



"We will heal the wounds of division and war and establish a future of peace and prosperity."

South Korea's new liberal President Lee Jae-myung

The Daily Star

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Fund crunch hits Rohingyas hard

Only 19% of required funds received in 5 months of this year

PORIMOL PALMA and MOKAMMEL SHUVU

A humanitarian crisis in Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps is brewing in the face of funding shortage for the refugees and more arrivals from the conflict-ridden Rakhine state of Myanmar.

This year, \$934 million is needed for the 1.5 million people -- 1.2 million Rohingyas and 300,000 host community members -- but only 19 percent of the funding requirement has materialised.

The gap has widened largely thanks to the funding cut by the Trump administration that in February eliminated more than 90 percent of the USAID-funded foreign aid contracts and \$60 billion in overall US assistance worldwide.

The overnight suspension of US funding came as a huge shock to the humanitarian community. The Daily Star has learnt from UN officials.

The other donors who committed funding will release it in August or November, but their amounts have also declined.

Last year, the total funding received was 68 percent of the required amount, but this year it may not even reach 50 percent, said a UN official on the condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with the media.

Dozens of projects including health, family planning, nutrition and education, supported by the USAID have been affected since the USAID cuts.

For example, data collated by the Cox's Bazar District Family Planning Office says service recipients of oral pills declined to about 10,000 in April from over 20,000 in February, while condom recipients came down to 3,800 from over 6,500.

The number of general patients seeking medical treatment in the Rohingya camps declined to 205,000 in April from 372,000 in February.

"We are facing serious problems in receiving medical treatment -- we

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Total funding requirement for 2025 \$934 million

Received so far \$180 million (19 percent)

SECTOR-WISE FUND SHORTAGE

Food	32%
Shelter	82%
Health	70%
Nutrition	62%
WASH	65%
Protection	64%
Education	58%

SOURCE: INTER-SECTOR COORDINATION GROUP ON THE ROHINGYA RESPONSE, MAY 8, 2025



People eager to reunite with their loved ones crowd onto a train, defying the authority's repeated warnings, as they rush to return home for Eid-ul-Azha on the eve of the first day of 10-day government holiday. The photo was taken from the Tongji Railway Station yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Eid rush begins

Journey mostly hassle-free; 10-day holiday begins today

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Tens of thousands of holidaymakers left Dhaka by road, rail, and river yesterday to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha at home, enjoying mostly hassle-free journeys ahead of the 10-day Eid vacation.

Most trains departed on time, and there were no major traffic jams on national highways except on the Savar-Baipail-Chandra section.

However, many passengers faced difficulties later in the day due to a vehicle shortage, as large crowds left Dhaka after office hours. Several complained of overcharging by bus operators, with fares raised by Tk150 to Tk400, and

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ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES Commission finds 16 secret detention centres

ZYMA ISLAM

The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances has found 16 secret detention centres across the country so far.

The centres were found in Dhaka, Chattogram (near Patenga), Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Bogura, Barisal, Jhalakathi and Narsingdi, among others.

However, this list is not exhaustive -- the Commission is yet to search for detention centres in Sylhet and Khulna.

Commission member Sazzad Hussain confirmed the number to this newspaper.

"There were many 'safehouses' but those had not been used since Rab [Rapid Action Battalion] got sanctioned," said Hussain. One of the secret detention centres was inside the office of the Detective Branch of police in Rajshahi.

The Commission submitted its second interim report to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus yesterday.

The report delves into the torture inflicted upon victims. "We found much evidence of law enforcers using methods like waterboarding, force-feeding rotten food, electrocution,

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Yunus to visit UK on June 10-13 to boost trade ties

To receive 'Harmony Award' from King Charles

AGENCIES

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus is scheduled to pay a four-day official visit to the United Kingdom from June 10-13 as the two countries seek to strengthen cooperation on economic, trade and investment fronts.



"This is a very important visit," acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique told reporters at a media briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday, reports UNB.

He said the chief adviser is set to leave Dhaka for London on June 9 and will return home on June 14.

During the visit, the chief adviser will meet King Charles and hold bilateral talks with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, in addition to other engagements.

Asked whether there will be any meeting with BNP acting Chairman Tarique Rahman in London, the acting foreign secretary said he had no information in this regard.

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FREEDOM FIGHTER'S DEFINITION Confusion, debate over ordinance

Liberation War adviser clarifies that Sheikh Mujib, Tajuddin, others in Mujibnagar govt are freedom fighters

BAHARAM KHAN and MD ABBAS

Confusion has emerged following the issuance of a new ordinance redefining the term freedom fighter.

Liberation War researchers and organisations have expressed concern over ambiguities in the revised definitions of Bir Muktiyoddha (valiant freedom fighter) and Muktiyuddher Shohojogi (associate of the Liberation War).

They are also questioning whether this new definition was necessary at all. The government, however, has dismissed these concerns.

Late Tuesday night, the government issued the Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council (Amendment) Ordinance 2025, amending the act of 2022 to include the revised definitions.

The previous law only included a definition of Bir Muktiyoddha. The new ordinance introduces at least three new categories: associates of the Liberation War, freedom fighter families and Liberation War associate families.

Some changes have also been made to the definition of the Liberation War itself. In the previous version, political parties that had opposed the Liberation War (Jamaat-e-Islami, Nezam-e-Islami, and Muslim League) were mentioned explicitly.

The amended ordinance now adds the term "then" before the names of these parties, referring to them as the "then Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami and Nezam-e-Islami".

Additionally, references to "Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" in several places have been omitted in the ordinance.

THE SOURCE OF AMBIGUITY
The definition of Bir Muktiyoddha in the ordinance includes the Mujibnagar government.

The definition of Liberation War associate includes all MNAs (Members of the National Assembly) and MPAs (Members of the Provincial Assembly) associated with the Mujibnagar government who later became members of the constituent assembly. Further, all employees and officials of the Mujibnagar government have also been

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EC to restore Jamaat's registration, symbol

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Election Commission (EC) yesterday decided to reinstate the registration of Jamaat-e-Islami as a political party, assigning the "Daripalla" (weighing scale) as its official election symbol.

The decision followed a verdict by the Appellate

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ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন

পশু কোরবানি ও কোরবানির বর্জ্য পরিবেশসম্মতভাবে অপসারণে আমাদের করণীয়

ইদ মোবারক

সিটি কর্পোরেশনের নির্ধারিত স্থানে পশু কোরবানি নিশ্চিত করুন। যত্রতত্র পশু জবাই করা হতে বিরত থাকুন।

✗

কোরবানির বর্জ্য যত্রতত্র ফেলাবেন না।

✗

সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক সরবরাহকৃত ব্যাগে বর্জ্য জমা করে নির্দিষ্ট স্থানে রাখুন।

✓

পশু জবাই ও কোরবানির পুরো কার্যক্রম চলাকালীন যথাযথ ব্যক্তিগত সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করুন।

✓

কোরবানির পশুর বর্জ্য স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে দ্রুত অপসারণে সিটি কর্পোরেশনকে সহায়তা করুন।

✓

সুস্থ পরিবেশ নিশ্চিত করে ধর্মীয় ও নৈতিক দায়িত্ব পালন করি

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ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ছুটির কয়েকটা দিন ইন্ডিমিবি বন্ধ থাকবে

আমাদের কোর ব্যাংকিং সফটওয়্যার আপগ্রেডেশনের জন্য আগামী ৯ জুন সোমবার থেকে ১৪ জুন শনিবার পর্যন্ত UCB'র সকল ব্যাংকিং সেবা সাময়িকভাবে বন্ধ থাকবে।

* জুন ০৯, ২০২৫ (রাত ১২:০০) থেকে জুন ১৪, ২০২৫ (রাত ১০:০০) পর্যন্ত

Legal action against 'false, misleading' reports Warns CA's deputy press secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Azad Majumder yesterday warned that legal action would be taken against anyone publishing "false or misleading" reports that create confusion among the people.

Speaking at a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy, he said news published by several media outlets about the revoking of the recognition of Mujibnagar government President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other cabinet members as freedom fighters was "false, baseless, and misleading".

He said the government hoped the news outlets that published "wrong, misleading" reports would correct their mistakes, publish a corrigendum in the same spot where they ran the wrong report, and apologise to their readers and the people of Bangladesh who were misled.

Azad said this was not the first time such incidents had occurred, adding, "We always try to provide you with accurate information to counter misinformation. The current interim government strongly upholds press freedom and welcomes criticism."

"No one has ever been granted a licence to publish false news at their whim. From now on, legal action will be taken against anyone who spreads such misinformation or misleading reports that confuse the people," he said.

Ukraine attacks Crimean bridge Says Kremlin; Russian army captures another village in Sumy region

AFP, Moscow

Moscow said yesterday that a Ukrainian attack on a bridge that links the annexed Crimean peninsula to Russia caused "no damage."

Ukraine's SBU security service said Tuesday it had detonated a bomb on one of the bridge's underwater pillars, publishing footage of a blast coming out of the water and debris flying.

"There was indeed an explosion," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "Nothing was damaged. The bridge is working," he said.

Ukraine has targeted the 19-kilometre (12-mile) bridge repeatedly since Russia launched its full-scale military offensive in February 2022.



British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke at a meeting with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: PID

Spice prices drop ahead of Eid Veggies get costlier as rain hits supply

SUKANTA HALDER and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of most spices have dropped in Dhaka's kitchen markets ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, giving some relief to consumers, but rising vegetable prices are putting extra pressure on fixed middle-income people.

Traders say due to adequate imports and sufficient supply in the market to meet demand, the prices of many spice items have dropped this year compared to last year.

On the other hand, due to continuous rainfall over the past few days in various parts of the country, the supply of vegetables in the market has decreased, leading to a rise in the prices of some vegetables.

Mohammad Bablu, a retailer in Karwan Bazar, one of the largest kitchen markets in Dhaka, told The Daily Star that due to higher supply in the market relative to demand, the prices of many spices have decreased compared to last year, and prices of some items have dropped by more than half.

For this reason, there is some relief among consumers regarding spice prices this time, he said.

According to data from the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) as of June 2, year-on-year prices of several essential spice items have seen notable declines.

Onion prices dropped by 31.25 percent, garlic by 42.86 percent, dried chilli by 26.39 percent, turmeric by 13.33 percent, and ginger by a significant 100 percent.

Other spices also recorded moderate price reductions over the past year. Cumin

prices fell by 14.38 percent, cinnamon by 4 percent, clove by 14 percent, and coriander by 2 percent.

However, according to the TCB market price on June 2, the year-on-year price of cardamom has increased by 31 percent and the price of imported turmeric by 6.35 percent.

At Karwan Bazar yesterday, dried chilli was sold for Tk 220 to Tk 240 per kilogramme, depending on quality. In contrast, before last year's Eid-ul-Azha, its

price had surged to Tk 350-400.

Last year, imported garlic was priced at about Tk 270 per kg during Eid-ul-Azha, but this year it is selling for Tk 160-170. Ginger, depending on quality, is now available at Tk 120 to Tk 130 per kg, compared to Tk 230-270 last year.

Salam Mia, a wholesale trader at the same market, said he has been doing business there for the past ten years. However, he had never seen spice prices

fall before Eid. "This year, I am witnessing an unusual trend of price declines ahead of the upcoming Eid," he added.

A visit to the kitchen markets in Dhaka yesterday revealed that retail vegetable prices have increased by Tk 10 to Tk 20 per kilogramme. Okra, pointed gourd, eggplant, and yardlong beans were sold at Tk 40 to Tk 70 per kilogramme whereas a week ago, their prices ranged from Tk 30 to Tk 60.



Nokib Hasan, a resident of Mirpur, said when the price of one item drops but the cost of another rises, it ultimately offers no real relief to consumers.

He said the government should pay attention to this issue.

Fahim Hossain, a retail trader in Karwan Bazar, said due to the rains in the past few days, the supply of vegetables in the market has decreased. Due to this, the prices have increased.

32 more pushed in through Netrokona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

At least 32 more people were detained by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) yesterday after they were allegedly pushed into the country by India's Border Security Force (BSF) through Durgapur upazila in Netrokona.

The incident occurred around 3:00am at the Bijoypur border point of the upazila, confirmed Lt Col ASM Kamruzzaman, commanding officer of BGB 31 Battalion in Netrokona.

According to the commanding officer, the BGB detained them 500 yards inside Bangladesh territory near Jagatkura, adjacent to pillar 1148/6-S of the Bijoypur Border Outpost (BOP).

"In the middle of the night, BSF pushed in 32 Bangladeshi nationals across the border. They have confirmed their identities. They are residents of various districts, including Khulna, Jashore, Narail, Satkhira, Brahmanbaria, and Tangail. They had travelled to India at different times," he said.

The returnees are currently being held at the BGB's Bijoypur camp, and preparations are underway to hand them over to the police, he added.

5 killed as bus, human haulier collide in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Five people were killed and two injured in a head-on collision between a human haulier, locally known as Mahindra, and a bus on Dhaka-Barisal highway in Bhanga upazila of Faridpur yesterday morning.

The accident occurred at Chumurdi Bablatata Bus Stand at 6:12am, according to local Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Two of the deceased have been identified as Mizanur Rahman, 45, from Chowkighata village of Bhanga and Tara Mia, 55, of Madborchar village in Shibchar upazila of Madaripur.

Confirming the accident, Station Officer of local fire service Abu Zafar said the three-wheeler overturned following the collision, leaving four passengers dead and three other injured on the spot.

The injured were admitted to Bhanga Upazila Health Complex where Tara Mia succumbed to his injuries, the fire official said.

