



"We are living in a time of intense volatility in international relations... narrowing landscape marked by acute human suffering." UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi

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Over 260 killed in Air India plane crash

Dreamliner with 242 on board falls out of the sky on a medical college hostel in Ahmedabad; British passenger survives



Recreated flightpath of the Air India flight.

IMAGE: REUTERS

AGENCIES

At least 265 people were killed when an Air India plane, bound for London with 242 people on board, crashed on to a hostel for medical students in the western Indian city of Ahmedabad yesterday.

In the world's worst aviation disaster in a decade, the plane crashed minutes after taking off.

The plane came down on to the hostel of state-run BJ Medical College outside the Ahmedabad airport during lunch hour. The flight was headed to Gatwick, south of the British capital.

per the message we received."

However, Vidhi Chaudhary, a top state police officer, told Reuters, "Approximately 294 have died. This includes some students as the plane crashed on the building where they were staying."

She said police found one survivor who was in seat 11A, next to an emergency exit, adding that there could be more survivors in hospital.

"Thirty seconds after take-off, there was a loud noise and then the plane crashed," 40-year-old Vishwaskumar Ramesh, a British national, told the Hindustan Times, which showed a

He said that his brother, Ajay, was seated in a different row on the plane. "He was travelling with me and I can't find him anymore. Please help me find him," he said.

Ahmedabad police chief GS Malik said the bodies recovered could include both passengers and people killed on the ground. The dead included Vijay Rupani, the former chief minister of Gujarat state, of which Ahmedabad is the main city.

Relatives had been asked to give DNA samples to identify the dead, state health secretary Dhananjay Dwivedi said.



PHOTOS: AFP/VIDEO GRAB

Moments leading to the tragic crash of an Air India flight bound for London at Ahmedabad. The first photo shows the aircraft losing altitude. The second, zoomed in, shows the plane very close to the ground and attempting to climb. The last photo is of the fireball after the crash.

PHOTOS: AFP/VIDEO GRAB

The dead included bystanders on the ground as the aircraft crashed on to the hostel during lunch hour.

At least one passenger is known to have survived, police said, and the man told Indian media that he had heard a loud noise shortly after take-off.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Kanan Desai told PTI, "265 bodies have reached the city civil hospital as

boarding pass for seat 11A in that name online. "It all happened so quickly," he told the paper from his hospital bed.

"When I got up, there were bodies all around me. I was scared. I stood up and ran. There were pieces of the plane all around me," he said.

"Someone grabbed hold of me and put me in an ambulance and brought me to the hospital."

The building on which it has crashed is a doctors' hostel... we have cleared almost 70 percent to 80 percent of the area and will clear the rest soon," a senior police officer told reporters.

Parts of the plane's body were scattered around the building into which it crashed, photographs and

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PHOTO: AFP/VIDEO GRAB

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Economy to face 7 challenges in FY26

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and AHSAN HABIB

The finance ministry has identified seven major challenges including tight monetary and fiscal policies, taken to tame elevated inflation levels for more than three years, in next fiscal year that may increase unemployment.

The challenges are high inflation, Trump tariffs, low tax-GDP ratio, weak financial sector, aftermaths of LDC graduation and climate risks.

The challenges are high inflation, imposition of tariffs by Donald Trump's administration, low tax-GDP ratio, weak financial sector, aftermaths of LDC graduation and climate risks, according to the finance ministry's Medium-term Macroeconomic Policy Statement.

Due to high inflationary pressure, the government is taking tight fiscal and monetary policies but the tight policy stance has engendered a constrained business environment, characterised by elevated market interest rates stemming from higher policy rates.

If inflation does not decline in the coming months, private investment may slow and foreign direct investment inflows could remain subdued.

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An almost empty Farmgate yesterday as many dwellers of the capital have yet to return from their hometowns after the Eid holidays.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

No barrier to Tarique's return
Says home adviser

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Savar

There is no obstacle to BNP acting chairman Tarique returning to Bangladesh, said Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

"He is a citizen of Bangladesh -- he is free to return whenever he decides," Jahangir said in response to a question on whether Tarique's return would be easier following the upcoming meeting with the chief adviser.

Jahangir went on to urge journalists not to publish partial quotes.

"Please report everything I say in full. Partial reports often lead to misrepresentation. Neighbouring countries sometimes circulate false reports based on such incomplete information."

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Britain's King Charles III welcomes Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's Interim Government, for an audience at Buckingham Palace in London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Hope abounds as Yunus, Tarique meet today

Polls timing to take centre stage

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

As Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman meet today in London, many hope the stalemate over the timing of the next election will finally end.

It is likely to be a one-on-one meeting, but Yunus and Tarique may decide if more people should attend, Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam yesterday said.

"This is going to be a very important meeting for Bangladesh ahead of the election ... We are hoping that all issues will be discussed because one of them is the chief of the interim government and the other is the chief of the largest political party of Bangladesh," he told reporters without going into details.

Yunus is now on a four-day visit to London, where Tarique has been living for nearly two decades.

Ever since the chief adviser's UK visit was announced on June 4, speculations ran rife about the meeting, even though

it was not in the CA's itinerary.

On Tuesday, BNP General Secretary Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the chief adviser had invited Tarique for a meeting at his hotel, The Dorchester. He confirmed that the meeting was happening.

As the CA recently said the election will be held in early April, Tarique may tell him that the election should be held sooner because the month of Ramadan will end in mid-March and those weeks would not be ideal for electioneering, said party insiders.

The current political situation, July Charter, and reforms may also come up for discussion, Shafiqul Alam said.

The BNP maintains that the polls must be held by December this year, saying the reforms can be implemented much earlier.

Contacted, BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed said, "Politics is the art of compromise. By making compromises, both sides can make arrangements for early elections

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Yunus receives the Harmony Award from King Charles

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday received the prestigious "King Charles III Harmony Award 2025", a special honor to recognise long-term commitment to creating a world where people, places and the planet can live in harmony.

The king presented the award to Prof Muhammad Yunus, a 2006 Nobel Peace Laureate who has founded more than 50 social business companies and encouraged sustainable projects, at a ceremony at St James's Palace in London.

"The award is a huge honour for Prof Yunus and the people of Bangladesh," said Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam, while speaking to media in London.

Established in 1990, The King's Foundation, a UK-based charity founded by the then Prince of Wales, bestows the prestigious award annually on individuals with outstanding achievements in sustainable development and humanitarian causes.

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Two rights activists assaulted in Rangamati

Attack took place after event commemorating Kalpana Chakma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two rights activists, including a university teacher, were assaulted while they were returning from a programme commemorating the disappearance of Kalpana Chakma in Kawkhali upazila of Rangamati.

Kalpana, the then organising secretary of the Hill Women's Federation, disappeared on June 12, 1996. Yesterday was the 29th anniversary of her disappearance.

Oliur Sun, lecturer of English at ULAB, women's rights activist Marzia Prova and Nuzia Hasin Rasha, president of the DU unit of Biplobi Chhatra Moitri, were invited as speakers to the event held by the Hill Women's Federation.

Oliur suffered eye injuries in the attack.

Recounting how the attack took

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PHOTO: AFP

Photo shows the rear of the Air India plane following its crash in Ahmedabad, India, yesterday.

Yunus receives the Harmony Award

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The award is given based on the King's tenet that "we should work with nature, not against it".

South Korean diplomat and former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon became the first recipient of the King Charles III Harmony Award last year in recognition of his lifelong efforts to promote a "sustainable relationship between people, planet and place on a local and global scale".

The King's Foundation was founded in order to support communities where people, places and the planet can coexist harmoniously.

This year's awards ceremony comes as the charity revealed it has trained more than 11,500 students in traditional crafts and environmental education over its 35 year tenure, welcomed more than 2.5 million visitors to its UK destinations, and positively affected more than 5,000,000 lives through sustainable urban planning, reports UK's People Magazine.

The event celebrated the work of students, teachers, alumni and partners who have contributed to the foundation's work across various sectors such as sustainability, traditional heritage skills and environmental education.

Celebrities including Meryl Streep, David Beckham and Kate Winslet were among the 200 guests in attendance, and the trio were photographed sharing a laugh with King Charles.

Earlier on the day, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus met Britain's King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, London, for a private audience.

During the one-to-one meeting, Yunus briefed Charles on the political transition and the reform measures implemented in Bangladesh following last year's July uprising and the ousting of the Awami League government.

"It was the most important event of the chief adviser's visit to the UK," CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam told journalists.

An audience granted by the King is an acknowledgement of the importance of certain individuals and their work.

After the meeting, Charles and Queen Camilla gave Yunus a gift signed by them, said Shafiqul.

"It was a proud moment," he said.

On the third day of his visit to the UK, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus also met Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the UK House of Commons in Westminster, London.

No barrier to Tarique's return

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he said in a media briefing in front of Salna Highway Police Station in Gazipur.

Regarding the issue of push-ins by Indian authorities despite Bangladesh's objections, he said that the matter has already been addressed by the foreign affairs adviser, and formal letters have been issued.

"If any Bangladeshi national is staying in their country, of course, we will take them back, but they must return through proper channels," he said.

When asked about the risk of Covid-19 transmission from those being pushed in, he said: "Tests are being conducted for everyone. Measures have been taken to strengthen awareness and health screening at airports and land ports."

About the public health issues, the adviser said greater awareness is needed regarding the use of polythene.

People must be made aware so that polythene is not used under any circumstances. Masks must be used properly, not just kept in pockets. We must stay alert even though we are not currently facing serious Covid-related issues."

people being moved in stretchers and being taken away in ambulances.

"My sister-in-law was going to London. Within an hour, I got news that the plane had crashed," Poonam Patel, a relative of one of the passengers, told news agency ANI at the government hospital in Ahmedabad.

The passengers included 217 adults, 11 children and two infants, a source told Reuters. Of them, 169 were Indians, 53 were Britons, seven Portuguese, and one Canadian, Air India said.

Investigators are prioritising the recovery of the aircraft's black box, the key to understanding what caused the tragedy.

FlightRadar24 also said that it received the last signal from the aircraft seconds after it took off.

US aerospace safety consultant Anthony Brickhouse said one problematic sign from videos of the aircraft was that the landing gear was down at a phase of flight when it would typically be up.

"If you didn't know what was happening, you would think that plane was on approach to a runway," Brickhouse said.

"At this moment, we are ascertaining the details and will share further updates," Air India said on X.

The crash occurred just after the plane took off, television channels reported. One channel showed the plane over a residential area and then disappearing from the screen before a huge fireball can be seen rising into the sky from beyond the houses.

Visuals also showed debris on fire, with thick black smoke rising up into the sky near the airport. They also showed

on its website.

"The tragedy in Ahmedabad has stunned and saddened us," Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said images emerging of the crash were "devastating", and that he was being kept informed as the situation developed. A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said King Charles was also being kept updated.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has expressed shock over the crash of an Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Ahmedabad.

In a message sent to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday, Yunus extended his deepest condolences to the families of the victims.

"At this trying hour, our thoughts and prayers remain with the victims and their loved ones," the chief adviser said.

"We stand in solidarity with the people and government of India, and offer our full support in any form."

Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said he was "saddened" by the plane crash in neighbouring India.

The Tata Group, owner of Air India, will provide Rs 1 crore to the family of each person who lost their life in the plane crash, announced the company's chairman N Chandrasekaran.

Tata Group will also cover the medical expenses of those injured and ensure that they receive all necessary care and support, he said.

A judge said a police report "reveals the existence of consistent evidence" suggesting Cerdan acted in collusion with former Transport Minister Jose Luis Abalos and his former adviser, Koldo Garcia Izquierdo, in exchange for financial gain.

Cerdan, who is also a member of parliament, has been invited to testify voluntarily before the Supreme Court on June 25.

Due to his parliamentary immunity, he cannot be formally charged unless the court proceeds with further steps.

"I am absolutely not afraid. I am

Top Spanish ruling party official implicated in graft probe

AFP, Madrid

completely certain that I will not be accused of corruption," he said as he arrived in parliament.

The investigation centres on public procurement of medical equipment during the early months of the pandemic.

Abalos, who served as transport minister from 2018 to 2021 and was once a key figure in Sanchez's administration, is accused of receiving illegal commissions through business contracts.

He faces charges of corruption, influence peddling, and embezzlement.

Abalos was dismissed from Sanchez's cabinet in 2021 and expelled from the Socialist Party earlier this year but remains a member of parliament as an independent.

His parliamentary immunity was lifted in January. During a court hearing in December, he denied receiving any kickbacks and maintained there were no irregularities.

Sanchez's wife, Begona Gomez, and his brother, David Sanchez, are also the target of separate investigations for graft.

Hope abounds as Yunus, Tarique

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at the right time for the nation."

Important decisions about how the country will be governed in the future may be made after this meeting, he added.

"Through this meeting, we hope we will quickly move towards a democratic transformation. The faster we move towards a democratic transformation, the sooner a sense of relief will return and the other political problems will subside," he added.

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf told The Daily Star that the Yunus-Tarique meet will open a path to restore democracy in Bangladesh.

"We have urged our acting chairman to raise the issues that the BNP as a party had been talking about."

Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Ahsanul Mahboob Zubair said, "Something good may happen for democracy and the country from this event. Any issue can be resolved through discussions."

National Citizen Party Chief Coordinator Nasiruddin Patwary

said, "We hope the government will not bypass the trial for the July killings and reforms. In case the government gives a commitment about the election timing to anyone, the NCP will urge the government to reconsider that commitment."

In a statement, Islami Andolon's Joint Secretary General Gazi Ataur Rahman expressed hopes that Prof Yunus and Tarique will prioritise discussions on reforming party politics. The political culture has recently caused extreme frustration among the people.

"We expect the chief adviser to advise him on practising peaceful politics and talk about the way BNP is opposing the reform process. They should also talk about how the BNP is more accountable in establishing national consensus," he said.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh, said, "If the government changes its position and the election is held this year, it could be a step forward for the country's development."

Political analyst and writer Mohiuddin Ahmad said the BNP may

eventually accept elections in April.

Prof Dilara Chowdhury, a former teacher of government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, said the meeting could play a crucial role in resolving misunderstandings, fostering political consensus, and easing tensions.

"It will open a channel for negotiations and could reshape the political landscape," she added.

Saiful Haque, general secretary of the Biplobi Workers' Party, said, "If the election timing is set at the beginning of January or February, then a path may emerge to resolve the existing political crisis, instability, and uncertainty."

"The opportunity should not be wasted. And the BNP, of course, will want to move towards a reasonable solution to the crisis through discussions."

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis' Secretary General Jalaluddin Ahmad said, "We believe this meeting could be very crucial to shaping the future political direction if they reach a consensus on reforms and a framework for a credible election."



This handout photo, taken and released yesterday by the Ukrainian State Emergency Service, shows firefighters extinguishing a fire in a grocery store that was destroyed during an overnight Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine.



