



YOUR
RIGHT
TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 15, 2025



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXV No. 142

ASHAR 1, 1432 BS

www.thedailystar.net

ZILHAJJ 18, 1446 HIJRI

16 PAGES : Tk 15.00



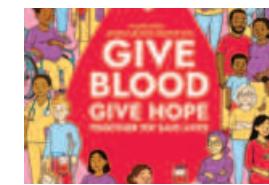
Citizens lament
RTI paralysis in
Bangladesh

P6



A pathway for
democratic
transition

P7



Give Blood, Give
Hope: Together
we save lives

P8



PSG have sights
set on Club
World Cup glory

P11

NEW POLLS TIMING

BNP upbeat, process irks Jamaat, NCP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government's revised election timeline with certain conditions has stirred cautious optimism as well as raised questions among political parties.

While many parties including the BNP have welcomed the proposed timeline -- mid-February next year -- concerns have emerged regarding how the decision was reached through discussions with only one party.

The BNP had long been demanding that the election be held by the year-end. It had been criticising the interim government for not unveiling a roadmap for the election.

The party, now the biggest one after the fall of the Awami League regime in August last year, pressed on with its call after Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus earlier this month announced that polls would be held in April next year.

The meeting between Yunus and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman in London on Friday, and the outcome now signal a potential thaw in the relations between the two sides.

This evolving dynamic suggests a realignment of political forces ahead of the next general election, according to party insiders.

The BNP is satisfied with the proposed election timeline,

BNP optimistic, but wary of conditions

Jamaat slams joint press meet as 'ethically unjustified'

NCP says election prioritised over reform, justice

but it has expressed some concerns and reservations due to the strings attached to Prof Yunus's suggested polls timing.

On the other hand, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party have criticised the government for the way it came up with the fresh timeline.

The Jamaat yesterday said that holding a joint press conference abroad after a meeting with a single political party, and issuing a joint statement about the meeting, is "ethically unjustified" and marks a "deviation from the country's political culture".

"Through this, the chief adviser has expressed a tilt towards a particular party, which has undermined his neutrality," the Islamist party said in a statement.

At the meeting with Tarique, Yunus said the next general election could be held in the week leading up to Ramadan in 2026 if all preparations are completed.

He added that sufficient progress in reforms and the trials of perpetrators of the atrocities during the July uprising would be necessary to bring the election date forward from April.

Yunus made the remarks when Tarique suggested that the election take place before Ramadan. The month of fasting will begin in the third week of February.

This is a significant shift in both sides' stance on election timing.

The Jamaat discussed the issue at its central executive

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

INDIA PLANE CRASH Death toll rises to at least 279

AFP, Ahmedabad

The death toll from the fiery crash of a London-bound passenger jet in an Indian city climbed to 279 yesterday as officials sought to match the DNA of victims with their grieving relatives.

The Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner issued a mayday call shortly before it crashed around lunchtime on Thursday, bursting into a fireball as it hit residential buildings.

A police source yesterday said that 279 bodies had been found at the crash site in the western Indian city of Ahmedabad, making it one of the worst plane disasters of the 21st century.

There was just one survivor out of 242 passengers and crew on board the jet when it crashed, leaving the tailpiece of the aircraft jutting out of a hostel for medical staff.

Emergency services kept

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Queues of patients at the DNCC hospital in the capital's Mohakhali where the health directorate has begun coronavirus testing amid rising number of cases.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN Over 35,000 cases unresolved for over 5 years

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

More than nine years have passed since a case was filed over the rape of a nine-year-old schoolgirl in Dhaka's Khilkhet area. The tribunal dealing with the case has framed charges against the lone accused and held 96 hearings but is yet to complete the trial.

However, a provision of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act says the court is supposed to dispose of such a case within 180 days from the start of proceedings.

The key reason behind the delay is that six of the 10 prosecution witnesses in the case have not appeared before the court to testify.

At a hearing on April 15 this year, the judge of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal 8 said, "The failure to produce witnesses on time has caused the unnecessary delay in disposing of the case."

The tribunal issued non-bailable arrest warrants against four witnesses and ordered four police stations in Khilkhet, Gaibandha, Nilphamari and Madaripur to produce them before it on May 21. However, they were not produced before the court that day, said a court staffer.

Contacted, officers in-charge of the police stations said they didn't receive any court order to produce witnesses.

This is just one of 35,262 cases, filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, which remain pending with courts across the country for more than five years, prolonging the victims' wait for justice.

The number of pending cases filed under the Act stood

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

Man killed for protesting daughter's harassment

Swechchhasebak Dal leader arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A man was beaten to death allegedly by a local Swechchhasebak Dal leader for protesting the harassment of his 14-year-old daughter in Bogura town yesterday.

The incident took place around 2:00pm in the Phulbari-Joraghat area of Bogura town, said Hasan Basir, officer-in-charge of Bogura Sadar Police Station.

Police detained the main suspect, Jitu Islam, 43, and two of his cohorts immediately after the incident, said the OC.

Swechchhasebak Dal said it expelled Jitu as the assistant general secretary of its Bogura District Unit after the incident.

Mostafa Manzur, additional superintendent of police in Bogura, told The Daily Star that they initially learned that Jitu had made a marriage proposal to a 14-year-old

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5



Farmers are boiling and drying freshly harvested boro paddy in the Dakshin Jallabad area of Nikli, Kishoreganj. The region is a major source of foodgrain thanks to its vast floodplains.

PHOTO: TAFSILUL AZIZ

IMF's two tranches to be placed to board

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh's strained foreign exchange reserves are set to get a substantial boost this month with about \$2 billion coming in as budget support from other bilateral and multilateral lenders.

Bangladesh is expecting to get \$900 million from the Asian Development Bank's two budget support programmes, the proposal for which would be placed in the ADB's board meeting on June 19, according to the finance ministry officials.

Of the amount, \$500 million is expected for climate-related budget support and another \$400 million

is expected to reform the banking systems.

In co-financing deals with the ADB, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank will provide \$400 million and the Agence Française de Développement, the French Development Agency, will provide \$100 million.

The World Bank will provide \$200 million in budget support, which will be placed at their board meeting on June 20, the finance ministry officials said.

"The Government of Bangladesh and the World Bank are preparing a development policy credit scheduled for the World Bank Board

discussion later this month, which would support transparency and accountability in domestic revenue mobilisation, banking sector, data production and dissemination, public investment management and procurement, audit and accountability, and the delivery of social programs," said the WB in a statement yesterday.

Besides, Japan will release \$418 million as a Development Policy Loan to support economic reforms and climate resilience.

As of May 29, reserves stood at \$20.57 billion as of May 29, according to the latest published data by the Bangladesh Bank.

54 pushed in thru 4 border dists

FROM PAGE 12
with BSF and told them to verify the identities of the four detainees who claimed to be Indians."

In Thakurgaon, 23 individuals were detained at the Chapsar border in Haripur upazila at around 2:00am.

The BGB is currently working to confirm their identities.

They were detained around 8:00am after they illegally crossed the border, said Nayek Subedar Jobayer Rahman, commander of the Sreerampur BOP under BGB 61 Battalion in Rangpur.

All three are Bangladeshi citizens and were handed over to local police, said Jobayer.

Mahmudun Nabi, officer in charge of Hatibandha Police Station, said they had illegally entered India eight years ago in search of work in Mumbai. "We'll now verify their identities."

Meanwhile, nine others remained stranded at the zero line till last night after BSF attempted to push them in through two border points in Patgram upazila, but BGB, with help from locals, foiled the attempts, said Jobayer.

In Moulvibazar, 12 people were detained near the Kumarsail border area in Barlekha upazila.

The individuals identified themselves as Rohingya and were being kept in a local school as their identities were being verified, said Lt Col Ariful Haque Chowdhury, commanding officer of BGB 42 Battalion in Beanibazar.

The returnees claimed they were pushed into Bangladesh by BSF.

[Our correspondents from Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat and Moulvibazar contributed to the report.]

Iran, Israel trade missiles

FROM PAGE 1
The DC said the four were being questioned. Police are also probing why such a large sum was stored at the distributor's residence and why it was being transported in this early morning. "It's suspicious that the bike carrying Tk 1.08 crore was specifically targeted," he said, adding that informants are often involved in such crimes.

He added that no arrests were made as of last night. Nayan was summoned for further questioning. His partner, Tarikuzzaman, is out of Dhaka on Eid holidays.

Rab 1 Commanding Officer Wing Commander Md Rokonuzzaman said they were also investigating how individuals wearing "Rab uniforms" managed to carry out the incident.

In reply, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that there would be a "more severe and powerful response" if Israel continued to strike his country.

Pezeshkian also criticised what he described as the United States' "dishonesty" for supporting Israel while Iran and Tehran were engaged in nuclear talks.

The United States, Israel's main ally, helped shoot down Iranian missiles, two US officials said.

Iranian fire still struck residential districts in Israel, however, and Defence Minister Israel Katz said Iran's leadership had crossed a red line.

"If Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei continues to fire missiles at the Israeli home front, Tehran will burn," he said in a statement.

Iran had vowed to avenge Friday's Israeli onslaught, which gutted Iran's nuclear and military leadership and damaged atomic plants and military bases, killing 78 people, including civilians, according to Iran's UN envoy.

Iran warned Israel's allies that their regional military bases would come under fire too if they help shoot down Iranian missiles, Iranian state television reported.

Iran's own ally, the Yemeni Houthi group, fired missiles at Israel on Friday night, but at least one appeared to go astray, injuring five Palestinians including three children in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Red Crescent said.

However, 20 months of war in Gaza and a conflict in Lebanon last year have decimated Tehran's strongest allies, Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, reducing its ability to project power across the region along with its options for retaliation.

Gulf Arab states that have long mistrusted Iran but fear coming under attack in any wider conflict have urged calm as worries about disruption to the Gulf region's crucial oil exports boosted the price of crude by about 7% on Friday.

Amid continuing fighting, UN chief Antonio Guterres called for Israel and Iran to halt their escalating conflict.

"Enough escalation. Time to stop. Peace and diplomacy must prevail," Guterres said on X.

NIGHT OF BLASTS AND FEAR IN ISRAEL AND IRAN

Iran's overnight fusillade included hundreds of ballistic missiles and drones, an Israeli official said. Three people, including a man and a woman, were killed and dozens wounded, the ambulance service said.

In Rishon LeZion, south of Tel Aviv, emergency services rescued a baby girl trapped in a house hit by a missile, police said. Video showed teams searching through the rubble of one home.

And in the western suburb of Ramat

Gan, near Ben Gurion airport, Linda Grinfeld described her apartment being damaged: "We were sitting in the shelter, and then we heard such a boom. It was awful."

The Israeli military said it had intercepted surface-to-surface Iranian missiles as well as drones, and that two rockets had been fired from Gaza.

With Iran's air defences heavily damaged, Israeli Air Force chief Tomer Bar said "the road to Iran has been paved".

Attacks on Iranian defences continued until the filing of this report at 10:00pm.

In preparation for possible further escalation, reservists were being deployed across Israel. Army Radio reported units had been positioned along the Lebanese and Jordanian borders.

In Iran, explosions were heard overnight across the capital, state media reported. Fars News agency said two projectiles had hit Mehraband airport, located inside the capital, which is both civilian and military.

State television reported that a 14-storey housing complex, Shahid Chamran, had been flattened by a missile. It said 60 people had been killed, though there was no immediate official confirmation.

Israel's military did not immediately comment on that report.

Authorities in Iran's northwest said that Israeli air strikes since Friday had killed at least 30 military personnel in East Azerbaijan province, according to news agency ISNA.

Iran's UN envoy Amir Saeid Iravani said 78 people had been killed in Israel's strikes on Friday and more than 320 wounded, most of them civilians.

IRANIAN NUCLEAR SITES DAMAGED

Israel sees Iran's nuclear programme as a threat to its existence, and said the bombardment was designed to avert the last steps to production of a nuclear weapon, even though US intelligence says it has seen no sign that this is imminent.

Israeli UN envoy Danny Danon called the strikes "an act of national preservation".

A military official yesterday said Israel had killed nine Iranian nuclear scientists, and that the damage to the nuclear facilities at Esfahan and Natanz would take "more than a few weeks" to repair.

Tehran insists the programme is entirely civilian in line with its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and that it does not seek an atomic bomb.

However, it has repeatedly hidden parts of its programme from international inspectors, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has reported it in violation of the NPT.

Israel, which is not an NPT signatory and is widely understood to have developed a nuclear bomb, has said it cannot let its main regional foe gain atomic weapons.

Iranian talks with the United States to resolve the nuclear dispute have stalled this year.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus returned to Dhaka yesterday morning after completing his four-day visit to the United Kingdom. The photo was taken at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after his flight landed around 9:45am.

BNP upbeat, process irks Jamaat, NCP

FROM PAGE 1

council meeting yesterday morning.

"The chief adviser's joint press conference with one party has created concerns among the public about whether the upcoming election will be free, fair, and acceptable," the party said in its statement.

It added that in a country where many political parties are actively engaged, it is not reasonable to take decisions on overall political matters by consulting only one party.

"We hope the interim government will remain neutral, ensure a level playing field for a free, fair, and credible election, and take necessary steps regarding justice and reforms," the statement read.

The NCP, in a statement on Friday, also said the government appeared to be prioritising a particular party's demands regarding the election.

While the talks regarding the election timing figured high at the meeting, the key demands of citizens in the post-uprising Bangladesh, namely justice and reform, were not given the same importance.

"The National Citizen Party finds it extremely frustrating," reads the statement.

