the facility is kept before you enrol. Are their shower areas, bathrooms, and locker rooms clean? Is the equipment cleaned regularly? Do the restrooms have hand sanitisers available?

A clean gym not only conveys professionalism but also helps shield you from possible health risks.

Gym culture and environment

When you enter a place that seems judgmental or unwelcoming, it can cause needless stress and gradually push you away from going there. Hence, it becomes essential to pay attention to the gym culture.

Notice if the staff and other members at the gym are welcoming, respectful, and sincere. Also, make sure the culture at your gym is welcoming to people of all body types and fitness levels. A positive and supportive environment can motivate you to keep going.

The many avenues for physical wellness

It is inevitable that almost everyone will face some sort of physical ailment in their lifetimes, whether it be temporary or permanent. In order to alleviate its effects, paying attention to our physical health is the first big step towards wellness.

A.M. FAHAD

Our bodies are machines made of meat and electricity that run into problems more often than we'd like them to. The degree of these problems varies greatly among people of different age groups. With that in mind, it is important to consider the various outlets available to us. Here are some options that can be accessed from the comfort of your home or a nearby spot.

Gym

The gym is usually the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks of physical wellness. It's also among the most accessible spaces available for wellness. Joining a gym comes with many pros. Not only do you find a community of people, each with their own fitness goals, but also a space that caters to people's needs through the availability of a wide variety of equipment. The tools at your disposal can be used for strength training and cardio amongst other things.

Good gyms also usually have trainers who guide newcomers and help them build a routine and diet plan to follow throughout their wellness journey. Gyms tend to possess a strong air of motivation where people are constantly seen pushing themselves, which can be incredibly motivating.

Zumba

Zumba is a dance-based workout that

involves high beat music and cardio. It might not seem like an exercise in the most traditional sense, but it most certainly is going to make you break a sweat. Zumba classes are filled with extremely high energy. The community-driven activity of letting your body dance to the rhythm of the music will also fill your reserves with endorphins.

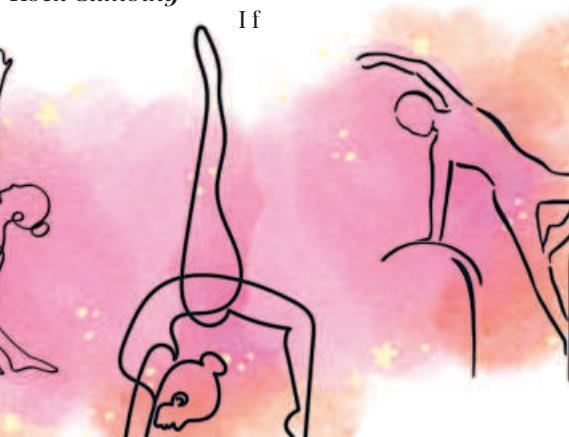
Many fitness studios in Dhaka offer Zumba routines to help you schedule your first class. The other good part about Zumba is that there are tons of resources on the internet. Most importantly, it's perfectly fine to do it from home. If you don't want to get into running or lifting heavy weights, Zumba may be the perfect alternative for you.

Pilates

Pilates is a body-conditioning routine that helps you build flexibility and endurance without putting on muscle. It focuses on improving your core strength and the quality of your breathing using repetitive small movements to target specific muscle

groups. Pilates is especially beneficial to people with sedentary jobs or people who lack active movement, as it helps improve your posture, and makes you more aware of how you move through daily life. Pilates can also be done both from home and at a studio.

Rock Climbing



someone told me that we would have rock-climbing gyms in Dhaka even a few years back, I would have found it difficult to believe, but rock-climbing gyms have grown in popularity recently, and the popularity is well deserved.

Rock climbing is a deeply rewarding and adventurous mode of wellness

that combines strength and balance with strategy and mental focus. Rock climbing gyms contain different categories and levels for people with varying levels of expertise. They're set using videogame-like level-up mechanisms in which you clear a stage

to move to a more challenging climb. Rock climbing is particularly beneficial for improving core strength and back strength, as well as your overall strength while adding an element of adventure to it. It is deeply rewarding, and every climb feels like solving a puzzle!

Yoga and stretch-based wellness

Yoga remains one of the most holistic wellness practices out there, as it improves flexibility and physical strength while grounding the mind with breathwork and mindfulness practices. Whether you're looking for a slow meditative approach or a dynamic workout, the benefit of yoga is that it will always meet your energy level. Though yoga and stretch-based exercises may not fill

you with adrenaline, they provide you with something just as valuable: stillness and an improved emotional connection with the body.