Painters add fresh coats of colour beneath the Mayor Hanif Flyover during the Eid holidays, bringing life to the otherwise drab concrete. The initiative is part of Dhaka South City Corporation's ongoing effort to beautify the city. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

271 arrested in joint drives from June 5-12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army, in coordination with other law-enforcement agencies, arrested 271 individuals during weeklong joint operations carried out across the country between June 5 and June 12.

The arrestees include known terrorists, illegal arms holders, smugglers, juvenile gang members, extortionists, drug dealers, and addicts, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a press statement yesterday.

During the drives, the law enforcers recovered 15 illegal firearms, 91 rounds of assorted ammunition, 18 shotgun cartridges, 21 empty cartridges, 38 hand-made bombs, various narcotics, locally made weapons, motorcycles, mobile phones, and cash.

All arrestees were handed over to local police stations after preliminary interrogation and legal procedures, the ISPR said.

The statement added that the army continues to carry out regular patrols and security operations across the country to ensure public safety.

In industrial zones, army patrol teams have been facilitating discussions between factory owners and workers, ensuring timely payment of wages and bonuses ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

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Justice eludes families of July uprising victims

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Shilpi Begum's life changed forever when her only son, Mehedi Hasan, was shot dead during a protest last July.

Since then, the grieving mother from Sonargaon, Narayanganj, has suffered two strokes. Now her only remaining wish is to see justice for her son.

"I just want those responsible for my son's death to be punished," Shilpi told The Daily Star recently.

Ahmed Palak, as well as ex-IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun. Two of them -- Palak and Abdullah Al Mamun -- are currently in jail on charges related to crimes against humanity committed during the uprising.

The investigator visited us once. That's all," Sana Ullah said outside the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), hoping for answers.

Sana Ullah also named activists of AL affiliated organisations -- Jubo League and Chhatra League -- as being involved. In a later

No progress has been made in the investigation into my son's death. Due to the delays, the witnesses of the incident are losing confidence and are now afraid of giving statements.

ZARTAJ PARVEEN
Mother of Shafiq Uddin

The grieving father met ICT Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam on Monday, who said they are currently busy dealing with Sheikh Hasina's command responsibility case. After the investigation of that case is completed, they will look into Mehedi's killing.

The family is not alone. So far, over 300 complaints have been filed with the chief prosecutor's office. A total of 23 cases have been lodged with the tribunal, according to the chief prosecutor's office.

This is a matter of law and professional investigation. Rushing may jeopardise the case and undermine justice.

TAJUL ISLAM
ICT Chief Prosecutor



But that hope is fading, as there has been no progress in the investigation over the past nine months.

Mehedi, 21, a student at Gazaria Institute of Science and Technology, was fatally shot in the head on July 20 during clashes between police, Awami League activists, and protesters in Siddhiganj.

On August 15, his father Sana Ullah filed a complaint with the ICT investigation agency accusing Sheikh Hasina, former ministers Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and Zunaid

complaint, he added more names, including several police officers and a local councillor.

Investigation Officer Zahiro Islam did not respond to phone calls despite repeated attempts.

Contacted, Investigation Agency Co-coordinator Muhammed Shahidullah Chowdhury said, "I cannot say outright what is the progress of the investigation as many complaints have been lodged. If the victim's father visits us, instead of the ICT, we can look into the progress."

In March, around 70 family members of the July victims held a sit-in outside the ICT, demanding swift justice.

The mother of another July uprising victim, Shafiq Uddin Ahmed Ahnaf, is also frustrated due to the delay in ensuring justice for her son's killing.

"No progress has been made in the investigation into my son's death. Due to the delays, the witnesses of the incident are losing confidence and are now

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NAT'L INSTITUTE OF OPHTHALMOLOGY Outdoor services resume amid security concerns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outdoor services at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital (NIOH) resumed yesterday after more than two weeks, bringing relief to patients seeking eye treatment.

At 11:20am, over 100 patients were seen waiting on the hospital's ground floor. A total of 577 patients received treatment at the outdoor department throughout the day.

However, many patients were unable to receive treatment, as the service was limited to four hours -- about 2.5 hours less than usual.

The 250-bed hospital, the country's largest government eye care facility, had suspended all services on May 28 following a clash between hospital staff and a group of patients injured in the July uprising, along with other patients and their attendants.

Emergency services resumed on a limited scale from June 4, but all other operations remained closed until yesterday.

Six doctors were on duty when the outdoor services resumed at 8:00am, and a large number of patients gathered.

Md Babul, 50, a driver by profession, came to the hospital on Wednesday but didn't get treatment. "I came again today

[yesterday] with my eye problems," he said while standing in the queue.

Arif Ahmed, a private employee from Munshiganj, said, "I came to the hospital at 9:30am and I'm still waiting," while speaking at around 12:00pm.

HOSPITAL STAFF RAISE SECURITY CONCERNS

Zane Alam, acting director of the hospital, said all services are expected to fully resume from Saturday as per the health ministry's instructions.

However, hospital staff, including doctors and nurses, have expressed concerns over security. They submitted a memorandum to the health adviser through the acting director seeking protection.

In the memorandum, the staffers said they have been providing treatment to all patients injured in the July Movement with high priority and standard. Still, the hospital is currently facing a serious security crisis and an increasingly untenable situation.

"Some patients who no longer require treatment have been occupying hospital beds unnecessarily for nearly ten months. They have been violating hospital discipline by engaging in unruly behaviour, verbally abusing and physically attacking doctors and staff, and even threatening the

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A man rides a bicycle with a child seated behind him in a makeshift passenger seat fashioned from a box. Though they appear cheerful, the precarious setup poses a serious risk, as it could detach at any moment and cause an accident. The photo was taken opposite the FDC building in the capital yesterday.

Barguna sees sharp spike in dengue

Locals, experts blame poor drainage, indiscriminate garbage dumping

HELEMUL ALAM and SOHRAB HOSSAIN

On the day of Eid-ul-Azha (June 7), Omar Al Arabi, a third grader at Barguna Collectorate School and College, was diagnosed with dengue.

He was first admitted to Barguna General Hospital, then moved to Rahat Anwar Clinic in Barishal. As his condition worsened, he was shifted to the ICU of Anwar Khan Modern Hospital in Dhaka, where he is currently receiving treatment.

Arabi is among many dengue patients in Barguna, which has become a major dengue hotspot this year.

The death toll includes 75-year-old Chan Mia from Charpara village in M Balitali union, who was admitted on June 9, and 70-year-old Gosai Das from Thanapara in Barguna town.

On June 6, Azmeri Monalisa Zerin, 27, daughter of former lawmaker Zafarul

Hasan Farhad, also died while undergoing treatment. Zerin was an LLB student at a private university and the founder of a cake-making business.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 108 dengue patients were hospitalised in the past 24 hours, with 79 admitted to Barguna General Hospital alone.

Out of 5,411 total dengue cases recorded this year across the country till yesterday, 1,485 are from Barguna. Among 23 reported deaths in the same period, two occurred in Barguna, as per DGHS data.

Currently, 184 patients are receiving treatment at Barguna General Hospital, the data also says.

Residents, entomologists, doctors, and municipal authorities blame the outbreak on poor drainage, waterlogging, indiscriminate littering, and ineffective mosquito control.

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614 died in road crashes in May Says Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 614 people died and 1,196 were injured in 597 road accidents across the country in May, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

Motorcycles were involved in 233 crashes alone, resulting in 256 deaths and 201 injuries. This accounts for 39.02 percent of all accidents, 41.69 percent of the fatalities, and 16.80 percent of the injuries, it said.

Dhaka division recorded the highest 139 road crashes last month, with 148 people dead and 271 injured. On the other hand, Barishal division saw the lowest 30 road accidents, resulting in 30 deaths and 44 injuries.

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Twenty-three Hajj pilgrims died in KSA this year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 23 Bangladeshi pilgrims died while performing Hajj in Saudi Arabia this year, according to the latest update from the Hajj Management Portal of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Among the deceased, 21 were men and two were women, according to the report released yesterday.

A breakdown of the deaths by location shows that 15 occurred in Makkah, seven in Madinah, and one in Arafat. No deaths have been reported in Jeddah, Mina, or Muzdalifah.

A total of 87,100 Bangladeshi pilgrims travelled to Saudi Arabia this year -- 5,200 under government management and 81,900 via private agencies -- to perform Hajj held on June 5.

According to official records, 65 Bangladeshi Hajj pilgrims died in 2024 and 121 in 2023.

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BNP, Gono Odhikar activists clash in Patuakhali

30 from both sides injured, BNP office vandalised, say locals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The activists of BNP and Gono Odhikar Parishad clashed reportedly over a trivial matter in Galachipa upazila of Patuakhali last evening.

At least 30 people from both sides were injured and a local BNP office was vandalised, said locals.

The incident occurred around 7:00pm in Char Biswas union following chases and counter chases between the two groups, said Galachipa Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Asadur Rahman.

The clash reportedly broke out when the Gono Odhikar Parishad organised a planned views-exchange meeting with local businessmen in front of their office near the Char Biswas Bazar. BNP's union office is adjacent to the office.

"As our meeting began, BNP activists started chanting provocative slogans that disrupted the programme," said Md Jewel, member secretary of the local unit of Gono Odhikar Parishad.

He claimed that activists led by Mofiz Uddin, president of the local Svechchhasebok Dal, engaged in a heated

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Youth held for rape attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Locals beat up a youth and handed him over to police after he allegedly attempted to rape a five-year-old girl in Phulbari upazila of Kurigram yesterday.

The incident took place in the morning. The child's father filed a case in this regard with Phulbari Police Station around noon.

The arrested youth was identified as Habibur Rahman Babu, 27, son of Saifur Rahman.

Phulbari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdus Salam said the five-year-old child was trying pick black plums from a tree near their house in the morning. Seeing the child alone, Habibur lured the child by tempting her with a black plum.

He then took the child to a betel nut garden next to the black plum tree and tried to forcibly rape her. Hearing the child's screams, family members and nearby locals ran to her rescue and detained the youth.

Later, the police went to the scene and arrested Habibur.

SHOHANUR RAHMAN RAFI

The mango orchards in Rajshahi are bustling with activity. Despite concerns that the break during Eid-ul-Azha holidays might disrupt the flow of mango supply across the country, orchard owners, traders and online entrepreneurs report a robust market.

Rajshahi, known as the "mango capital" of Bangladesh, experiences a sharp rise in mango harvesting and marketing each summer. This year, a bumper harvest combined with the Eid holidays created additional opportunities for trade.

Hossen, a seasoned mango grower from Durgapur, said, "There was a time when, if we couldn't sell mangoes in the market or to the wholesalers, many would go to waste. But now, there's no such risk. Even during Eid, transportation services continue to operate, so large volumes of mango shipments are going out. Since there are multiple channels to sell mangoes, they are being sold consistently. There's hardly any chance of spoilage now. However, this year, due to high yields, prices have dropped a bit."

Mango trader Abdur Razzaq from Charchhati echoed similar views. "Business is good, even during Eid holidays. The supply chain doesn't stop. Our transport runs throughout the holidays. We've prepared in advance

to ensure the mangoes reach different parts of the country without delays."

Ismail Hossain Islam, a wholesaler at Baneshwar Bazar, said, "Despite Eid holidays, our shipments go out as usual. Demand remains stable, especially from Dhaka. Our transport partners operate even during Eid. We expect orders from urban areas where people

orders and deliver mangoes nationwide.

"Earlier, growers lost many mangoes due to spoilage or lack of market access. Now, through online platforms and courier services, every mango can be sold.

Customers from anywhere in the country can order mangoes directly from the orchard and receive them within a few days," said Nayem.

owners to ensure fresh mangoes are picked and shipped within 24 hours," he explained.

"Online orders peak before Eid, as many people want to send mangoes as gifts or enjoy them during family reunions. Technology allows us to ensure quality and timely delivery anywhere in Bangladesh," he said.

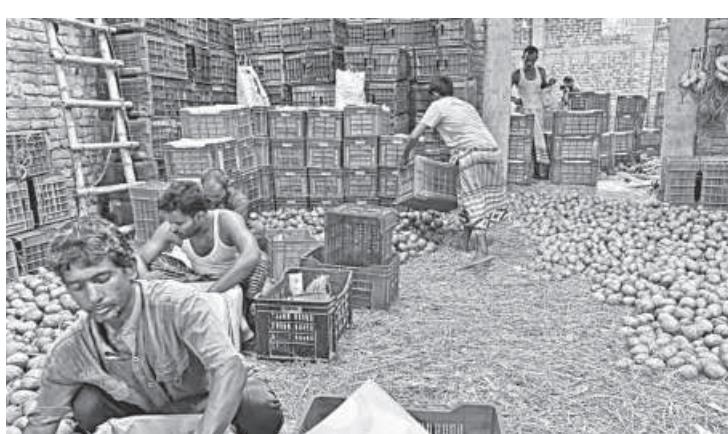
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According to officials at the Department of Agricultural Extension in Rajshahi, the local mango economy has undergone a significant transformation this year.

Rajshahi DAE deputy director Umme Salma told The Daily Star that this year's mango production is higher than last year.

"Due to increased production, prices have dropped slightly, but not drastically. Although farmers are getting a bit less per kilogramme, they are not facing losses. Transportation is not being disrupted during of Eid, so mangoes are being delivered across the country even during the holidays.

Besides, online platforms have become a strong marketing channel. However, consumers should always verify the source before buying mangoes online to ensure they are authentic."



want to gift Rajshahi mangoes or enjoy them at family gatherings."

The most significant recent change, however, has been the rise of online mango businesses, often run by students and young entrepreneurs.

Nayem Zahin, a law student at the University of Rajshahi, started selling mangoes online three years ago. Nayem and his peers use Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups to collect

orders and deliver mangoes nationwide.

"Although mango sales were strong before Eid, deliveries through online platforms are paused during the holidays as most courier services remain closed," he added.

Another young entrepreneur, Ehatashamul Haque Ibnu, a student of Geography and Environmental Science at the University of Rajshahi, has also entered the online mango trade.

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Wars now displace over 122m as aid funding falls

Says UN refugee agency

REUTERS, Geneva

The number of people displaced by war and persecution around the world climbed above 122 million this year due to a failure to resolve multi-year conflicts such as those in Sudan and Ukraine, the UN refugee agency said yesterday, noting that funding to help the refugees has fallen to 2015 levels.

There were over 2 million more people displaced globally by the end of April 2025 than there was the previous year despite the return of nearly the same number of Syrians after the collapse of Bashar al-Assad's rule, according to the report by United Nations High

The report attributed the rise to major conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar and Ukraine

Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

The report attributed the rise to major conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar and Ukraine and a "continued failure to stop the fighting".

"We are living in a time of intense volatility in international relations, with modern warfare creating a fragile, harrowing landscape marked by acute human suffering," Grandi said in a statement alongside the report.