"Our party is okay with any date between December and June. But prior to that, a consensus must be reached on fundamental reforms and how they would be implemented. Restructuring the existing Election Commission is another precondition for ensuring a level playing field for a fair election," Ariful Islam Adeeb, senior joint convener of the NCP, told The Daily Star.

"Even the chief adviser said that polls

could be held in February if progress is made on reforms and ongoing trials.

But the BNP is publicising it in such a way that as if the government has finalised the election timing. They [BNP] are confusing people," he added.

Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, headed by Mamunul Haque, expressed deep concern in a statement yesterday.

As the head of a non-partisan interim government, Yunus has the responsibility to ensure equal treatment of all political parties, the Khelafat Majlis said.

"Issuing a joint statement with the leader of a particular political party raises questions about his neutrality and acceptability and sends a message of state-level discriminations against other political parties," the Islamist party said.

"We hope the leadership of the interim government will play a more cautious and balanced role in the coming days, so that national unity is established and an acceptable electoral environment is ensured," the statement added.

The Khelafat Majlis also said it welcomes any constructive dialogue and discussion aimed at easing the ongoing political tensions and paving the way for a credible, peaceful, and neutral election.

Meanwhile, Revolutionary Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque said the meeting could be viewed as a step toward reforms, justice and polls, potentially offering a dignified exit for the interim government.

"This could help resolve the political stalemate. It might also reduce concerns about the government leaning towards any particular direction," he added while talking at a programme in the

Tour organiser arrested over trekkers' death

MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban

Police yesterday arrested the owner of a tour company in a case over the death of two trekkers, including a young woman, in a trail in Alikadam upazila of Bandarban last week.

Habibur Rahman filed the case with Alikadam Police Station yesterday, accusing Barsha Islam Brishti of negligence that led to the death of his daughter Smriti Akhter.

Barsha, who was arrested yesterday, is the executive director of Tour Expert.

Smriti, fellow trekker Sheikh Jubairul Islam, and their guide Hasan Chowdhury Shuvo went missing on June 10.

Police recovered Jubairul's body from the Matamuhuri river on June 12, Smriti's body was found next to Tain Khal the following day, and Hasan remains missing, according to police.

The bodies of the two trekkers, aged less than 30, are at the Bandarban Sadar Hospital morgue, said police.

According to the complaint, Tour Expert organised a trekking event in the remote hilly terrain of Krishtong-Rung Rang Summit.

The victims were among the 33 participants who joined the tour on the night of June 8 in Alikadam, it adds.

On June 10, tour director Barsha, accompanied

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

Pubali Bank Credit Card – Now Just a Click Away!

- Apply online from your comfort zone
- Instantly check your credit score and credit limit in real time
- Simple process, trusted service

A Smart Choice for a Smarter Life – Pubali Credit Card
<https://applycreditcard.pubalibankbd.com> or Scan QR Code



ঘরে বসেই
ব্যাংক
অ্যাকাউন্ট
খুলুন



ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্মী' পূর্বালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়



Holidaymakers return to the capital as the Eid-ul-Azha vacation ends, ahead of government offices and schools reopening today. The photo was taken at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Locals block two advisers' motorcade
Protest govt ban on stone lifting
OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Sylhet

The motorcade of Power and Energy Adviser Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan and Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan faced a blockade by local residents in Jaflong of Sylhet yesterday.

Around 11:45am, a group of agitated locals blocked the road at Jaflong Bazar area, chanting slogans and lying down on the road protesting the government ban on stone lifting from river in Jaflong, temporarily halting the advisers' convoy while they were returning from a visit to the Ecologically Critical Area.

Confirming the incident, Sarker Mohammad Toufayel Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Gowainghat Police Station, said police intervened and cleared the road. The advisers reached the Haripur Guesthouse by 12:30pm, he added.

Later, the advisers cancelled their visit to Bholaganj area in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila over security concern.

Abdul Kalam, a protester and the general secretary
SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

CTG PORT
Sramik Dal
protests
move to lease
NCT terminal
STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Ctg

Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal yesterday launched a six-day programme at Chattogram Port protesting the government's decision to lease the New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) to UAE-based operator DP World.

The protest programme will continue till June 19 and will include mass outreach campaigns and sit-ins to press home a nine-point demand, said Mozaher Hossain Showkat, former assistant general secretary of the organisation.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

LACK OF SAFE, UNHYGIENIC RESTROOMS

A constant struggle for Dhaka women

TANGILA TASnim

S M Moon, a 24-year-old graphic design student and small business owner from Dhaka's Bashundhara Residential Area, faces a daily struggle just to move around the city.

Diagnosed with diabetes, she needs access to a toilet every 45 minutes. But in a city of over 20 million, finding a clean and safe public restroom is nearly impossible – turning even short trips into a source of stress.

"Before going out, I avoid drinking anything – even when I'm already dehydrated," Moon told The Daily Star. "It's traumatic not to find a restroom when you need one. I feel anxious every time I leave home."

Nasrin Akhter Khanom, a deputy manager at BRAC, shared a similar experience. "I've suffered severe mental stress while travelling for work," she said. "The shortage of public washrooms has a serious impact on women's lives. It's so difficult that many of my colleagues have left their jobs because of it."

Moon and Nasrin are not alone, as women across the capital face the same struggle. Despite being the busiest city in the country, Dhaka has a very limited number of public toilets.

TOILETS EXIST, BUT NOT FOR WOMEN

According to official data, the city has just 198 public toilets – 120 under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and 78 under Dhaka South (DSCC).

Of the DNCC facilities, 82 are government-funded, while the rest are operated by NGOs such as WaterAid, Bhumijo, Arban, and Space. Many are in poor condition, and around 15

We're seeing more women with kidney disease and uterine infections. Most are students or professionals who spend long hours outside without access to clean toilets.

DR FARHAD HASAN CHOWDHURY
Bangladesh Renal Association

This is not just an issue of convenience. It's about safety, dignity, employment, and health. Women skip meals, avoid drinking water, limit their travel, and give up job opportunities – all because the city has failed them.

HASIN JAHAN
Country director, WaterAid

percent were vandalised during the political unrest in July last year and have remained unusable since.

Even where toilets exist, they are often male-dominated, unsafe, and unsanitary – making them practically unusable for women.

Under DNCC, there is no dedicated public

restroom service for women. Only one "pink toilet," designated for women, is currently under construction at the Mohakhali Bus Stand, with support from WaterAid.

Meanwhile, of the 78 public toilets under DSCC, 42 are rented out, 10 are NGO-run, and at least seven are either non-functional or abandoned, said Hasiba Khanom, senior assistant secretary of DSCC.

"These toilets have been leased to private operators who are responsible for maintenance," she said. "But in many cases, they neglect hygiene and safety to maximise profit. That's one of the main reasons women avoid using them."

Even where restrooms are available, women rarely feel comfortable using them. According to the daily ticket book at the Farmgate Public Toilet, an average of 40–50 women use the facility each day, compared to 600–700 men. On April 14, during Pahela Baishakh celebrations, the number of female users peaked at just 85.

"Women don't feel safe or comfortable due to the poor hygiene and lack of security," said Dipu, a security worker at the Farmgate facility. "Cleaners work in shifts, but it's not enough."

Renu Khatun, a hawker, shared, "I always feel uneasy in public toilets. Even though nothing has happened to me, it feels like someone is watching."

Regarding the lack of safety in public facilities, Saida (pseudonym) shared a harrowing experience. "I once had to use a public washroom at a bus terminal. The

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

NATIONAL EYE HOSPITAL

Full services resume amid tight security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Medical services at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital resumed fully yesterday, more than two weeks after operations were suspended due to a clash on the hospital premises.

Total 1,443 patients took treatment at outdoor while 67 patients got admitted and an emergency operation was carried out till 2:00pm yesterday, Zane Alam, acting director of the NIOH, told The Daily Star.

Talking to reporters, he said although they have been trying to normalise the services, they were still not out of security concerns.

"We are having to run a hospital under police and army guard," he said. Zane Alam was carrying out his duties from resident physician office, instead of his own due to security concern.

A doctor at the facility said that

around 20 individuals injured in the July uprising – who had received treatment at the hospital but left without notifying the authorities – attempted to re-enter the premises on two occasions till 12:30pm.

Police prevented them from entering, he said wishing not to be named.

Zane Alam said, "According to hospital regulations, they [July injured] have been declared absconders. Therefore, they are not permitted to enter the hospital."

He added that five individuals injured in the July incident remain at the hospital but they were no longer requiring admission.

"We have prepared their discharge letters, and they may leave at any time," he said.

Asked what would happen if they refused to leave, he stated, "We will ac-

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



Residents of a neighbourhood cool off in the rain, seeking relief from the intense heatwave that had persisted for days. The photo was taken in a lane of the capital's Moghbazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

END OF EID HOLIDAY

Thousands return to Dhaka amid traffic woes

STAR REPORT

As the 10-day Eid-ul-Azha holidays ended yesterday, thousands returning to the capital faced severe traffic congestion, transport shortages, and soaring fares across the country on the last day of vacation.

While some highways remained mostly clear, major routes near the Jamuna and Padma bridges experienced heavy congestion due to vehicle breakdowns, accidents, and an overwhelming number of Dhaka-bound vehicles.

In Dhaka, many returnees were stranded at terminals like Gabtoli and Sayedabad as buses were packed and rickshaw and CNG fares soared.

One of the worst congestions was at the Jamuna Bridge, where traffic slowed to a crawl early yesterday. Tailbacks stretched over 20 kilometres – from Pungli to Elenga in Tangail and Shimantobazar to Nalka in Sirajganj.

Police said several factors contributed to the gridlock – two truck collisions, multiple vehicle breakdowns, and slow toll booth operations. The congestion, which began around Friday midnight, lasted all day.

Md Sharif, in charge of Elenga Highway

Police Outpost, said, "We're trying to ease the congestion, but the pressure is still intense."

Md Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of the bridge's west zone police station, added, "Due to heavy traffic, we opened four lanes for Dhaka-bound vehicles, temporarily suspending northbound movement."

According to the Jamuna Bridge traffic control room, 49,182 vehicles crossed the bridge in 24 hours up to Friday midnight, with 30,817 heading to Dhaka. Toll collections amounted to Tk 3.43 crore.

Md Faruk Hossain, a jobholder from Pabna, told The Daily Star yesterday, "I left home at 6:00am aiming to reach Tongi by noon. But by 3:00pm, I was still five kilometres away from the bridge."

According to the Padma Bridge Site Office, 38,781 vehicles crossed till Friday midnight, with 24,922 heading to Dhaka. Another 12,191 vehicles crossed by yesterday afternoon.

Though the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway saw relatively smooth movement, the Jazira end saw queues stretching up to 500 metres. "All 15 toll booths were operational," said Abu Saad, executive engineer at the site.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Govt considers to enforce mediation before lawsuits
Says Asif Nazrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering making alternative dispute resolution mandatory before filing a lawsuit to resolve disputes more efficiently, said Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul yesterday.

"However, accepting the outcome of the mediation will remain voluntary," he said.

He made the remarks while presiding over a views exchange meeting on the preliminary draft of the "Legal Aid Services (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025", held at the office of the National Legal Aid Services Organisation (NLASO) on Bailey Road in the capital.

Leaders of bar associations from various districts, officials from the law ministry and NLASO, and representatives of different organisations attended the event and shared their views on the draft ordinance.

Addressing the event, Prof Asif said anyone not satisfied with the mediation outcome will still have the opportunity to file a case.

"In other words, participating in mediation will be made mandatory, but accepting its outcome will not be. So, no one's right is being taken away," he added.

The adviser noted that around five lakh cases are filed in Bangladesh each year, while only about 35,000 of those are resolved through government legal aid.

Mediation under the legal aid programme takes less time compared to court trials and achieves a satisfaction rate of about 90 percent. This is a huge opportunity, he said.

"If we can expand, institutionalise, and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Pedestrians ignore a blockade at a level crossing and cross the road in Rajshahi city despite an approaching train, putting themselves at risk of accident. The photo was taken in the Railgate area yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

Couple found dead in Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole

Police yesterday recovered the bodies of a man and his wife near their house in Raghunathpur village under Benapole Port Police Station in Jashore.

The deceased were identified as Moniruzzaman, 52, and his wife Rehena Khatun, 45.

According to police, Moniruzzaman's body was found hanging from a tree adjacent to their house around 9:30am, while Rehena's body was recovered from a nearby field.

Villagers claimed that unidentified assailants killed the couple after abducting them from their house in the dead of night.

Injury marks were found on the woman's face and neck. The man's hanging body had his feet touching the ground.

Contacted, Md Russel Mia, officer-in-charge of Benapole Port Police Station, said, "We've started an investigation to uncover the motive behind the deaths. The exact cause of death will be known after receiving the autopsy reports."

PLOT FOR SALE

A plot is for sale in Baridhara Diplomatic Zone. Only interested and genuine buyers should Contact: 01973456904



Chittagong Medical University

BITID Building, Faujdarhat

Chattogram-4316, Bangladesh

Contact: 01829-626055, 01815-924581, 01719671824

Email: kazi.m.saleheen@gmail.com

frashid943@gmail.com

e-Tender is invited to the e-GP Portal for following procurement. Interested tenderers are requested to visit (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) website for details

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Types of Procurement, Name of the Procurement	Tender publication date	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender opening date and time	Method
1	1084937	Procurement of Electrical Items for the Fiscal Year 2024-25	02-Jun-2025 10:30	16-Jun-2025 15:00	16-Jun-2025 15:30	OTM
2	1117827	Procurement of Computer Accessories (Windows, External Storage etc)	01-Jun-2025 10:30	15-Jun-2025 11:00	15-Jun-2025 11:30	OTM
3	1125347	CMU/H/GR-01 Procurement of Air Conditioners for the Fiscal Year 2024-25	09-Jun-2025 19:00	23-Jun-2025 19:00	23-Jun-2025 19:30	OTM

Dr. Md. Delwar Hossain

Controller of Examination

Chittagong Medical University

BITID Building, Salimpur, Faujdarhat, Chattogram

Scientists save endangered Gotali fish from extinction

BFRI researchers develop artificial breeding technique

ASADUZZAMAN TIPU

Once widely consumed and prized for its taste, Gotali fish – an indigenous species declared endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 2015 – is now on the path to revival.