Sub-inspector of Bhanga Police Station Rakib Hasan said all the deceased and injured were the passengers and driver of Mahindra. The bus driver fled the scene with the vehicle, the SI said.

UK nuclear site could leak until 2050s: MPs

AFP, London

Britain's most hazardous building threatens to leak radioactive water until the 2050s unless the clean-up of a former nuclear power plant is quickened, UK lawmakers warned yesterday.

The waste has been leaking into the ground from a storage silo at the Sellafield facility in Cumbria, in northwest England, since 2018 — enough to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool every three years.

Sellafield, which began operations in the 1940s, generated nuclear power between 1956 and 2003.

Fund crunch hits Rohingyas hard

FROM PAGE 1

no longer receive sufficient medicine as before," said Badrul Alam, head of Camp 26 in Ukhiya Rohingya camp.

In cases of serious illness, the Rohingyas are having to seek treatment from doctors at their own expense, which is not possible for all refugees, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The latest sector to be hit by the fund cut is education, leaving at bay the future of 230,000 Rohingya children in Cox's Bazar, where about 1.2 million Rohingyas have been living since 2017 after fleeing a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine State.

On June 2 and 3, hundreds of host community teachers terminated from their jobs in the learning centres of Rohingya camps blocked the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road, signalling deepening tension between the host community and Rohingyas.

Rohingya children will face serious safety risks with the closure of learning centres, which worked as protection spaces, said Rohingya rights activist TK Aung Myo.

"Our Rohingya children are among the most vulnerable in the world," said Master Mohammad Zubair, chairman of

the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights.

For them, education is a beacon of hope during a humanitarian crisis. Through education, they learn discipline and structure.

"It is frustrating that the beacon is now going off," he added.

The disruptions are taking place at a time when the vulnerable refugee camps were hit hard by the monsoon rains last weekend, damaging 1,400 homes.

Communal spaces are being used to temporarily host affected families, said interim UNHCR Representative Juliette Murekevisoni.

However, even before the monsoon, there was not enough space to provide shelter to all, especially as thousands of newly arrived Rohingyas have sought asylum here in recent months, she said.

Over the last few months, according to a WFP update, some 150,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh and 50,000 more may flee by the year-end, making it challenging for the authorities to provide basic services.

With drastic cuts in services in the camps, it is very likely that the Rohingyas will be desperate to flee the camps, either to engage in local jobs or take risky

journeys to foreign lands, said Rohingya Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Mizanur Rahman.

The criminal activities among the Rohingyas — including intra-feud, domestic violence and drug peddling — may rise, he said.

A UN official based in Cox's Bazar said UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR have reduced to around 500 staff — both local and foreign nationals — following funding cut by the US government, which provides more than 50 percent of the total Rohingya funding.

"We have a food guarantee until October but after that what happens is up in the air. The Rohingyas as well as the affected host community remain at serious risk," the official said.

Handicapped International, a specialised non-governmental organisation used to serve the more than 10,000 disabled Rohingyas, but their operations are on halt now. There is none to support people with disability.

"Gender-based violence in the camps is quite high. Services like handling these complaints and providing psychological support are so important for the people who fled genocide, but these services have become thin. We are very worried about

he said he got a spot beside the driver.

"I had to wait an hour and paid Tk 600 and still could not manage a proper seat for the long journey."

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) fined three bus operators at Sayedabad Terminal in a mobile court drive led by Executive Magistrate Shamim Ara for overcharging and regulatory violations.

Ekushey Paribahan was fined Tk 5,000 for overcharging; Nilachal Paribahan, Tk 4,000 for not displaying the official fare chart; and Unique Paribahan, Tk 5,000 for operating without a valid permit.

"We're taking overcharging allegations seriously. BRTA's mobile court will continue operations to ensure passenger comfort and accountability," said Magistrate Ara.

Passengers welcomed the BRTA action and urged continued vigilance throughout the Eid travel period.

However, some transport officials said they are charging a little higher than the usual rate as they have to make the return trip almost empty.

what's going to happen in the days to come," said a UN official on the condition of anonymity.

Funding cuts have led to some basic services like health and education, which is a violation of human rights, said Mohammad Zubair, chairman of the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights.

The decline of aid is a matter of concern, but more concerning is how efficiently the aid is being used in the management of the Rohingyas camps, said Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, executive director of the COAST Foundation.

"We have always been demanding that local NGOs be deployed to manage the Rohingyas camps, while the UN remains at the policy level. But, we have seen that international aid agencies engaged in the management. This is not cost-effective," he said.

The UN and international aid agencies need to have greater collaboration with the local authorities on effective management of the Rohingyas camps, said RRRRC Mizanur Rahman.

"Now it is more important than ever to restore the basic services for the Rohingyas."

Limon Mridha, the counter manager of Ekushey Paribahan, told The Daily Star, "Fares have been increased by Tk 100 to Tk 150 to cover the fuel cost on the return trip."

RAILWAYS AND RIVERWAYS Thousands departed Dhaka by train from Kamalapur station, with all trains leaving on time, Mohammad Mohiuddin Arif, divisional railway manager (Dhaka) told The Daily Star around 7:00pm.

He said most of the 70 trains, including 43 intercity services, left for their destinations on time yesterday. Only a few of them were a few minutes behind the schedule, he added.

However, sources said at least three trains — Ekata Express, Rangpur Express and Kalni Express — were running one to two and a half hours behind schedule.

He said passenger pressure is expected to rise today and tomorrow.

"We are doing our best to stay on schedule," Arif said.

Meanwhile, thousands left the capital by launches from the Sadarghat Launch Terminal.

Yunus to visit UK

FROM PAGE 1

"The relationship between Bangladesh and the UK is very deep and diverse," he said, adding that the visit would play an important role in further improving bilateral ties.

King Charles III will present the prestigious Harmony Award 2025 to Prof Yunus.

The recovery of laundered money and assets abroad is likely to be among the issues discussed during the visit, he added.

Meanwhile, British High

Commission finds

FROM PAGE 1

hanging victims upside down, spinning them on rotating chairs, locking victims in toilets for days on end and defecating on victims," said Hussain.

In a separate statement, the Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam revealed that the Commission has identified 1,837 cases of enforced disappearance and has verified and reviewed 1,350 of them.

"The intelligence wing of the Rapid Action Battalion has been identified as the main perpetrator in these cases. Those involved in enforced disappearances will be brought to justice," he said, speaking at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy.

Of these cases, about 345 individuals who had been forcibly disappeared never returned, said Hussain.

"The law enforcers had truly abused the Anti-Terrorism Act to persecute victims of enforced disappearance," he added.

While abuses perpetrated by Rab and the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence had been the focus of the Commission's investigation so far, it will thoroughly investigate the police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit and the Detective Branch in the next phase.

Yunus said a "horror museum" should be established to exhibit the findings of torture and persecution uncovered by the Commission.

"These crimes were committed by members of our own society's 'gentlemen' — our own relatives and

Commissioner Sarah Cooke met Prof Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka, reports BSS.

During the meeting, Cooke extended her congratulations to Prof Yunus on receiving the Harmony Award.

"It is a great honour," the chief adviser said, referring to the award.

Their discussions encompassed a range of mutual interests, including trade and investment, aviation cooperation, migration, and the interim government's efforts in asset recovery.

acquaintances. Based on your findings, there should be a horror museum. These are spine-chilling events. People should be shown what such detention cells are like — the cruelty and brutality of being confined to a three-by-three feet space for days and even months," said the chief adviser.

While submitting the report, one commission member told him, "The incidents are so horrific that many of the involved officials and others suffer from remorse. They have contacted us as an effort for self-purification. Two officers even wrote formal letters, requesting to get rid of it. These letters were found at the Ganabhaban. The then army chief publicly acknowledged these letters."

The commission's chief, Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, urged the chief adviser to take steps so that the families of the missing can at least carry out financial transactions through their bank accounts.

He said that under existing law, a person missing for seven years can be legally presumed dead. He recommended amending the law to reduce this period to five years.

Yunus welcomed the suggestion and advised the commission to propose concrete measures for immediate action.

Thanking the commission members, the chief adviser said, "You've braved fear, threats, and intimidation to carry out your work. You are an inspiration to the people of this country. You will inspire future generations who work for human rights."

Preparations for Eid-ul-Azha satisfactory

Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said preparations ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, including security measures, are satisfactory.

He made the remarks while visiting a cattle market near Maitree Sangha Club in the capital's Shahjahanpur area.

"A large number of Ansar members have been deployed at each cattle market to ensure security," he said.

In addition to police presence, control rooms have been set up by leaseholders at the markets, he said.

During a visit to Kamalapur Railway Station, the adviser instructed authorities to prevent passengers from riding on train rooftops. He also said standing tickets will be limited to 25 percent of total capacity for safety reasons.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Holiday rush gripped Sadarghat Launch Terminal in Dhaka yesterday as people have begun leaving the capital to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with their loved ones. Similar scenes were seen at train and bus stations across the city.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Eid holiday, rain spark fear of dengue spike

RECOMMENDATIONS

Seal all water containers tightly	Properly manage sacrificial waste during Eid
Turn buckets, tubs upside down to avoid water accumulation	Continue anti-mosquito drives during holidays
Check rooftops, basements, yards for discarded containers	Apply bleaching powder or salt in damp basement areas

HELEMUL ALAM

With intermittent rainfall continuing across the country and a 10-day Eid holiday beginning today, experts are warning of a spike in dengue cases.

Entomologists caution that without proper precautions from both city authorities and Dhaka residents, vacant homes and unchecked water sources could become breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes, the primary vector of dengue.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department has forecast light to moderate rain or thunderstorms with lightning and temporary gusty winds in Chattogram, Sylhet, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, and Barisal divisions over the next 72 hours starting from 6:00am today.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, at least 23 dengue patients have died while 4,783 others were hospitalised with dengue fever this year since January 1.

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NCP unveils crowdfunding model to finance party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP) yesterday unveiled a financial model based on crowdfunding to ensure transparent and accountable political financing.

The policy was presented by the party's Joint Member Secretary SM Saif Mostafiz at a press briefing in Dhaka.

Under the model, anyone can donate through mobile banking and bank transfers via "donate.ncpd.org". The website will display real-time updates, showing total donations, number of donors, and contributing regions.

NCP has been raising funds by selling Tk 100 membership forms. Around 50,000 have been sold, with another 70,000 in process. Members will also pay monthly fees - Tk 5,000, Tk 3,000, or other amounts - based on their rank and financial capacity.

Additional fundraising will come from small-donation campaigns, and the sale of books, T-shirts, magazines, training sessions, and online courses. A dedicated crowdfunding portal will also be launched on the party's website.

Corporate donations will be accepted only after verifying the legal source of funds. Donor identities will be kept confidential unless the party decides

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Cuts in gender budget raise alarms

NILIMA JAHAN

Despite ongoing challenges for women in employment, education, health, and safety, the national budget for fiscal year 2025-26 has seen a reduction in allocations for promoting gender equality and women's development.

Rights activists warn that this rollback threatens to reverse progress and stall efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The gender budget has dropped to Tk 2,60,767 crore, down from Tk 2,71,818.6 crore in FY2024-25. As a share of the total budget, it now stands at 33 percent, falling from 34 percent last year.

Its proportion of GDP has also declined to 4.2 percent, compared to 4.86 percent previously, raising fresh doubts about the government's commitment to closing gender gaps in key sectors.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) has seen its budget drop to Tk 5,078 crore, down from Tk 5,222 crore in the previous fiscal year.

Three out of four key thematic areas of gender-relevant spending have also seen declines:

Women's Empowerment and Social Status: Tk 62,535.9 crore, down from Tk 64,074.6 crore.

Effective Access to Public Services: Tk 36,177.9 crore, down from Tk 44,054.4 crore.

Education, Health, and Wellbeing: Tk 82,867.7 crore, down from Tk 86,894.4 crore.

Only Economic Participation and Equality saw a modest

increase, rising to Tk 79,185.2 crore from Tk 76,841.7 crore.

CONCERNS OVER WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AND SAFETY
Critics argue that the budget cuts come at a time when Bangladesh is facing massive job losses among women, declining labour force participation, and shrinking access to essential services such as reproductive healthcare and education.

However, experts stress that such measures must be backed by strong implementation frameworks.

Shahnaz Sumi, director at Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, termed the reductions in gender budget and MoWCA funding as "unfortunate".

"There's no recognition of women as farmers, and the minimal increase in allowances doesn't reflect the rising cost of living," she said.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Fauzia Moslem echoed the concern, stating that reducing the budget while claiming to fight gender inequality is contradictory.

"Without targeted measures for security, employment, and education, women's economic participation will decline," she warned.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES

Experts also raised concerns over transparency, noting that only 16 out of 64 ministries included detailed schedules in this year's gender budget -- a sharp drop from 44 ministries in FY2023-24.

Sharmind Neelormi, economics

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NAT'L EYE HOSPITAL Emergency services resume after weeklong halt

STAR REPORT

Emergency medical services at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in Dhaka resumed on a limited scale yesterday, following a weeklong suspension caused by clashes at the facility.

"Only emergency services resumed for today [yesterday], as Eid vacation begins tomorrow," a doctor at the hospital told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

He added that only patients injured during the July uprising are currently admitted.

All other regular patients have left the hospital over the past week.

A four-member medical board, formed by the health ministry with doctors from other hospitals, is assessing the condition of the admitted patients.

"Depending on their findings, the patients will either be discharged or transferred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital or Bangladesh Medical University," the doctor said.