The surge in displacement numbers comes as funding to help them has fallen to 2015 levels when the total number of refugees around the world stood at about half current levels, UNHCR said.

It described the cuts in aid as "brutal and ongoing" and said the situation was untenable, leaving refugees and others vulnerable.

Humanitarians complain that a lack of political leadership in brokering peace deals is prolonging conflicts and stretching aid groups tasked with addressing their impacts.



The body of a Palestinian is transported by car as mourners gather for the funeral of Palestinians who, according to medics, were killed by Israeli fire at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Iran in breach of nuclear obligations

Says UN watchdog; US evicts personnel from ME in sign of growing regional tension

REUTERS, Vienna

The UN nuclear watchdog's board of governors declared Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations yesterday and Tehran announced counter-measures, as tensions rose in the Middle East before further US-Iranian nuclear talks.

US and Iranian officials will hold a sixth round of talks on Tehran's accelerating uranium enrichment programme in Oman on Sunday, the Omani foreign minister said yesterday.

But security fears have risen since US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday American personnel were being moved out of the region because "it could be a dangerous place" and that Tehran would not be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's policy-making Board of Governors declared Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations for the first time in almost 20 years, raising the prospect of reporting it to the UN Security Council.

The step is the culmination of several stand-offs between the Vienna-based IAEA and Iran since Trump pulled the US out of a nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers in 2018 during his first term, after which that accord unravelled.

An IAEA official said Iran had responded by informing the nuclear watchdog that it plans to open a new uranium enrichment facility.

The move by Iran was among several measures being taken because of the resolution, Iranian state TV said.

Japan, China trade barbs over fighter jet manoeuvres

AFP, Tokyo

Beijing yesterday condemned what it called "dangerous behaviour" by a Japanese military plane over the Pacific after Tokyo said Chinese fighter jets flew unusually close to its aircraft at the weekend.

The Japanese government had complained to China over the incident, in which no Japanese military personnel were reported injured.

A Chinese J-15 fighter jet from the Shandong aircraft carrier followed a Japanese P-3C patrol plane for 40 minutes on Saturday, said Japanese defence ministry.

IMMIGRATION RAIDS Protests spread across US despite Trump threats

AFP, Los Angeles

Protests over hardline immigration tactics ignited across the United States after days of demonstrations in Los Angeles, as California yesterday prepared for a legal showdown over President Donald Trump's deployment of the military.

More than 1,000 people massed Wednesday in America's second biggest city, for a sixth day of protests, with the crowd peaceful as they marched through the streets.

A second night of curfew was in place as city leaders try to get a handle on the after-dark vandalism and looting that scarred a few city blocks in the 500-square-mile (1,300 square kilometers) metropolis.

"I would say for the most part everything is hunky-dory right here at Ground Zero," protester Lynn Sturgis, 66, a retired school teacher, told AFP. The mostly peaceful protests ignited over a sudden escalation in efforts to apprehend migrants in the country illegally.

Trump unveils website for \$5m US residency visa

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump touted a new website for his planned \$5 million US residency permit on Wednesday, saying the waiting list for the golden visa has opened on TrumpCard.gov.

"Thousands have been calling and asking how they can sign up to ride a beautiful road in gaining access to the Greatest Country and Market anywhere in the World," Trump wrote in a social media post.

Trump unveiled the first such visa aboard Air Force One in April, holding a golden prototype that bore his face and promising the special permit would probably be available "in less than two weeks."

The visas are not available yet, but the website announced Wednesday allows interested parties to submit their name, desired visa and email address under a header that says "The Trump Card is Coming."

বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী

সরাসরি কমিশন
অফিসার পদে ২০২৬এ
ডিইও ব্যাচে যোগ দিন

উপযুক্তি

১। নিয়োগ পদ (ক্লিপিং) - প্রতিবেদ ও পরিবেশ :

ক। **শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা :** সরকার কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত বনামধন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত বিষয়ে প্রাপ্তক (সম্মান) সহ মাস্টার্স/ প্রার্থীকৃত এসএসসি ও এইচএসসি/ সম্মান উচ্চ প্রার্থীকৃত স্নাতক জিপিএ-৪.০০ এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক পদে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক পদে জিপিএ-৩.০০ (৪-ক্লেই) প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে।

(১) বাংলা (২) ইংরেজি (৩) পদাধিবিজ্ঞান (৪) রসায়ন

খ। **নিয়োগ :** চূড়ান্ত মনোনয়ন থেকে কমিশনার অফিসার হিসেবে 'ড্রাইভিং সার সেক্ষেটেন্যান্ট' পদে ০৫ বছরের জন্য ব্যর্থমেয়াদী কমিশন পদে নির্দেশ করা হবে। প্রবর্তীতে বিধি অনুযায়ী চাকুরি বর্ধিত/ ছারী করা হবে।

২। নিয়োগ পদ (ক্লিপিং) - প্রতিবেদ :

ক। **শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা :** সরকার কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত বনামধন প্রার্থীকৃত ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং স্নাতক পদে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। অথবা, ইঞ্জেঞ্জিয়ারিং এবং প্রযোজন প্রক্রিয়া প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক পদে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক পদে জিপিএ-৩.০০ (৪-ক্লেই) প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে।

১। কল্পিতকার সামগ্রে এবং ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং

৩। সিভিল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং

প্রার্থীকৃত এসএসসি ও এইচএসসি/সম্মান উচ্চ প্রার্থীকৃত স্নাতক (সম্মান)-এ স্নাতক পিসিপি-৪.৫০ সহ স্নাতক (সম্মান)-এ স্নাতক পিসিপি-৩.০০ (৪-ক্লেই) প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। অথবা, ইঞ্জেঞ্জিয়ারিং এবং প্রযোজন প্রক্রিয়া প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান)-এ স্নাতক পিসিপি-৩.০০ (৪-ক্লেই) প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে। যেকোনো ২টি বিষয়ে স্নাতক পদে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান)-এ স্নাতক পিসিপি-৩.০০ (৪-ক্লেই) প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে।

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৩। নিয়োগ পদ (ক্লিপিং) - প্রতিবেদ :

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১। চূড়ান্ত প্রার্থীকৃত এবং প্রযোজন প্রক্রিয়া ও চেবার টেস্টে প্রেসিপিল প্রার্থীকৃত এবং প্রযোজন প্রক্রিয়া প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে।

গ। **নিয়োগ :** চূড়ান্ত মনোনয়ন থেকে কমিশনার অফিসার হিসেবে 'ড্রাইভিং সার সেক্ষেটেন্যান্ট' পদে ০৫ বছরের জন্য ব্যর্থমেয়াদী কমিশন পদে নির্দেশ করা হবে। প্রবর্তীতে বিধি অনুযায়ী চাকুরি বর্ধিত/ ছারী করা হবে।

৪। নিয়োগ পদ (ক্লিপিং) - প্রতিবেদ :

ক। **শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা :** সরকার কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত যেকোনো মেডিকেল কলেজ হতে এমবিবিএস ইন্টের্নশপ প্রোগ্রামে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং এমবি�বিএস প্রোগ্রামে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক পদে প্রাপ্তিপাত্তি প্রাপ্ত এবং স্নাতক (সম্মান) ও মাস্টার্স উভয় পরীক্ষায় স্নাতক পদে জিপিএ-৩.০০ (৪-ক্লেই) প্রাপ্ত হতে হবে।

১। জাতীয়তা : বাংলাদেশি নাগরিক

৮। সময় : ০১ জানুয়ারি ২০২৬ তারিখে অনুর্বৰ্ত ৩০ বছর (একিডেভিট এক্সিবিগো নয়)।

৫। ব্রেকিং অব্যাহৃত :

৫। ব্রেকিং অব্যাহৃত : বিবাহিত/ অবিবাহিত।

৬। সার্বিক যোগ্যতা ন্যূনতম :

পুরুষ
ক। উচ্চতা : ১৬০ সে' মি' মি' (৫'-৮")
খ। বৃক্ষের মাপ : ব্রাতৰিক ৭৬ সে' মি' মি' (৩০")
গ। প্রস্তুত স্নাতক পিসিপি-৩.০০ (৩০")
গ। প্রজন্ম : ৫০ কেজি

মহিলা
ক। উচ্চতা : ১৫৭.৮ সে' মি' মি' (৫'-১")
খ। ব্রাতৰিক ৭১ সে' মি' মি' (২৮")
গ। স্নাতক পিসিপি-৩.০০ সে' মি' মি' (৩০")
গ। প্রজন্ম : ৪৭ কেজি

* উচ্চতা ও বৃক্ষের মাপ নির্ধারিত করে আগোগ বিবেচিত হবে।

৭। জাতীয়তা : বাংলাদেশি নাগরিক।

৮। প্রশংসন প্রযোজন : বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনীর প্রচালিত বিধি মোতাবেক প্রচালিত প্রযোজন প্রদান করা হবে।

৯। সেবা ও বিধু বাংলাদেশি অধিবাসী যেকোনো সরকারি চাকুরি হতে ব্যর্থমাত্র কিংবা অপ্রযোগ্য হতে পারে।

১০। প্রার্থীকৃত এসএসসি/সম্মান উচ্চ প্রার্থীকৃত আর্ডেনেন্স প্রযোজন করে আগোগ প্রযোজন করে আগোগ প্রযোজন করে আগোগ প্রয

End the persistent paralysis at NHRC

Why has the government failed to reactivate it after seven months?

It is unacceptable that seven months after the resignation of its chairperson and members, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) still remains leaderless, powerless, and largely ineffective. This situation might have been expected during Awami League's 15-year rule when it functioned as little more than a silent spectator to the regime's persistent human rights violations. And that should have changed following its ouster through the July uprising. Unfortunately, the interim government—which has frequently expressed its commitment to upholding human rights—has made little, if any, progress in reforming and empowering the NHRC despite having been in power for over 10 months.

Established in 2009, the commission was intended to align with the 1993 Paris Principles and function as an independent human rights watchdog. These principles require such institutions to be autonomous, well-resourced, and capable of investigating all rights violations, including those committed by state actors. However, since its inception, the NHRC has been widely criticised as a "toothless body", and for good reason.

By law, it cannot investigate law enforcement agencies or intervene in cases pending before the courts or the ombudsman, effectively excluding it from many of the country's most serious human rights cases. Additionally, under Sections 6 and 7 of the NHRC Act, the president appoints its chairperson and members based on recommendations from a selection committee largely composed of ruling party allies. According to rights advocates, this violates the Paris Principles, which emphasise that minimising political interference is essential to a rights watchdog's credibility. Moreover, unless the commission is capable of holding state actors accountable—which the NHRC is not, by design and by statute—its very existence becomes symbolic, offering neither meaningful protection for victims nor deterrence against future violations.

Another significant concern is the NHRC's funding. Reportedly, only 25 percent of its budget comes from the state, while 75 percent is provided by international development partners. For such an important human rights body, there must be a designated budget that ensures both its efficiency and its operational independence.

On top of these pre-existing structural issues, the interim government's failure over the past seven months to reconstitute the commission has left it limited to receiving complaints and carrying out routine administrative tasks only. This is deeply unfortunate, and totally unacceptable. In a way, the continued plight of the NHRC resembles that of the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC). For years, critics argued that the NRCC was deliberately kept weak—not only in terms of legal and executive authority but also in terms of budget, resources, and administrative power. Since the change in government, it too has remained virtually non-functional. Such dysfunctions benefitted rights and rivers violators in the past, and they continue to do so now.

For a government charged with leading the state reform drive, it is difficult to understand why it has failed not only to make these commissions functional but also to reform their structures and introduce meaningful change in their governance. It is high time the government changed its course.

Tensions at NIOH hurting eye patients

Authorities must ensure no further disruptions take place

The prolonged closure of the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital (NIOH)—the country's largest public facility for eye care—is something that should never have happened, given how it not only affects ordinary patients seeking eye treatment but also worsens an already battered image of the state's handling of those injured during the July uprising. At this point, it is immaterial to debate who was or is more at fault for the paralysis—hospital staff or the protesting July Joddhas. What's important is that ordinary patients are suffering because of it.

On Thursday, outdoor services have resumed after more than two weeks, while emergency services resumed on a limited scale on June 4. But other services including tests continue to remain halted. Worryingly, the prospect of full operations being restored on Saturday is clouded by uncertainty and fear that tensions may again flare up with the likely return and re-mobilisation of injured protesters following the Eid holiday. Hospital closure has already caused immense hardship for low-income patients who rely on this facility for affordable care, with thousands turned away. Any further disruption will only deepen their suffering while further eroding trust in the authorities' ability to mediate convincingly in this meaningless stand-off.

This latest episode in the short history of public outbursts by aggrieved July Joddhas started on May 28. That day, a group of injured protesters long receiving treatment at NIOH allegedly attacked the staff, sparking a tripartite clash involving other patients and their attendants. Several doctors and nurses were injured, and some staff residential quarters were also attacked. Meanwhile, the July protesters claimed they, too, were assaulted by hospital staff and police during the incident. All this led to the hospital services being suspended. Despite sporadic negotiations and partial service resumption afterwards, things remain tense. Fuelling the concern is the refusal of injured protesters to accept discharge letters despite many among them being cleared by a medical board on June 4.

Against this backdrop, the hospital authorities, as one of the involved parties, may find it difficult to broker a solution alone. The onus, therefore, lies with the higher authorities to mediate a solution that ensures uninterrupted treatment for both the July injured and the general public. This will require clear communication of discharge procedures and addressing the protesters' grievances about neglect or malpractice. The July Joddhas deserve proper care and respect. But so do the thousands of ordinary citizens who come to this hospital for treatment.

CLARITY FROM ONE LONDON DIALOGUE

Will the other follow suit?



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KAMAL AHMED

Even if the much-anticipated meeting between Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Tarique Rahman, acting chairman of the BNP, the leading political party in Bangladesh, fails to fulfil the high expectations of bridging differences over the recently unveiled election roadmap, London has nonetheless emerged as the place where the interim government's strategy gained much-needed clarity. This was largely due to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, commonly known as Chatham House, hosting Prof Yunus for a discussion and Q&A session focused on Bangladesh's future trajectory. The conversation addressed both domestic issues, such as elections, democracy, and institutional reforms, and foreign policy concerns, particularly relations with India and the Rohingya refugee crisis.

This context underscores a glaring issue: the Chief Adviser's Office still lacks an effective communication strategy. Had similar interactive press sessions been held in Dhaka over the past 10 months, many unanswered questions might have been addressed. Of course, no one desires a return to the fawning praise and suppression of dissent that characterised Sheikh Hasina's rule over 15 and a half years. However, meaningful engagement with the press—beyond selective interviews or statements by a frequently seen spokesperson—is long overdue.