Scientists at the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) freshwater substation in Saidpur, Nilphamari, have successfully developed a technique for its artificial breeding and fry production, offering new hope for its conservation.



The Gotali fish (*Crossocheilus latius*), a member of the Cyprinidae family, was once abundant in the Teesta basin, the hilly streams of Mymensingh, and the river systems of Sylhet.

However, its population has drastically declined due to water pollution, the use of destructive fishing techniques – such

as current nets and electric fishing – and the adverse effects of climate change.

According to BFRI, Bangladesh is home to 261 freshwater fish species, 64 of which are critically endangered.

BFRI Principal Scientific Officer Azhar Ali said efforts to conserve Gotali's gene pool began in 2023, with a five-member team conducting extensive research.

Scientists collected live specimens (5-6 grammes) from the Teesta and Buri Teesta rivers during April-May and preserved them in research ponds for domestication and adaptation before breeding.

"During the breeding season (July-August), mature male and female Gotali fish were transferred to hatchery tanks with gentle water flow and injected with synthetic hormones," said Senior Scientific Officer Sonia Sharmin.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

Water levels rise at 17 river stations, fall at 95: FFWC

BSS, Dhaka

Water levels at 17 river stations monitored by the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) have risen, while 95 stations recorded a fall, according to an FFWC bulletin issued yesterday.

Out of the 116 monitored river stations, water levels at four stations have remained steady, while no stations are flowing above the danger level, said the bulletin.

All major rivers are flowing below their respective danger marks, it also said.

The water levels of the Brahmaputra-Jamuna rivers are on a declining trend, which is expected to continue over the next three days, remain steady for the following two days, and stay below danger levels throughout.

Similarly, water levels of the Ganges-Padma rivers are decreasing and are likely to continue doing so for the next five days, remaining below danger levels.

The Surma and Kusiyara rivers are also experiencing falling water levels, which are expected to continue for the next three days, with levels staying below danger marks, the bulletin said.

Farmer dies in lightning strike in Manikganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A farmer was killed in a lightning strike in the Kumuria area of Khalshi union under Daulatpur upazila of Manikganj yesterday afternoon.

The victim is Robin Sheikh, 30, of the area.

Quoting locals, Daulatpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Al Mamun said Robin was working on a farmland near his house around 4:00pm when he was struck by lightning. He died on the spot.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body and handed it over to the family without a post-mortem examination.

Woman dies in police custody

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

A woman died in the custody of Katiadi Police Station in Kishoreganj on Friday morning.

Firoza Begum, 50, wife of Swapna Mia, 55, was a resident of Darichariakona Mohalla of Katiadi Municipality.

In this connection, Firoza's daughter Soma Begum filed an unnatural death case with the police station.

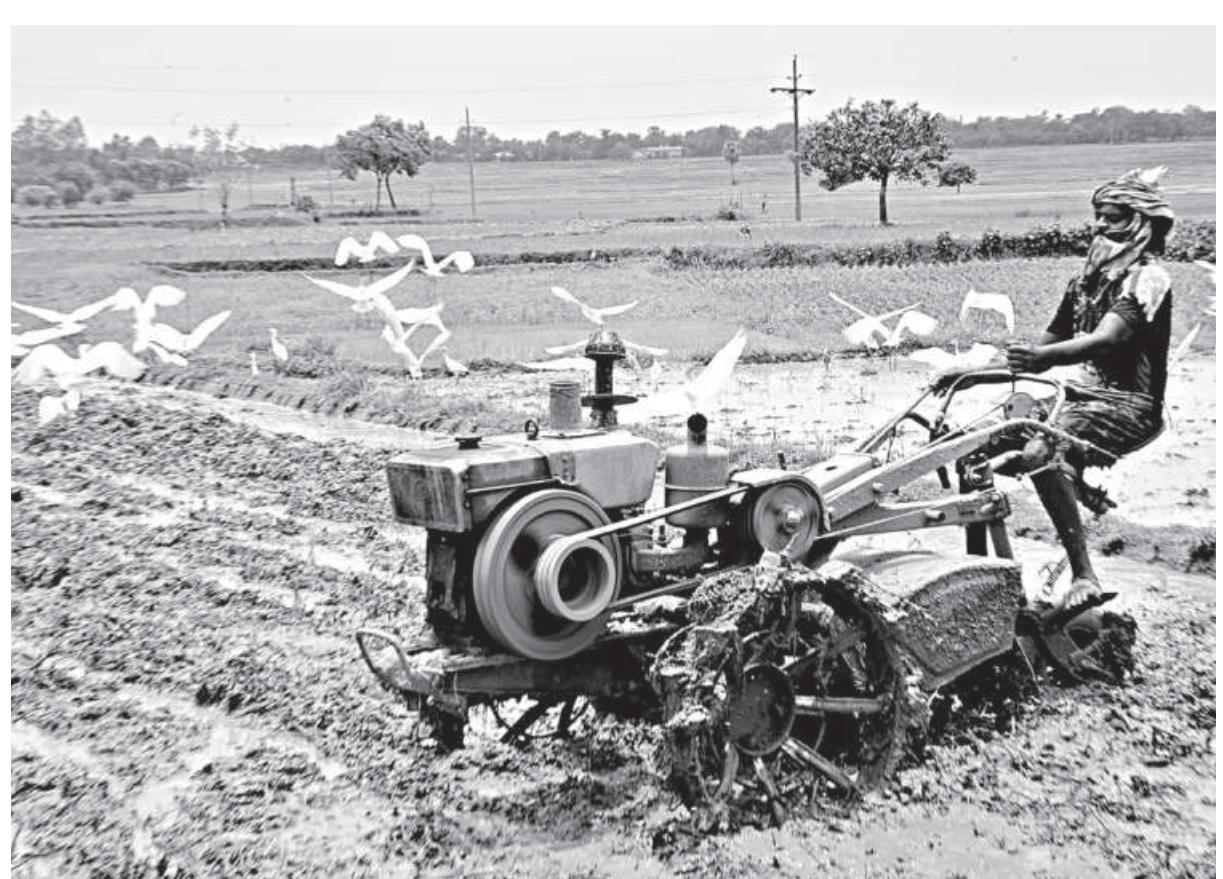
According to locals and police, Swapna and Firoza are known as drug dealers locally.

Police said joint forces conducted an anti-drug drive at the couple's house on Thursday night, and arrested Firoza with 11 yaba pills, 22 packets of marijuana, and Tk 32,664 in cash. Swapna managed to flee.

Firoza was taken to the police station around 3:30am on Friday, and was kept in the women and children cell. On Friday morning, when she did not wake up, she was taken to Katiadi Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared her dead.

Later, an autopsy was conducted at the hospital. The body was later handed over to family and buried yesterday.

A d d i t i o n a l Superintendent of Police Tofazzal Hossain said, "The cause of Firoza's death will be confirmed once the autopsy report is received."



A farmer tills his land in preparation for sowing paddy seeds, while a flock of herons pass through the field in search of insects in the freshly turned soil. The photo was taken from Kakonhat in the Barind region of Rajshahi yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 15, 2025
ASHAR 1, 1432 BS
The Daily Star **5**

'We knew everything'

Trump on Israeli attack on Iran

REUTERS, Washington

After months of urging Israel not to strike Iran while he worked toward a nuclear deal, President Donald Trump told Reuters in a phone interview on Friday that he and his team had known the attacks were coming and still saw room for an accord.

"We knew everything, and I tried to save Iran from humiliation and death. I tried to save them very hard because I would have loved to have seen a deal worked out," Trump said.

"They can still work out a deal, however, it's not too late," he added.

Trump had repeatedly pushed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to delay an Israeli attack to give diplomacy more time, though the president himself had threatened to



This handout picture released by the Iranian Red Crescent yesterday shows Iranian Red Crescent volunteers gathered in front of a building partially destroyed in an Israeli strike in Tehran.

PHOTO: AFP



bomb the Gulf nation if nuclear talks failed.

Trump's shifting stance around the Israeli strikes, which he called "excellent" and "very successful" in a series of media interviews on Friday, offered one of the most striking examples yet of how he conducts high stakes negotiations through both frank public rhetoric and behind-the-scenes maneuvers.

Asked if the US would support Israel against Iranian counterattacks, Trump said he supported Israel. He said he was not concerned about a regional war breaking out as a result of Israel's strikes but did not elaborate.

"We've been very close to Israel. We're their number one ally by far," Trump told Reuters, adding, "We'll see what happens."

Later on Friday, two US officials said the US military had helped shoot down Iranian missiles headed toward Israel.

Speaking to Reuters on Friday, Trump said he had given the Iranians 60 days to come to an agreement and that the time had expired with no deal.

"We knew just about everything," he said. "We knew enough that we gave Iran 60 days to make a deal and today is 61, right? So, you know, we knew everything."

Trump said it was unclear if Iran still has a nuclear program following Israeli strikes on the country.

"Nobody knows. It was a very devastating hit," Trump said.

Over 35,000 cases unresolved

FROM PAGE 1

at 1,48,314 till March 31 this year. Of those, 33,485 were filed in the past year alone, says a Supreme Court report.

Legal experts say trials of these cases could not be completed within the 180-day time frame due to various reasons – witnesses don't appear at courts to give statements, prosecution lacks sincerity regarding trial, and many of the accused move to the High Court to stay trial proceedings.

Around four years ago, a special cell was formed in line with a 2016 HC directive to keep track of the cases filed under the Act. But the cell is not operational now, according to SC sources.

In its directive, the HC said the cell, led by the SC registrar general or the registrar of the HC Division, would monitor whether trials of such cases are completed within 180 days. The cell would submit reports to the authorities concerned from time to time for taking appropriate action.

Contacted, SC Spokesperson Muajjem Hussain said he was unaware of the current status of the monitoring cell.

He said 13 committees led by HC judges were formed a few months ago to expedite the trial proceedings of all types of cases, including those filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

ISRAEL'S ATTACKS ON IRAN

Strikes hint at bigger ambition: REGIME CHANGE

REUTERS, Jerusalem/Washington

Israel's surprise attack on Iran had an obvious goal of sharply disrupting Tehran's nuclear programme and lengthening the time it would need to develop an atomic weapon.

But the scale of the attacks, Israel's choice of targets, and its politicians' own words suggest another, longer-term ambition: toppling the regime itself.

The strikes early on Friday hit not just Iran's nuclear facilities and missile factories but also key figures in the country's military chain of command and its nuclear scientists, blows that appear aimed at diminishing Iran's credibility both at home and among its allies in the region – factors that could destabilise the Iranian leadership, experts said.

"One assumes that one of the reasons that Israel is doing that is that they're hoping to see regime change," said Michael Singh of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and a former senior official under President George W Bush.

"It would like to see the people of Iran rise up," he said, adding that the limited civilian casualties in the initial round of attacks also spoke to a broader aim.

In a video address hours after Israeli fighter jets began striking Iranian nuclear facilities and air defence systems, Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, appealed to the Iranian people directly.

"The Islamic regime, which has oppressed you for almost 50 years, threatens to destroy our country, the State of Israel," Netanyahu said.

Israel's objective was to remove the nuclear and ballistic missile threat, he said, but added: "As we achieve our objective, we are also clearing the path for you to achieve your freedom."

The regime does not know what hit them, or what will hit them. It has never been weaker. This is your opportunity to stand up and let your voices be heard," Netanyahu said.

But despite the damage inflicted by the unprecedented Israeli attack, decades of enmity toward Israel – not only among Iran's rulers but its majority-Shia population – raises



questions about the prospect for fomenting enough public support to oust an entrenched theocratic leadership in Tehran backed by loyal security forces.

Singh cautioned that no one knows what conditions would be required for an opposition to coalesce in Iran.

Friday's assault was the first phase of what Israel said would be a prolonged operation. Experts said they expected Israel would continue to go after key Iranian nuclear infrastructure to delay Tehran's march to a nuclear bomb, even if Israel, on its own, does not have the capability to eliminate Iran's nuclear program.

US President Donald Trump's administration, while acquiescing to Israel's strikes and helping its close ally fend off Iran's retaliatory missile barrage, has given no indication that it seeks regime change in Tehran.

Israel has much further to go if it is to dismantle Iran's nuclear facilities, and military analysts have always said it might be impossible to totally disable the well-fortified sites dotted around Iran.

"There's no way to destroy a nuclear programme by military means," Israel's National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi told Israel's Channel 13 TV. The military campaign could, however, create conditions for a deal with the United States that would thwart the nuclear programme.

Analysts also remain sceptical that Israel will have the munitions needed to obliterate Iran's nuclear project on its own.

While setting back Tehran's nuclear programme would have value for Israel, the hope for undermining the regime could explain why Israel went after so many senior military figures, potentially throwing the Iranian security establishment into confusion and chaos, analysts said.

But such a change would come with risk, said Jonathan Panikoff, a former US deputy national intelligence officer for the Middle East who is now at the Atlantic Council.

If Israel succeeds in removing Iran's leadership, there is no guarantee that the successor that emerges would not be even harderline in pursuit of conflict with Israel.