On May 26, four victims of the July uprising reportedly attempted suicide by ingesting poison during a meeting at the hospital.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Nagar Bhaban still locked

No respite for service seekers despite Ishraque suspending protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite an earlier announcement to temporarily relax the ongoing protest programme, the main gate of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) headquarters at Nagar Bhaban remained locked yesterday.

As a result, citizens seeking services were forced to return empty-handed, while most officials did not attend office.

Supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain have been staging a sit-in in front of Nagar Bhaban since May 14, demanding that he be sworn in as the mayor of DSCC. The following day, on May 15, a majority of DSCC employees joined the protest in solidarity, leading to the locking of all gates and complete suspension of services.

On Tuesday, Ishraque announced a temporary suspension and relaxation of the programme in view of public suffering ahead of Eid.

"Eid is ahead. Keeping public suffering in mind, we have decided to somewhat relax and take a break from the siege programme," he had said.

Following this announcement, there were expectations that regular operations would resume yesterday, the last working day before Eid for government offices.

However, the gates of Nagar Bhaban remained locked, keeping DSCC services closed.

As a result, residents in DSCC areas have been deprived of services for 22 consecutive days, including birth and death registration, issuance and renewal of trade licences, holding tax payments, and issuance of heir certificates.

Ashraful Alam, a resident of Ray Shaheb Bazar, visited Nagar Bhaban around noon to correct

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Cattle sales yet to pick up pace

Buyers cite high prices; traders expect brisk business starting today

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

With only two days left before Eid-ul-Azha, cattle markets in Dhaka are yet to pick up full momentum.

Although prices of small and medium-sized bulls have slightly decreased, they remain higher compared to last year.

During visits to three cattle markets - Gabtali, Kachukhet, and the open space near Dhaka Polytechnic Institute -

yesterday, these correspondents observed that while the number of bulls is sufficient, buyer turnout is still low.

Demand for small bulls is particularly high, but their supply is limited compared to medium and large ones.

Traders remain optimistic that customer numbers will rise starting today morning, as the government holidays begin.

Nurul Alam, a trader from Jamalpur who brought two bulls to the market near Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, said, "I raised

this pair of bulls for four years and am asking for 4 lakh takas, but the highest offer I've received so far is 2.5 lakh takas."

Another trader, Mohammad Jahir Khan from Bakshiganj Thana in Jamalpur, brought 18 bulls early yesterday. "I got better offers in my village market but came to Dhaka hoping for more profit," he said.

Md Mokhles, an employee of BG Press who visited the same market, noted that prices remain high. "A bull that cost 80,000 takas last year is now being sold for 1 lakh taka," he said.

Mostakim Miah, a resident of Karimganj in

Kishoreganj, brought five bulls to the Kachukhet market for the first time. "I raised these bulls for eight to nine months. I'm asking between 1.3 lakh takas and 1.8 lakh takas. Normally I sell at the Karimganj market, but this year I came here hoping for better profit," he said, adding that he's aiming for a profit of Tk 10,000 per bull.

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Houses in Jahangirnagar Residential Area No-5 under Tukur Bazar union of Sylhet Sadar upazila have been built at the base of razed hills. With the monsoon underway, residents face a constant threat of landslides. Despite calls for action, local authorities have yet to take preventive measures.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

We must uphold the spirit of Eid-ul-Azha

Let safety, empathy, and civic duty mark this extended holiday

As Muslims around the world prepare to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha, it is a time to reflect on the values of sacrifice and gratitude that this festival embodies. These principles resonate deeply especially when millions in Gaza are facing hunger and death under Israeli attacks, and hundreds of Rohingya children are being denied their right to education. Closer to home, some workers are returning to their villages without receiving salaries or bonuses. Then there are the road accidents that have become a tragic routine during every Eid, as a large number of people travel from cities to spend the holidays with loved ones.

Although, like the Eid-ul-Fitr earlier in the year, media reports suggest that bus, train, and launch journeys have so far been relatively smooth, several road accidents and at least one robbery on the highway have already occurred, despite increased patrols by law enforcement. However, the responsibility of ensuring safety on highways and river routes does not rest solely with the authorities—it is shared by passengers, transport owners, and drivers alike. Passengers, too, must avoid overcrowded or unfit vehicles, while owners and drivers must prioritise safety over profit, avoiding reckless driving. Law enforcement officials must also remain vigilant.

Another critical aspect that calls for both responsible behaviour and proper planning is the sacrifice of animals. As we celebrate this act of devotion, we must not lose sight of our duty to show kindness to all living beings. Sacrificial animals should not be subjected to unnecessary cruelty. In cities and municipalities, we must ensure that animal waste and other refuse from our households and neighbourhoods are properly disposed of, and that streets, footpaths, and house premises where animals are kept or sacrificed are thoroughly cleaned.

This Eid-ul-Azha marks the first in which municipal and city corporations are being overseen by administrators rather than elected representatives. Many of these administrators are also juggling responsibilities in other government departments. However, this must not be used as an excuse for delays in post-Eid cleanliness drives. On the contrary, swift waste disposal should be treated as a top priority, especially as monsoon rains could worsen the stench and spread of blood, creating ideal conditions for the breeding of dengue mosquitoes. We also hope that the efforts of Dhaka South City Corporation will not be disrupted, as they were for 21 days when supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain staged protests at Nagar Bhaban.

We wish everyone a safe and joyful Eid.

How is this a priority for the government?

Ordinance on freedom fighters creates confusion, controversy

We are surprised to learn of the promulgation of the National Freedom Fighters Council (Amendment) Ordinance 2025 that replaces the National Freedom Fighters Council Act 2022, redefining some key aspects related to the Liberation War. At a time when the nation is navigating an extremely fragile transition to democracy, this adds yet another element of confusion and controversy that we could do without at this moment. Codifying a more restrictive, combat-oriented definition of freedom fighters (FFs) and the war itself might seem justified by the history of political exploitations under Awami League. But it also reflects a potential reframing of national memory that no bureaucracy should be entrusted with.

It's true that much of the initial confusion about the ordinance stemmed from flawed reporting, particularly claims about the "revocation" of the recognition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Tajuddin Ahmad, and other national heroes as freedom fighters. But partly responsible for it is the redefinition of a "freedom fighter" and the introduction of three new categories, including that of an "associate of the Liberation War"—thus dividing all previously recognised under the broad term of freedom fighters into distinct groups. For example, all Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) who were aligned with the wartime provisional government and later became members of the Constituent Assembly will now be considered "associates," whereas those who led the provisional government will continue to be recognised as FFs. These categories overlap in some cases, and exclude in others, creating ambiguities and confusion.

While the reclassification may not affect the benefits received by freedom fighters or their families—as later clarified by the adviser to the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs—the real question is: was this reframing, and the symbolic rollback of recognition for some, necessary at all? If there are concerns about "fake" freedom fighters, this approach will certainly not help. On the contrary, it piles on existing bureaucratic workload by necessitating fresh examinations of status. By defining a "freedom fighter's family" strictly as their spouse, son, daughter, father, or mother, the ordinance appears to align with the post-uprising restructuring of job quotas that no longer extend to their grandchildren. But again, these objectives could have been pursued without wading into what some perceive as a revisionist attempt. At the very least, the government could have consulted with political parties to generate consensuses on such a divisive issue.

The interim government has interfered in such historical matters in the past as well. Instead of doing what is ideally the responsibility of historians or society at large, we feel it should focus on more urgent and present-day reforms that the nation is eagerly waiting to see. But whatever it does, it should stop bringing a top-down approach to critical reforms.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Robert F Kennedy fatally shot



On this day in 1968, US lawmaker, Robert F Kennedy was fatally shot by Sirhan Sirhan at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. He died the following day.

The budget was a missed chance to honour the revolution

Nahid Islam
is convener of the National Citizen Party (NCP).
Khaled Saifullah
is joint convener of NCP.

NAHID ISLAM and
KHALED SAIFULLAH

The proposed national budget for FY2025-26 was presented not merely at the end of a fiscal cycle, but at the end of an era—one marked by systemic corruption, institutional degradation, and a profound alienation of citizens from their state. That this interim government had to prepare the budget within the skeletal framework left behind by the fallen regime is not in question. Nor is it fair to ignore the administrative and financial constraints they inherited. But while constraints explain limitations, they do not absolve responsibility. This budget was a historic opportunity to redefine the role of the state, to mark a definitive departure from the logic of managed inequality and patronage. It did not take that opportunity.

Instead, the budget keeps within the grooves of a model we have already rejected. It repeats the structural imbalance that has long tilted our economy away from justice. It does not lay the foundation for an economic settlement that would decisively confront the legacy of discrimination, exclusion, and wealth concentration among the elites.

The central failure is not one of omission, but of orientation. The budget keeps intact the asymmetry between direct and indirect taxation. The wealthiest citizens, those with the means to conceal income and relocate capital, remain under-regulated. It is a missed opportunity to introduce new instruments or institutional strategies to identify and tax high-net-worth individuals or large corporate actors. A more progressive tax policy could also alleviate the burden on the middle class and ensure that those with the broadest shoulders carry a greater share of the responsibility. In contrast, VAT and other regressive levies remain the primary engines of revenue. It is a choice that perpetuates the transfer of burden from the powerful to the vulnerable.

The same misalignment is visible in the area of employment. The budget contains no coherent national employment strategy, no public works programme, and no shift towards labour-intensive infrastructure development. This could have been an opportunity to introduce a national minimum wage for people in precarious work, such as day labourers and transport workers. The scattered measures for youth loans, freelancing, and training are not wrong in themselves, but they are no substitute for structural planning. A budget is not a collection of gestures. It is a statement of direction. And this one shows no solution when it comes to the country's largest crisis.

Allocations for health, education, and science and technology have increased ever so slightly. These are numerical adjustments within inherited systems, not transformative moves. The health system still remains urban-centric and underfunded at the community level. The education system lags far behind global competition and remains without a vision for transformation. And the science and technology programmes remain concentrated in a few institutions, detached from a national innovation ecosystem. A revolutionary moment demands transformation, not an incremental shift.

One of the clearest examples of the budget's failure to break with the old order is in agriculture. Although

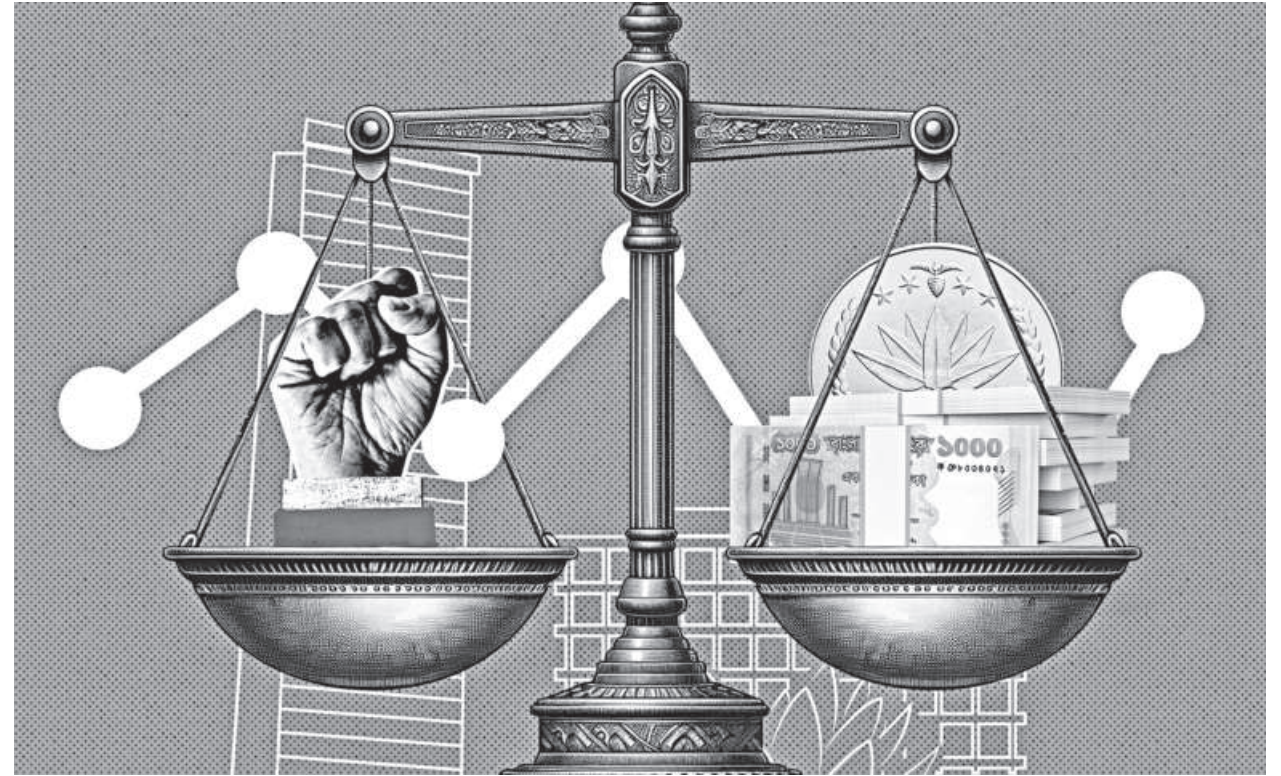
But a state that benefits from their labour abroad continues to neglect their rights at home. There is still no coordinated plan to train outgoing workers in higher-value skills, nor a serious reintegration effort through employment or entrepreneurship. Diversifying the labour force requires preparation, such as language instruction, sector-specific training, and legal support abroad. None of this has been prioritised. And so, the country remains content to export vulnerability rather than skill.