Tai Chi, martial Arts, and boxing

Tai Chi is a gentle, flowing practice that looks like martial arts in slow motion. Tai Chi is similar to both yoga and martial arts, as it combines the motions of martial arts with the slow flow of yoga to create meditation in motion. Like some of the other activities in this list, Tai Chi can also be done both in your own house and in a professional studio.

On the other hand, martial arts and boxing, especially kickboxing, have grown popular in recent years. Karate, judo, and kickboxing combine physical skill with mental discipline. Although boxing is not a martial art in the most traditional sense, it has shown great results in alleviating stress and tension.

It is inevitable that almost everyone will face some sort of physical ailment in their lifetimes, whether it be temporary or permanent. In order to alleviate its effects, paying attention to our physical health is the first big step towards wellness. By staying active in ways that suit our bodies and interests, we build resilience that supports us throughout our lives and improves our overall quality of life.

Kiwis weather spin test

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand A showed resilience against Bangladesh A's spin attack on a rain-hit second day of the second four-day match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. At stumps, the visitors were 104 for 1, trailing by 253 runs.

Despite the pitch offering turn, the spin trio of Hasan Murad, Nayem Islam, and Nasum Ahmed failed to break through. The only wicket came from pacer Khaled Ahmed, who removed opener Rhys Mariu. Curtis Heaphy remained unbeaten on 41, while Joe Carter added a solid 48 before play was halted.

Earlier, Bangladesh A resumed on 225 for four and reached 357 all out. Amite Hasan anchored the innings with a patient 67 off 110 balls, while Nurul Hasan Sohan's brisk 48 off 40 deliveries lifted the total. With a decent first innings score on the board, Bangladesh will hope their spinners can make an impact over the final two days.



Miraz replaces injured Soumya for Pakistan T20Is

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz has been called up to Bangladesh's T20I squad for the upcoming Pakistan tour, replacing Soumya Sarkar, who has been ruled out with a back injury. Miraz, recently roped in by Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League, is set to join the squad in Lahore. The three-match T20I series begins on May 28 at the Gaddafi Stadium.

Miraz, who has played 29 T20Is, last appeared in the shortest format during Bangladesh's tour of the West Indies in December last year.

Regarding Soumya's medical assessment, national team physio Bayyedul Islam Khan confirmed: "The injury requires an extended rehabilitation period of approximately 10 to 12 days. This effectively means that he [Soumya Sarkar] will not be available for next week's three-match series in Pakistan."



Bangladesh's crises go beyond the scoreboard

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Learning from mistakes is typically a sign of growth, even admirable. But when Bangladesh captain Liton Das leaned on that familiar line after his team's 2-1 T20I series defeat to the UAE -- a result that marked a historic low -- the words felt more like a reflex than reflection.

Although the message might seem reasonable on its own, coming from a team that has stumbled over the same hurdles time and again, repeating such lines without real change only deepens the frustration.

In less than a month, Bangladesh cricket suffered two blows that have shaken their foundation. First, they lost a home Test match to Zimbabwe for the first time in over six years -- a team traditionally considered beatable in subcontinental conditions. Then came the unthinkable: a series loss to UAE, a side ranked six places below them in T20I standings and with no prior series win against Bangladesh.

Short-lived highs and scattered tournament flashes have long papered over the cracks -- but Wednesday's result tore through the facade. Former captains Habibul Bashar, Minhajul Abedin Nannu, and Khaled Mashud Pilot didn't mince words: this isn't just a passing stumble. It's a full-blown crisis in Bangladeshi cricket.

"There's no excuse for such defeat," Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday. "It's pathetic and shocking. UAE played like favourites in all three matches. Even the one we won, we were lucky. This can't be explained away."

Bashar demanded accountability. "You need to identify how you can lose a series to a team like UAE. The responsible authority must come up with an explanation."

The panic isn't unfounded. Bangladesh cricket, once a promising force in the 50-over format, has lost its grip. A decade ago, they were giant killers in ICC

"This should be a wake-up call. We are losing to small teams because there is no professional attitude -- neither from the players nor from the management. The system is failing."

Former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mashud Pilot

tournaments. Now, they sit at number 10 in ODI rankings, plagued by inconsistency, incoherent planning, and declining public interest.

Former chief selector Minhajul pointed to strategic confusion and poor planning as the main reasons behind the nosedive. "We need to evaluate our long-term plan and see whether our strategies are even

working," he said. "Selection, format specialisation, team management -- everything needs a rethink."

While he urged patience in not judging the team based on just one or two bad series, he admitted that things aren't heading in the right direction. "The cricketing ecosystem isn't in good shape. It's not about off-field distractions; it's the lack of clarity and direction on the field."

Pilot believes the rot begins at the roots -- the domestic structure. "It's not a sudden collapse," he said. "Our domestic culture has deteriorated, and that shows in our international results. We simply don't have enough quality players coming through."