US complicit in Israeli strikes

Says Iran at UN

REUTERS, United Nations

Iran accused the United States of being complicit in Israel's attacks on the Islamic Republic, which Washington denied, telling Tehran at the United Nations Security Council that it would "be wise" to negotiate over its nuclear programme.

Iran launched retaliatory strikes on Israel late on Friday after Israel attacked Iran earlier in the day. Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon said Iran had been "preparing for war" and Israel's strikes were "an act of national preservation."

His Iranian counterpart, Amir Saied Iravani, accused Israel of seeking "to kill diplomacy, to sabotage negotiations, and to drag the region into wider conflict," and he said Washington's complicity was "beyond doubt".

"Those who support this regime, with the United States at the forefront, must understand that they are complicit," Iravani told the Security Council. "By aiding and enabling these crimes, they share full responsibility for the consequences."

US President Donald Trump said Friday that he had given Tehran a 60-day ultimatum, which expired on Thursday, to make a deal over its escalating uranium enrichment program. Danon said intelligence had confirmed Iran could have produced enough fissile material for multiple bombs within days.

Senior US official McCoy Pitt said the United States will continue to seek a diplomatic resolution that ensures Iran will never acquire a nuclear weapon or pose a threat to stability in the Middle East.

Ukraine, Russia swap POWs

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine and Russia conducted another POW swap – the fourth one in a week – the warring sides said yesterday, under agreements reached in Istanbul earlier this month.

"We continue to take our people out of Russian captivity. This is the fourth exchange in a week," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on social media.

"In accordance with the Russian-Ukrainian agreements... another group of Russian servicemen was returned from the territory controlled by the Kyiv regime," Russia's defence ministry said.

The exchange came as Russia repeatedly rejected ceasefire calls and intensified its offensive along the front line, and especially in the northeastern Sumy region, where it seeks to establish a "buffer zone" to protect its Kursk region, previously partly occupied by Ukraine.

Zelensky claimed Russia's advance on Sumy was stopped, adding that Kyiv's forces have managed to retake one village. According to Ukraine, Russia was using 53,000 men in the Sumy operation.

Australian man shot dead in Bali

AFP, Denpasar

An Australian man was shot dead and another one was wounded in a shooting at their villa on the popular Indonesian resort island of Bali early Saturday, according to police who were hunting for two suspects.

Local police chief Arif Batubara said in a statement that two men came to the victims' villa in the popular tourist hub of Badung district just after midnight, stormed inside, and shot the victims.

"We still don't know the motive of the attack," Arif said.

The dead victim was Zivan Radmanovic, 32, while the other man, Sanar Ghanim, 34, was seriously wounded and had been taken to hospital, Arif said.

"We are currently investigating the scene to find out the motive of this attack," he said.

Arif said, according to witnesses including Radmanovic's wife, the perpetrators who fled the scene after the attack were speaking in English with a thick Australian accent.

OUR CUSTOMERS SPEAK FOR US

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

"After thorough research, we decided on bti for its well-earned reputation of trustworthiness; which gave us the confidence to dream big. We now eagerly await the on-time handover of our dream home!"

Mrs. Mehzabin Ahmed
Joint Venture Customer
Amberwood



Seeking anonymity, a law ministry official told this newspaper that 101 tribunals are now dealing with the cases under the Act, and the government plans to set up more tribunals to increase the disposal of such cases.

WHAT LEGAL EXPERTS SAY

Criminal law expert Khurshid Alam Khan said that since the 180-day time frame for completing trial in cases filed under the Act is not mandatory, the prosecution must be sincere in completing trial within the time limit.

"A separate secretariat under the SC should be established to monitor the execution of the directives by the Appellate Division and the High Court and take necessary measures."

Shukla Sarwat Siraj, a lawyer at the SC, said, "The country's criminal justice system has failed to effectively protect women and child victims from violence."

"We have great laws but those are not properly enforced. Many victims refrain from reporting crimes because of social stigma, the culture of victim shaming, and intimidation by the perpetrators."

Victims are often pressured to negotiate settlements with the perpetrators. Besides, police and local influencers sometimes work in favour of the accused, she noted.

"We lag behind many other

countries in terms of collecting and preserving DNA-based evidence. We need more tribunals, dedicated prosecutors, and strict adherence to the 'no adjournment policy'. More importantly, we need social awareness."

Legal expert Ishrat Hasan said the Act was designed as a fast-track law to protect the most vulnerable women and children from violence and abuse.

"Yet, thousands of cases filed under the Act remain stuck in the system despite a 180-day time limit for disposal of such cases."

"Police investigations are often incomplete or get delayed. It takes months, sometimes even years, to get critical forensic evidence, such as DNA reports, due to poor infrastructure. Overburdened special tribunals grant frequent adjournments, while witnesses don't show up at courts out of fear or due to intimidation."

"Victims and their families face social stigma and economic hardship as they have to attend court proceedings over a long period. Many lose hope and abandon the legal battle. This is why conviction rates are alarmingly low – below 3 percent – in many districts."

"This systemic failure demands urgent reform. The government must expand tribunals, equip police with resources, and ensure the protection of victims from threats," added Ishrat.

The London meeting has given clarity

It demonstrates political maturity and goodwill

We welcome the positive outcome of the meeting between the Chief Adviser of the interim government Prof Muhammad Yunus and BNP Acting Chairman Tariqul Islam in London, during which the chief adviser suggested that the election could take place before Ramadan—if sufficient progress is made on reforms and the trials related to the July-August uprising. This conditional acceleration reflects both sides' willingness to link the election timetable to concrete progress on judicial and institutional reforms.

We are relieved that the uncertainties regarding the election timing have been allayed by this announcement and that both sides have shown maturity and a willingness to cooperate with each other. This has significantly cooled down the tensions between the interim government and the BNP and has smoothed the path towards a more stable democratic process.

Four political parties and an alliance have welcomed the concurrence between the government and the BNP regarding the timing of the election. This is a significant breakthrough in a climate previously fraught with discord, mistrust, and ambiguity. The agreement indicates a noticeable shift from the chief adviser's earlier insistence on the polls taking place between December 2025 and June 2026, a timeline strongly opposed by the BNP, which demanded a December election.

Now there is a clear election roadmap that the nation has been waiting for—one that most parties are open to. The National Citizen Party, however, has expressed its disappointment, criticising the decision as being made to satisfy one particular party, the BNP. While their concerns regarding reforms and justice not receiving priority when making this announcement are understandable, the decision to give a definite timeline that is acceptable to most political parties has been a wise one. It has avoided the confrontational politics that was expected following growing resentment of the BNP, which is one of the largest political parties in the country. It has also opened space for dialogue.

The challenge ahead for the chief adviser and his cabinet is to start meaningful electoral reforms and ensure that the process of delivering justice for those killed in the July-August uprising is initiated with fairness and transparency. The other major challenge is to ensure that the elections are held with maximum voter turnout and participation from all major parties, including the NCP.

We condemn Israel's strike on Iran

Both sides must exercise restraint before wider war erupts

We strongly condemn Israel's pre-emptive strikes on Iran as a gross violation of the UN Charter and international law. Reportedly, Israel's strikes targeted Iran's nuclear facilities, ballistic missile factories, military commanders, and nuclear scientists. So far, 78 people have been killed—including top scientists and generals—and 329 others injured in the attacks. In retaliation, Tehran launched hundreds of ballistic missiles at Israel, reportedly killing at least three people. Alarmingly, Israel's airstrikes came at a time when the sixth round of nuclear talks between the US and Iran was scheduled to take place on June 15 in Oman. Judging from the timing of the attacks, it appears that Israel does not support negotiations or a peaceful resolution of Iran's nuclear issues, and that the strikes were intended to sabotage the US-Iran talks. Reportedly, Iran has already suspended the talks, which suggests that Israel was at least partially successful—an outcome that is deeply concerning.

Israel has a long history of violating international laws. Its aggression against Palestine has persisted for decades. The world has been watching in horror as it commits genocide against the Palestinian people, with full diplomatic and logistical support from powerful Western countries, particularly the US. This time as well, US President Donald Trump voiced his support for the Israeli attacks on Iran, describing the strikes as "excellent" and "very successful." The US president told Reuters that he was aware of Israel's strikes on Iran. Meanwhile, Israel justified the strikes as a pre-emptive measure to stop Iran from nearing nuclear weapons capability. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu even stated to the media that the strikes marked the beginning of a prolonged operation to prevent Tehran from developing an atomic weapon. Iran, however, has consistently maintained that its nuclear programme is intended solely for peaceful purposes. Evaluations from the US, UN and independent experts have also concluded that Tehran was not actively pursuing a nuclear bomb.

Clearly, it is due to the backing of the US and other Western powers that Israel can commit such acts of aggression—and even genocide—with impunity. Such backing itself is a violation of international law. We therefore urge the US to end its blind and unconditional support for Israel. Here, the UN must also play a major role. It must take steps to de-escalate the Israel-Iran conflict and work towards bringing all sides to the negotiating table. It must ensure that tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear programme are resolved through diplomacy, not through "war." We also call on world leaders to urgently intervene in this crisis before any more violence occurs, so that no further lives are lost.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Magna Carta sealed by King John
On this day in 1215, Magna Carta—a charter of English liberties that occupies a unique place in the popular imagination as a symbol and a battle cry against oppression—was sealed, under threat of civil war, by King John.

EDITORIAL

Citizens lament RTI paralysis in Bangladesh

Dr Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, at Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). They can be reached at rib@ctech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAD

"I think there is a deliberate attempt to downgrade the use of the RTI law. There are no protection mechanisms in place to protect whistleblowers, and we hear about so many incidences of corruption and malpractice daily, but how do you raise the alarm?"

This is a typical lament of an activist who uses Bangladesh's Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 to unearth corruption and hold the government to democratic account. Since the departure of the three Information Commissioners soon after the 2024 July uprising, this column has sought to draw the interim government's attention to the urgent need to appoint a new set of commissioners. We emphasised that, apart from the urgent reform of various institutions and mechanisms of governance destroyed through past misrule, there was an overriding need to uphold the importance of citizens' role in monitoring the work of all public authorities for better governance. This, we argued, can be advanced by conscious citizens' unhindered use of the RTI law. We underlined that the emergence of an alert group of youthful citizens who spearheaded the uprising was propitious for better and more effective use of the law and for taking it forward.

RTI applications, especially those affecting transparency and accountability, remain unanswered in most cases. As there is no recourse without the Information Commissioners, the recalcitrant officials could not be brought to book. The frustrated adherents of the RTI Act saw the delay in appointing commissioners as a deliberate act by the authorities to weaken transparency and accountability in governance.

An activist from North Bengal described his frustrations as follows: "I had engaged myself in utilising and promoting the RTI Act because I

believe that, in doing so, we, as citizens, can make a great contribution to the affairs of the state, but now I feel discouraged because I see there are no commissioners. So, there is no remedy in case of any dispute arising from

huge expenses on a commission that has been sitting idle for so many months. This is all taxpayers' money they are wasting."

Another was more aggressive: "I am surprised that the present regime is



FILE VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

an application. On the other hand, public authorities have become very casual about compliance with the law; I am not getting responses to my RTI requests. This is very frustrating—I no longer feel the excitement that I am contributing."

An irate RTI user said, "We are faced with a dismal situation. We file RTI requests, but Designated Officers (DOs) do not bother to respond because they do not care about compliance. One reason is that they know there are no Information Commissioners at the moment, so the likelihood of them imposing fines or recommending departmental action does not exist. This gives the DOs enough leeway to get away without compliance. As a result, a backlog of pending cases with the commission, applications and appeals pile up without resolution, discouraging citizens from filing RTI requests."

Another bemoaned: "It seems no one is bothered that so many complaints are piling up at the commission without any action. This is absolutely not acceptable. On top of that, the government is incurring

not realising the importance of such a transparency law, though they never fail to talk about their determination to reform all important governance sectors. But how much reform is possible by strategically keeping this most important law on the back burner and making it redundant?"

Other observations reveal the practical difficulties users face. One applicant said, "When I submitted RTI applications in recent months, a few authorities reprimanded me for using the law. They told me that I must stop all this nonsense now. They asked me to forget the RTI law, saying it is no longer in force. Some even mock us. Many of us are already disheartened. We feel sorry that the law, which saw some progress, is going backwards now."

Another observed: "We all know that the law prescribes Tk 2 as a photocopy charge for each page, but now the authorities demand excess fees from us, and when we challenge them, they misbehave with us." Similar problems are revealed in another observation: "There has been a rise in cases in recent months in

which exorbitant fees are demanded for the information requested, just to harass the applicants. And we know that applications are being returned on the plea that the office address is incorrect, though that was not the case. In some cases, the information is denied, citing Section 7 as a reason, without any justification as required by the law."

There seem to be differences in response depending on the authorities' location. According to some users, authorities who know there are no commissioners deliberately avoid responding to RTI applications. This applies mainly to government offices at the divisional and district levels. However, upazila-level offices, which are unaware, tend to respond as before.

The RTI community perceives the delay in appointing commissioners as deliberate neglect and considers it a tactic to weaken transparency efforts. Some journalists felt that they faced risks when filing RTI applications. Without an active commission, they lack protection or recourse in cases of harassment or denial. According to others, public authorities are under no pressure to comply with proactive disclosure requirements without a functioning commission.

The frustration and dismay in the statements quoted above reveal the concern of our citizens committed to promoting transparency and accountability of public offices in the country, as envisioned in the RTI Act. The longer such frustrations continue, the greater the danger that the gains made over the years in creating awareness and implementing the law will be largely lost. We know that measures for improving the existing RTI Act are included in the recommendations of one or more reform commissions set up by the interim government. While their approval and implementation will take time, attention must be given immediately to the appointment of the three Information Commissioners so that the law does not perish in the meantime through neglect and inaction.