At Chatham House, while most questions came from the moderator and sympathetic expatriates, the chief adviser's responses were clear and direct. His categorical rejection of any future political role and dismissal of the idea of a referendum are especially significant. Critics and conspiracy theorists have long speculated that the delay in holding elections beyond December 2025 is driven by his personal political ambitions. A referendum, they argued, could be used as a means to extend his mandate under the guise of enacting reforms. His unequivocal stance helps dispel those suspicions.

Yunus reiterated that the interim government has three core mandates: a) reforming institutions that enabled the rise of authoritarianism; b)

ensuring accountability for those involved in killing protesters and committing grave human rights violations; and c) holding a free and fair election. While these goals are widely supported, the question of a timeline remains contentious. The consultation



Prof Muhammad Yunus, chief adviser of the interim government in Bangladesh, during a Q&A session at Chatham House in London, UK on June 11, 2025.

SOURCE: CHATHAM HOUSE/FACEBOOK

process involving stakeholders and the complexities of judicial procedure make it nearly impossible to fix definitive deadlines for the first two objectives.

His declaration—"None of our cabinet members (of the interim government) would like to do that (stay in power)... Our job is to manage a smooth transition and ensure the people are happy when we hand over power to an elected government"—was reassuring. It addresses concerns raised by senior BNP figures who question the interim government's neutrality, particularly due to the continued presence of two former student leaders in ministerial positions.

for crimes against humanity. His observation that "none of that party has ever expressed remorse" leaves a narrow window for a reformed entity to seek national forgiveness—though such a transformation would demand genuine contrition and structural overhaul.

This puts pressure on international observers and allies of the Awami League, particularly India, who continue to call for the party's inclusion in future elections. They now face a stark choice: either persuade the Awami League to acknowledge and rectify its past, or accept the reality that the Bangladeshi public has decisively turned away from it. Even

public sentiment. Recorded interviews with the party's General Secretary Obaidul Quader and former minister Rezaul Karim openly acknowledging their illegal border crossings further expose their disregard for legal norms.

While it would be speculative to draw a direct connection between the Chatham House event and the Yunus-Rahman meeting, the former served as a timely opportunity to clear the air and possibly mend perceived rifts between the interim government and BNP. As BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir hinted, this meeting could well mark a turning point in Bangladesh's political trajectory—if all goes as intended.

The true purpose of education



EDUCATING EDUCATION

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RUBAIYA MURSHED

"Are you an education major?" someone asked me, a hint of admiration in her voice. It had been a hot humid afternoon in July; we were sitting on the field under the bot gachh at our bot-tola school, gathered for our regular classes with the homeless street children on the Dhaka University campus. She was a foreigner visiting from a social work NGO, and seeing my engagement with the children, she assumed I had specialised in the field of education.

At the time, I was a second year student in economics, and I began to wonder: can an economist focus their skills and knowledge on matters of education? I Googled "economics and education" and found my answer. I finished my economics degrees and journeyed to the University of Cambridge, where I found a group of economists who had set up their platform working on education issues.

The dream to someday work on reforms in Bangladesh's education system became my inspiration. I daydreamed about working on education for underprivileged children, and I set out to learn all that I could so that I could do something to make a difference when I returned to Bangladesh. The more I learnt, the harder it seemed. I decided that the first step would be to begin raising questions.

Today, it all rounds up with one last question: what is the purpose of education? The answer will ascertain that we're not like a train with competence that runs on time, but like one that doesn't know where it's going or why it's going there.

Philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell once cautioned that different stakeholders of education would naturally have different ideas on education's purpose, because they'd have different interests to serve. The powerful are more likely to have a different agenda altogether—they don't want education to create a workforce that can think for themselves. If we are an "educated" workforce and if we want the best collective interests of the majority to be reflected in educational policy-making, we must think, ask questions, and demand answers.

Importantly, our answers should be research-driven. We need to invest in conducting our own research and make the system of grants and funding efficient, not connection-driven. We need to fix our education system so that it mitigates socioeconomic differences, rather than reproducing it. We need to do better for the children coming from lower-income families to balance out inequities at home. We need to de-politicise education.

The truth remains that nothing

is above politics. During a visit to Cambridge while I was a student there, the then Indian education minister said, "One thing I believe is behind the change in the education system is the political will behind it." With so much political difference persisting historically in our country, we need to unite and rise above politics for the sake of the state of our education.

We need to do our own re-imagining and remember that the true goal of education is 'intelligence plus character,' as Dr Martin Luther King, Jr said. Those of us who have seats at the table, who are policymakers and politicians, we need to care more—even if our own children are safely abroad studying in other education systems.

Like separation of church and state, we need separation of education and party politics. We need to ask: who sets our education policies? Who gets a seat at the table?

We need to institutionalise this process so that qualified people, not just famous people, comprise a team and so that quality work continues regardless of a change in political regime. Rabindranath Tagore, as much an education enthusiast as a writer, wrote, "What we understand by school is just a factory for providing education... There are rules in the factory, but no soul. Teachers are working, students are working, but

neither knows what this working is for." You see, we've been yearning for a change for a long time, and this need surpasses who is in government.

If we are to revolutionise our education system, we have countless examples from around the world to draw inspiration from, many quite close to home. The likes of the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives Ladakh, combining the best of the East and the West, where students don't pay for education but work for it, where education is contextual and experiential and values the culture that has developed over a thousand years as part of it. The likes of the "Happiness Curriculum" launched in Delhi, where students learn to develop critical thinking and inquiry while also learning to express themselves independently and creatively. The likes of education reformists such as Sonam Wangchuk, the real life Phunsukh Wangdu, and Gitanjali J Angmo, whose lecture on reimagining the philosophy of education shook me to the core.

We need to do our own re-imagining and remember that the true goal of education is "intelligence plus character," as Dr Martin Luther King, Jr said. Those of us who have seats at the table, who are policymakers and politicians, we need to care more—even if our own children are safely abroad studying in other education systems. As novelist and poet Thomas Hardy said, "All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time and entitled to our general care." I end this series here in the hope that, if anything, my writings have sparked, in my soul and yours, a stronger yearning for change—for a society that lets us learn because we love to learn.

What the Awami League and Jamaat can learn from apologies



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SAZZAD SIDDIQUI

Political discourse in Bangladesh is increasingly marred by a dangerous trend, especially through the casual use of stigmatising labels against ideological dissent. The trend of tagging individuals as pro- or anti-Islamist, pro-Pakistani or pro-Indian—often based on circumstantial or short-term politically opportunistic interpretations—is inevitably problematic and deeply destabilising. This culture of labelling undermines democratic norms and contributes to long-term sociopolitical volatility. What may begin as a strategic manoeuvre to delegitimise opponents often spirals into a broader culture of suspicion, hostility, and somatic violence. The effects of this tagging culture have eroded democratic values and compromised national security.

A recent example is Mahfuj Alam, the current adviser for information and broadcasting in the interim government. Over time, he has faced various political labels, including accusations of being an Islamist linked to the banned group Hizbut Tahrir and a pro-Pakistan sympathiser. More recently, he has been accused of being both pro-Indian and anti-Islamist, based on a Facebook post and a critical speech about the student-teacher protests at Jagannath University. These contradictory labels highlight the opportunistic and inconsistent nature of political branding in Bangladesh. As he appeared to address JNU protesters, Mahfuj was physically attacked with a water bottle and later targeted with widespread verbal abuse. Yet, instead of retaliating, he invited his attacker to his home for tea, which is a rare and commendable gesture in a political culture often driven by vengeance. His response mirrors two other recent public apologies that stand out in Bangladesh's deeply polarised political landscape.

The first came from the Islamist group Hefazat-e-Islam, following outrage over

misogynistic censures made by some of its leaders during a protest at Suhrawardy Udyan against the proposals of Women's Affairs Reform Commission. Under public and legal pressure, the party issued a formal official apology—an unprecedented move in its history. This is particularly significant given that in 2013, Hefazat's then chief Shah Ahmad Shafi derogatorily compared women to tamarinds, which credited him with the satirical title "Tamarind Hujur." Despite national uproar, neither he nor the party apologised for this derogation.

Another significant example from the Bangladeshi media landscape occurred during the 2006-2008 caretaker government period, when nearly all media outlets were accused of uncritically reproducing narratives and stories provided—often pushed—by intelligence agencies, particularly the DGFI. Only the New Age resisted this trend, and years later, a prominent editor acknowledged this by crediting the New Age and publicly apologised on a television show for his own paper's role during that period. Such rare apologetic humility in our culture marked a significant milestone for media

To achieve genuine democratic renewal, Bangladesh must adopt a political culture rooted in historical truth and moral accountability. This demands that all political actors, especially Jamaat-e-Islami (most notably its controversial role during the 1971 Liberation War), confront past wrongdoings. The party's internal divisions highlight the urgency of such reckoning.

accountability and journalistic ethics in Bangladesh.

These three acts of forgiveness and apology carry significant weight at a time when public figures rarely admit their wrongdoings. In a regressive political culture so often driven by aggression and propaganda, these gestures suggest a potential shift towards democratic values and the ethics of accountability.

Similarly, the Awami League must confront recent allegations of state-sponsored atrocities. A leaked audio recording allegedly implicates the then regime premier, Sheikh Hasina, in authorising the use of lethal force against demonstrators. In addition, a recent UN fact-finding report describing state actions as potential crimes against humanity raises grave concerns about human rights and democratic governance in the country.



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

Our nation is still haunted by the horrors of the 1971 Liberation War and deeply divided over many issues. Most importantly, targeted and opportunistic tagging of political opponents often imperils hard-won democratic gains. Such practices silence dissent and deepen societal divisions. In this context, three key lessons emerge from these events that merit broader reflection in Bangladesh's sociopolitical landscape.

One editor's public apology underscores that admitting mistakes reflects ethical responsibility, not weakness—an essential

and a break from the politics of vengeance.

Towards genuine democratic renewal
t Barrister Abdur Razzaq, Jamaat's former assistant secretary general, resigned after failing to convince party leaders to seek an apology. Razzaq's stance was a principled act that sparked introspection within the party, reflected in the public tribute paid by Jamaat activists at his funeral. Jamaat's continued failure to unequivocally support the Liberation War remains a profound moral and political shortcoming.

It is worth mentioning that Sheikh Hasina sought apology for any mistakes committed by her father's Awami League government during its 1972-75 tenure, which allegedly brought her to power through an electoral victory.

Given these realities, both Jamaat and the Awami League must formally acknowledge their past misdeeds. Only sincere apologies and concrete steps towards accountability can help the country build a political culture based on democratic values, mutual respect, and a more equitable society.

Dhaka's darling dengue diaries



MIND THE GAP

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NOSHIN NAWAL

Ah, summer in Dhaka. That magical time of the year when mangoes ripen, lychees flood the bazaars, and humidity smothers you, and everyone's plus one to picnics, school events, and family dinners is—you guessed it—dengue fever. As if melting into a puddle of sweat in this heat was not enough, you also have to embrace the skeletal-level weakness that makes lifting your head off a pillow a herculean feat.

Yes, while other countries boast cherry blossoms and beach holidays, we get a yearly VIP visit from the Aedes mosquito. It doesn't just bite—it makes your body buckle into absolute stupor. These mosquitoes have better timing than airlines (not saying much, but still) and a more efficient delivery system than the local food delivery services.

At this point, let's stop pretending that dengue is a health crisis. It's a lifestyle. You don't get dengue—you host dengue. It arrives

uninvited, overstays its welcome, and leaves you broke, exhausted, and contemplating your life choices. Think of it as a relative from hell, but airborne and slightly more bloodthirsty. The cost of the blood tests alone is doing much to my blood pressure.

The symptoms? Fever, joint pain, headache, rashes—and a newfound intimacy with hospital waiting rooms. And the cure? Well, mostly papaya leaf juice, blind optimism, and your mum whispering, "InshaAllah bhalo hoye jaba" while pouring coconut water down your throat like she's exorcising the virus.

Hospitals? Overcrowded. IV drips? Shared like a plate of pakoras. Beds? Optional. In fact, dengue is the only illness where being sent home to "rest" means you're not sick enough to die yet. Congratulations!

Meanwhile, the government launches their annual dengue awareness campaign

which is critically sidelined by the who-will-be-our-new-mayor crisis: posters that no one reads, fogging drives that look suspiciously like stage smoke for a low-budget jatra, and public health officials assuring us on TV that "the situation is under control," while behind them someone faints from a platelet count that's trying to set a new limbo record.

And the fogging? Oh, the fogging. It's less a public health intervention and more a

waterlogged street—nice try, *bhai*, but we're built differently.

Local authorities always seem shocked by the yearly outbreak, as if dengue RSVs in invisible ink. Every year, it's the same drill: act surprised, scramble for beds, pretend that fogging works, and give interviews about "raising awareness"—which, if you're wondering, now includes TikTok videos of teenagers doing the dengue dance. (Spoiler: the mosquitoes are not impressed.)

But we, the Bangladeshis, are resilient. We'll fight dengue with a bottle of Dettol, a plastic racket that makes zapping sounds but kills nothing, and a fervent belief that neem leaves solve everything.

And let's not forget the elite response. In Gulshan, you'll find people consulting homeopaths, importing organic mosquito nets from Switzerland, and applying lavender oil as "a natural repellent." In contrast, in Mirpur, your dad is wearing jeans indoors and whacking the air with a sandal, yelling, "Ekta merechhi!" with the confidence of a man who's declared war on an invisible enemy while armed only with rage and footwear.

The mosquitoes, of course, are thriving. They aren't just insects; they're trained operatives. They dodge coils, laugh at sprays, and develop immunity faster than your cousin lake-cried for a vaccine exemption. One bite and you're down. Two bites and

you're on saline. Three bites and you're asking your doctor if he takes bKash.

So, what's the long-term plan? Trick question—we don't have one. Our dengue strategy is like a poorly managed relationship: deny, ignore, panic, repeat. No proper drainage system. No nationwide mosquito control. But hey, at least the fogging guy gets a yearly performance review.

And yet, we endure. Because in Bangladesh, illness is not just a physical condition; it's a communal experience. Neighbours bring fruits, your *bua* gossips about which auntie gets it next, and every family member becomes a medical expert armed with Google and two teaspoons of misinformation.

So, here's to dengue, our unwanted summer guest, our viral nemesis, our yearly reminder that in Dhaka, you're never truly alone. Not with mosquitoes in your bedroom, in your shower, and possibly in your group chat.