A similar stagnation marks the treatment of small and medium enterprises. SMEs are widely acknowledged as the backbone of the economy. But there is no targeted credit guarantee mechanism, no

for girls' education is welcome. But these are not systemic answers. The structural exclusion of women from the formal economy, the absence of protections for care work, and the failure to address gendered insecurity in public space remain untouched. We cannot close the gender gap with minor transfers. We must redesign the system.

We welcome the government's allocation of Tk 405 crore for the July warriors and green initiatives. However, it is concerning that the budget lacks any specific measures to reduce non-performing loans or to support the much-needed banking sector reforms through budgetary provisions.

The budget was an opportunity to



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

headline figures on fertiliser subsidies, cold storage concessions, and mechanisation incentives provide the appearance of support, these measures do little to transform the lives of marginal farmers. There is no plan for land tenure reform or tenant protections, even though 40 percent of farm households are "pure" tenants; these cultivators cannot secure formal credit or move into non-farm employment to diversify incomes. The continued emphasis on blanket subsidies, rather than targeted credit or loss buffer schemes, benefits larger landholders who already access informal loans, while smallholders still struggle to finance their operations. By offering handouts in place of reform, the budget reinforces inequality rather than making agriculture a genuine engine of rural prosperity.

Alongside farmers and small producers, another pillar of our economy, migrant workers, remains structurally overlooked. Every year, our workers remit billions of dollars to the country, often at a great personal cost.

robust infrastructure to integrate women-led or rural SMEs into the national economy. To make matters worse, the government has proposed tripling the VAT on online product sales commissions, from 5 percent to 15 percent. This single policy will disproportionately impact exactly the kinds of digital micro-entrepreneurs the state claims to support.

Most troubling of all is the continuation of the provision for whitening black money. We have seen, repeatedly, that such measures neither curb corruption nor generate sustainable revenue. They reward evasion and insult compliance. When a government invites money launderers to return with impunity, it sends a message that integrity is negotiable. We have reached a point in our political transition where we must abandon the fiction that informal economic amnesties are necessary or effective.

On the question of gender justice, the budget again stops short of structural intent. The increase in allowances for widows or stipends

express, through fiscal architecture, a break from the political and moral logic of the past. It could have been the moment that moved the country closer to a government that serves all, not just the organised, the connected, or the comfortable. That it did not do so is a missed opportunity. No revolution endures without reform. No reform endures without redistribution. And no redistribution is possible without the courage to change course.

The National Citizen Party remains committed to a vision of government that begins with recognising obligations to the young, the women, the working, the poor, the returning migrants, and the voiceless. It is only in fulfilling those obligations that we will honour the meaning of the revolution and build a Bangladesh that is for the many, not the few.

The authors recognise the contributions of Ehtasham Haque, Islamul Haque, Istiak Akib, and Faisal Abdullah to this article.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

A story of memory and nature



Raida A. K. Reza
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RAIDA A. K. REZA

I want to share a story about a little girl and a tree. A beautiful krishnachura tree, reaching the fourth floor balcony of a house and hiding it away from the urban sprawl, but not enough that moonlight couldn't peek through. A tree that was a friend to that little girl living on that balcony. In spring, the blooms would set ablaze in red in that little corner, and summers would be kinder to the girl as the shade of green would protect the space from the scorching sun. For years, that tree was a friend to her. The passing of the seasons and the changes in foliage were a part of her life, and they were friends—they both knew it.

And one day, just like that, the tree was gone. Cut down to make space for growth. More than a decade of kinship, torn apart in the span of a week.

It's the kind of loss that lingers with you. It's the kind of loss that is hard to explain to a child but must be understood by an adult. The numbness that comes up to cope with this loss is something that is reflected in all of us,

wouldn't you say? Living in a concrete jungle that is Dhaka, I wonder: when did we stop caring for the small things that make life, life? When did we stop romanticising the rain? Was it when the entire city got flooded and the day was ruined on a monsoon day? When did we stop listening to the birds? Was it when they stopped coming to us, to an almost uninhabitable city? When did we stop caring for the soil we walk on? Was it when it started being covered in asphalt for so long that we forgot what lies beneath?

Amid all this, a story that sticks with me is a memory. A memory of Amena apa, whom I met in Noakhali a few years back. She invited my family for lunch, and I remember looking at her old glass jars of jams and jellies filled with seeds—some small, some big, but all sitting in airtight containers. She told me about how she stores seeds so that she does not forget how things are meant to taste. It was very normal for her community to store seeds. They would keep them as a contingency for

when floods hit. Some would call this a resilience model, but to her it is just how things are.

"We look out for each other," she said. This is something I could never relate to. When I moved away from my maternal home, the houses I lived in, I never knew who my neighbours were. We sometimes met while getting out of our doors, in the garage, maybe



FILE PHOTO: STAR

I want to share a story about a little girl and a tree. A beautiful krishnachura tree, reaching the fourth-floor balcony of a house and hiding it away from the urban sprawl.

sometimes walking on the road, but we never spoke. We never had that community feeling. It is also just how things are for most of us living in Dhaka.

Most things in Dhaka have little meaning to us. There are no parks to walk in, no water bodies to sit beside

and forget our worries. No open space for children to learn about the birds that come in winter, no connection of the spirit to the earth. Our days are spent thinking about the next traffic jam, even thinking about how to survive the next day. Living in such fight-or-flight mode brings out apathy in us even more strongly.

Today is World Environment Day, a day that holds a reminder of all these thoughts. But it's also a day when I am reminded that, despite mass apathy towards the environment, there are still people who care.

There are people who protect our little spaces so that they can be green again, people who remember to be mindful enough to care. Their actions lie in quiet choices, in how we walk through the world, and with the world. Those people remember the smell of wet earth after the first rain, how it makes them stop, just for a moment. They remember the silence that hung after a storm passed, when even the birds paused to breathe. They remember the thrill of picking a mango, sticky-handed, from a tree that had stood there longer than them. They let their memories be an anchor, and remind them of who they were, and who they still could be. They care, because they remember. They remember how the environment matters, and how we matter within it.

Now the question is, do you remember?

‘Recovery of NPLs overseas will strengthen Bangladesh’s banking sector’

Efforts to recover assets stolen during the Awami League regime—much of which was illicitly transferred abroad—are currently being led by the interim government of Bangladesh. A specially established “asset recovery task force,” under the leadership of Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Ahsan H Mansur, is spearheading the initiative. The strategy includes enlisting international law firms, insolvency practitioners, asset tracing investigators, and litigation funding providers. Among them is Omni Bridgeway, one of the world’s leading litigation funders. A team by Omni Bridgeway has visited Dhaka several times and expressed interest in assisting Bangladesh in recovering its non-performing loans (NPLs). During a visit in May this year, **Wieger Wielinga**, managing director of Omni Bridgeway, spoke to **Ramisa Rob** of *The Daily Star* in an exclusive interview, breaking down the concept of litigation funding and how he hopes to support Bangladesh in the process to bring back the money that was laundered abroad through the banking sector.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and Omni Bridgeway?

I started my career as a litigation lawyer, working in the Netherlands and the US, and later took part in development projects in post-Soviet states with the World Bank. I joined Omni Bridgeway in 2001 with Raymond van Hulst, who is now our CEO, and Jurriaan Braat, also our managing director. At that time, the company—operating globally since 1986—focused on asset recovery for governments, banks, and political risk insurers. Over the next two decades, we expanded, and following our merger with IMF Bentham in Australia in 2019, Omni Bridgeway became one of the largest global funders and is currently a listed entity in Australia.

We work worldwide with 22 offices, so we have the local know-how in places where NPLs from Bangladesh have ended up. The backgrounds of our investment managers are mostly lawyers and experts from top law firms, bankers who worked in the recovery department of banks or as insolvency practitioners, and like myself—individuals with a combination of law and intelligence expertise. I worked in military intelligence, as did my fellow Bangladesh team member Anthony Elwood Russel. For Bangladesh, we would have a robust international team, including a former lawyer-turned-banker with extensive NPL recovery experience. This core team is supported by colleagues from our offices in Singapore, Dubai, Netherlands, UK, US, Canada, and Switzerland.

they belong: the banks. It is obvious that the recovery of these loans would strengthen the cash balance of Bangladesh’s banking sector. It would also bring about a system of accountability and sanctions on those who did not follow the rules. We strongly believe that it is important to recover these loans, whether with our or other experts’ help.

It is perhaps important to clarify that we would not finance domestic recovery, because Bangladesh is perfectly capable of doing that. We would take on the recovery where international litigation is needed. It is also important to distinguish us from a law firm. We finance and help select the right law firm for the cases, and where needed, external experts or asset tracing companies. We work together with international law firms and experts, pay all their bills for and on behalf of the client—in this case they are the private banks of Bangladesh—and help the client coordinate the entire recovery endeavour, all the way up to successful recovery, which is defined as money in the bank, not some legal win. Unlike lawyers, we do not get paid based on the damages in a judgment but from actual recoveries, so only when the money is returned to the banks of Bangladesh.

Do the banks in Bangladesh actually hold cases with realistic recovery potential? What’s your success rate in cases like this?

Based on the information we’ve seen so far, yes, we believe there is genuine potential. But we do not want to over-promise. We



Wieger Wielinga

violating requirements that officially should have been followed, during the past regime. The people who have been involved and committed potential criminal activity by helping give out loans knowing they may never get back should be pursued under the Bangladeshi laws that they have violated. The banks’ management have changed and, to my knowledge, they perfectly understand the importance of setting this right. We have talked to various banks, and it is clear to me that the management is keen to begin the recovery process. And I had the same impression from the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and Dr Mansur, who in my view, for what it is worth, is doing an excellent job given the challenging circumstances. It is also clear to me that, at least among the banks we have spoken to, the current leadership was not complicit in corrupt practices. Our work as a litigation funder is confined and simple: bringing back the cash outside the country to where it belongs in the shortest possible time.

Why would other nations, say Singapore, where the assets are, be interested in returning cash or assets that’s gone into their economy?

We rely on rule-of-law jurisdictions. The legal system of Singapore is well-functioning; they will not knowingly support the retention of fraudulently obtained assets. The role of legal systems in general is to uphold justice, not protect illicit wealth. But the courts cannot volunteer to return money with allegations only; they need a solid case with evidence to act on. For instance, they will need a solid Bangladeshi court judgment, which also means that a court judgment from Bangladesh has to abide by a number of internationally accepted principles, with say a particular affidavit showing that the perpetrator procured the loan without any security and guided it by making their gardener, for example, as the personal entity. But keep in mind, we cannot influence the Bangladeshi court system; we can only advise what should be in the case of judgments to be acceptable elsewhere, in what we call “exportable judgments” to other jurisdictions. Every country has different rules of what is acceptable, and we know from experience what those acceptability criteria are. That’s why we can say this is what we need to fulfil and get a favourable, exportable judgment. Our job here would be to work with Bangladeshi authorities to establish all this, including asset tracing, in collaboration with the BFIU.

Isn’t this an enormous task that needs strong government backing, and what happens when elections are held?

It is not an easy task to repair something that’s gone on for so long, and with so many people involved. Recovering these assets requires strategic commitment and resources. But the effort is worth it—not just for the financial return, but to break the cycle of impunity.

Our work is to provide access to justice to plaintiffs involved in legal disputes, either in court or arbitration, by covering all the costs associated with the dispute, so that the plaintiffs themselves—Bangladesh’s banks, in this case—do not have to risk their own capital in costly proceedings.

What exactly is litigation funding, and why did you take an interest in Bangladesh?

So, to explain litigation funders: our work is to provide access to justice to plaintiffs involved in legal disputes, either in court or arbitration, by covering all the costs associated with the dispute, so that the plaintiffs themselves—Bangladesh’s banks, in this case—do not have to risk their own capital in costly proceedings. When we take on a case, we cover lawyers’ fees, but also court fees, expert fees, investigators’ fees, disbursements, and any security for costs needed to facilitate the proceedings through the institutional capital we manage, which as of today, is 3.5 billion Australian dollars (\$2.3 billion). In return, we receive a share of the proceeds if the case is successful. If the case is unsuccessful, we lose our investment, but the user of our services bears no financial risk. So, it is a risky business, where experience and a solid process for selecting the right cases as well as experience in managing the cases until success is key.

Our portfolio is diverse, from construction disputes in Dubai to onshore arbitrations in the People’s Republic of China to patent cases in the US, and debt recovery projects like those in Bangladesh. We have worked with governments, financial institutions and exporters for over 35 years, so we have developed a wealth of expertise in recovering and collecting from evasive debtors in almost all jurisdictions around the world. Global enforcement and debt recovery are what we are best known for. In 2017, we were approached by the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation (IFC), and with them we have set up a specific fund aimed at assisting banks in the MENA region with cross-border recoveries, protecting the rule of law by ensuring everyone, irrespective of status, is held accountable to ensure banks maintain capital to provide new loans. So our experience matches with the current needs of Bangladesh’s banking sector.

Probably because of our reputation, we were put in touch by Ifiti Islam with the governor of Bangladesh Bank, Ahsan H Mansur. We took an interest in at least a subset of the cases where money was laundered out of the country by the Sheikh Hasina regime.

To be more specific, we are primarily looking at the non-performing loans of the commercial banks—financing and managing the process of getting the money back to the banks from abroad. These loans were not gifts. They need to be repaid by the rightful party—including the ultimate beneficiaries who may be hiding behind shell companies or complex offshore structures—and they have to be brought back to where

are in the initial stages of reviewing more detailed bank files. The Bangladesh Bank governor has taken the right steps to speed up the process.