How extortion is strangling businesses



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Dr Abdullah Shibli
is an economist and employed at a nonprofit financial intermediary in the US. He previously worked for the World Bank and Harvard University.

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

Last week, I was chatting with my friend Shuvro, who had just come back from Indonesia for a short visit to celebrate Eid in Bangladesh. I asked him if he had noticed any changes in Dhaka while he was away. This was his first visit after the July uprising. Shuvro, a businessman, said ruefully, "Well, it is tough to do business here now because the incidence of *chandabaji* (extortion) has increased."

I knew what he meant. I have seen newspaper reports about the prevalence of *chandabaji* (which is a genteel word for extortion). One can hardly open a Bangla newspaper without coming across a news item on the ferocity of this practice at bus stations, kitchen markets, and other transport hubs.

The scourge of *chandabaji* has been eating away at business profits and also depleting the take-home wages of workers. Shuvro said that he saw the extortionists operating through their agents or collectors, known as "linemen," in all the major inter-district bus terminals located in the busiest areas of the capital—Ghatoli, Sayedabad, and Mohakhali.

The situation is even worse outside Dhaka. It manifests itself under different names and forms: tax, fees, contribution, fundraising, crowdsourcing, rent seeking, crowdfunding, etc.

At a recent conference, Taskeen Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), declared, "Extortion has become an abscess for businesses. Even now, businesspeople cannot

operate without fear."

Chandabaji is a form of corruption and affects poorer people more severely. In a recent book, David Jackman of Oxford University, who has years of research experience in the slums and informal labour markets of India and Bangladesh, provides a fascinating account of the modus operandi of extortionists in Kawran Bazar, a major marketplace in Dhaka.

The book, entitled *Syndicates and Societies: Criminal Politics in Dhaka*, based on Jackman's socio-anthropological work, also sheds light on the role of syndicates in crime and politics, "revealing the world of the extortionist."

Jackman is unequivocal in his critique of the major political parties, including Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party, for sustaining the operations of the extortion network and how it adversely affects both business and the working class.

Since coming to power last August, the interim government has been working to address corruption and has taken measures to reduce the influence of power brokers in national politics. However, it soon became clear that various elements of the groups dominating the current political scene have taken over the reins from the AL extortionists. In the name of "levy," "collection," or "contribution," the new operators of various scams are resorting to extortion and exploiting vulnerable populations.

A prominent local daily reported that an investigation by an intelligence

agency found that local influential figures and political party leaders, especially those linked to the BNP, are involved in extortion. In the past, AL members used various tools such as tokens, receipts, and stickers for extortion. But the new extortionists have introduced a novel method to avoid the risk of detection.

An alarming story in September



FILE ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

2024 gained national prominence. Activists aligned with the BNP took control of the Shimulia ferry terminal, the fish market, and tawler docks at Lohajhaj in Munshiganj, allegedly by threatening and assaulting the rightful leaseholders.

Various reliable sources confirmed that, in Bangladesh, fundraising cartels have created a menace, raising concerns that these forces could be engaged in the potential misuse of funds. These campaigns might falsely claim to be raising money for a specific cause or exaggerate the needs of Bangladesh, potentially leading to scams.

The role of organised crime in fundraising was confirmed by a 2023 study funded by the US government. The "Organised Crime Index," an innovative tool designed to measure

levels of organised crime in a country and assess its resilience to such activity, identified several rackets and syndicates engaged in nefarious activities.

Researchers concluded that organisations are not transparent about how donated funds are used or distributed in Bangladesh, raising concerns about accountability and the

effective use of resources.

Fundraising efforts might be used to support specific political or ideological agendas within Bangladesh, potentially undermining genuine humanitarian efforts and exacerbating social divisions.

Some individuals or groups might exploit the vulnerability of people in Bangladesh by creating false narratives or misrepresenting their needs to raise funds for personal gain.

Sumon Howlader, president of the Bangladesh Poultry Association, said extortion was a major reason for the price hike of eggs and chickens.

The prevalence of extortion fees has been cited as a reason why small and medium businesses in Bangladesh are not willing to pay income tax, and these fees also contribute to high production costs in the country.

YUNUS-TARIQUE MEETING IN LONDON

A pathway for democratic transition

Fahim Mashroor and Jyoti Rahman
are members of Nagorik Coalition.

FAHIM MASHROOR and
JYOTI RAHMAN

Almost a year on from the Monsoon Revolution, the euphoria of victory against the monstrous Hasina regime has faded, and the prospects for a peaceful democratic transition hang in the balance. The interim government has found itself getting entangled in various policy controversies. The National Citizen Party, formed by the youth leaders who spearheaded the uprising last July, is finding it difficult to gain political traction. Radicals within and outside the government try to seize every opportunity to push their anarchic agenda. Meanwhile, the largest democratic party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, appears unsure of its own reform agenda and vision.

It is against this backdrop that the Chief Adviser of the interim government Prof Muhammad Yunus and the BNP's Acting Chairperson Tarique Rahman met in London on June 13. The nation waited with bated breath for the outcome of the meeting. Our history is full of such meetings where the principals fail to find common ground. The early signs suggest that this time might be an exception. It seems that the two leaders have agreed to work towards a smooth democratic transition, with agreements on reforms paving the way towards a pre-Ramadan



Chief Adviser of the interim government Prof Muhammad Yunus meets with BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman in London on June 13, 2025.

PHOTO: CA PRESS WING

Our history is full of such meetings where the principals fail to find common ground. The early signs suggest that this time might be an exception. It seems that the two leaders have agreed to work towards a smooth democratic transition, with agreements on reforms paving the way towards a pre-Ramadan election. The Nagorik Coalition—a civil society platform advocating reforms related to citizen's rights and building democratic institutions—has proposed a clear, feasible pathway that can lead to a peaceful, durable democratic transition by next Ramadan.

requires two things: a high-turnout election and consensus on some critical reforms. Let us take these elements in turn. Election timing is not just a matter of polling day. A set of activities required for the election must begin immediately. An ordinance needs to be issued by the end of July allowing those who have turned 18 in

2025 to be enrolled in the voter roll. The voter list could be finalised by the end of October. This could pave the way for the announcement of the election schedule in late November, with the election taking place before Ramadan.

And it is critical for a democratic transition that the election takes place before Ramadan, not afterwards. Bangladesh has not had a large-scale national election since 2008. It is well understood that the functioning of government machinery, and indeed of society as a whole, changes during the month of fasting. Eid is arguably the biggest celebration for most Bangladeshi families. Furthermore, April is the exam season, and educational institutions play a vital logistical role in the conduct of elections.

That the chief adviser even floated a post-Ramadan April election, defying these basic social realities, is difficult to fathom. Back in August, he had said the timing of elections would be determined

by politicians. Well, most politicians who would actually campaign for election on the ground—as opposed to shouting on social media—would welcome a pre-Ramadan election.

It is therefore welcome news that the chief adviser has indicated that, if sufficient progress is made on the reform front, a pre-Ramadan election is very much possible.

The democratic political parties are not as far apart on critical reforms as one might believe from the daily din of disinformation on social media. For example, there is general agreement on a hundred member upper house, one hundred female MPs, an election-time non-partisan government, and the strengthening of parliamentary committees and institutions such as the Election Commission. The disagreement is about the mechanisms.

An upper house of parliament with members chosen in proportion to the votes won by the parties in the general election could, in fact, go a long way towards

avoiding the difficulties we have had in the past with caretaker governments or weakening institutions. On the other hand, if the upper house simply reflects the seats won in the lower house—as preferred by the BNP—then the risk is that, over time, its members will resemble the party hacks that made up Hasina's parliament.

Tarique Rahman was the first major politician to propose the upper house. Surely, he would want to see an upper house that actually works, and not the kind of circus one associates with Hasina's parliaments.

A similar point can be made about the one hundred female MPs.

Politically, there is nothing for the BNP to lose from agreeing to a proportionally represented upper house with a role to play in the formation of the election-time non-partisan government, and in ensuring

Tarique Rahman was the first major politician to propose the upper house. Surely, he would want to see an upper house that actually works, and not the kind of circus one associates with Hasina's parliaments.

better parliamentary oversight and the strengthening of institutions. Indeed, as the largest democratic party, the BNP is likely to maintain the largest number of upper house members in the foreseeable future under proportional representation. And as a party that is expected to govern, it has everything to gain from better institutions. Similarly, the party stands to benefit most from directly elected female MPs, simply because it is the largest democratic party with a nationwide presence.

That is, there is both national interest and narrower partisan logic for the BNP acting chairperson to agree in principle to these key reform ideas.

The chief adviser had expressed his desire to see the Rohingya celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr 2026 in their homeland. There is little chance that he would see that wish fulfilled. Perhaps he would be better off spending the next few months solely focusing on whatever needs to be done to give the nation a democratically elected government by Ramadan 2026.

Why we must catch up with global disability commitments

Ayon Debnath
is a development practitioner currently working with
Sightsavers as campaign adviser.

Rejaul Karim Siddiquee
is a disability rights activist and advocate at Bangladesh
Supreme Court, who attended the GDS 2025 in Berlin.

AYON DEBNATH and
REJAU KARIM SIDDIQUEE

The Global Disability Summit (GDS), held in April 2025 in Berlin, Germany, ended with a renewed global push to advance and protect disability rights and inclusion. At the heart of the summit was the adoption of the Amman-Berlin Declaration on Global Disability Inclusion, a powerful and unified call to action by the global community. For the first time, governments and development actors collectively committed to ensuring that at least 15 percent of international development programmes implemented at the country level explicitly target disability inclusion. This "15 percent for the 15 percent" principle—ensuring inclusive development for the estimated 15 percent of the world's population living with disabilities (WHO)—has the potential to transform lives and make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) truly inclusive.

The declaration, endorsed by over 100 governments, development agencies, financial institutions, and multilateral organisations from both the Global North and South, sets a timeline: this 15 percent target is to be met by 2028, coinciding with the fourth Global Disability Summit. This global consensus represents more than a numerical target; it is a call for justice, equity, and practical policy shifts that can break the cycle of exclusion faced by people with disabilities worldwide.

Yet amid this global awakening, Bangladesh was noticeably absent. Bangladesh's absence from the GDS 2025 was both symbolic and troubling. A country once known as a disability rights champion in South Asia—having made



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

eleven ambitious commitments during the previous summits in 2018 and 2022—has now retreated into silence. Historically, Bangladesh's commitments on the global stage had been inspiring, positioning the nation as a beacon for inclusive development.

But the failure to participate in this critical global event reflects a stark decline in national priority on disability issues under the current interim government.

This retreat is particularly alarming given the fact that, as per the World Health Organization (WHO), over 15 percent of Bangladesh's population lives with some form of disability. These are not peripheral figures—they represent over 25 million citizens. The interim government, which took charge with the promise to eliminate discrimination and rebuild a just and more equal society, was expected to bring fresh commitment and urgency to such issues. Instead, it has allowed disability rights to

fall into neglect. In the last nine months, not a single meaningful policy or initiative has been introduced to address the needs and rights of people with disabilities.

Even with the existence of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013, which explicitly guarantees equal rights and protection for persons with disabilities, the government continues to treat disability through a charity lens. Institutional structures meant to implement the law have been paralysed—no meetings of the National Coordination Committee or the National Executive Committee have taken place in the past nine months. This policy inertia has led to a tangible worsening of conditions: people with disabilities now face increased barriers in accessing education, health services, livelihoods, and employment. The interim government's failure to act is not just a policy lapse; it is a breach of its own legal obligations and a

betrayal of millions of citizens living with disabilities.

The Amman-Berlin Declaration should serve as a roadmap for Bangladesh to realign with global disability rights standards. It reflects a collective recognition that inclusive development is not an afterthought—it is imperative. Bangladesh's silence and its failure to endorse the declaration signal a concerning lack of commitment at a time when global partnerships and shared accountability are more important than ever. It is essential that Bangladesh immediately endorses the Amman-Berlin Declaration and commits to the 15 percent for the 15 percent target. Such an endorsement must not remain symbolic. It should be accompanied by concrete actions to integrate disability inclusion into the fabric of all development efforts.

The 15 percent for the 15 percent concept is both simple and powerful. It demands that 15 percent of all development programmes—particularly those supported by international cooperation—directly address the needs of people with disabilities,

Even with the existence of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013, which explicitly guarantees equal rights and protection for persons with disabilities, the government continues to treat disability through a charity lens. Institutional structures meant to implement the law have been paralysed—no meetings of the National Coordination Committee or the National Executive Committee have taken place in the past nine months.

who themselves comprise around 15 percent of the world's population (WHO). This model is rooted in fairness and equity. It aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the principle of "leaving no one behind," especially in countries like Bangladesh where socio-economic exclusion is disproportionately high amongst persons with disabilities.

rights; otherwise, the country will continue down a path of indifference and neglect towards disability inclusion. The Global Disability Summit 2025 was not just another diplomatic gathering. It was a clarion call to rethink inclusion, refocus on rights, and reimagine development. Bangladesh's absence was a missed opportunity; but the door is not yet closed.

Tanim Noor revives the 90s as 'Utshob' picks up steam

The film features beloved icons of the 90s— Zahid Hasan, Jaya Ahsan, Chanchal Chowdhury, Aupree Karim, Intekhab Dinar, and Afsana Mimi— whose presence instantly evokes nostalgia.



SHARMIN JOYA

At a time when fast-paced, action-packed stories—often laced with violence, bloodshed, and moral ambiguity—dominate the big screen, Tanim Noor took a bold yet conventional risk this Eid-ul-Azha with his film *Utshob*.