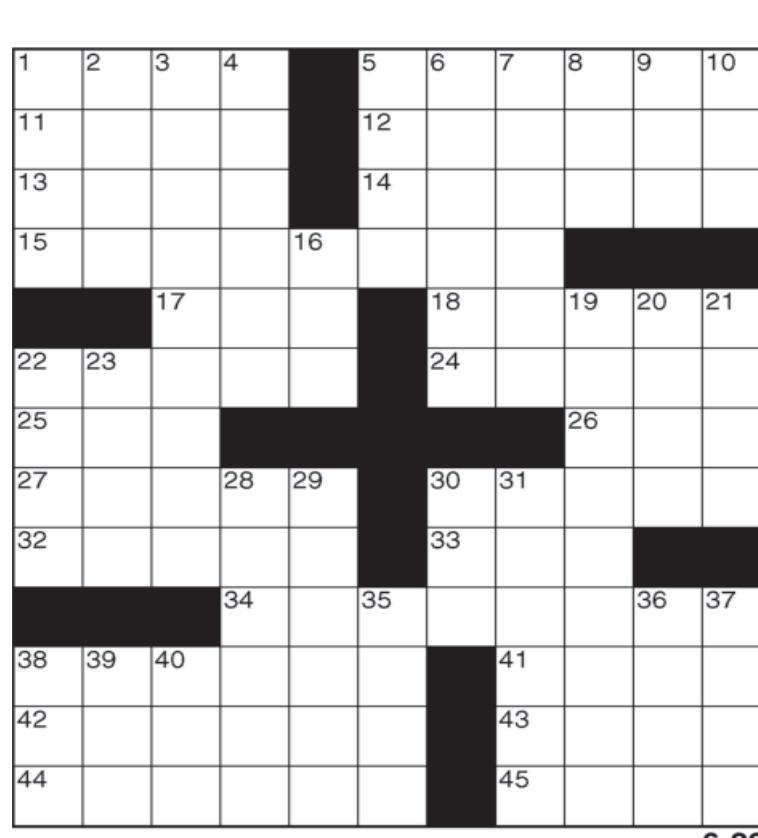
Cheers to another season of itching, sweating, and trying to remember which body part you haven't already slapped. If dengue had a flag, we'd probably hoist it. After all, what's a Bangladeshi summer without a little fever, fear, and a nationwide fog machine that doubles as a vibe check? Welcome to the tropics. We may be drowning in mosquito larvae, but at least we're doing it with style and some fizz.

dramatic theatre. A man in a mask emerges from an alley like a rejected Ghostbuster and blasts out enough chemical mist to either kill a mosquito or awaken your childhood asthma. Meanwhile, the mosquitoes shrug it off like seasoned Dhakaites navigating a

CROSSWORD
BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Dull pain
5 Loving touch
11 Bird on a Canadian dollar
12 Spotted cat
13 – mater
14 Catcher's catch
15 Goblets, e.g.
17 Stew sphere
18 Trade agreement of 1994
22 School areas
24 Mixes
25 Hagen of acting
26 Agent, for short
27 Suggested
30 Stands
32 Met offering
33 Drama division
34 First grade subject
38 Bar order
41 Gushing review
42 Warring groups
43 Exploits
44 Leave
45 Dispatched

DOWN
1 Woeful cry
2 Future stallion
3 Diamond corner
4 Tooth layer
5 Nightclub of song
6 Squirrel's stash
7 Iterate
8 Pole worker
9 Musical note
10 Pig's place
16 Used to be
19 Diamond corner
20 Grove growth
21 Pharaoh symbols
22 Designer Boss
23 Resting on
28 Mecca setting
29 More statuesque
30 Cheering cry
31 Doomed flier
35 Gnat, e.g.
36 Smooth
37 Evaluate
38 Pop
39 Iron source
40 Diamond worker



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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Sequel to 'The Devil Wears Prada' set for July production

Nearly two decades after the release of the original, actress Emily Blunt has confirmed that a sequel to the iconic fashion drama *The Devil Wears Prada* is set to begin filming in July.

In an interview with Entertainment Tonight, the actress shared her excitement, admitting she has yet to read the script and is unsure about her character's current storyline. Blunt also commented on her recurring on-screen tension with co-star Meryl Streep, joking about their frequent portrayals of conflict.

While tight-lipped about the plot, she noted that her daughters are eager to see the fashion-forward film.

The sequel is scheduled for release on May 1, 2026—just ahead of the Met Gala.



Star Cineplex boosts 'UTSHOB' SCREENINGS



The family drama *Utshob* continues to draw packed audiences at Star Cineplex, prompting an increase in screenings. Director Tanim Noor confirmed via a press release that the film had nine shows daily during its first week across Cineplex branches in Dhaka and beyond.

From today, it will be screened 13 times daily. The film will also run at Blockbuster Cinemas and Lion Cinemas in its second week. Discussions are underway to bring *Utshob* to single-screen theatres outside Dhaka.

Featuring Jaya Ahsan, Chanchal Chowdhury, Zahid Hasan, and Aupee Karim, the film blends family-friendly storytelling with nostalgic nods to 1990s Bangladeshi pop culture. Its tagline reads: "Statutory Warning: Not to be watched without family."

Restored version of 'Aranyer Din Ratri' to screen in Italy

The 4K restored version of Satyajit Ray's revered classic film *Aranyer Din Ratri* will be screened at Il Cinema Ritrovato in Bologna, Italy, from June 21 to 29.

The restored film premiered at the 78th Cannes Film Festival last month. Announced by the Film Heritage Foundation, the screening celebrates Ray's 1970 classic, based on Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel.

The film follows four Calcutta men on a forest retreat, featuring Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore, and Simi Garewal. Tagore and Garewal, the only surviving cast members, attended the Cannes premiere with filmmaker Wes Anderson and producer Purnima Dutta.



'Taandob' and 'Insaaf' to get sequels

Following strong Eid-ul-Azha box office performances, sequels to *Taandob* and *Insaaf* have been officially confirmed.

Taandob, starring Shakib Khan and featuring surprise cameos by Afran Nisho and Siam Ahmed, ended with a teaser for a sequel of the film.

Director Raihan Rafi confirmed plans for a shared cinematic universe. Similarly, *Insaaf* introduced Mosharraf Karim and Chanchal Chowdhury in pivotal final scenes. Director Sanjoy Somadder revealed both actors will return in central roles for *Insaaf 2*, currently in development.

With these announcements, Bangladeshi cinema signals a shift toward interconnected storytelling, inspired by global film universes. The move marks a new chapter for the industry, promising recurring characters, crossovers, and extended narratives that go beyond single-film experiences.

Netflix unveils animated spinoff 'Stranger Things'



Netflix has announced an animated spinoff titled *Stranger Things: Tales From '85*, revealed at the Annecy Film Festival. Set between Seasons 2 and 3 of the original series, the show follows the Hawkins gang and a new character, Nikki—a mohawked rebel—as they confront eerie monsters in a new paranormal mystery.

Inspired by classic cartoons like *Scooby-Doo* and *The Real Ghostbusters*, the series combines retro vibes with modern animation styles seen in *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse* and *Arcane*.

Character design is by Meybis Ruiz Cruz, with monsters created by Carlos Huante. Produced by the Duffer Brothers and Flying Bark Productions, the series premieres in 2026. *Stranger Things Season 5* returns November 26, ending on December 31.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Bhashajog'

Bhashajog, a travelling printmaking festival and workshop supported by the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, will highlight the intersection of language, identity, and self-expression. Drawing on local proverbs, folktales, and protest slogans, the initiative will give visual form to linguistic diversity and amplify marginalised voices through the art of printmaking.

Date: Friday Saturday | June 13-21, 2025

Time: 10am-6pm

Venue: National Art Gallery, BSA



NEWS

84 pushed in thru' Sylhet, Lalmonirhat

FROM PAGE 12

children -- were detained by BGB personnel at Sreepur BOP (Border Outpost).

They are originally from Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.

At Minatia BOP under the same upazila, 23 people -- nine men, seven women, and seven children -- of four families were held.

They are all from Kurigram.

In Sylhet's Companiganj upazila's Kalairag BOP area, BGB personnel detained 13 people -- four men, three women, and six children who are also from Kurigram.

In Sunamganj's Chhatak upazila, 17 more people -- five men, four women, and eight children -- were pushed back through the Chanbari border near Noakot BOP.

They are from Lalmonirhat.

In Lalmonirhat, at least 14 people were pushed in through the Jalangi border in Patgram upazila and the Dighaltari border in Aditmari upazila.

Locals first spotted the groups near the border pillars no. 847 at Jalangi and no. 926 at Dighaltari early yesterday.

BGB personnel later detained them and took them to the respective BOP camp.

Seven of the returnees, who were pushed in through the Jalangi border, are from Kodaltata village in Moghalhat union of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila.

One of the returnees, Anarul told this newspaper that his family

crossed into India illegally in January 2016 via the Phulbari border in Kurigram. They had been working at a brick kiln in Haryana, India, where his two youngest children were born.

"The BSF brought us to the border at night and pushed us into Bangladesh."

The other seven, who entered through the Dighaltari border, are from Dhaniram village in Baravita union of Kurigram's Phulbari upazila.

Another returnee, Obaidur, said his family entered Siliguri, West Bengal, in March 2020 and lived there as undocumented workers. "We worked as day labourers. On Wednesday night, the BSF picked us up and pushed us across the border the early today [yesterday]," he said.

He also said their youngest child was born during their stay in India.

Meanwhile, BSF tried to push five more Bangladeshis through pillar no. 889 at Dolapara border of Hatibandha upazila. However, BGB foiled the attempt. The five remain on the Indian side of the border, the BGB said.

The BSF then initiated the repatriation process by contacting BGB and submitting a list of names.

Upon verifying their identities, BGB agreed to the handover, which was carried out at border pillar no. 64 in the presence of company commanders from both forces.

[Our correspondents from Sylhet, Lalmonirhat, and Benapole contributed to the report.]

border protocols. We have strongly protested such actions at previous flag meetings with BSF," he added.

26 ILLEGALS DEPORTED

The BSF handed over 26 Bangladeshi nationals to BGB through a flag meeting at the no-man's land near the Benipur border under Jibannagar upazila in Chuadanga on Wednesday evening.

The returnees included 13 children, six women, and seven men, said Lt Col Abu Hanif Md Sihanuk, additional director of BGB 58 Battalion in Chuadanga.

The individuals were taken into BGB custody and later handed over to Jibannagar Police Station following the flag meeting.

A general diary was filed before the handover.

They are from different areas of Kurigram and Joypurhat districts, Lt Col Sihanuk added.

The 26 individuals had been detained earlier by Indian police in Haryana for illegally residing in the country. After their arrest, they were transferred to BSF custody.

The BSF then initiated the repatriation process by contacting BGB and submitting a list of names.

Upon verifying their identities, BGB agreed to the handover, which was carried out at border pillar no. 64 in the presence of company commanders from both forces.

[Our correspondents from Sylhet, Lalmonirhat, and Benapole contributed to the report.]

Two rights activists assaulted in Rangamati

FROM PAGE 2

place, Marzia Prova, who was also injured, said, "We had wrapped up the event and were heading out from Kawkhali in a CNG-run autorickshaw. We had just crossed the bazaar and were approaching the Kawkhali bridge when a motorcycle stopped our autorickshaw."

All three people got down from the bike and approached the autorickshaw, she went on.

"One of them was talking on the phone with someone, describing our appearance and informing them that they had found us."

Marzia said the attackers then dragged out Oliur and started beating him, while verbally abusing her for attending the programme of what they claimed was a "terrorist organisation".

"When I tried to stop the assault on Oliur, one of the men hit me on my face."

Attackers also threatened, Marzia added, by saying that they would be handed over to the security forces.

When two or three other autorickshaws stopped at the place of the attack, Marzia said the attackers

released them and warned them to never come back to the area.

"We called the Kawkhali Police Station for help, and they told us to come back and file a case. But we didn't feel safe about going back to Kawkhali."

Oliur said that they broke his glasses, injured his eye and one of his fingernails was left bleeding.

Kawkhali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saiful Islam Sohag denied that anything untoward had happened, telling our correspondent, "There was no trouble. The programme took place peacefully."

Marzia, however, claimed that while they were at the programme, they found that eight of their pick up drivers had been detained. "Those vehicles were used to bring attendees to the programme."

The organisers, requesting anonymity, echoed the same and provided The Daily Star with the names of the drivers. They also said that the keys to the vehicles had been taken.

OC Saiful, however, denied any knowledge of this.

Gonotantrik Chhata Jote

marched on Dhaka University campus condemning the attack.

Protesters and the victims claimed that the attackers were Bangalees.

The protest, organised by the Gonotantrik Chhata Jote was held at the Raja Bhashkarjo on the DU campus.

Biplabi Chhata Moitri President Dilip Roy and General Secretary Jabir Ahmed Jubel also condemned the attack.

"This attack is a direct assault on citizens' security and the long struggle for justice over the enforced disappearance of Kalpana Chakma. It is also an attack on freedom of expression," reads a statement issued by them.

Hill Women's Federation sent a statement decrying the attack. Quoting the federation's chair Niti Chakma and the president of Parbatya Chattogram Nari Sangha, Konika Dewan, the statement said, "The attack is proof of the misrule in the hill tracts."

"As long as we are colonised, there will be no peace and no safety for the women of the hills," added the statement.

Covid-19 testing at six hospitals

FROM PAGE 2

at the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday that both RT-PCR and rapid test kits were supplied to the six hospitals to ensure they can resume testing as quickly as possible.

Earlier, the DGHS issued an 11-point health advisory, urging people to avoid public gatherings and mandating mask use in crowded areas to curb the spread of the virus.

In the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, 15 out of 134 samples tested positive for Covid-19, according to DGHS data. The day before, 10 of 107 samples had returned positive results.

The infection rate saw a sharp increase in May, according to Covid-19 surveillance data analysed by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). Of 1,409 samples tested that month, 9.51 percent were positive -- the highest positive rate since January 2023.

Additionally, two new SARS-CoV-2 Omicron subvariants -- XFG and XFC -- were detected in Bangladesh in April, according to a hospital-based influenza surveillance study jointly conducted by IEDCR and the ICDDR,B.

Brig Gen Md Saydur Rahman, director of Kurmitola General Hospital, which had continued testing throughout, said the number of patients seeking tests had remained low. "We've received more

test kits today [yesterday], and will continue the service," he told The Daily Star.

CMCH is also preparing to resume testing tomorrow. Its Director Brig Gen Mohammed Taslim Uddin said, "All preparations for testing are almost complete."

Col Tanvir Ahmed, director of DNGC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital, said they had been conducting tests continuously and would now do so with the newly supplied kits.

At a press briefing on Wednesday, DGHS Director General Prof Md Abu Jafor said the government, international agencies, and some other countries were in talks to procure additional test kits, as some of the stored stock had expired. "We have already collected 28,000 rapid test kits, and 10,000 RT-PCR kits are expected to arrive today [Wednesday]."

Covid-19 was first detected in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020, with the first death reported 10 days later. Since then, over 20.51 lakh people have tested positive, and at least 29,500 have died from the disease.

BB mulling settlement with suspects

FROM PAGE 12

been frozen, and the administration is working with foreign law enforcement agencies to trace the funds, it says.