We have high financial stakes on our end. So we only take on cases that we assess and find that there’s at least a 70-75 percent chance of a substantial recovery success. And before accepting cases, we have to prove this to our investment committee, which consists of former judges, top lawyers, financial experts, and country experts. It is a critical, contentious process, like a mini trial, so in order to not waste anyone’s time, I will not submit a case to the committee if I am in doubt myself. For instance, it could be that the assessment of a case file means we agree to allocate up to \$5 million in a recovery effort of one or two high-value NPLs. We estimate budgets based on the jurisdictions where our asset tracing efforts indicate we will have to engage in recovery litigation, judgment recognition, freezing orders, delivery procedures. We will finance that with our institutional capital so we have a fiduciary duty to be very careful. In enforcement cases, we have a very strong track record of over 90 percent. That’s because we tend to be deeply involved, from asset tracing to strategy execution. And we have a “never give up” mentality, where we stick with the client until we get the money back, even if it takes 10 years.

The aggregate value of our recoveries is no doubt in the billions. However, large recoveries often consist of a multitude of individual smaller cases, each with a different fact pattern. We have recovered substantial amounts from a nation in the Middle East where the total recovery consisted of a multitude of individual cases, with claim sizes in the range of \$20-200 million. In the case of Bangladesh, the aggregate value of all claims may be in the billions, but the task at hand actually consists of a large multitude of individual loans of \$20-300 million each. Those sort of claims are the ones that have our prime interest and where we see our main added value.

Why should Bangladesh involve foreign litigation funders, especially from abroad and the West?

It’s a fair question. First of all, investors in Omni Bridgeway are not exclusively Western investors but come from institutions worldwide. Second, a very important part of our clientele and partners are international institutions like the IFC, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and Asian national export credit agencies.

Most of the assets of the NPLs we are talking about have unfortunately found their way abroad. As external funders, we are only interested in helping recover money

where you have to go through other nations’ court systems to get the money back, and prevent the borrowers from transferring it further, outside of the grasp of the banks. It is only to the extent that there is necessity for Bangladesh to go outside that we come into play. So just as an example: S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam has hired

We are primarily looking at the non-performing loans of the commercial banks—financing and managing the process of getting the money back to the banks from abroad. These loans were not gifts. They need to be repaid by the rightful party—including the ultimate beneficiaries who may be hiding behind shell companies or complex offshore structures—and they have to be brought back to where they belong: the banks.

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP, an American law firm that has successfully defended Elon Musk and Tesla in a multi-billion dollar securities trial, among other cases. The firm, on behalf of S Alam, sent a notice of dispute to the chief adviser of the interim government in December last year to combat the recovery efforts of Bangladesh. So if those like S Alam are doing that, it means you’re in for a very expensive legal battle to be successful. And as far as I know, NGOs don’t fund such kinds of litigation.

Can you debunk a bit more on the complex set of cases before us?

The cases are legally complex, because the loans found their way to unexplained offshore wealth through various ways. *The Daily Star* itself has done investigative reporting on such schemes done under the former regime. So for example, methods may have included unsecured loans via proxies, abuse of procurement systems and illicit transfers via the hundi system. So you have to untangle the complex illegal case before you go to an external court—in let’s say the UAE, Canada, Seychelles, UK, and so on—in order to have permission to freeze assets so that they are not dispersed further but come back to Bangladesh at some point. And for that, you have to go through a legal process in that nation, which means that a court in the UK, for instance, will want to be convinced that you have a valid case and that the basis for the case is solid. In order to arrive at that, you have to understand what exactly happened with witnesses, credible evidence, and you have to find out where the

assets are as they might not be in the name of the actual beneficiary—so it could be in the name of a relative or someone at arm’s length of the ultimate beneficiary.

So engaging external experts trained at this is a wise idea, but it would be unwise to overpay for it, or choose someone who oversells and underperforms. Most top global law firms won’t take risk on their fees, so litigation funding fills that gap.

Under the ousted regime, the central bank made exceptions for these NPLs to be taken out. How can this be repaired and why is successful recovery important for this?

Yes, that was part of the checks and balances in the former regime, and it’s not an easy task to repair something that’s gone on for so long and with so many people involved. As the saying goes, there is only one way to eat an elephant: one bite at a time. But you cannot stop the asset recovery plan, you have to pursue recovering these cases in order to start a system of checks and balances and prevent the cycle from happening again.

I hesitate to disclose details about the cases, because that will mean the other party will get to know about it, and try to repair their weak points, which will hurt Bangladesh. And I also have to be humble in what I say, because the whole process is in the beginning stage. We have to look at each file of a case carefully; each file has slightly different factors. Some of them

It’s important to distinguish between the entity of the bank and the former management of the bank. Yes, some of the banks should not have given the loans, violating requirements that officially should have been followed, during the past regime. The people who have been involved and committed potential criminal activity by helping give out loans knowing they may never get back should be pursued under the Bangladeshi laws that they have violated.

are straightforward while some of them are part of a larger theft, if you will, where bank loans are part of the larger scheme of a powerful person or family expropriating assets illegally, as I explained earlier. Broadly speaking, we understand that Bangladeshi banks have numerous outstanding loans that are not being repaid on their balance sheets as they have ended up overseas. And that’s why we think banks are the right entity to pursue these cases. The loans are loans; they are not gifts.

Regarding the banks, however, The Daily Star reported that some private banks engaged heavily in reciprocal lending, and even lent thousands of crores to the relatives of the banks’ chairmen or directors. How does bringing money back to institutions that were complicit help Bangladesh?

It’s important to distinguish between the entity of the bank and the former management of the bank. Yes, some of the banks should not have given the loans,

Of course, it is clear to the public sector stakeholders to keep driving the process forward at the best speed so the bad actors don’t have time to conceal ill-gotten assets. Omni Bridgeway’s focus now is seeing the evidence so we can begin our due diligence process, and we would appreciate support both from government stakeholders and the banks themselves in getting that access. If we cannot see the evidence, we cannot make an investment decision.

And regardless of who forms the government next—as the current one is interim—we hope that the next elected government will engage meaningfully in recovering dissipated assets. Our focus is on helping the banks and thereby, more widely, the people of Bangladesh.

From decades of experience on similar matters, I can say: any country where it’s an open secret that people enter politics to get rich eventually suffers. That can and must change. For that, an independent and empowered judiciary is key. It’s an investment worth making.

'TAANDOB' gets censor board clearance

The Shakib Khan starrer *Taandob* has officially received clearance from the Bangladesh Film Certification Board, paving the way for its theatrical release and setting the stage for a potential box office storm.

Taandob, directed by Raihan Rafi and produced by Shahriar Shakil, is a joint venture between SVF and Alpha i, and is scheduled to hit cinemas on the day of Eid-ul-Azha.

Producer Shahriar Shakil shared the confirmation on Facebook yesterday, writing, "Congratulations to our audiences. *Taandob* arrives in cinemas on Eid Day."

The film features Shakib Khan in the lead role, alongside Jaya Ahsan and Sabila Nur in pivotal roles.



'Shopno Jabe Bari' reconnects the emotion with a new rendition

SHARMIN JOYA

There's a deep emotional connection to the song *Shopno Jabe Bari*, especially for those who, after waiting an entire year, finally prepare to return home during Eid. The longing, the struggle, and the overwhelming desire to reunite with family make this song even more poignant.

Originally composed by Habib Wahid, *Shopno Jabe Bari* had previously been released in two editions, sung by Milon Mahmud and Mithun Chakra, respectively. This Eid-ul-Azha, the song is returning in a new rendition — and for the first time, it will be voiced by a female artiste. This version centres around the story of a daughter making her journey home, adding a fresh emotional layer to its narrative.

The music for the new edition has been arranged by Emon Chowdhury, with vocals by Aditi Rahman Dola. Directed by Piplu R Khan, the music video was released yesterday.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Emon Chowdhury shared, "Habib *bhai* is beloved by all of us, and having had the opportunity to work on one of his creations feels like a blessing. We approached this version from a feminine perspective, which led us to rearrange the composition into a softer, more melodic and emotional tone." Widely regarded as one of the leading composers of contemporary times, Emon also expressed his gratitude to Grameenphone,



Grey, and Piplu R Khan for including him in the project.

Dola, who captured hearts last Eid with *Chand Mama*, returns this time with a gentle, heartfelt rendition. "It feels truly special to be part of such a timeless song," she said. "*Shopno Jabe Bari* resonates deeply with so many people because it reminds them of going home to their loved ones. Until now, we've always seen and heard it from a male perspective. This time, it's told from a woman's point of view, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have been chosen to lend my voice to something so emotionally powerful."

The song is now officially available on YouTube.

Bangladeshi 'Sand City' secures worldwide sales deal ahead of festival premiere

Bangladeshi director Mahde Hasan's debut feature film *Sand City* has been acquired by Bangkok-based sales company Diversion for worldwide sales (excluding Bangladesh and Switzerland).

The film will have its world premiere in the Proxima Competition at the 2025 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

Sand City, produced by Rubaiyat Hossain and Aadnan Imtiaz Ahmed (Khona Talks



and Cinema Cocoon), won the CNC Development Award at Locarno Open Doors and was showcased at La Fabrique Cinéma, Produire au Sud, and Film Bazaar. It also received Visions Sud Est support.

The film follows two characters tied to sand—Emma (Victoria Chakma), who finds a severed finger, and Hasan (Mostafa Monwar), who steals sand to fuel a delusional dream of a glass empire.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

SNEAKER FEST 2025

Kangaroo Bangladesh presents *Sneaker Fest 2025*, Bangladesh's first-ever sneaker event. It will bring together fashion, music, and street culture in an exciting celebration.

Featuring live concerts, exclusive sneaker drops, food stalls, and a custom sneaker zone, the event will offer a unique, immersive experience for sneakerheads and fashion lovers, highlighting creativity, style, and cultural expression.

Date: Thursday | July 3

Time: 11am onwards

Venue: Tejaon-Gulshan Link Road



Jessie J reveals cancer diagnosis ahead of surgery



Jessie J has revealed she has been diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer and will undergo surgery after performing at the Summertime Ball 2025 on June 15 at Wembley Stadium.

In a heartfelt video, the singer stressed the importance of early detection and opened up about the emotional toll. She thanked fans for their support and plans to continue her *No Secrets* tour later this year.

Jessie, who has faced multiple health challenges over the years, said she has a new outlook on life. Despite the irony of her recent music titles, like *No Secrets* and *Living My Best Life*, she remains hopeful in sharing her journey with fans.

NEWS

BNP slams budget as 'unilateral'

FROM PAGE 12
dialogue, the budget would not have been one-sided, lacking participation, or confined to conventional approaches. "It would have reflected new ideas," he said, adding that under the current exceptional circumstances, political engagement is more critical than ever.

He further noted that if dialogue had taken place, budget allocations could have been restructured based on consensus.

Reading out a statement, Khosru said, "According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, GDP growth in the 2024-25 fiscal year was 3.97 percent. Yet in the current budget, it is projected

at 5.6 percent, which, like previous governments, is unrealistic and merely growth on paper.

"Food security is under threat. The apparent increase in allocation by including pensions and agricultural subsidies under the inadequate, flawed, and corruption-prone social safety net is misleading. Despite this, allocations for social protection remain inadequate."

He also expressed concern over reduced allocations in key sectors such as education, healthcare, and agriculture.

Private universities, medical colleges, colleges, and schools could have been

granted full tax exemption, he said, adding that BNP will ensure this if it comes to power.

The press conference was also attended by BNP Standing Committee members Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Selima Rahman, and chairperson's Adviser Ismail Jabiullah.

As part of BNP's 180-day action plan, it will launch a review of all foreign loans taken during the autocratic regime and request the UN secretary general to form an independent commission, and a list will be prepared of those killed and injured during the July uprising and the 16-year anti-fascist movement to facilitate assistance for them.

Million gather

FROM PAGE 12
Yesterday, pilgrims performed the tawaf — walking seven times around the Kaaba, which Muslims pray towards each day.

Pilgrims arriving on buses had begun already trickling into Mina on Tuesday afternoon, greeted by staff offering them coffee and dates.

"I am so happy, it's such an amazing feeling," said Reem al-Shogre, a 35-year-old Saudi performing the pilgrimage for the first time.

Following last year's lethal heatwave, authorities have mobilised more than 40 government agencies and 250,000 officials to improve protection.

Shaded areas have been enlarged by 50,000 square metres (12 acres), thousands of additional medics will be on standby and more than 400 cooling units will be deployed, Hajj Minister Tawfiq al-Rabiah told AFP last week.

Artificial intelligence technology will help process the deluge of data, including video from a new fleet of drones, to better manage the massive crowds.

Aid sites in Gaza shut

FROM PAGE 12
support civilian safety.

"Our top priority remains ensuring the safety and dignity of civilians receiving aid," said a GHF spokesperson. An Israeli military spokesperson warned civilians against moving in areas leading to GHF sites yesterday, deeming them "combat zones".

At least 26 Palestinians have been killed in intense overnight air attacks carried out by the Israeli army across Gaza, reports Al Jazeera online.

The UN Security Council was set to vote yesterday on a demand for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and humanitarian access across Gaza, where malnutrition is widespread and aid has only trickled in since Israel lifted an 11-week blockade in late May.

UN not involved in talks

FROM PAGE 12
been reached yet, but added that they welcome any initiative to improve cross-border relation and to support people that are impacted by the conflict in Myanmar.

"But there is no humanitarian corridor in place as such and we haven't been involved in discussions to establish such a corridor. So, I just want to clarify that it really is between governments. It's something that we can support once it's established but there is quite a legal process behind something like a corridor."