Featuring not just a star-studded cast, *Utshob* also serves as a cinematic time capsule of the 1990s, stirring deep nostalgia for those who grew up in that era.

We reached out to director Tanim Noor to commend him for his bold creative choice and to learn more about the behind-the-scenes journey of *Utshob*—a film that truly captured the festive spirit of Eid.

"I'm elated by the response to the film," said Tanim Noor. "As audience appreciation grows, so does the demand, and for a director, it's incredibly rewarding when viewers genuinely relate to the story. I especially can't thank those who

are spreading the word about the film. It is because of them that viewership interest is expanding."

The film features beloved icons of the '90s—Zahid Hasan, Jaya Ahsan, Chanchal Chowdhury, Aupree Karim, Intekhab Dinar, and Afsana Mimi—whose presence instantly evokes nostalgia. They are joined by a fresh new pairing, Shoumya Joyti and Ayman Asib. "Being a fan of Zahid Hasan *bhai* and getting the opportunity to direct him is truly a blessing," shared Tanim Noor.

Through this project, Tanim Noor reunited with Jaya Ahsan more than a decade after they collaborated in the 2011 film *Phirey Esho Behula*. "I consider it a great achievement that I was able to bring together such talented actors for my project," he proudly stated.

While audiences love seeing big stars come together on screen, producers and directors often face challenges, particularly scheduling conflicts and budget constraints, that make assembling star-studded lineups difficult. So, how did Tanim manage to pull it off?

He laughed and replied, "Money wasn't a big issue for me. I was lucky to align their schedules, and more importantly, they were all genuinely excited about the story."

Reflecting on his earlier film, he warmly added, "Even Humayun Faridee *bhai* didn't take any remuneration for *Phirey Esho Behula*. How could I ever repay that kind of love?"

The story, dialogue, and screenplay of

Utshob were crafted by Tanim Noor, Samiul Bhuiyan, Ayman Asib Shadhin and Sumsay Sarkar—a creative team that came together to adapt Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, reimagining it entirely within a Bangladeshi context and setting. This film became a nostalgic treat for every 90s kid. In addition to that, the veteran actors' impeccable comic timing and charming self-deprecating humour, along with surprisingly layered performances from the newcomers, make

Utshob a truly well-rounded cinematic experience, according to audiences who have already watched the film.

Born and raised in Dhaka during the 1980s and 90s, director Tanim Noor often finds himself reminiscing about that era with his close circle of friends. *Utshob*, which blends both period and contemporary elements, is infused with the emotional essence of that generation. He believes this generational flavour offered a sense of relief—a breath of fresh air—for audiences navigating the lingering trauma and frustration in the aftermath of the July uprising.

"Mostly, people can enjoy the film with their family and friends. Looking back, there was a time when people spent more quality moments together with their loved ones and truly cherished every moment."

Utshob is produced by Dope Productions, co-produced by Chorki, and Laughing Elephant Productions as associate producer. By its fifth day of release, the number of screenings for the film had increased. Nearly all of its shows on that day were sold out.

"I would describe *Utshob* as an independent commercial film," he explained, "because I struggled to find producers for it. I'm deeply grateful to my wife Shormila Akter, director and producer Shakeeb Fahad, and, last but not least, Chorki, who believed in me and stood by me throughout the journey."

After the success of *Utshob*, Tanim plans to take a short break, while also hinting at a possible sequel to the film. As for the audience eagerly awaiting *Kaiser 2*, he shared that they might have to wait a little longer. Meanwhile, he may be working on another exciting big-screen project.

'Taandob' releases in over 50 theatres across Canada and the US

The Shakib Khan-starrer *Taandob* has been drawing packed audiences and selling out shows since its release among the six Eid-ul-Azha titles. Premiering internationally on June 13, the film has been screened in over 50 cinemas across Europe, the United States, and Canada, distributed by BiosKope Films.

BiosKope directors Raj Hamid and Rubna Rashid Khan confirmed *Taandob* will screen in 60 theatres during its first week, launching in cities like New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, Rome, and Stockholm. Marking the distribution company's 50th international release, *Taandob* is being backed by a major promotional campaign.

Taandob, directed by Raihan Rafi, centres on a dramatic TV channel attack and stars Afzal Hossain, Jaya Ahsan, Sabila Nur, and others, with cameos by Afran Nisho and Siam Ahmed.

BTS' J-Hope breaks YouTube record with 'Killin' It Girl'

BTS member J-Hope made a powerful comeback last Friday (June 13) with his new single *Killin' It Girl*, featuring Gloc-9.

The music video hit one million views on YouTube in just 43 minutes, setting a 2025 record for the fastest by a Korean artist, surpassing Blackpink member Jennie's solo track *Like Jennie*.

Blending pop and hip hop, the high-energy track captures the thrill of love at first sight. The video showcases J-Hope's bold new look and a standout dance performance.

The song was released during the week marking BTS' 12th anniversary, just ahead of J-Hope's final *Hope on the Stage* concert in Seoul, where he delivered the track's live debut.

NEWS

South Africa seal a 'special' victory

FROM PAGE 12 Allan Donald, Shaun Pollock, AB de Villiers and Jacques Kallis had failed.

South Africa's path to the final was criticised, with the Proteas playing just 12 Tests in the WTC cycle and none against England or Australia.

The Proteas resumed on 213 2, needing just 69 more runs for victory.

Markram, dismissed for a duck in the first innings, was 102 not out and Bavuma unbeaten on 65 despite spending most of his innings limping with a hamstring injury.

But South Africa have such a long history of folding under pressure they could not take anything for granted against serial winners and defending WTC title-holders Australia.

In 18 previous attempts in the one-day international and T20 World Cups, South Africa had only reached a solitary final.

But South Africa, so often labelled "chokers" for their failure to close out knockout games, held their nerve yesterday as a largely unheralded side succeeded where star players such as

match figures of 9-110.

"Unfortunately, it was a bridge too far," said Australia captain Pat Cummins, who led Australia to the 2023 WTC title after New Zealand won the inaugural 2021 final.

South Africa suffered a setback early on Saturday when Bavuma, who had added just one run to his overnight score, was caught behind off Cummins to end a stand of 147 with Markram.

But Markram couldn't quite finish the job, though. His pull off Hazlewood was brilliantly caught by Travis Head at midwicket to end a 207-ball innings featuring 14 fours.

As Markram received a standing ovation on his way back to the pavilion, several Australia players shook his hand.

It was left to Kyle Verreyne to hit the winning run as South Africa completed the second-highest chase to win a Test at Lord's, behind the West Indies' 344-1 against England in 1984.

Pirojpur Sadar Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The bus driver fled the scene, police said.

In Cumilla's Daudkandi upazila, one person died and eight were injured when a passenger bus plunged into a roadside ditch near Shahidnagar Rajarhat on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway around 3:00am.

The deceased was Shilpi Begum, 26, of Machuakhal village in Patuakhali, said Mohammad Rashed Khan Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Highway Police Station. The bus was heading to Cox's Bazar from Patuakhali when the driver lost control of the steering.

In Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila, a man was killed after being hit by a train in the Teliapara area around 3:30pm.

Sub-inspector Joy Pal of the local police outpost said the man, believed to be about 30, was walking along the rail track while on the phone when a Chattogram-bound Paharika Express train hit him. He died on the spot.

Police recovered the body, but his identity could not be confirmed till the filing of this report around 9:00pm.

"Our correspondents from Chattogram, Thakurgaon, Pirojpur, Cumilla and Moulvibazar contributed to the report."

Law enforcers

FROM PAGE 12

happen—they've been happening over the last 53 years. If everything were perfect, we wouldn't need a police force. The playing field may never be completely even, but we aim to minimise the gaps as much as possible."

Jahangir Alam urged the media to act responsibly ahead of the polls, particularly regarding sensitive information.

"Please do not publish fragmented reports. Whatever you report, make sure it reflects the full context. Incomplete information can be twisted, especially by those outside the country," he cautioned.

He said that the overall law and order situation has significantly improved, citing the incident-free Eid holidays as an example of the police force's effectiveness.

"Just look at this Eid—there hasn't been a single major negative report. By the grace of Allah, everything went smoothly. That proves how much the law and order has improved," he told reporters after visiting the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) headquarters in Dhaka.

Acknowledging the occurrence of theft and mugging, he said no serious crimes were reported during the holiday period.

"Improvement has no limit; it requires constant effort," he said.

He also addressed a mugging incident in Uttara, where over Tk 1 crore was stolen by men in Rab uniform. "Even if they're Rab members, they won't be spared. Many are dressing in police, Rab or Ansar uniforms to commit crimes—we're taking action against them too."

The home adviser further clarified the ongoing debate around lethal weapons.

"These days, even a pencil can be lethal. So yes, APBn personnel carry rifles—that's standard. Their role is different from regular police—in wartime, they may have to fight alongside the army."

The adviser also raised concerns over repeated pushbacks of people across the border from India.

"We've informed India through diplomatic channels, including our foreign ministry and their high commissioner in Dhaka. If any of our citizens are in India, we will take them back—but through proper channels, not by abandoning them in forests or rivers. That is inhumane, and we've issued a strong protest," the adviser added.

Tour organiser arrested

FROM PAGE 2

by only one local guide, Siddhartha Tenchongya, set off towards the Andharmanik trail with 12 participants, while the remaining 21 participants, including Smriti Akhter, were sent back to Alkadam under the supervision of Hasan, reads the complaint.

On the afternoon of June 11, when the team reached the Shamuk Jhorna area, heavy rainfall triggered a flash flood that swept away Smriti, Hasan, and Jubairul.

The complaint adds that the accident occurred due to a lack of understanding of the weather in the hills, inexperienced guides, the absence of proper administrative approvals, and irresponsible planning.

Barsha and other unknown

individuals who organised the event are responsible for the deaths, it adds.

Bandarban Additional Superintendent of Police Zenia Chakma said, "Initial findings suggest the tragedy resulted from mismanagement in the tour operation."

Mintu Karmakar, president of the Bandarban Tourist Guide Association, said, "The incident highlights growing concerns over unregulated, event-based tours in the hills. Strict regulation and legal framework are needed to ensure safety in adventure tourism."

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Abdullah Al Momin said, "Permission was granted for just 12 people. But in reality, 33 joined. The tour operators misled the administration with false information."

Man killed for protesting

FROM PAGE 2

girl. Her father strongly protested it, questioning how Jitu could consider marrying an underage girl.

An altercation broke out between Jitu and the girl's father yesterday afternoon. Around 2:00pm, Jitu went to the victim's house with a gang on 4-5 motorcycles, forcibly took the man to the Jorhat area, and severely beat him, said the police official.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team went to the spot and found the man in a critical condition. When the family took him to a hospital, doctors declared him dead, Addl SP Mostafa added.

The victim's family alleged that after they rejected Jitu's marriage proposal, he began harassing the girl. Yesterday morning, the girl's father

became enraged and slapped Jitu.

Later, Jitu and his associates severely beat the man, they said.

When he tried to take shelter at home, Jitu and his accomplices returned on 4-5 motorcycles, forcibly dragged him to the Phulbari riverbank, and beat him to death, alleged the victim's family.

OC Hasan said there are five cases against Jitu with the Sadar Police Station, including charges of drugs and attempted robbery.

Contacted, Bogura Sweekhaseb Dal President Sarkar Mukul said the organisation expelled Jitu following the incident, and it would not take responsibility for an individual's crime.

However, no case was filed till the filing of this report at 10:00pm.

Israel kills 23

FROM PAGE 12

were stopped on the edge of Cairo as they attempted to reach the Suez Canal city of Ismailiya, the organisers said.

From there they had hoped to travel on by road to the North Sinai city of El-Arish, the starting point for their planned march to the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing on the

Gaza border.

Most of the activists were ordered onto buses back to the capital after several hours of questioning, but some remained in custody, the organisers said.

At least one activist was expelled from Egypt, several sources said, adding to dozens more denied entry or expelled in the run-up.

NEWS

Nepal set to export 40mw power to Bangladesh via India today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Beginning at midnight yesterday, Nepal was set to export 40mw of electricity to Bangladesh through an Indian transmission grid.

Nepal, India, and Bangladesh inked a trilateral agreement on October 3 last year to export electricity produced by Nepal to Bangladesh via the Indian transmission line.

As per the agreement, Nepal will export 40mw of electricity for five months from June 15 to November 15 using India's 400 kV Muzaffarpur-Baharampur-Bheramara transmission grid.

"The electricity will be transmitted to Bangladesh at 12:00am on June 15," a PTI report from Kathmandu said, citing sources in Nepal Electricity Authority.

Last year, Nepal exported electricity to Bangladesh on November 15 for a single day as a symbolic intent to implement the agreement.

As per the bilateral agreement reached between Nepal and Bangladesh, Nepal will charge \$0.064 (6.4 cent) per unit of electricity while selling to Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has agreed to import electricity from Nepal for the next five years.

Youth killed after being hit by train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

An unidentified youth was killed after being struck by a moving train at Teliapara Railway Station in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj yesterday afternoon.

The incident occurred around 3:30pm on the Dhaka-Sylhet railway line as the Chattogram-bound Paharika Express was passing through Teliapara station, police said.

According to witnesses, the youth was walking along the railway track while talking on his mobile phone and appeared unaware of the approaching train.

He was crushed under the wheels and died on the spot.

Joy Paul, sub-inspector of Teliapara Police Outpost, said upon receiving the information, a police team rushed to the scene and recovered the body.

The body was sent to Habiganj Sadar Adhunik Hospital morgue for post-mortem examination.