During a visit to London this week to advance asset recovery efforts, Yunus called for "more enthusiastic support" from UK authorities. "This is stolen money," he told the FT, arguing that the UK government had both a "legal and moral obligation" to assist in tracing and returning the assets.

A white paper commissioned by the government and published in December estimated that around \$234 billion was siphoned out of

the country during Hasina's time in office.

According to the FT, Mansur and other officials alleged that funds were misappropriated through fraudulent loans acquired via control of bank boards and by embezzling from infrastructure projects.

As part of its recovery strategy, Mansur said the government is in talks with litigation funding firms, entities that cover legal costs in exchange for a share of the settlement or award.

"We have been looking at litigation funding, and we are getting a very positive response," he said. "We would

NEWS

Body of trader recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Police recovered the throat-slit body of a cosmetic shop owner from a bamboo cluster at Dhammandal Molanipara village in Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Moklesar Rahman, 35.

Quoting family members and locals, Officer-in-Charge of Debiganj Police Station Sohel Rana told The Daily Star that Moklesar used to drive for Uber in Dhaka.

About a week back, before Eid-ul-Azha, he set up a cosmetics shop at Khochabari Bazar, near their village.

On Wednesday night, he left the shop around 10:00pm with his motorcycle, leaving behind one of his maternal nephews at the store.

After he did not return and his mobile phone was found to be switched off, the nephew informed the matter to Moklesar's family.

Despite searching, the family could not trace him.

In the morning, a local woman discovered the throat-slit body of Moklesar in a bamboo cluster near his house while grazing her goats.

Following the incident, multiple police teams – including CID, PBI, and Debiganj police – started working to uncover the motive behind the murder.

The body was sent to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy in the same afternoon.

Preparations are underway to file a case in connection with the incident, the OC said.

Man found dead in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bandarban*

Police recovered the body of an unidentified person from the bank of the Matamuhuri river in Bandarban yesterday.

The body was recovered from ward 2 area of the Sadar Union under Alikadam upazila, confirmed Alikadam police.

According to police and locals, residents spotted the body lying on the riverbank and informed the law enforcers. The unidentified body is estimated to be around 35 years old.

Locals suspect that the deceased might have been a tourist who was trekking or enjoying a boat ride.

Sub Inspector Shahadat Hossain of Alikadam Police Station said the body will be sent to Bandarban Sadar Hospital for an autopsy. Legal procedures regarding the incident were underway, he added.



After the 58-day fishing ban came to an end at midnight on June 12, fishermen returned to the sea to once again engage in their livelihood. Many fishermen were hoping to recover the losses they incurred during the fishing ban. The photo was taken from the Ganga Sthan Ghat in the Patenga area yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Jibanananda archive still locked a year after completion

SUSHANTA GHOSH AND HABIBUR RAHMAN, from *Jhalakathi*

Even a year after the completion of construction work on the Jibanananda Das Archive and Library on the bank of the Dhansiri river in Jhalakathi, the facility remains locked, awaiting administrative handover.

Constructed by the Bangladesh Water Development Board, the foundation stone for the picturesque facility was laid on February 18, 2023, the birth anniversary of the celebrated poet. The construction was completed in June 2024 at a cost of Tk 3.14 crore.

However, a year on, the archive remains closed as no staff have yet been appointed for its operations.

According to officials concerned, the BWDB lacks both the personnel and the experience to run such a cultural institution. A proposal was submitted several months ago to the BWDB headquarters to hand over the archive's management to the district administration. Until the administrative handover and staffing issues are resolved, the archive's activities remain at a standstill.

Meanwhile, the surrounding area – developed like an eco-park with greenery, benches, and scenic riverfront views –



attracts visitors and tourists regularly. However, many leave disappointed upon finding the archive building locked.

Local writers and artists have called for immediate steps to make the archive and library functional in a bid to honour the legacy of Jibanananda Das, a poet deeply associated with the region.

Arup Talukder, a poet from Barishal, stressed the importance of restoring the Dhansiri river and reviving the surrounding landscape. "Jibanananda Das used to travel through this river to

Khulna by steamer. That's why the river and the region frequently appear in his poetry," he said.

Contacted, AKM Niloy Pasha, executive engineer of BWDB in Jhalakathi, confirmed the prevailing situation.

"We've submitted a proposal to hand over the archive to the district administration, as we don't have the experience to manage such institutions. Once the proposal is approved and necessary staff are appointed, the facility will be opened to the public," he said.

Youth killed, 10 injured in Narsingdi clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narsingdi*

A youth was killed and at least 10 others, including police personnel, were injured in a clash between residents of two villages in Narsingdi's Belabo upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Saiful Islam, 26, from Charbelabo village under Belabo Sadar Union.

The clash broke out around 10:00am yesterday between villagers of Matiyalpara and Charbelabo, following a dispute that reportedly began the previous day over disagreements between whether a motorcycle or an auto rickshaw could pass first, following a local football match, said Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Sujan Chandra Sarker.

According to police and locals, the argument turned into a physical altercation on Wednesday, injuring three people. Tensions escalated yesterday as both sides engaged in repeated clashes using locally made weapons.

On information, police rushed to the

spot to bring the situation under control. However, the agitated villagers reportedly attacked the law enforcers, prompting police to use rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the crowd.

At least 10 people from both sides were injured and received treatment at Belabo Upazila Health Complex and other local hospitals, said police.

Saiful Islam succumbed to his injuries during the violence, his family claimed. His body is currently at Belabo Upazila Health Complex.

Dr Manzur Mushfiq Ferdous, a duty doctor at Belabor Upazila Health Complex, said Saiful was brought in dead and bore marks consistent with rubber bullet wounds. "The exact cause of death will be confirmed after an autopsy," she added.

Additional police forces have been deployed in the area to maintain law and order, and the situation is now under control, said ASP Sujan Chandra Sarker.

"Legal proceedings are underway," he added.

BNP, Gono Odhikar activists

FROM PAGE 4

exchange with Gono Odhikar activists after they requested to postpone BNP's meeting by 30 minutes.

"Despite our plea, they gave us just 15 minutes to wrap up. When we didn't comply, they attacked us and beat up several of our members, including VP Nurul Haque Nur's younger brother Aminul Islam," said Jewel.

Among the injured were Aminul; Konok, president of Ward 2 Chhatri Odhikar Parishad, Jihad, general secretary of the same unit; Shamim, organising secretary of Ward 5, and several others, he added.

Aminul alleged that BNP

supporters threw chairs at them and broke their own furniture to blame Gono Odhikar activists.

BNP, however, rejected the claims and accused Gono Odhikar supporters of launching an attack on them.

Char Biswas Union BNP President Bakher Biswas said, "Our activists were holding a scheduled workers' meeting when suddenly they barged in, vandalised chairs, tables, and even broke the photo of our party chief."

He claimed that at least 20-25 BNP men were injured, including Maksud Khan, president of the local Krishnal Dal, who was later sent to Barishal for

advanced treatment.

Other injured BNP activists include Al-Amin and Mahiuddin Al-Muin, joint conveners of Swechchhasebok Dal; Tahsan Islam Naim, joint secretary of Chhatri Dal, Bappi, joint general secretary of BNP; Lokman, president of Ward 6 Swechchhasebok Dal; Shihab Khalifa, Hridoy Maman, Zakir Boyati, Mohammad Mofiz, Soikat Dofadar, Mehedi, Torikul, and Shohel, among others.

OC Asadur Rahman said while the situation was under control, tensions remain high in the area. Additional forces were deployed to prevent further escalation.

Justice eludes

FROM PAGE 3

"We're afraid of giving statements," said Zartaj Parveen, mother of Shafiq Uddin, 17, who was shot dead in the Mirpur 10 area during the uprising.

She lodged a complaint with the ICT prosecution on October 19 last year.

Another July uprising victim, journalist Mehedi Hasan's father Mosharrif Hossain, demanded justice within the tenure of the interim government.

After the uprising, the tribunal's investigation agency was restructured, and there are now 25 investigation officers, according to the agency's website.

Tajul Islam recently said the people demand swift justice, but trials for crimes against humanity are not ordinary; they cannot proceed under street pressure.

"This is a matter of law and professional investigation," he said, cautioning that rushing may jeopardise the case and undermine justice.

New JCD

FROM PAGE 3

Science and Technology, University of Asia Pacific, Southeast University, Northern University Bangladesh, BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology, World University of Bangladesh, Primeasia University, Presidency University, International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, Bangladesh University, The People's University of Bangladesh, Manarat International University, Gono Bishwabidyalay, Asian University, and City University.

Barguna sees sharp spike

FROM PAGE 3

"We're continuously bothered by mosquitoes, even during the day. Our families live in constant fear of dengue," said Oliullah Emran, a resident of the Char Colony area.

Md Saiful Islam, a medicine trader at Barguna town's main market, said indiscriminate garbage dumping across the municipality worsens pollution and creates mosquito breeding grounds.

"This is a major reason for the severe outbreak," he added.

Md Kamal Hossain, president of TIB's Barguna chapter and general secretary of the Citizen Rights Protection Committee, cited widespread waterlogging and clogged drains as key issues.

LACK OF AWARENESS AND DOCTOR SHORTAGES

Hasanur Rahman Jhantu, president of the Barguna District Health Rights Forum, said the general hospital – serving nearly 1.2 million people – faces acute shortages of doctors and resources, affecting both treatment and prevention.

Dr Md Rejwanul Alam, superintendent of Barguna General Hospital, described the situation as overwhelming. The 100-bed facility is overcrowded, with many patients receiving treatment on the floor.

"We've contacted the health adviser and submitted a list of vacant posts. We hope these will be filled soon," he said.

EXPERTS URGE STRONG PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Public health expert Mushtuq Hussain said an IEDCR pre-monsoon

survey (not yet officially released) found a higher density of mosquito larvae in the Barishal division than in Dhaka.

He attributed the outbreak to a lack of cleaning, favourable weather for Aedes breeding, and abundant breeding sites.

"We need a layered treatment system with clear primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to reduce mortality and streamline patient management."

"A stronger primary healthcare system is essential. Many avoid dengue testing due to limited access at local clinics, leading to late diagnoses, especially in impoverished areas," he said.

"If testing is available nearby, people will seek help earlier. Currently, most avoid testing due to limited facilities," he added.

He also recommended setting up more blood collection centres and secondary care facilities to reduce the burden on medical college hospitals.

Critical patients could be transferred from secondary facilities to tertiary hospitals when necessary, he said.

Hussain stressed the importance of year-round, community-driven cleaning efforts. "Right now, it's a routine exercise. We need continuous monitoring to control mosquito populations," he said.

"We've contacted the health adviser and submitted a list of vacant posts. We hope these will be filled soon," he said.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman said Barguna's coastal location makes it more vulnerable, as people often store water, creating breeding grounds.

Rahman underscored the importance of strengthening surveillance and eliminating mosquito breeding sites.

"Many still think dengue

DHAKA FRIDAY JUNE 13, 2025

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9

Asma weaving hope thread by thread

MINTU DESHWARA, MOULVIBAZAR

Inside the walls of Asma Akhter's half-finished brick house in Adampur union under Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar, the sound of Manipuri looms at work hums with a purpose.

A decade ago, Asma's family struggled to survive. Her husband Jabbar Mia's small farm and modest business barely met daily needs, let alone the rising cost of educating their children. With no clear way forward, Asma clung to a sliver of hope – her traditional Manipuri loom.

Over the years that followed, Asma, now 50, wove her way to a sustainable livelihood.

"It all began after I went to Baanga village and learned to weave using Manipuri loom from a woman named Bilkis Begum," she said.

Once learning the trade, a determined Asma with her Tk 6,000 loom started making two pieces of clothes a week and selling those to help her family stay afloat. Soon, local women came



to learn from her. Slowly but steadily, Asma expanded her endeavour.

Today, she manages 18 looms spread across her home and other locations. At least 10 women work under her, weaving five to seven sarees each week. Yarn is sourced from the local Adampur market, and wholesalers now come directly to her home to collect the finished products.

The once impoverished household also transformed gradually. Asma now earns an average of around Tk 50,000 per month. Her two children have graduated from university, while another now studies in medical college. The family's home – still under construction – is a symbol of continuous progress.

"With her loom, Asma took charge. Everything this family has achieved till today, it's all because of her efforts," said her husband, Jabbar.

According to local cultural activist and researcher Ahmed Siraj, Asma is a rare example of undaunted resilience.

"They had nothing but the house. Yet, through sheer will, this woman rebuilt her family and is now employing other women. Such entrepreneurs should be recognised and encouraged," he said.

Once an ordinary housewife, Asma has become an inspiration for others, weaving not just sarees but a new future – thread by thread.

Outdoor

FROM PAGE 3

hospital director with assault and arson," reads the memorandum.

The staff placed eight demands, including the rehabilitation of the July injured, formal discharge of patients who no longer need hospital-based care and ensuring their departure from the hospital, proper treatment and compensation for the staffers injured in attacks by miscreants on May 28, and legal action against those responsible for the May 28 attack.

The acting director said police deployment has been increased to improve security, and they hope to resume all services from Saturday.

AUTHORITY'S RESPONSE

Amimesh Biswas, additional deputy commissioner (general) and administrator of Barguna Municipality, acknowledged problems like poor drainage, waterlogging, and clogged drains and indiscriminate waste dumping.