She also said participation and inclusion of all political parties in the elections will help prevent political polarisation and potential unrest.

"An inclusive election means that every segment of society should be able to vote — women, people who are 18, ethnic minorities, different religious

communities. That's what we mean by inclusive," she said.

Asked if an inclusive election means inclusion of all political parties, she said, "No. It's not about any political party."

The issue was raised as the interim government has banned activities of Awami League, which fell following a mass uprising in July-August last year when around 1,400 people were killed.

She declined to comment on the ban of AL. While the UN fact-finding report last year recommended not banning any political party, Gwyn Lewis said it was not a question for her but for the government.

"We made our recommendations because the participation and inclusion of all political parties is something that prevents very polarised positions and potential unrest."

However, it depends on the government, she said.

Lewis said she was quite impressed by the consensus commission, which is holding dialogues with all parties, though it is a very complex process.

"I think the interim government is leading that process well and working towards credible and peaceful [elections]," she said.

She reiterated the UN's technical assistance to the Election Commission but said the organisation would not play any role in determining the election schedule.

Lewis also said the UN supports the Bangladesh government's ongoing reform initiatives, though the nature and extent of those reforms remain entirely within the government's jurisdiction.

She said the UN Human Rights Office will soon establish a small office in Bangladesh.

"We understand from the government that a MoU is finalised in this regard. We are waiting to sign it soon," she said.

Once a lifeline, Labondaho now a curse

FROM PAGE 12
with the rapid rise of factories in Gazipur. And Labondaho isn't alone. The Tengra, Kata, Sera, Bairagirchala, Tarun, and Saldah canals have all suffered a similar fate.

Trucks routinely dump industrial waste beneath the bridge over the Labondaho river, near the Bagher Bazar-Safari Park route in Gazipur Sadar. The water has turned black, thick with stench. Residents say fish have vanished, and even livestock fall ill after contact.

Mohammad Asadullah of Chakpara village in Maona union said various indigenous fish species were once available in the river. "We used to cultivate our fields using its water," he said.

"We used to fish here and bathe in its water," said Ahmad Ali of Maona Uttar Para. "Now, using it causes diarrhoea and diseases even in animals."

Anwar Hossain of Beltali village said the land has become so polluted that even walking along the fields is difficult. "The soil is littered with polythene," he said. "Growing paddy is out of the question."

Mohammad Moazzem Hossain, a resident of Indrapur and an employee of a knit composite factory, lives beside the river. "The stench is unbearable," he said. "At day time, the stench is sickening. At night, the air turns toxic."

According to Industrial Police and factory sources, Gazipur houses 2,176 registered factories, 1,154 of them garments. In Sreepur alone, there are 674 factories, of which 657 have effluent treatment plants (ETPs).

But Deputy Director Arefin Badol of the Department of Environment (DoE) says some factories secretly

release untreated effluents through underground pipes.

"When we visit the factories along with our lab team, we often find that the ETPs are turned on only when we are seen standing at the gate," he said. "We will take action."

He added that the DoE has discussed advanced surveillance, including drones and high-tech monitoring, with the director general. Seventeen factories have had their service connections cut, though some have resumed operations via court orders. Legal action is ongoing against two others.

Environmentalists say enforcement has long lagged behind violations. Khorsheed Alam, chairman of River and Nature Foundation, said industrial waste has blocked the river's flow, worsening pollution. "Farmers can no longer step into their land, let alone farm it," he said. "Immediate excavation and cleanup are crucial to stop the farmers from facing losses."

Sharif Jamil, representative of Waterkeeper Bangladesh, echoed this warning: "Labondaho is just one of many. Untreated waste from textile and tannery industries, even by government bodies like city corporations and WASA, have made Dhaka's rivers toxic."

He said pollution upstream, from Gazipur's textile industries and even from the Khiru river at Bhaluka in Mymensingh, contributes to widespread contamination downstream in rivers like the Turag in Dhaka.

Mahmud Hasan Khan, president-elect of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), acknowledged the industry's role. "Pollution isn't

confined to Gazipur," he said.

"Installing CCTV in industrial zones to monitor ETPs could be a step forward. Vigilance must be increased," he said, adding that other bodies like Bangladesh Textile Mills Association and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association should also come forward to protect the environment.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said the government has taken protection of the Labondaho river as a new initiative being financed under the Climate Change Trust Fund.

"We will demarcate the river's boundary, remove encroachments, carry out dredging, and complete the excavation work," she said.

The ministry's secretary and the DoE chief met with industries responsible for the pollution and warned them to cease operations like occupying and polluting that harm the river.

"Dumping waste became habitual due to years of inaction despite continuous pollution. These industries have been initially served notices and were engaged in meetings. They are now being brought under strict monitoring and control. Simultaneously, we will also begin enforcement actions."

She noted the department has only six magistrates. Much of the winter was spent shutting down illegal brick kilns.

"Now, we are prioritising and focusing on industrial pollution. We hope to begin our operations to save the Turag river in Dhaka by November or December," she said.

"If we cannot free Loblong from pollution, it will be impossible to save the Turag."

Govt to roll out

FROM PAGE 12
special circumstances and will remain in place next year as well.

However, he expressed hope that during his tenure he would be able to lay the foundation for a revised secondary education curriculum.

After assuming power, the interim government cancelled the implementation of the latest curriculum that was finalised by the previous Awami League government. Instead, it reinstated the 2012 curriculum.

CR Abrar said a vice-chancellor selection panel has been formed to fill high-level positions at two

universities. "The recruitment process will involve publishing advertisements in newspapers and accepting applications from interested candidates," he said.

A search committee has also been formed, comprising representatives from the ministry, the University Grants Commission, and distinguished professors.

He expressed optimism that, with everyone's cooperation, if the selection process is completed based on merit and competition, his vision of enabling the next generation to lead the world while staying in the country will move forward.

BB plans to merge

FROM PAGE 12
will be removed, and a new board will be formed, drawing from existing board members and representatives from different sectors. The merged entity will operate under the central bank's direct supervision.

The move is part of the interim government's broader efforts to stabilise the banking sector under the newly enacted Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, which gives the central bank expanded powers to resolve distressed financial institutions.

Six banks are currently in the resolution pipeline, with five now in the final stage. ICB Islamic Bank has been excluded from the process due to its foreign ownership.

"The central bank is likely to merge these five banks by October this year under the ordinance," said Mohammed Nurul Amin, chairman of Global Islamic Bank. He said Governor Mansur discussed key aspects of the new ordinance during the meeting.

Those who can confidently prove

they can recover on their own may be considered for exemption. Otherwise, the resolution process under the ordinance will begin, according to Amin.

"Now, five banks have been identified. They could be consolidated into one larger Islamic bank. The meeting was held to initiate that process. A roadmap has been discussed," he said.

Mohammad Abdul Mannan, chairman of First Security Islamic Bank, described the meeting as a "preliminary step," adding that Bangladesh Bank informed them of the plan.

The merger effort gained momentum after Bangladesh Bank appointed two international firms in January to conduct asset quality reviews of the banks. The review, which is now nearing completion, aims to assess the actual financial condition of the institutions.

The central bank's plan is expected to restore depositor confidence and instil discipline in a sector long plagued by mismanagement, insider lending and capital shortfalls.

Cattle sales yet to pick Amassing Tk 600cr per year

FROM PAGE 3 Shamim Miah, also from Kishoreganj Sadar, said the price of small bulls is unusually high. "A two-mound bull is priced at 70,000 takas, while a four-mound bull is going for 1.2 lakh takas," he said.

Meanwhile, in a unique offering, Amzad Hossain brought a camel to the Gabtali market this year. "I'm asking for 35 lakh takas and have already received an offer of 22 lakh takas. If someone offers a bit more, I'll sell it," said Amzad, who brought three camels from Rajasthan two years ago and sold two during previous Eid seasons.

FROM PAGE 4 The court has directed the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), the managing directors and heads of relevant bank branches, and other concerned authorities to ensure that no funds can be withdrawn under any circumstances.

get in touch with Enayet Ullah, who is believed to be in Singapore with family members since the fall of the Awami League government on August 5 last year, following a mass uprising.

was launched in mid-2020 against Enayet Ullah and his family members over allegations of amassing illegal wealth and laundering money through irregularities, corruption, and extortion. However, for unknown reasons, he managed to evade consequences at the time.

Cuts in gender Eid holiday, rain spark

FROM PAGE 3 professor at Jahangirnagar University, argued that gender budgeting is more about intention than just numbers.

FROM PAGE 3 Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, noted that the combination of extended holidays, ongoing rainfall, and poor waste management could significantly worsen the situation.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said daily dengue cases are already nearing 100 and are expected to rise further. "The large movement of people during Eid could accelerate the spread of dengue nationwide," he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD Sylhet Road Division, Sylhet. e-Tender Notice 56 (Fifty-Six)/2024-2025 Open Tendering Method (OTM)

Nagar Bhaban

FROM PAGE 3 his daughter's birth registration. It was his third attempt. "This culture of holding the public hostage to realise demands must end. People are suffering unnecessarily," he said, expressing his frustration.

reopen on Wednesday. But when I arrived in the morning, I found the main gate still locked. Neither the chief executive officer nor the administrator came in. So, I had to leave.

Emergency services

FROM PAGE 3 They were later treated at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital.

around 90 minutes due to reported infighting between two groups of July victims.

CALL FOR POLICY ACTION

Women's Affairs Reforms Commission member Maheen Sultan also expressed concern over reduced allocations and MoWCA funding.

PRAYER TIMING

JUNE 5 Azan 4:05 12:45 5:00 6:45 8:15 JAMAAT 4:40 1:15 5:15 6:50 8:45 SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

NCP unveils

FROM PAGE 3 disclosure is necessary for safety reasons. All spending will require prior approval from the central committee's budget.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ অধিনায়কের কার্যালয় ১ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন উত্তরা, ঢাকা. উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)

STATUTORY NOTICE IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION) COMPANY MATTER NO. 919 OF 2025

স্ববিশিষ্ট মোটর বাংলাদেশ সুলীম কোর্ট, হাই কোর্ট বিজ্ঞাপন, ঢাকা (বিশিষ্ট আদমি অধিক্ষেত্র)

KHULNA SHIPYARD LIMITED BANGLADESH NAVY, KHULNA. INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Ananta Apparels Limited Ananta Plaza, 136 Elephant Road, Dhaka - 1205. NOTICE OF MEMBERS MEETING OF ANANTA APPARELS LIMITED

THE SHELF

Books for different types of READERS ON EID



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

This one is for the readers who reserve that one highly-anticipated book to be read later, specifically on Eid. It could be a tear-jerker or a potential five-star read, or it could be a book featuring Muslim characters/Eid itself.

NUR-E-JANNAT ALIF

Eid-ul-Azha is right around the corner, which entails delicious meals, family gatherings, and a little extra downtime between all the Qurbani preparation and feasting. It is also the perfect excuse to, at long last, pick up that book you have always meant to read or dive into something fresh and fun. Whether you are into buzzy new releases or comforting old favourites, here are five books for different kinds of readers to enjoy this Eid.

The one with a new book on every chaand raat

THE PARIS EXPRESS
Emma Donoghue
S&S/Summit Books, 2025

For the reader who starts a new book every chaand raat, *The Paris Express* is a thrilling and immersive option to

help them persevere, even after the initial novelty wears off. Inspired by the infamous 1895 Montparnasse train crash, *The Paris Express* is a gripping novel set aboard a speeding train filled with a diverse cast of passengers. As the locomotive hurtles toward destiny, lives intertwine—members of parliament race to a crucial vote, a medical student fears for a dying girl, a secretary champions the future of moving pictures, and two train crew members navigate double lives. Meanwhile, a young anarchist plots a shocking act, setting the stage for an unforgettable journey of ambition, secrecy, and fate. Donoghue, known for her compelling narratives, captures both the external journey and the emotional undercurrents of her characters, making it the perfect book to kick off your Eid reading. Whether you are reading under the moonlight or

in the comfort of your home (fatigued from a rough day at the gorur haat), this novel's suspenseful plot and richly developed characters will keep you hooked from beginning to end.

The one who hides away with a book to avoid responsibilities

THE FRAUD
Zadie Smith
Penguin Press, 2023

Eid-ul-Azha arrives with its fair share of duties—dividing the meat, cooking the food, managing the guests, and yes, cleaning up after the Qurbani. But if you are the type to quietly vanish into a corner with a book while others are elbow-deep in Eid chaos, *The Fraud* is your perfect alibi. Set in 1873, the book follows Mrs Eliza Touchet, a sharp-witted Scottish housekeeper to fading novelist William Ainsworth. A sceptic by nature, she questions everything—from

her cousin's literary talent to Charles Dickens' morality and England's veneer of respectability. Meanwhile, Andrew Bogle, a formerly enslaved man from Jamaica, becomes the key witness in the sensational "Tichborne Trial", where a butcher from Australia claims to be the heir to a grand estate. As the trial grips England, Mrs Touchet and Bogle navigate a world of deception, class struggles, and hidden truths. The ideal festive read—one to flaunt while you immerse yourself in its captivating and nuanced tale.