Pilot, known for his sharp assessments, was blunt in his warning. "This should be a wake-up call. We are losing to small teams because there is no professional attitude -- neither from the players nor from the management. The system is failing."

Indeed, while cricket is a game of glorious uncertainties, repeated failures against teams with far fewer resources hint at something systemic.

Whether this series defeat will serve as a wake-up call or fade into another chapter of unmet potential depends entirely on how swiftly and seriously the board, team management, and players respond.

Whether this series defeat jolts the system or slips quietly into the growing pile of misfiring rests on one factor -- the urgency and intent with which the board, team management, and players choose to act.

Tottenham rise in Europe while United sink further

AGENCIES

Brennan Johnson's scrappy first-half goal proved decisive as Tottenham Hotspur claimed the Europa League title with a tense 1-0 victory over Manchester United in Bilbao on Wednesday night, ending their 17-year wait for silverware and securing a Champions League return amid one of their worst domestic seasons in decades.

In a season where both giants languished near the Premier League drop zone, it was Spurs who salvaged pride and purpose, lifting their first European trophy since 1984.

Johnson's 42nd-minute effort, bundled in during a chaotic scramble with Luke Shaw, embodied the scruffy but spirited nature of the final.

United keeper Andre Onana, flat-footed and flailing, could only watch as the ball trickled in -- a fittingly clumsy climax to a match low on finesse but high on stakes.

The rest was sheer defensive defiance.

Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou -- famed for his attacking 'Ange Ball' philosophy --



ditched flair for grit.

His side barely ventured forward in the second half but defended with steely discipline, repelling wave after wave of United pressure. Micky van de Ven's heroic goal-line clearance from a Rasmus Hojlund header and Guglielmo Vicario's reflex saves preserved their precious lead.

"We got it done," said match-winner Johnson. "People said we never would, but this is for every fan who's stuck with us through the pain."

Postecoglou, who faced mounting pressure with Spurs 17th in the Premier League after 21 defeats, earned redemption and vindication. Delivering on his pre-season vow to win silverware in his second year, he may now have forced a rethink on his future.

"I don't feel like I've completed the job yet," he said. "We've taken a big step, but there's more to come."

While Tottenham were jubilant, Manchester United descended further into despair. Defeated in four meetings with Spurs this season and without European football next year, coach Ruben Amorim's project is now in peril.

Bereft of identity and ideas, United's season ended with a whimper, not a roar.

For Spurs, this triumph offers more than a trophy. It brings belief, momentum, and a shot at the UEFA Super Cup this summer.

Whether Postecoglou stays or not, the narrative has changed. Tottenham are no longer the nearly men of English football -- they're champions of Europe once more.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
Bangladesh A vs New Zealand A
Second Test, Day 3
Live from 10:00 am
IPL
Qualifier 2
Live from 8:30 pm

Bengaluru vs Hyderabad
Live from 8:00 pm
NAGORIK TV
PSL
Qualifier 2
Live from 8:30 pm

A parting rich in meaning for Rana

ANISUR RAHMAN

In a country where footballers rarely bid farewell on their own terms, former Bangladesh captain and goalkeeper Ashraful Islam Rana is set for a rare and poetic exit.

The 38-year-old will retire today after featuring for Brothers Union in a Bangladesh Premier League clash against Mohammedan Sporting Club -- the very team where his top-flight journey began in 2014.

As Rana takes his final bow in Cumilla, he will also witness his first club lift the league trophy after 23 years, having already confirmed the BPL title with three games to spare. The Black and Whites are set to don special champion jerseys at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium, while local supporters are expected to contribute to the celebration in their own way.

"It is going to be an emotional moment for me, and I am really happy that I am going to call my time from the ground," Rana told reporters during Brothers Union's practice session at Gopibagh yesterday.

Asked why he chose this particular fixture for his swansong, Rana replied: "I chose Mohammedan because it had been my former club from where I started my top-flight football career."

A mainstay in domestic football and a reliable presence between the sticks for Bangladesh from 2015 to 2022, Rana also played for Chittagong Abahani, Saif Sporting Club and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra.

"I'm satisfied with my football career because what I am today is because of football, coming from a rural area," he said.

Among his fondest memories is the 1-1 draw against India during the 2019 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in front of a roaring 90,000-strong crowd at Salt Lake Stadium. On the other end of the emotional spectrum lies the aggregate loss to Bhutan in the 2016 Asian Cup Qualifier play-offs -- a painful chapter where he wore the captain's armband.

Post-retirement, the 38-year-old is not planning to stray far from football. With an AFC 'B' diploma already in hand, he hopes to contribute as a goalkeeping coach, be it at club level or with the national age-group teams. He also intends to pursue an AFC Goalkeeping License.