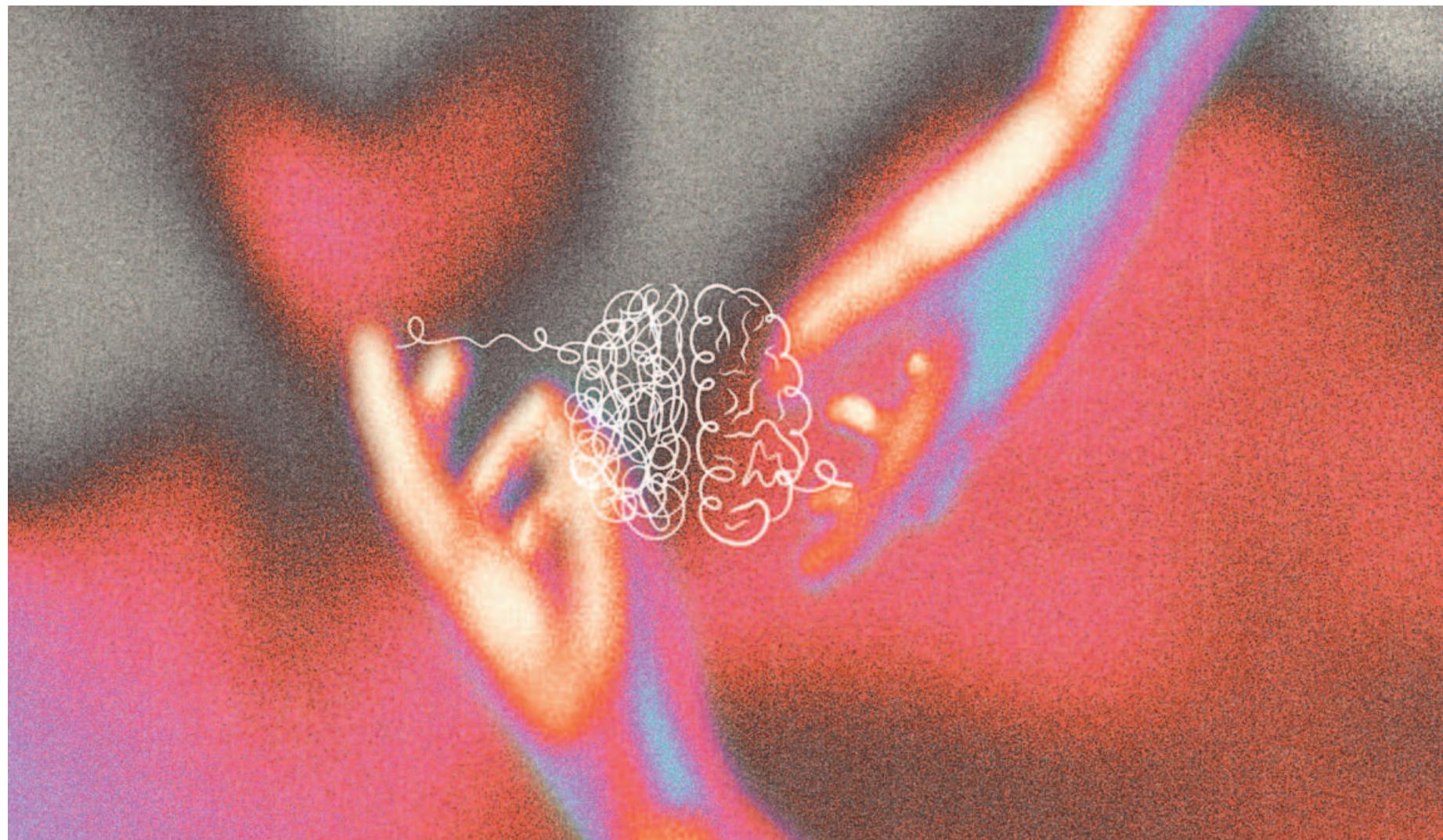


ILLUSTRATION: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

READER SUBMISSION

The implications of overlooking BPD

BPD is a complex and often misunderstood mental health condition, characterised by chronic emotional instability, intense and stormy relationships, a fragile sense of self, impulsivity, and a pervasive fear of abandonment. It affects approximately 1.4 percent of the global population, though the true figure may be higher due to frequent misdiagnoses and cultural underreporting.

MAHAPARA SANJANA
In Bangladesh and across South Asia, where mental illness remains cloaked in shame, stigma, and silence, the plight of borderline personality disorder (BPD) largely unnoticed. But for countless young people grappling with the struggles of BPD, the silence can be deafening, and the consequences, deadly.

BPD is a complex and often misunderstood mental health condition, characterised by chronic emotional instability, intense and stormy relationships, a fragile sense of self, impulsivity, and a pervasive fear of abandonment. It affects approximately 1.4 percent of the global population, though the true figure may be higher due to frequent misdiagnoses and cultural underreporting.

Notably, BPD disproportionately affects young women – around 75 percent of those diagnosed are women, with symptoms typically appearing in late adolescence or early adulthood, precisely the period when societal pressures are tightening around young women, especially in a conservative society like ours.

In Bangladesh, a young woman showing signs and symptoms of BPD is unlikely to be met with understanding, kindness, or support. Instead, she may be dismissed as "moody," "too sensitive," or "emotionally unstable" – labels that stick fast in a culture that often equates femininity with restraint and mental illness with weakness.

This double stigma of mental illness and gender means that young women with BPD suffer

not only the symptoms of their condition but also the crushing weight of social judgment. Their pain is trivialised, their trauma doubted, and their needs dismissed. Their self-harm may be misinterpreted as attention-seeking; their need for connection viewed as clinginess, desperation, or manipulation.

The emotional wounds of BPD are deep enough, but societal misunderstanding drives them even deeper. In a society where a woman's value is often still measured by her obedience, ability to get and sustain a marriage, and docility, BPD becomes more than a diagnosis, it becomes a source of shame. Families fear social fallout. Friends fade. Employers hesitate. And most tragically, the woman herself internalises the idea that she is broken beyond repair. These fears and stigma force many women into silence, robbing them of early diagnosis and treatment that could potentially alter their lives.

These misunderstandings aren't just painful, they're dangerous. According to the National Education Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder, UK, up to 10 percent of individuals diagnosed with BPD take their own lives, one of the highest rates among psychiatric conditions.

When combined with the alarming rise in self-harm rates among young people in low and middle income countries like Bangladesh, the situation becomes critical. Yet, our conversations about mental health barely scratch the surface, let alone acknowledge conditions as complex as BPD. However, the cost of this silence is high.

Even in clinical settings, BPD is often treated with hesitation or avoidance. The disorder has historically been labelled "difficult to treat," and some professionals continue to shy away from working with those affected. This bias can leave individuals with BPD feeling hopeless, reinforcing the belief that they are "too broken" to deserve help.

But BPD is treatable. Over the last few decades, evidence-based therapies have changed the landscape of care. Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) – developed by Dr Marsha Linehan, (a survivor of BPD herself) – has been shown to significantly reduce self-harming behaviours, improve emotional regulation, and foster more stable relationships. Other treatments such as Mentalisation-Based Therapy (MBT) and Schema Therapy are also providing new hope to those previously deemed "untreatable."

However, access to these therapies in Bangladesh remains scarce. Mental health services are concentrated in urban areas, often prohibitively expensive, and culturally misaligned with the lived experiences of many patients. Personality disorders are still largely omitted from public health campaigns and school-based mental health programmes. Even within professional circles, awareness of BPD is limited.

This is why it's imperative to centre the voices of people, especially young women who live with this disorder and are fighting for dignity in systems not built for them. It's a call to action for policymakers, educators, health

professionals, and communities to recognise that ignoring BPD won't make it go away. But awareness, compassion, and investment just might make it easier on those living with this diagnosis.

To move forward, we must begin by changing the narrative. We must begin with education, both public and professional. Schools, universities, and workplaces, should incorporate mental health literacy into their programmes, ensuring that young people learn about emotional well-being long before a crisis point. Medical institutions must prioritise training in personality disorders, so future clinicians are equipped not just with skills for diagnosis, but with empathy and tools for care.

At a societal level, we need to reimagine support systems. Families must be given tools to understand BPD, not through the lens of shame, but with compassion and context. Community-based resources, including peer-led support groups and culturally sensitive therapy models, can help reduce the burden on clinical systems while offering people a space to feel understood.

Finally, we must be willing to sit with the discomfort of emotional pain, not to fix it immediately, but to treat it with care. Because behind every person with BPD is not a problem to be solved, but a person longing for connection, safety, and dignity. Behind every "difficult" person is often an inner child longing to be understood.

Mahapara is a PGT student pursuing an MA in Social Justice and Education at the University of York.

Helping parents navigate misinformation on the internet

HASIB UR RASHIDIFTI

One of the key aspects of growing up involves taking responsibilities for one's parents. However, in the digital age, caring for them is not just about ensuring their well-being. It also involves protecting them from one of the greatest threats that is prevalent today: misinformation.

With most parents now active on social media, they are exposed to the same barrage of misleading content as the rest of us. But unlike younger generations who have developed a degree of scepticism, many parents come from an era when the printed word was synonymous with credibility. If something appeared in a newspaper, it was, more often than not, true. The internet, however, operates by an entirely different set of rules. Content can be created by anyone, and social media algorithms prioritise engagement over accuracy. Misinformation thrives on emotion – fear, anger, nostalgia – making it dangerously easy to spread.

The challenge is such that even for those of who have spent a considerable amount of time online, distinguishing fact from fiction is becoming increasingly difficult. However, the difficulty is

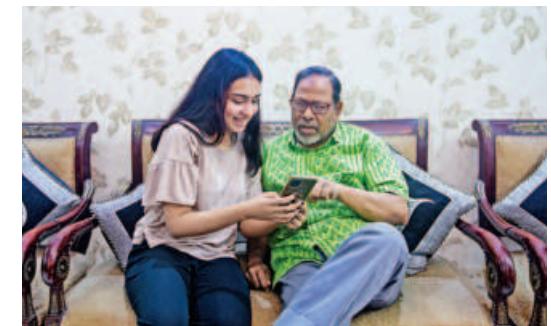


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

compounded for older generations, many of whom are resistant to the idea that they might be misled. Simply telling them that something is false often provokes defensiveness rather than reflection.

Instead of outright dismissing their beliefs, a more effective approach is to guide them through the fact-checking process. While we may assume that parents struggle with technology, the truth is that they have adapted to social media surprisingly well. Teaching them to verify information using credible news sources is a strong first step.

If something is true, it is likely to be covered by major news media within 24 hours. So, it is crucial that they learn to wait a while before blindly believing the information and share it with the rest of the world. Many older individuals are also prone to accepting information that aligns with their existing political views. Introducing them to neutral, fact-based sources – both on social media and traditional media platforms – can help counterbalance biased narratives.

However, chances are that the frequency of misinformation appearing on your parents' social media feed is much higher than your feed simply because of the algorithm. If your parents are avid consumers of unreliable conspiracy theory videos on Facebook or YouTube, their feed is likely to be filled with such content.

One of the most effective ways to intervene is to help them take charge of the kind of pages they interact with. Unsubscribing from unreliable pages and explaining how recommendation systems work can make a significant difference. Parents should understand that their feeds are curated based on past interactions and that consuming a variety of sources leads to a more balanced perspective. They are, after all, navigating a new landscape. The goal should be to make them self-sufficient in filtering misinformation rather than micromanaging their internet use.

Instead of positioning ourselves as fact-checkers scrutinising every move, we should empower them to verify information independently. In Bangladesh's current political landscape, misinformation has become a powerful tool for manipulation. False narratives are deliberately spread to influence public opinion, stir unrest, or serve hidden agendas. Ensuring that our parents can navigate this digital minefield with vigilance is not just a personal responsibility; it is a necessity for a more informed society.

Reach **Iti's** spam at hasiburashidifti@gmail.com

Why we should keep our hobbies alive



IRINA JAHAN

Drawing came to me before I learnt my first alphabet. My earliest memories are of sketching and painting circles and flowers on the pages of books, walls, and any surface on which crayons would sit well. Once, to my sister's absolute horror, I coloured an entire page of her homework completely blue. My teachers would often note how I traced letters along the lines of my notebook in various colours. Throughout my school years, I was deeply immersed in many activities both creative and athletic, but drawing and painting were the only ones I stuck with throughout the years.

This particular hobby nurtured something essential within me, something that extended beyond the simple act of creating. It became a way for me to express myself, to find

joy in experimentation, and to develop patience.

Then came adulthood and I found myself tasked to take on more responsibilities. Career and academic aspirations filled my schedule, and the vibrancy of my many hobbies began to fade into insignificance.

When I return to drawing, perhaps once every six months, I am reminded of my self-imposed exile from my creative mind space into the relentless rat race. But sacrificing the joy of hobbies in exchange for productivity has never felt like an emotionally fulfilling trade-off.

There was also a part of me that carried an unspoken shame for practising something for years without achieving mastery. But perhaps this expectation is flawed. I doubt it even existed before the internet had romanticised the idea of a monetised hobby.

We must free ourselves from the belief that every activity we pursue must lead to perfection. Some things can be done purely for the joy they bring, offering an escape from rigid expectations. Not every skill we cultivate needs to be showcased to an audience, and not every endeavour must serve a purpose beyond personal fulfilment.

Hobbies are not just sources of amusement; they can also be challenging – a stark contrast to the ease of doomscrolling. However, they may, in fact, be the key to overall well-being. Since most of our pursuits are for the sake of a better life, integrating small doses of activities that bring us gradual satisfaction can leave us feeling happier and more fulfilled in the present.

I will admit that part of my neglect of these pursuits stems from indulging

in social media's short-form content. After a busy day, it's easier to spend hours scrolling through my phone than to take out the painting supplies tucked away at the back of my room. It often feels more sensible to do nothing, knowing that by morning, another financially promising goal will demand my attention. Why would I spend hours creating something that, quite frankly, never ends up looking the way I want it to?

Yet, nothing compares to the satisfaction of watching something take form over time. Perhaps the key to maintaining hobbies is to carve out small, intentional moments for them. Hopefully, over time, these small efforts will accumulate into something meaningful, ensuring that our creative selves are not buried under the weight of responsibilities but thrive alongside them.

ILLUSTRATION: FAISAL BIN IQBAL

New ODI skipper Miraz vows 'fearless cricket'

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday appointed all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz as captain of the men's ODI team for the next 12 months.

The 27-year-old will take over from Najmul Hossain Shanto and begin his captaincy tenure with the upcoming three-match ODI series in Sri Lanka next month. He has previously led the national side in four ODIs in Shanto's absence last year.

With Miraz at the helm in ODIs, Bangladesh now has three different full-time captains in three different formats, something that last happened in June 2022, when Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah were skippers in Tests, ODIs and T20Is respectively.

Miraz, who has captained in an ICC Under-19 World Cup and also led Bangladesh in two Tests, expressed gratitude towards the board and vowed to play fearless cricket.

"It is a huge honour for me to be entrusted with this responsibility by the Board. Leading the country is a dream for any cricketer and I am grateful for the confidence the Board has shown in me," Miraz was quoted



Bangladesh Test skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and other players like pacer Khaled Ahmed took part in the final day of a two-day practice game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Meanwhile, one of the Tigers' Test contingent, including pacer Nahid Rana, reached Colombo, Sri Lanka, for their upcoming two-Test series. The first Test is scheduled to start in Galle on June 17, followed by the second Test in Colombo from June 25.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/SLC



in a BCB press release.

"I have every faith in this team. We have the talent and the belief to play fearless cricket. I want us to perform with confidence, play without inhibition and continue giving our best for the country," he concluded.

In the same press release, BCB's cricket operations chairman Nazmul Abedeen Fahim said Miraz was the 'ideal candidate' to lead in ODIs, saying, "The Board felt that Miraz's consistent performances with the bat and ball, his ability to fight and inspire the team and his energetic presence on and off the field make him an ideal candidate to lead the ODI side during a transitional time."

In February last year, the BCB handed Shanto captaincy in all three formats. Later, he expressed desire to quit T20 captaincy but showed interest to continue in Test and ODI.

Fahim thanked Shanto for his service, saying, "He remains very much a part of the leadership group and we know how important his batting is to the team."