The one with the 'Perfect Eid Book'

THE BOOK OF GOLD LEAVES
Mirza Waheed
Viking, 2014

This one is for the readers who reserve that one highly-anticipated book to be read later, specifically on Eid. It could be a tear-jerker or a potential five-star read, or it could be a book featuring Muslim characters/Eid itself. We recommend you seek out *The Book of Gold Leaves* by Mirza Waheed. *The Book of Gold Leaves* is a poignant love story set in war-ravaged Kashmir. Faiz, an artist who delicately paints papier-mâché boxes in Srinagar, crosses paths with Roohi, a young woman yearning for a love that transcends time and conflict. As violence looms over their world, their romance unfolds—a tale of passion, fate, and the heart-wrenching choices war demands. As the novel blends the every day with the extraordinary, it offers a perfect reading experience during Eid's quieter moments, when you might want something both uplifting and contemplative. With its emotional depth and timeless appeal, this book promises to resonate long after you have turned the last page.

The one with a book for the food coma

CODE WORD ROMANCE
Carie Walker
Berkley, 2025

After an indulgent Eid meal, when you are too full to move but not ready for a nap, you need a book that is deeply engaging but not too demanding (we both know you will be fast asleep by the

end of the minute). Max is an average woman, struggling with a mountain of debt, working odd jobs, and living an ordinary life. That is, until she discovers she bears an uncanny resemblance to Sofia Christensen, Europe's youngest female prime minister. When Sofia receives a credible death threat, the CIA sees an opportunity and makes Max an offer she cannot refuse—impersonate the prime minister during her annual trip to Italy, and they will pay her a life-changing amount of money. But the mission is not without its dangers, assassins are closing in, and Flynn, Max's former lover who broke her heart years ago, is assigned as her handler. Let's be honest, you can already see what is coming next!

The one who brings a book to every dawat...just in case

GULLIVOR ER SAFARNAMA
Abul Mansur Ahmed
Prothoma Prokashon, 2024

Just in case you need a break from the endless chatter and want to dive into something sharp and witty instead, *Gullivor er Safarnama* by Abul Mansur Ahmed, first published in 1969, is the ultimate companion for moments when you crave a clever take on society wrapped in humour. Unlike typical political rants, this satirical travelogue takes you on a journey through fantastical lands that reflect the real struggles of Bengal: division, corruption, education woes, all served with a generous dose of irony. What makes this book a joy to pull out, whether at a gathering or in quiet moments, is its blend of laughter and insight. Ahmed's keen observations and biting wit make you ponder, while his warm love for society shines through. Plus, it is a subtle flex that shows off your brains to the catty relatives (not saying you have any)—always satisfying.

Nur-E-Jannat Alif is a gender studies major and part-time writer who dreams of authoring a book someday. Find her at @literatureinsolitude on Instagram or send her your book/movie/television recommendations at nurejannatalif@gmail.com.

INTERVIEW

Embracing the bizarre and 'An Eye and a Leg'

An interview with the Commonwealth Short Story Prize regional winner on surrealism, self-doubt, and finding her voice

STAR BOOKS REPORT

The Asia regional winner of the 2025 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, Faria Basher, in an interview with The Daily Star, opens up about her journey from lifelong reader to emerging writer. She reflects on the creation of "An Eye and a Leg" (Granta, 2025), a surreal and darkly humorous story that challenges the cultural narrative of the "expiring woman". Through reflections on doubt, identity, and literary influences, she speaks about embracing the bizarre, letting go of perfectionism, and the liberating power of writing on her own terms.

You mention being a longtime reader but a fairly new writer. Can you tell us where your love for books began, and what pushed you to finally start writing?

I've been an avid reader for as long as I can remember. I was a bit of a misunderstood child, but always found a lot of understanding in literature. I don't know if I can pinpoint a time or place my love for books began, per se; I think it's something that's just always been innate to me. My father has quite an inclination towards literature too, and is a published author in Bangladesh, so it's possible I inherited some of that from him.

Having that regular exposure to good literature definitely played a part in my journey to becoming a writer. I always knew that at some point in my life, I wanted to try my hand at writing, but I was held back by things like having not taken the academic route to writing, self-imposed perfectionism, and a touch of impostor syndrome. Writing became something I put on the back burner for many years. I kept saying to myself, "Not yet." In retrospect, I don't regret the waiting too much, because I think things worked out for me exactly when they were supposed to. But I do regret the self-doubt.

What has it meant to you to have your work recognised by the Commonwealth Foundation? Has this recognition



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

influenced or added new energy to your writing journey?

I'm eternally grateful to the Foundation for their recognition of my work. I've always had a bit of a unique way of looking at the world, which has often left me on the fringes of a wider collective. I knew while writing it that "An Eye and a Leg" was a weird one, that it might not be easily understood or easily-liked. I wrote it anyway. So to ultimately receive that institutional validation—to know that the preliminary readers and judges resonated with my worldview and my surreal little story—is absolutely priceless.

In terms of my writing journey, making the regional winner has definitely motivated me to keep my writing momentum going. I'd ideally like to avoid resting on my laurels. I want to keep reading, keep learning, and

keep developing my writing capabilities.

In exploring the trope of the 'expiring woman', what personal insights or real-life observations informed your approach to this theme?

I think it's a universal experience, and especially in South Asia, for a woman to hit a certain age and be bombarded with subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) nudges towards marriage and starting a family. This commodification of women, the reduction of an individual down to her marriageability and childbearing capacity, always seemed to me like a great tragedy. It's dehumanising, and a great disservice to women's personal aspirations, talents, and liberties. I've always refused to internalise anything that contributes to my own oppression, but I'm in a personal

and socioeconomic context where I'm able to do that. Many don't have that privilege. When I hit my mid-20s, I began to critically examine the idea of the "expiring woman" or the "old maid" trope that's so prevalent in various forms of media. Who wins by commodifying women and who wins when women begin systematically commodifying themselves? Who benefits when a woman races against the invisible clock in her head? My search for the answers to these questions led me to write "An Eye and a Leg".

How did you find the balance between dark comedy and the unsettling themes present in 'An Eye and a Leg'? How important is humour to you when writing about heavy or uncomfortable topics?

I knew I had a message to get across in "An Eye and a Leg"—and I was never going to

compromise on that. So keeping it intact, I gave myself the space to play around with elements of humour, surrealism, and a bit of body horror. I didn't want to write a regular, run-of-the-mill melodrama; the world has enough of those. What I did want was to shock my readers, make them laugh, cry, and ultimately have them reconsider everything they've been conditioned to believe in since birth. I wanted to write what no one has ever written before. Saras Manickam, Judge for the Asia Region, said that my story was "without hysterics, without playing to victimhood", which indicates to me I was successful in what I set out to do.

I believe all tragedies are, at their core, hilarious. The best tragic works of literature are ones that incorporate humour so cleverly that you can't even tell it's there. It's a tragedy when we quell women's ambitions and aspirations for the sake of marrying them off, but it's also hilarious, I think, in how we approach it. In the imaginary, socially-constructed timelines we assign them. I personally will always incorporate some humorous and outlandish elements in anything tragic I write; it's how I offset the seriousness of it.

Where do you hope your writing takes you, both literally and creatively, in the next few years?

As I mentioned, I'm eager to keep this momentum going, but at the same time, I'm going to pace myself. I'm not in any rush. I'm just the instrument through which my stories tell themselves. There's a few works in progress I'm looking forward to completing and submitting to various competitions and journals within the next year or so. After that, who's to say? All I'm certain of at the moment is that while I might have what it takes to be good, I'd very much like to become great.

This is an excerpt. Read the full interview on The Daily Star and Star Books and Literature's websites.

What to WATCH
 Sony Sports 1 and 2
 French Open
 Live from 3:00 pm
 Sony Sports 5
 Nations League
 Semifinal
 Live from 1:00 am (Friday)



Hamza stars on home debut

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh fans got exactly what they came for at the renovated National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday: a victory to celebrate and a goal from their new icon, Hamza Choudhury, who scored on his home debut to help Bangladesh to a 2-0 win over Bhutan in a FIFA friendly, adding the perfect icing to the celebratory atmosphere.

Bhutan had threatened to spoil the occasion early, with midfielder Prema Zangmo narrowly missing the target just after kick-off, but the home side soon took control.

Coach Javier Cabrera rested key players Hamza, Jamal Bhuiyan, and Quazem Kirmancee after the break, opting for several changes to test combinations ahead of the high-stakes World Cup qualifier against Singapore at home on June 10, with tickets already sold out.

Fahamedul Islam, another expat but from the Italian diaspora, started on his preferred left wing. Although initially nervous, he grew into the game and created chances, including a cutback early in the second half that substitute Sheikh Morsalin failed to convert.

Experienced midfielder Sohel Rana eventually doubled the lead in the 48th minute with a low strike from outside the area, sealing a comfortable win.

Bangladesh goalkeeper Mitul Marma ensured the clean sheet with a brilliant stoppage-time save, denying a close-range tap-in from Bhutan substitute Jigme Namgyal.

The night ended with a heartfelt gesture as the players walked the stadium's athletic track, waving to fans in gratitude for their passionate support.



Bangladesh's heartbeat Hamza Choudhury points towards captain Jamal Bhuiyan (not in picture) in celebration after his towering header from a pinpoint Jamal corner gave the hosts a sixth-minute lead, paving the way for a 2-0 win over Bhutan in a FIFA friendly at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. Marking his home debut in style, the England-based midfielder did not take long to send the crowd into raptures at the venue, hosting its first international match in 55 months following extended renovation.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SHOME IS HOME
 Bangladesh midfielder Shamit Shome was unveiled in national colours ahead of the FIFA friendly between Bangladesh and Bhutan at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. Shome, who had arrived a few hours earlier, was rested for the contest but came onto the pitch during warmups and waved at fans before watching the match from the stands.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



“This moment (the IPL win) is right up there with the best moments I’ve had in my career, but it still marks five levels under Test cricket. That’s how much I value Test cricket... I would just urge youngsters coming through to treat that format with respect. If you want to earn respect in world cricket all over, take up Test cricket, give your heart and soul to it and earn the respect from legends.”

Virat Kohli after winning the elusive IPL title.

‘GIRLS ARE FANTASTIC’: Butler beaming after back-to-back draws

SPORTS REPORTER

Before facing off against higher ranked sides in the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Qualifiers in Myanmar in a few weeks’ time, the Bangladesh women’s football team recently earned back-to-back draws against two strong opponents in Jordan and Indonesia, much to the delight of head coach Peter Butler who felt the team’s hard work is starting to pay off.

“The girls are fantastic, well done, fully deserved it and it just goes to show with hard work, sometimes, you reap what you sow. So, I’m really, really proud of the girls,” Butler said in a video clip sent by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) after the match against Jordan on Tuesday.

Following a goalless draw against Indonesia, who are ranked 94th in FIFA rankings, the 133rd-ranked Bangladesh came from behind twice against the 74th-ranked Jordan to play out a 2-2 draw on Tuesday.

The positive outcomes against two strong opponents are good signs before the qualifiers, where Bangladesh will face higher ranked opponent like Myanmar (55) and Bahrain (92). Turkmenistan (141) is the other side in the four-team Group C and Bangladesh’s campaign will run from June 29 to July 5.

The results will also bring relief following a tumultuous period in the country’s women’s football.

Just months after Butler coached Bangladesh to their second successive SAFF Women’s Championship title in last year’s October, captain Sabina Khatun and 17



other senior players revolted against the coach in late January, skipped training and demanded his resignation.

But the BFF didn’t yield to the pressure of the footballers and sided with the coach. A new-look Bangladesh team, without the rebel players, played in the two-match friendly series against the UAE in February-March and lost both matches 3-1.

Butler had initially reportedly refused to call back any of the rebel footballers, but later relaxed his stance and included proven campaigners like Monika Chakma, Maria Manda, Rupna Chakma, Shamsunnahar Sr, Ritu Porna Chakma, Tahura Khatun and Shamsunnahar Jr who were part of the protests. However, he didn’t recall SAFF champions Sabina,

Sanjida Khatun and Masura Parvin.

The return of the experienced players improved the side’s strength and the team is now implementing the style of play Butler was trying to instill.

“We play good football. We’ve got a clear identity of actually how we want to play and how I want the team to play.”

But for the English coach, the biggest gain from the two draws was the character his team showed on the field.

“I think the most important ingredient which has come off this week is character... I’m just really proud of like everybody. The staff, the technical team, everyone’s put a shift in, worked really hard. I just thought we showed lots and lots character.”

“It’s been a wonderful learning week. Playing against higher opposition is not easy, but I think we’ve come a long way.”

Ebadot returns, Shanto retained as skipper for SL Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacer Ebadot Hossain returned to the national side for the first time in almost two years while Najmul Hossain Shanto was retained as Test captain for another year as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 16-member squad for the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka this month.

Ebadot suffered an ACL injury during an ODI series against Afghanistan in July 2023. He went under the knife and then endured a lengthy rehabilitation process before finally returning to action in November last year in the National Cricket League.

Alongside Ebadot, Hasan Murad, Nahid Rana and Liton Das returned to the Test side, while Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Tanzim Sakib and Tanvir Islam, who were part of the Bangladesh squad for their second Test against Zimbabwe last month, were dropped.

The series marks the start of the 2025-27 cycle of the ICC World Test Championship. The first Test will be played in Galle from June 17. The second match will commence in Colombo on June 25.



SQUAD: Najmul Hossain Shanto (Captain), Shadman Islam, Anamul Haque Bijoy, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Litton Das, Mahidul Islam, Jaker Ali, Mehidy Hasan Miraz (vice-captain), Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Hasan Murad, Ebadot Hossain, Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana and Khaled Ahmed.



The Real Madrid-Barcelona rivalry will be reignited on the international stage in national colours as French superstar Kylian Mbappe -- who leads the line for Los Blancos -- faces off against Barca’s young sensation Lamine Yamal, who is set to headline Spain’s XI, in the UEFA Nations League semifinal in Stuttgart on Friday. Defending champions Spain, who won the trophy under Luis de la Fuente in 2023, are aiming to make history by becoming the first team to retain the Nations League title.