Efforts are underway to identify the deceased, said the police official.

Govt considers

FROM PAGE 3
professionalise the legal aid programme further, the number of cases resolved through mediation can rise to one to two lakhs," he added.

Highlighting the government's reform goals, the adviser said the law ministry has been working with three primary objectives -- ensuring speedy and low-cost dispute resolution, enhancing access to justice, and alleviating the burden of litigation.

He said with the aim to expedite case disposal at low cost, they have already made an amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure.

"Also, we are in the final stages of amending the Code of Criminal

Procedure, which we aim to pass into a law within the next month," he added.

Mentioning ensuring justice is the second objective in the reform plan, Prof Asif said to strengthen the justice system, they have been focusing on digitalisation, upgrading the training curriculum for the judges, and enhancing judicial accountability with the support of legal experts.

The law adviser also said to improve access to justice and reduce case backlog, the government is going to reform the country's legal aid system.

He also said to expedite the resolution of legal aid cases, the ministry has planned to increase judicial manpower in this area.



Thick dust and sand blanket the Zero Point area of the Khulna-Satkhira highway, as continuous movement of buses and trucks on the poorly maintained road worsens air pollution. Commuters, residents, shopkeepers, and pedestrians -- especially children and the elderly -- suffer from respiratory issues, allergies, and other health problems due to prolonged exposure.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A constant struggle for Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3

door lock was broken, but I had no choice. Suddenly, a man tried to force his way in. I had to hold the door shut with all my strength while he kept pushing from the outside. That experience terrified me. Since then, I totally avoid public restrooms."

However, Ismail Hossain, a security worker at the Ramma Public Toilet, disagreed. "There is no safety issue. We try to keep the washrooms clean and safe. But I think social taboos and shyness stop women from using them."

CONSEQUENCES

WOMEN FACE

The impact of limited access to public restrooms goes far beyond inconvenience -- it's a serious health and safety issue for women. "We're seeing more women with kidney disease and uterine infections," said Dr Farhad Hasan Chowdhury of the Bangladesh Renal Association. "Most are

students or professionals who spend long hours outside without access to clean toilets. They drink less water or delay urination, which causes serious harm to the body."

Dr Arefin Islam, country director of Noora Health, echoed this concern. "Lack of access to toilets affects both men and women, but it's far worse for women. It's not just a physical issue -- it takes a mental toll as well."

EXPERTS URGE ACTION

Dr Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, pointed to a lack of political will. "Policymakers don't face this issue. It affects working and middle-class people, not those in power," he said.

He also criticised the policy of charging for public toilet use. "The government spends crores on infrastructure but still asks the poor to pay for basic sanitation. That discourages use."

Locals block two advisers'

FROM PAGE 3

of the Gowainghat upazila unit of Sramik Dal, said, "We demand that the stone lifting using the traditional manual method be authorised for the survival of the local stone workers."

The law adviser also said to improve access to justice and reduce case backlog, the government is going to reform the country's legal aid system.

He also said to expedite the resolution of legal aid cases, the ministry has planned to increase judicial manpower in this area.

Dr Adil called for a public toilet every 500-600 metres across Dhaka, according to directives from the health ministry."

"We are not barring any of the July injured from receiving treatment here," he said in response to another question.

"But they must do so in accordance with hospital rules," he added.

Raju Islam, country director of WaterAid, echoed this concern. "Lack of access to toilets affects both men and women, but it's far worse for women. It's not just a physical issue -- it takes a mental toll as well."

EXPERTS URGE ACTION

Dr Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, pointed to a lack of political will. "Policymakers don't face this issue. It affects working and middle-class people, not those in power," he said.

"This is not just an issue of convenience," he said.

"It's about safety, dignity, employment, and health. Women skip meals, avoid drinking water, limit their travel, and give up job opportunities -- all because the city has failed them."

He also criticised the policy of charging for public toilet use. "The government spends crores on infrastructure but still asks the poor to pay for basic sanitation. That discourages use."

Earlier yesterday, Adviser Rizwana Hasan told reporters after visiting the area that the government will no longer allow stone extraction from the ecologically critical site.

"Jaflong has aesthetic and ecological importance. It is an Ecologically Critical Area. We've spoken to the Ministry of Tourism to promote eco-friendly tourism here and ensure

Full services

FROM PAGE 3

according to directives from the health ministry."

"We are not barring any of the July injured from receiving treatment here," he said in response to another question.

"But they must do so in accordance with hospital rules," he added.

Raju Islam, country director of WaterAid, echoed this concern. "Lack of access to toilets affects both men and women, but it's far worse for women. It's not just a physical issue -- it takes a mental toll as well."

EXPERTS URGE ACTION

Dr Adil Mohammed Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, pointed to a lack of political will. "Policymakers don't face this issue. It affects working and middle-class people, not those in power," he said.

"This is not just an issue of convenience," he said.

"It's about safety, dignity, employment, and health. Women skip meals, avoid drinking water, limit their travel, and give up job opportunities -- all because the city has failed them."

He also criticised the policy of charging for public toilet use. "The government spends crores on infrastructure but still asks the poor to pay for basic sanitation. That discourages use."

Earlier yesterday, Adviser Rizwana Hasan told reporters after visiting the area that the government will no longer allow stone extraction from the ecologically critical site.

"Jaflong has aesthetic and ecological importance. It is an Ecologically Critical Area. We've spoken to the Ministry of Tourism to promote eco-friendly tourism here and ensure

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 15, 2025

ASHAR 1, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

9

Sramik Dal protests

FROM PAGE 3

Their demands include halting all efforts to privatise any terminal of the port, whether to foreign or local firms; holding immediate elections for the port's Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA); introducing an international-standard salary scale for port staff; providing a port duty allowance of Tk 10,000; a 40 percent risk allowance; a rationing system; and a 120-day incentive bonus.

"All terminals, including NCT, CCT, and GCB, should be operated by the port's own management," Showkat said.

The organisation also

demanded that DP World's representative Captain Tanvir be declared persona non grata inside the port. Otherwise, they warned that they would resist any DP World representative from entering jetties.

Leaders of Chattogram Port Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (former CBA) conducted a mass outreach programme yesterday at different points, including Port Hospital and CPA Engineering department.

Their programmes include mass outreach till June 17 and sit-in programmes on the premises of Bandar Bhaban on June 18 and 19.

Scientists save

FROM PAGE 4

After 8-10 hours, females laid eggs, which were fertilised by males, leading to the successful production of fish fry.

The fry were initially fed a mixture of boiled egg yolk and water and later transferred to nursery ponds after 6-7 days.

Over 45-60 days, the fry reached 5-6cm in size, with a survival rate of 65-70 percent.

The research was led by Azhar, alongside Sonia,

Maliha Hossain Mou, Srebas Kumar Saha, and Md Abu Naser.

Azhar confirmed that the Gotali fry will soon be distributed to farmers, enabling private and government hatcheries to produce them commercially.

It is notable that BFRI's Saidpur freshwater substation previously received a medal in 2017 for successfully developing artificial breeding techniques for native Tengra fish.

Thousands return

FROM PAGE 3

However, a road crash near the Mawa end involving a microbus left one person dead and 13 injured, briefly halting traffic.

In Barishal, the Nathullab bus terminal and river port were overwhelmed. Despite increased efforts by authorities, demand far exceeded supply.

Barishal's river port handled nearly 10 times the usual number of passengers. Normally, only two launches operate on the Dhaka route, but yesterday, 12 launches were deployed to cope with the surge.

BRITC also ran double-decker buses, usually reserved for Barishal University students. "We usually operate 15 buses. For Eid, we added double-deckers, but even that wasn't enough," said BRITC official Moshiur Rahman.

Md Enamul, a passenger at the BRITC counter, said he had been waiting since 9:00am. "It's 10:30am now, and I still haven't boarded any bus," he said.

Debi Karmakar, another commuter, shared, "I need to go to Dhaka urgently. I've never faced such trouble before. I've already waited nearly two hours."

Transport owners said around 200 buses usually operate daily in Barishal, but during Eid, that

number rose to 500-600 -- which was still insufficient.

Passengers reported deck spaces on launches were being sold at Tk 300-400, while regular fares are around Tk 150-200. Some said even the launch rooftops were overcrowded.

Meanwhile, inside the capital, the real ordeal began once people entered the city. From Gabtoli to Sayedabad, returnees waited for hours as most city service buses were full. Those with children and heavy bags found it nearly impossible to board any transport.

Some had to walk long distances. Others negotiated with CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers, who were charging Tk 400-600 for short trips.

Usama Ahmed, a returnee from Natore, said, "I reached Dhaka after a 12-hour journey, completely exhausted. But things got worse when I got off the bus. I had too many bags to take a public bus. CNG drivers were asking for Tk 600. So I had to walk."

With offices, factories, and universities reopening today, traffic and transport pressure are expected to increase further from this morning.

[Our correspondents from Tangail, Pabna, Barishal and other respective districts contributed to this report.]



Office of the Ghorashal Pourashava Palash, Narsingdi.

Memo No. Ghora. Pou./ Engg./ 2025/2327

Dated: 05 /06/2025

e-GP Teder Notice No- 03/2024-2025 (LTM)

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal.

SL. No.	Package No.	Tender ID	Last Date & Time Selling Documents	Closing Date & Time
01	ADP-S/2024-25/01	1125494		
02	ADP-S/2024-25/02	1125495		
03	ADP-S/2024-25/03	1125496		
04	ADP-S/2024-25/04	1125497		
05	ADP-S/2024-25/05	1125498		
06	ADP-S/2024-25/06	1125499		
07	ADP-S/2024-25/07	1125500		
08	ADP-S/2024-25/08	1125501		
09	ADP-S/2024-25/09	1125502		
10	ADP-S/2024-25/10	1125503		

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in

RISING COVID-19 CASES

essential steps to protect yourself and others

STAR HEALTH DESK

As COVID-19 cases are once again on the rise in many parts of the world, it is crucial for individuals and communities to take proactive measures to slow the spread of the virus. The pandemic is not over, and with new variants emerging, the risk of infection remains significant.

First and foremost, vaccination continues to be the most effective way to protect yourself and others from severe illness. If you're eligible and haven't been vaccinated yet, now is the time to get your shots. Additionally, if you're due for a booster dose, make sure to get it to ensure lasting protection.

Mask-wearing remains important, especially in crowded indoor spaces or areas with high transmission rates. Even if you are fully vaccinated, wearing a mask reduces the risk of spreading the virus, particularly if you are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic.

Maintaining physical distancing is another critical step. Avoid large gatherings, particularly indoors, and try to keep a safe distance from others when possible. This helps limit close contact, which is one of the main ways COVID-19 spreads.

Frequent handwashing and the use of hand sanitizers are essential practices, as the virus can survive on surfaces for extended periods. Clean your hands regularly and avoid touching your face, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Finally, if you experience symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, self-isolate and seek medical advice. Remember, don't panic—stay calm and follow the guidelines. Avoid spreading false rumours or unverified information that can cause unnecessary fear and confusion.

By following these steps, we can work together to protect ourselves, our families, and our communities from the growing threat of COVID-19.



Choosing the right sunscreen: what you need to know

As summer approaches, protecting yourself from the sun remains crucial. Recent studies have raised concerns about the safety and effectiveness of certain sunscreens, but understanding how sunscreen works and choosing the right one is key to staying safe.

First, SPF (sun protection factor) is vital. It indicates the level of protection against UVB rays, with higher numbers providing more protection. SPF 30 blocks about 97% of UVB rays, while SPF 50 blocks 98%, and SPF 100 blocks 99%. For daily use, experts recommend at least SPF 30.

Sunscreens come in chemical and mineral varieties. Chemical sunscreens absorb UV rays and convert them into heat, while mineral sunscreens (containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide) sit on top of your skin to physically block UV rays. Both types protect against UVB and UVA rays, but mineral sunscreens tend to be gentler on sensitive skin and are a better option for those with conditions like eczema.

For added protection, choose broad-spectrum sunscreens, which safeguard against both UVA and UVB rays. Water-resistant formulas are ideal for activities like swimming or sweating but should be reapplied every two hours.

While choosing sunscreen, avoid relying solely on sprays, as they may contain harmful chemicals like benzene. Lotion-based sunscreens are often safer and more effective.

Lastly, do not forget to reapply sunscreen regularly, wear protective clothing, and seek shade, especially during peak sun hours, to ensure complete sun safety.

Bangladesh steps forward in advanced healthcare with stem cell therapy

DR SHAKIRA NOVA

Health is one of the most important aspects of life, influencing our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Being proactive about health and preventing illness is crucial, but when serious conditions arise, advanced medical solutions become necessary. In recent years, regenerative medicine has opened new frontiers in treating complex and chronic diseases. Now, Bangladesh has made significant progress in this field with the establishment of Concord Stem Cell Limited, the country's pioneer regenerative healthcare and research centre.

Located in Dhaka, Concord Stem Cell Limited is approved by the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) of Bangladesh for offering advanced stem cell therapy, starting with arthritis. The centre provides innovative treatments like Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP), Stromal Vascular Fraction (SVF) Therapy, Mesenchymal Stem Cell (MSC) Therapy, Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT), and more.

This pioneering clinic aligns with global advancements in stem cell science, offering a wide range of services including pain management, aesthetic therapy, neurological support, stem cell banking, and treatments for chronic illnesses like diabetes and respiratory disease.

Stem cell research has roots in the 1960s, but its application in healthcare is now

rapidly transforming patient outcomes. By providing these therapies locally, Concord Stem Cell Limited offers a cost-effective and accessible option for people in Bangladesh who would otherwise travel abroad for such treatments.