"Playing top-flight football and representing the national team have been great honours," Rana said. "But I still have one regret -- we couldn't take the country's football back to the craze it once enjoyed. I would have been happier had we managed that."

Modric to leave Real after Club World Cup

AGENCIES

Luka Modric will leave Real Madrid after the Club World Cup, the Croatian midfielder said on Thursday as the club's most successful player and the 2018 Ballon d'Or winner prepares to end a trophy-laden stint in Spain. Modric, who arrived at the club in 2012, has played almost 600 games for Real and won nearly 30 trophies including a record six Champions League titles and four LaLiga trophies. His last match at the Bernabeu will be Real's final LaLiga game of the season against Real Sociedad on Saturday and the 39-year-old said he would sign off after their Club World Cup campaign which begins next month.



Maisha Akhter Mim of BKSP continued her impressive form in the pool, securing two more gold medals in the Girls' U-15-17 category on the second day of the 37th National Age-Group Swimming Championships at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday. With a determined performance, the promising swimmer cruised to victory in the 400m individual medley, clocking 06:07.80 minutes, and further extended her gold medal tally to five.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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HRW slams ban on AL activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recent legislative initiatives by Bangladesh's interim government risk undermining fundamental freedoms, said Human Rights Watch yesterday.

Instead of pursuing its pledge to reform the criminal justice system and bring accountability for serious abuses, the government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, is attempting to "suppress the rights" of supporters of the deposed leader, Sheikh Hasina, and the Awami League party, it said in a report.

On May 12, the interim government ordered a "temporary" ban on the Awami League using newly introduced powers under a draconian amendment to the Anti-Terrorism Act, it added.

Meanwhile, draft legislation to address enforced disappearances, which were widespread under the previous government, does not meet international standards and scarcely addresses accountability for past crimes.

"Sheikh Hasina's government

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A farmer harvesting half-ripe paddy at Goalpara village in Rajshahi's Mohanpur upazila yesterday out of fear that water would completely ruin the crops after hours of incessant rain inundated fields in different upazilas of the district on Wednesday night.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

India pushed 109 more into Bangladesh

STAR REPORT

At least 109 people were pushed into Bangladesh from India through various border points in eight districts between Wednesday night and yesterday, according to Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

BGB officials detained them along the Bangladesh-India border in Panchagarh, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Moulvibazar, Feni, Cumilla and Khagrachhari, said our local correspondents.

Over the past month, at least 500 people have been reportedly pushed into Bangladesh from India.

BGB officials, quoting the detainees, told this newspaper that India's Border Security Force (BSF) pushed the individuals in. However, BSF officials during flag meetings with BGB in at least two districts yesterday denied their involvement.

Meanwhile, Dhaka has sent multiple letters to New Delhi requesting a stop to actions that pose risks to security and undermine mutual understanding.

In Panchagarh, 21 individuals, including women and children, were detained near the Joydharbhangha Borobari border in Sadar upazila early yesterday. They are all from Khulna and Narail.

Lt Col Sheikh Md Bodruddoza, commanding officer of BGB 56, said the detainees had been living in various parts of Gujarat, India, for a long time.

They said they were handed over by Indian police to the BSF, who then pushed them into Bangladesh, he added.

BSF officials, however, denied their involvement during a flag meeting.

In Lalmonirhat, 20 individuals, including women and children, were detained near Dhabsutti and Jhalangi borders in Patgram upazila on Wednesday night.

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Israel kills 52 more Palestinians

Two Israeli embassy staffers shot dead in Washington DC

AGENCIES

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli strikes had killed at least 52 people since dawn yesterday across the territory, as Israel allowed 100 aid trucks carrying flour, baby food and medical equipment into the enclave.

Boys and young men gathered after one vehicle arrived in the city of Khan Younis on Wednesday night, but kept back as men, some holding guns, watched over the unloading of sacks.

"Some bakeries will begin receiving flour to produce bread, and we expect the distribution of bread to begin later today[yesterday]," Amjad al-Shawa, director of the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network in Gaza, told Reuters.

"During the ceasefire, 600 trucks used to enter every day, which means that the current quantity is a drop in the ocean, nothing," he said. The International Committee of the Red Cross said it had got one truck of medical supplies through to replenish its field hospital in Rafah, but more was needed.

The Palestinian health minister said 29 children and elderly people had died from starvation-related deaths in Gaza in recent days and that many thousands more were at risk.

The Israeli army issued an evacuation warning yesterday for 14 neighbourhoods in the northern Gaza Strip, including parts of Beit Lahia and Jabalia.

The army told residents in an Arabic-language statement that it was "operating with intense force in your areas, as terrorist organisations continue their activities

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