PHOTOS: AFP/FACEBOOK



Ancelotti’s tactical trial with Brazil begins

AGENCIES

Carlo Ancelotti arrives in Brazil not just as a coach, but as a figure of hope and repair. The 65-year-old Italian is the Selecao’s first foreign manager in over 50 years, and he steps into a role layered with both expectation and urgency.

His first match—against Ecuador on Friday (5am Bangladesh Time) in a World Cup qualifier—marks the start of a critical mission: to rescue a faltering campaign and reignite a connection with disillusioned fans.

Brazil’s qualifying journey has been turbulent. A historic 1-0 home defeat to Argentina and three straight losses in 2023 ended Fernando Diniz’s reign. Dorival Junior’s short-lived tenure concluded with a 4-1 thrashing in Argentina. Yet despite the setbacks, Brazil sits fourth in the South American standings.

The format remains forgiving—six of ten teams qualify directly for the 2026 World Cup—and Brazil holds a six-point lead over seventh-placed Venezuela with four matches left.

The talent remains, but the structure is fragile. Ancelotti inherits a side bursting with attacking



Argentina head coach Lionel Scaloni and star forward Lionel Messi, and Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti with winger Raphinha, take part in training sessions ahead of their FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers. Argentina face Chile in Santiago on Friday (7am Bangladesh Time), while Brazil take on Ecuador in Sao Paulo (5am Bangladesh Time).

PHOTO: AFP

wingers, but lacking a true centre-forward. The legendary pipeline of No. 9s—from Romario to Ronaldo—has dried up. Richarlison is the

closest option, and Ancelotti knows how to work around this, having won the 2024 Champions League with a Madrid side led by Vinicius Jr. and

Rodrygo, though the latter hasn’t made this squad. Raphinha, co-top scorer in this season’s Champions League, offers another threat, but the bigger question lies in midfield creativity.

Brazil’s current generation lacks a classic playmaker. At Madrid, Ancelotti had Toni Kroos feeding Vinicius. Brazil, however, has no Kroos. Casemiro has been recalled to bring experience and leadership, but he’s no creator. Recent experiments with Bruno Guimaraes, Gerson, and Joelson have offered little in terms of imagination. The famed fullback tradition—once embodied by Cafu and Roberto Carlos—also seems in decline, with Ancelotti turning to names like Carlos Augusto, Wesley Franca, and Alex Sandro.

Off the pitch, Ancelotti faces another challenge: mending the bond between the team and the nation. The iconic yellow jersey, long a symbol of joy, has been politicized and now divides as much as it unites. Ancelotti has already called for unity. For Brazil, qualifying may still be likely—but rediscovering its identity is the real goal. The journey begins in Ecuador.

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UN not involved in talks on 'humanitarian corridor'

Says Gwyn Lewis

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UN has not been in discussions to establish a humanitarian corridor via Bangladesh to Myanmar's Rakhine State, said UN Resident Coordinator Gwyn Lewis yesterday.

She said it is not the UN's decision to put in place a humanitarian corridor, the decision rests on sovereign agreements between Bangladesh and Myanmar, and any other group involved.

She said this at an event organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents' Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) at Jatiya Press Club.

During the visit to Bangladesh in March this year, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told media he discussed the possibility of humanitarian aid channel from Bangladesh. He had said that would require authorisation of the parties involved in the conflict.

At the DCAB Talk, Gwyn Lewis said any such agreement has not

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



The Labondaho river in Gazipur's Sreepur has withered into a polluted canal now known as Lobolong, its waters darkened by toxic industrial waste. One corner overflows with scrapped polythene bags, while an adjacent enclosed water body remains green in an unsettling contrast. Photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

BNP slams budget as 'unilateral'

Says it lacks concrete strategies to tackle challenges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday said it had expected the interim government to hold talks with parties involved in the July uprising to build a minimal national consensus before announcing the national budget.

The party also described the proposed budget for the fiscal 2025-26 as "unilateral, traditional, and non-participatory", adding that it lacks concrete strategies to address persistent economic challenges, such as rising inflation and worsening poverty.

The BNP has laid out a 180-day action plan focused on education, healthcare, women's rights, rural development, and honouring martyrs if voted to power.

"If the interim government had wanted, it could have sought opinions from people of various classes and professions. Experts, civil society members, businesspeople, and youth representatives could also have participated. In that case, the budget would have symbolised a unified economic perspective," BNP Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury told a press conference on the party's budget reaction held at the BNP chairperson's office in Gulshan.

"The budget could have reflected the voices of various sections of society, but that opportunity has been missed."

The BNP leader said that if there had been political

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

BB plans to merge five Islamic banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Bank plans to merge five troubled Islamic banks in what could be the country's largest financial sector consolidation in recent memory. The formal merger process will begin in July and is expected to be completed by October 15, according to officials familiar with the plan.

Arief Hossain Khan, spokesperson for the central bank, confirmed that a meeting on the subject took place. "We heard that the agenda of the meeting was the merger," he said, but declined to elaborate.

A high-level meeting was held yesterday at the central bank headquarters between Governor Ahsan H Mansur and the managing directors and chairmen of the five Islamic banks -- Social Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank, First Security Islami Bank, Union Bank, and EXIM Bank.

According to officials, five joint teams, comprising Bangladesh Bank representatives and qualified staff from each bank, will begin work on the integration process and continue over a three-and-a-half month period. The banks will come under temporary government control after the merger process starts.

The current managing directors

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Once a lifeline, Labondaho now a curse

29km long river turned into polluted canal affecting farming, daily life, livelihoods

PINAKI ROY and MONJURUL HAQUE

Abdul Aziz once harvested rice in abundance from his fields next to Labondaho, once a picturesque river located in Indrapur, Gazipur's Sreepur. Today, he stands on cracked earth, nursing losses and lamenting poisoned waters.

This year, he invested Tk 18,000 in cultivation, expecting to reap 37 maunds (1 maund = 37.3242 kilogrammes) of paddy. Instead, he harvested only 21. "If the water wasn't so polluted, I could've met my target," he told The Daily Star.

Aziz farms on 35 decimals of land beside the river, now reduced to a narrow canal with stagnant water, choked with industrial waste and sewage. Locals no longer call it Labondaho, but Lobolong, the bitterness in their voices unmistakable.

We met Aziz just past a culvert on the road to the Gazipur Safari Park, a tourist trail that masks the silent crisis unfolding behind the treeline. For locals, the devastation is inescapable.

Aziz's neighbour, Matiur Rahman, fared even worse. His land, flooded with foul-smelling water, yielded just five maunds of rice since the embankment he made to save the land was breached.

The pollution of Labondaho has turned

farming into a game of chance, one that farmers increasingly lose. Across at least 50 villages, including Kabarghata, Beltoli, Uttar Beltoli, Korotoa, Shibit Chala, Baniar Chala, Beraider Chala, Boirar Chala, Paillabandha, Pirujali, Bhanipur, Mirzapur and more, farmers share the same story. Fields either wither in drought or drown in toxic runoff. Yields plummet. Illnesses rise.

Locals and environmentalists estimate that hundreds of acres of farmland have become uncultivable due to persistent waterlogging and contamination.

Once the lifeblood of an agrarian economy, the Labondaho is now a cautionary tale of industrial recklessness. What was once a river is now a black, foul-smelling stream that poisons land, sickens families, and suffocates livelihoods.

According to the water resources ministry, the 29-kilometre-long Labondaho originates in Gazipur Sadar and empties into the Turag. But residents say it flows from the Khiru river in Bhaluka, Mymensingh, coursing through Maona Uttar Para, Maona Bazar, Gargaria Master Bari, Bagher Bazar, and the Indrapur Safari Park area before joining the Turag at Bhabanipur.

Pollution, locals say, began in the 1990s

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Govt to roll out revised curriculum from 2027

Says edn ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government is set to introduce a revised secondary education curriculum in phases starting from 2027, officials said.

In the first year, it will be implemented for students of class six and gradually extended up to class twelve, said Siddique Zobair, senior secretary of the Secondary and Higher Education Division, while speaking at a press conference yesterday.

The conference was held at the education ministry office.

Education Adviser Chowdhury Rafiqul Abrar, widely known as CR Abrar, said the 2012 curriculum was reinstated under

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Aid sites in Gaza shut

Israel issues 'combat zones' warning; airstrikes kill 26 Palestinians



AGENCIES

The US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation did not distribute any aid yesterday as it presses Israel to boost civilian safety beyond the perimeter of its distribution sites, a day after dozens of Palestinians seeking aid were killed.

The GHF said it has asked the Israeli military to "guide foot traffic in a way that minimises confusion or escalation risks" near military perimeters; develop clearer guidance for civilians; and enhance training to

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

পবিত্র ঈদ-উল-আজহা উপলক্ষে সকল গ্রাহক ও শুভানুধ্যায়ী-কে

ঈদ মোবারক

গ্রাহকের আমানত সম্পূর্ণ সুরক্ষিত ও নিরাপদ

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি ব্যাংক

গণমানুষের ব্যাংক

Million gather in Makkah as hajj begins



AFP, Makkah

More than a million pilgrims participated in Islam's most important rite under a scorching sun yesterday as the hajj pilgrimage began.

With temperatures expected to top 40 degrees Celsius, pilgrims slowly circled the Kaaba -- the black cube at the heart of Makkah's Grand Mosque which is Islam's holiest site.

State media reported that others had begun arriving in the sprawling tent city of Mina on Makkah's outskirts where they will stay overnight before the hajj's high-point today -- prayers on Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) is believed to have delivered his final sermon.

About 1.4 million pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia ahead of the hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam that must be performed at least once by all Muslims with the means.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 3

কোরবানি উপলক্ষে জরুরি নির্দেশনা

কোরবানির হাটে সুস্থ পশু চেনার উপায়:

১. পিঠের ফুজ মোটা ও টানটান থাকবে।
২. সব সময় কান ও নেজ নাড়াচাড়া করবে।
৩. পশু স্বাভাবিক প্রাণবন্ত থাকবে এবং জাবর কাটবে।
৪. শরীরের চামড়া টানটান, পশম মসৃণ চকচকে ও উজ্জ্বল হবে।
৫. চামড়া টান দিয়ে ছেড়ে দিলে দ্রুত পূর্বের অবস্থায় ফিরে আসবে।
৬. মুন্দের সামনে খাবার ধরলে নিজ থেকে জিহ্বা দিয়ে টেনে খাবে।
৭. পশুর চোখ উজ্জ্বল, নাকের উপরের কানো অংশ ভেজা ভেজা এবং চকচকে হবে।

কোরবানির হাটে পশুর যত্নে করণীয়:

১. পশু খাবার জায়গা নিয়মিত পরিষ্কার রাখতে হবে।
২. প্রয়োজনীয় খাবার ও বিপজ্জনক পানীয় ব্যবস্থা রাখতে হবে।
৩. হাটের নিচে বা ঠাণ্ডা হারায়ুক্ত স্থানে পশুকে রাখতে হবে।
৪. অতিরিক্ত গরমে হিট স্ট্রোক এড়াতে পানি হিটলো যেতে পারে।
৫. পশু অসুস্থ হলে হাটে অবস্থানরত ভেটেরিনারি মেডিকেল সিনের সহযোগিতা নেয়া যেতে পারে।

কোরবানির পশুর চামড়া ছাড়ানো বিষয়ে করণীয়:

১. পশু জবাই করার পূর্বে গোসল করাতে হবে এবং পর্যাপ্ত পানি পান করাতে হবে।
২. ধারালো ছুরির সাহায্যে জবাই করার স্থান থেকে গলা, সিনা ও পেটের উপর দিয়ে সোজাসুজি দাগ কাটতে হবে।
৩. সামনের দু'পায়ের হাঁটু থেকে সিনা পর্যন্ত একটি দাগ কেটে প্রথম দাগের সাথে যোগ করাতে হবে এবং অনুজপভাবে পিছনের দু'পায়ের হাঁটুয় নীচ থেকে দাগ কেটে প্রথম দাগ পর্যন্ত কাটতে হবে।
৪. চামড়া ছাড়ানোর কাজে বাঁকানো মাথার ছুঁড়ি ব্যবহার করাতে হবে।
৫. ছাড়ানো চামড়া যথাশীঘ্র বিক্রয়/সংরক্ষণ/প্রক্রিয়াজাত করাতে হবে।

কোরবানির পর পশুর বর্জ্য ব্যবস্থাপনায় করণীয়:

১. সন্ন্যাস কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত স্থানে পশু জবাই করাতে হবে।
২. পশু জবাই করার পর রক্ত চরানিকে ছড়িয়ে যাতে পরিবেশের ক্ষতি না করে সে ব্যাপারে বিশেষ সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করাতে হবে।
৩. সন্ন্যাস কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত স্থানে পশুর বর্জ্য ফেলাতে হবে।
৪. পশু জবাইয়ের স্থান পানি দিয়ে ভালোভাবে বৌত করে জীবাণুনাশক ঔষধ বা ব্লিচিং পাউডার ছিটানতে হবে।
৫. সীতি কর্পোরেশন বা পৌরসভা কর্তৃক বিতরণকৃত ব্যাগ ব্যবহার করে এবং কর্তৃপক্ষের নির্দেশনা মোতাবেক বর্জ্য অপসারণ করাতে হবে।

প্রাণিসম্পদ অধিদপ্তর
মত্যা ও প্রাণিসম্পদ মন্ত্রণালয়।