Miraz is currently fourth in the ICC ODI all-rounders rankings. He has 1617 runs and 110 wickets in 105 ODIs and is the fourth Bangladeshi after Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib Al Hasan to have 1000 runs and 100 wickets in ODIs.

Long-term planning or short-term thinking?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Ahead of their all-format tour of Sri Lanka, part of the Bangladesh contingent have already departed, with the rest of the Test squad -- led by Najmul Hossain Shanto -- scheduled to leave on Friday. While it is confirmed that Shanto will captain the Test side and Litton Das will lead in T20Is, the ODI captaincy remained undecided even as the team prepared to leave.

That such uncertainty remains, especially with players already on their way, raises serious concerns. Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials had previously informed the media that captaincy will be handed on a long-term basis in both Tests and ODIs. During the announcement of the Test squad, Shanto was named captain for another year.

Shanto, who led the 50-over side during the recent Champions Trophy qualifiers, was naturally asked about his status at yesterday's pre-departure press conference.

"They haven't informed me [about ODI captaincy]. They will let me know," Shanto said simply.

Around an hour after the press conference ended, whispers had already begun that Mehidy Hasan Miraz was set to be named ODI captain. Shanto was in the dark regarding ODI captaincy yesterday and it leaves room for doubts and toxic mismanagement that can lead to an environment destabilising for the players and the management concerned.

A BCB official, with detailed knowledge of the developments, informed The Daily



We have some good memories in Sri Lanka. We won our 100th Test there [in Colombo, 2017]. We know the conditions will be challenging, but we see it as an opportunity to do something special.

Test skipper Shanto recalled Bangladesh's only victory in 26 Tests against Sri Lanka, which also led to their only drawn series out of 12 so far.

Star that Shanto had asked to be the Test captain for two years. But he has been appointed for a year.

However, the WTC cycle continues over a two-year period; not one. So captaincy in Tests has not been handed over for the whole cycle yet.

If long-term planning was in BCB's thoughts, the decision falls into the category of indecisiveness -- and does not breed trust or security in the captain.

The cricket operations committee, currently led by Nazmul Abedeen Fahim since the tenure of former president Faruque Ahmed, is responsible for such decisions.

Previously, Fahim loved to shed light on the importance of planning and efficiency, but under his watch the handling of the captaincy scenario suggests otherwise.

If the captaincy was indeed a long-term concern, there was ample time to resolve it well before the team entered the

final stages of preparation. The Daily Star attempted to reach Fahim for a comment on the matter, but he was unavailable.

At the press conference, Shanto himself explained why clarity and commitment is pivotal when it comes to long-term planning.

"A longer term is always helpful for the captain. I had it previously and now I got the captaincy for another year. Planning becomes easy if a captain is appointed with a World Cup or a WTC cycle in mind," Shanto stated.

Shanto's point is clear: stability strengthens leadership. But by evening, the board had indeed handed the ODI reins to Miraz. But in forming long-term plans, it has shown indecisiveness around WTC cycle plans.

Is BCB building a team for the future, or simply reacting to the present? As it appears, coherent planning is left for daydreams.

'Climbing five spots in rankings a big achievement'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh made a significant stride in the latest FIFA Women's World Ranking by climbing five spots to 128th place -- a timely morale boost ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, scheduled for June 29 to July 5 in Myanmar.

Climbing up the ladder was possible due to two creditable draws against higher-ranked sides -- Jordan and Indonesia -- in the recent FIFA friendlies in Jordan, where Bangladesh held 94th-ranked Indonesia to a goalless draw before coming from behind twice in a 2-2 draw against Jordan.

FIFA yesterday disclosed the latest women's FIFA ranking, and it came as big news for the charges of Peter Butler, as the women in red and green crossed the 130-mark ranking for the first time in six years.

"It is a big achievement for us because we have come to this stage after working hard over the last six years, and climbing five places is very important for us because it will have a positive impact on the team ahead of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers," said captain Afeda Khandokar.

Afeda and Co. resumed preparations for the



Asian Cup Qualifiers on Monday following a two-day Eid ul-Adha break, as only a few girls traveled to their respective homes while the majority of the players in the camp stayed at the BFF dormitory after returning from Jordan on June 5.

Butler has been conducting training with nearly 45 players, as four senior players -- Monika Chakma, Maria Manda, Ritu Porna Chakma, and Shamsunnahar Jr -- flew out from Dhaka to Bhutan on Eid Day to join their respective clubs in the ongoing Bhutan Women's National League. However, goalkeeper Rupna Chakma stayed back home as she had no fixtures in the Bhutan league in the coming days.

All four players are expected to rejoin the camp on June 16, as the national women's football team is scheduled to leave for Myanmar on June 27, two days before the start of Group C matches featuring hosts Myanmar, Bahrain, Bangladesh, and Turkmenistan.

"We believe we can do something better in the Asian Cup Qualifiers on the back of our preparation. We are hoping to produce good results against Bahrain and Turkmenistan and trying our level best against Myanmar, who are much ahead of us," said Afeda.

Though Bangladesh progressed five spots, other South Asian nations either fell or remained in their previous positions.

India fell one spot to 70th following two defeats against Uzbekistan. Nepal followed suit, slipping one place to 100th after a loss to Thailand, and Sri Lanka also dropped one place to 159th after losing a match to Saudi Arabia.

Bhutan, despite two successive draws against Hong Kong, remained in 171st position, while Pakistan and the Maldives, who did not play a single match, also retained their previous positions of 159 and 163, respectively. The top three places in the FIFA Women's World Ranking remained unchanged, with the USA leading the table, followed by Spain and Germany.

Trent boosts Real's Club World Cup bid

AGENCIES

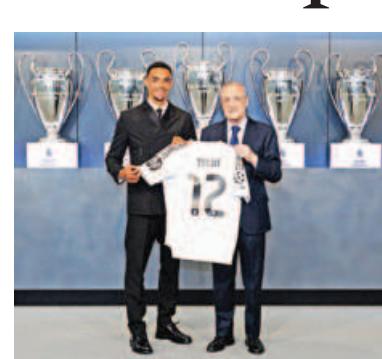
After Real Madrid's hopes of major silverware this season faded, the Club World Cup took on far greater importance for them and it will provide an insight into new coach Xabi Alonso's strategy.

The 43-year-old Spaniard, who replaced Carlo Ancelotti at the helm, along with new arrivals Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dean Huijsen add a fresh look to a team that emerged battered and bruised from a domestic season dominated by bitter rivals Barcelona.

Alexander-Arnold, unveiled yesterday as a Rael player in Madrid, spoke about the club's appeal: "A big reason why I joined is to be a part of that amazing history. To be a part of the success going forward, joining an exciting, young team with a lot of potential."

Alonso may deploy his favoured 3-4-3 formation which would give the England international an important role on the right flank.

Alexander-Arnold's supreme



Real's participation ends which they hope is after they have been crowned champions.

Their title ambition is why they paid a reported £10 million (\$13.5 million) to sign Alexander-Arnold early, his Liverpool contract was due to end on June 30.

In Group H Real Madrid's campaign begins against Saudi Arabian side Al-Hilal on June 18 in Miami, before facing Mexican outfit Pachuca in Charlotte on June 22.

Alonso's team then face Austria's RB Salzburg in Philadelphia on June 26 in their final group game.

After Barcelona reclaimed La Liga on the way to wrapping up a domestic treble, beating Real four times in the process, Los Blancos would also welcome some sporting success to raise morale and increase belief before the new campaign.

Some of the same problems that Ancelotti could not solve -- a lack of balance and cohesion in attack -- are in Alonso's in-tray and the Club World Cup is the first chance for him to answer them.



Australia skipper Pat Cummins celebrates after having South Africa all-rounder Marco Jansen caught off his own bowling on Day 2 of the World Test Championship final at Lord's yesterday. Cummins finished with figures of 6-28, completing his 14th five-wicket haul and first at Lord's, as he ripped through the lower order to have South Africa bundled out for 138 in reply to Australia's first-innings total of 212. Cummins also claimed his 300th Test scalp when he removed Kagiso Rabada to wrap up the Proteas' innings.

PHOTO: AFP

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Covid-19 testing at six hospitals from tomorrow. New RT-PCR, rapid testing kits already supplied by DGHS

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Covid-19 testing will resume at four major hospitals in Dhaka and Chattogram from tomorrow, following a recent rise in infection rates in Bangladesh and neighbouring countries.

Two other hospitals in Dhaka, which continued testing patients even after the pandemic was declared over, will also carry on with their services.

To support the six hospitals, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) yesterday supplied fresh stocks of test kits.

The hospitals are: Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, Kurmitola General Hospital, and the DNC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

300-year-old shipwreck with £15bn treasure on board found

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Images taken from the depths of the Caribbean are the clearest evidence yet that a 300-year-old shipwreck worth £15bn has been located, researchers say.



The "richest wreck in history" the Spanish galleon San Jose, was transporting treasure from Peru to Spain to finance the Spanish side of the War of the Spanish Succession when it was intercepted by the British Navy in 1708.

The treasure-laden ship, which was loaded with gold, silver and emeralds estimated to be worth as much as \$20bn (£15bn), sank and was not seen again.

It wasn't until 2015 that a wreck was identified by the Colombian navy, but it was not conclusively proven to be the San Jose.

But new sophisticated underwater imaging has analysed some of the cargo on the sunken ship 600m below the surface of the Colombian Caribbean Sea.

Daniela Vargas Ariza, lead researcher from Colombia's Naval Cadet School and the National Institute of Anthropology and History explained the San Jose is the only ship that matches these characteristics.



The Covid testing area at DMCH is being cleaned and readied, as the hospital is set to start collecting samples from tomorrow. The Directorate General of Health Services in the meantime has supplied test kits to six major hospitals in Dhaka and Chattogram, including DMCH, to ensure testing activities can begin without delay amid the recent surge in Covid-19 cases. Inset, stocks of saline lie damp on the floor near the testing area. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



THE BAYA'S LOVE NEST

A male Baya weaver, or Babui pakhi, weaves a hanging nest on a tree in Chattogram's Anowara. Native to South and Southeast Asia, this sparrow-sized bird is famed for its intricate nest-building skills. Using grass, palm fibres, and paddy leaves, the male constructs flask-shaped nests, often over water, to attract a mate. The female will only breed with the male if she approves his design. These nest colonies are more than just a sight to behold; they reflect the species' intelligence, precision, and the delicate balance of their natural habitat.

PHOTO: HAIDER ALI

200 pro-Palestinian activists detained

Says Egypt ahead of Gaza march; over three dozen activists deported; 22 killed by Israeli fire across the enclave

AGENCIES

Egyptian authorities have detained more than 200 pro-Palestinian activists in Cairo ahead of a planned international march with the stated aim of breaking Israel's blockade on Gaza, the organisers said yesterday.

Over 200 participants were detained at Cairo airport or questioned at hotels across Cairo, the march's spokesperson Saif Abukesh told AFP, adding that those detained included nationals from the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Morocco and Algeria.

The activists had planned to travel to Egypt's Rafah border crossing with Gaza, to demand the entry of humanitarian aid and an end to Israel's blockade on the besieged enclave.

An Egyptian official told The Associated Press that authorities had deported more than three dozen activists, most of whom held European passports, on arrival at Cairo International Airport in the past two days.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli fire killed 22 people across the Palestinian territory yesterday, including 16 who were waiting to collect aid.

16 of the dead were waiting to collect aid at a distribution point

Internet down in Gaza after attack on fibre optic cable

UNGA to vote to demand immediate ceasefire

The distribution of food and basic supplies in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip has become increasingly fraught and perilous, exacerbating the territory's deep hunger crisis.

Civil defence official Mohammed Al-Mughayir told AFP that the Al-Awda Hospital received 10 dead and around 200 wounded, including women and

children, "after Israeli drones dropped multiple bombs on gatherings of civilians near an aid distribution point around the Netzarim checkpoint in central Gaza".

He said that Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital received six dead following Israeli attacks on aid queues near Netzarim and in the Al-Sudaniya area in northwestern Gaza.

Mughayir said another six people were killed in Israeli attacks across Gaza.

The US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) accused Palestinian group Hamas of attacking aid workers en route to a distribution centre on Wednesday, saying at least five people were killed.

In Gaza, the Palestinian Authority said internet and fixed-line communication services were down yesterday following an attack on the territory's last fibre optic cable blamed on Israel.

The United Nations General Assembly was set to vote yesterday on a draft resolution that demands an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in the war in Gaza after the United States vetoed a similar effort in the Security Council last week, reports Reuters.

BNP team to visit China this month on CPC invite
Trip likely to take place at the end of the month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A high-level delegation of the BNP, led by the party's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, is scheduled to visit China at the end of this month at the invitation of the Communist Party of China.

Sayful Kabir Khan, a member of the BNP's media cell, confirmed the development yesterday, adding that the visit will be conducted under Mirza Fakhrul's leadership.

Party sources said China has expressed interest in strengthening ties with the BNP, particularly in the context of possible political shifts in Bangladesh following the end of the Awami League's tenure in government.

China has previously hosted representatives from the BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, and other political parties as part of its diplomatic outreach efforts.



What the Awami League and Jamaat can learn from apologies

P7

84 pushed in thru' Sylhet, Lalmonirhat borders

26 Bangladeshis deported via Chuadanga border

STAR REPORT

At least 84 people were pushed into Bangladesh from India through different border points in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Lalmonirhat between Wednesday night and early yesterday.

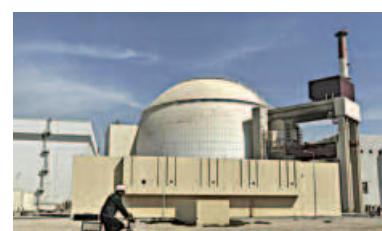
Of them, 70 people, including 18 women and 30 children, of Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, were pushed in through borders in Sylhet and Sunamganj, while 14 others of Lalmonirhat were pushed in through different border points in the district.

In Sylhet and Sunamganj, members of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) detained the returnees and confirmed their identities as Bangladeshi nationals.

Confirming the matter, Lt Col Md Nazmul Haque, commanding officer of BGB 48 Battalion in Sylhet, said the individuals had been living illegally in India for years before being detained and pushed back by the BSF.

In Sylhet's Jaintapur upazila, 17 people of two families – including four men, four women, and nine

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



Iran in breach of nuclear obligations: IAEA

P5

WE MOURN

Abdullah Hil Rakib

Former Senior Vice President, BGMEA & Managing Director, Team Group

We express our deepest condolences on the passing of Abdullah Hil Rakib, a dynamic entrepreneur and visionary business leader. His first namaz-e-janaza will be held at BGMEA Complex in Uttara at 10 AM on 14th June 2025 & the 2nd janaza will be held on the same day after Zuhr prayer at around 2 PM at Banani DOHS Field.

Md. Anwar Hossain
Administrator, BGMEA