Md Faizur Rahman, Managing Director of Concord, emphasises their commitment to offering advanced regenerative healthcare guided by WHO principles of quality and integrity. The centre not only treats ailments but also promotes rejuvenation therapies like facial treatments,

hair regrowth, and sexual health solutions.

With this groundbreaking development, Bangladesh has entered a new era of modern medicine. The presence of such a facility reflects the country's growing capabilities in healthcare innovation and provides hope for treating previously incurable conditions.

The writer is a consultant endocrinologist at the Concord Diagnostics & Molecular Lab. E-mail: drssnova@gmail.com

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2025

GIVE BLOOD, GIVE HOPE

together we save lives

On 14 June, the world celebrates World Blood Donor Day, a global event dedicated to honouring the millions of voluntary, unpaid blood donors who offer others a second chance at life. Their generosity not only saves lives but also strengthens communities and represents the true spirit of solidarity. This day serves as both a time for gratitude and a call to action, emphasising the ongoing and urgent need for safe, regular blood donations.

STAR HEALTH DESK

This year, the campaign highlights the theme of hope—hope that flows with every drop of blood. Each year, millions of patients around the world rely on blood transfusions to survive. Every single blood donation plays a significant role in offering hope to those who need it most. Blood donations can mean the difference between life and death, and the need for a steady and safe blood supply is becoming more critical than ever.

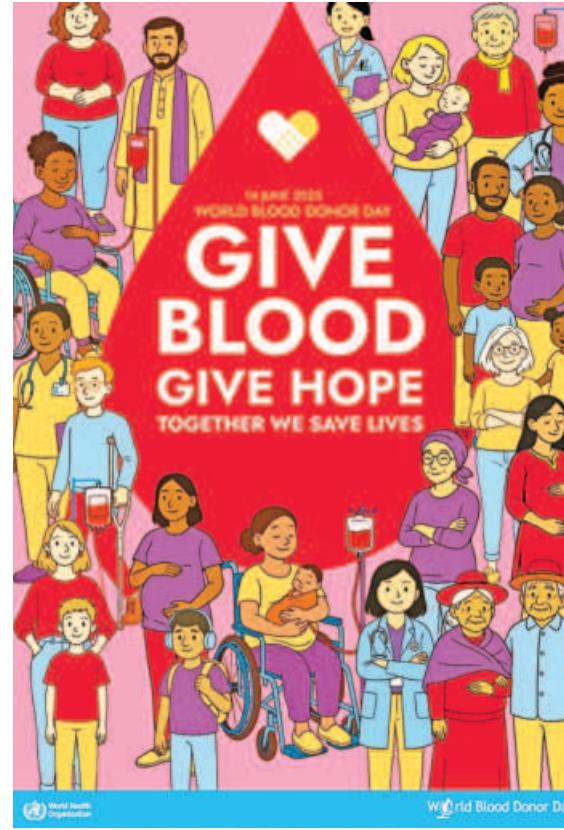
The key objectives of World Blood Donor Day are to raise public awareness about the critical need for blood and plasma donations, encourage both new and existing donors to give blood regularly, and highlight the enormous impact blood donors have on the health and well-being of others. The campaign also urges governments and development partners to invest in and sustain national blood programmes, ensuring universal access to safe blood transfusions worldwide.

One of the central messages of this year's campaign is that safe blood saves lives. A single blood donation

can help save up to three lives. This powerful message underscores the life-saving impact of blood donation on individuals in need. Every blood donation is more than just a medical procedure; it is a gift of hope. For many patients, this hope could be the difference between life and death.

The theme of solidarity is another key message for this year's campaign. Blood donation is a collective effort, and when communities come together to donate, they ensure a safe and steady blood supply for everyone. Whether it is for emergencies, surgeries, or long-term treatments, blood donations are essential in maintaining a reliable blood supply. However, in many parts of the world, especially where donation systems are still developing, the demand for blood often exceeds the available supply. This creates a pressing need for more regular donors to ensure timely access to safe blood.

The campaign encourages regular voluntary blood donations, urging individuals to donate blood as often as possible. This is necessary to ensure that countries have a consistent



and reliable blood supply for all who need it. Additionally, access to safe blood is a crucial component of universal health coverage and is vital for the smooth functioning of health systems. Governments are encouraged to invest in strong national blood programmes that ensure safe blood transfusions are accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live.

The campaign encourages everyone to become a voluntary blood donor and inspire others to do the same. Regular blood donations save lives, and by encouraging friends and family to donate, individuals help ensure a steady and sufficient supply. Governments and health ministries are urged to organise activities that promote blood donation and to ensure that the infrastructure needed to support blood services is in place. National blood transfusion services are encouraged to improve donor care and focus on building stronger systems to handle blood donations effectively.

Source: World Health Organisation

Dense breasts and mammograms: what comes next?

Getting your yearly mammogram is a great step for your health. But there is one more important thing to check—do you have dense breast tissue? More than 40% of women do, and it can make it harder to spot cancer on a mammogram.

Dense breasts have more glands and tissue and less fat. On a mammogram, dense areas and cancer both appear white, which can hide signs of cancer. Your mammogram report will say if your breasts are "heterogeneously dense" (mostly dense) or "extremely dense" (almost no fat). If you are not sure, ask your doctor or check your report online.

Why this matters: Regular mammograms can miss up to 30–40% of cancers in dense breasts. That is why some women need extra tests like an MRI, breast ultrasound, or a special type of mammogram that uses contrast dye. These tests can help find cancer that a regular mammogram might miss.



Not all doctors automatically suggest these extra tests, and not all insurance plans cover them. Some tests, like MRI, can be expensive, but quicker and cheaper options are becoming available. A 3D mammogram is also better than the standard version and may be covered by insurance.

In the end, the decision to get extra screening depends on your personal risk factors (like family history) and your comfort level. Extra tests can be stressful or costly—but catching cancer early can save your life.

Talk to your doctor and learn your options. The more you know, the better choices you can make.

CHILDHOOD CANCER

Together for hope – bridging gaps, saving lives

DR ABDULLAHEL AMAAN & DR KHAINOOR ZAHAN

cured with medicines and other forms of treatment, including surgery and radiotherapy.

Childhood cancer is associated with a range of warning symptoms, such as fever, severe and persistent headaches, bone pain and weight loss, which can be detected by families. When identified early, cancer is more likely to respond to effective treatment and result in a greater probability of survival, less suffering, and often less expensive and less intensive treatment. An early diagnosis consists of awareness of symptoms by families, accurate and timely clinical evaluation, diagnosis, and staging (determining the extent to which a cancer has spread) and access to prompt treatment.

A correct diagnosis is essential to prescribe appropriate therapy for the type and extent of the disease. Standard



therapies include chemotherapy, surgery and/or radiotherapy.

Children also need special attention to their continued physical and mental growth and nutritional status, which requires a dedicated, multidisciplinary team. Palliative care relieves symptoms caused by cancer and improves the quality of life of patients and their families. Not all children with cancer

can be cured, but relief of suffering is possible for everyone.

Pediatric palliative care is considered a core component of comprehensive care, starting when the disease is diagnosed and continuing throughout treatment and care, regardless of whether a child receives treatment with curative intent. Palliative care programmes can be delivered through community and home-based care, providing pain relief and psychosocial support to patients and their families.

However, a cure is possible for more than 80% of children with cancer when childhood cancer services are accessible. But access to effective diagnosis, essential medicines and radiation therapy, pathology, blood products, technology and psychosocial and supportive care are variable and

inequitable around the world.

In 2018, WHO launched, with the support of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, USA, the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer to provide leadership and technical assistance to governments to support them in building and sustaining high-quality childhood cancer programmes. The goal is to achieve at least 60% survival for all children with cancer by 2030. This represents an approximate doubling of the current cure rate and will save an additional 1 million lives over the next decade.

The writers are the assistant professors of neonatology at the Institute of Child & Mother Health (ICMH), Matua, Dhaka. Emails: abdullahelamaan@gmail.com, khainoorzahan@gmail.com

Daily rituals for a stronger immunity

RAISA MEHZABEEN

In an era when health crises can arise unexpectedly, building and maintaining a strong immune system has become more than just a wellness trend—it is a necessary lifestyle. Strengthening immunity isn't about shortcuts or miracle cures but about consistent, conscious actions that support the body's natural defence mechanisms. The steps outlined below, deeply rooted in both traditional knowledge and scientific rationale, can be powerful tools to safeguard our health.

Firstly, regular physical activity in sunlight is vital. Engaging in at least 30 minutes of outdoor exercise daily—whether it is brisk walking, cycling, weightlifting, or simply carrying groceries—enhances circulation, stimulates white blood cell production, and aids vitamin D synthesis. Vitamin D, often called the "sunshine vitamin", is critical in modulating the immune response.

Secondly, maintaining a proper circadian rhythm is crucial. Turning off artificial lights after 8 PM and having dinner around sunset helps regulate melatonin production and improves sleep

quality—both of which have a direct impact on immune health. Good sleep restores the body and enhances the efficiency of immune cells like T cells and cytokines.

Incorporating immune-boosting foods into the diet is another key strategy. Garlic and ginger, known for their antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties, can be easily added to salads and cooked meals. Turmeric, especially when paired with black pepper and lemon juice, can enhance antioxidant levels and reduce inflammation. A healthy drink combining turmeric, lemon, and 500 mg of vitamin C powder, consumed 4–5 times a day in small doses, can significantly support the body's natural defences.

Vitamin C plays a frontline role in immune protection. Consuming therapeutic doses—around 1,000 mg two to three times daily—can help reduce the severity and duration of infections. Pairing it with chamomile tea, known for its calming and immune-regulating effects, creates a synergistic boost.

Traditional remedies like black seed (Nigella sativa) also deserve attention. Consuming one teaspoon of black seed

in the morning and at night has been traditionally used for strengthening immunity. Additionally, a warm beverage made from ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, clove, and garlic can be an effective natural tonic.

The integration of these practices into daily life does not require expensive supplements or extreme lifestyle changes. Rather, they encourage a return to natural rhythms, mindful nutrition, and balanced living. While no single measure can provide immunity against all diseases, a consistent combination of these strategies can significantly reduce vulnerability to infections.

In conclusion, building a resilient immune system is not about fear—it is about empowerment. With regular effort, conscious dietary choices, and alignment with natural cycles, we can arm ourselves with the best defence nature and science have to offer. Let this be a reminder that health is in our hands, and immunity is a daily investment, not a one-time cure.

The writer is the founder & CEO of Nutrition For Change. E-mail: raisamch2@gmail.com

Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 15, 2025, ASHAR 1, 1432 BS

**ROLL OF HONOUR**

2021 - New Zealand. The Black Caps produced a dominating display to beat India by eight wickets.

2023 - Australia. India were on the receiving end again as Australia handed them a 209-run loss.

2025 - South Africa.

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma circles the ground alongside his teammates with the ICC World Test Championship Mace in hand after his side defeated Australia by five wickets in the final on the first session on Day 4 at Lord's yesterday. The Proteas overcame their nerves to score the remaining 69 runs of their 282-run target on the day to end their 27-year trophy drought in major ICC events. Opener Aiden Markram (R) hit a career-defining 136 and his mammoth 147-run third wicket stand with Bavuma, who made 66, set the foundation of this chase. The Australians threw everything in their arsenal on the fourth day but could claim only three of the eight wickets they needed for a victory as Kyle Verreyne (L) took the winning single to break the jinx for the Proteas.

PHOTO: ICC, REUTERS, AFP

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 1
Major League Cricket
Seattle vs
Washington
Live from 7:00 am
Los Angeles vs Texas

Live from 3:00 am
(Monday)
SONY SPORTS 1
Vitality Blast
Yorkshire vs Durham
Live from 7:30 pm

PROTEAS SILENCE DOUBTERS

• This was South Africa's first ICC Men's title win since 1998 when they won the ICC Knockout Trophy in Dhaka by beating the West Indies in the final.

• In 18 previous attempts in the ODI and T20 World Cups, South Africa had only reached a solitary final. That was in last year's T20 World Cup in Barbados when they lost to India.

• South Africa's run chase was the joint second-highest at Lord's, alongside England who chased as many against New Zealand in 2004, and bettered only by West Indies' pursuit of 342 against England in 1984.

• Temba Bavuma has now won nine of his first 10 Tests as captain, the joint-most for anyone in Tests alongside England's Percy Chapman.

• This was Australia's fourth defeat in an ICC Men's tournament final against 10 wins.

• This was Aiden Markram's third hundred in the fourth innings of a Test, a number bettered only by Sunil Gavaskar and Graeme Smith (four each).

We've been relentless, getting to the doorstep consistently and experienced heartache, the sun's been with us. We got ourselves into the final, there were doubters on the route we took, this win squashes that. Here's an opportunity for us as a nation, divided as we are, to unite.

TEMBA BAVUMA, South Africa captain

Aiden and Temba didn't give us a chance. South Africa showed why they're here and are deserved winners. They kept themselves in the game throughout.

PAT CUMMINS, Australia captain

BFF boss outlines SIX-MONTH ROADMAP

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Tabith Awal faced the media yesterday in an extended press conference that lasted over two hours at a convention hall in the capital -- his most elaborate interaction since taking charge last October.

While the agenda officially revolved around the BFF's ongoing activities, development plans and six-month roadmap -- discussed by Tabith alongside 15 others, mostly heads of Standing and Ad-hoc Committees -- the session was soon overshadowed by mounting frustration over national team coach Javier Cabrera.

The Spaniard, already under fire for Bangladesh's subpar form, faced renewed criticism after a 2-1 loss to Singapore in Tuesday's Asian Cup Qualifiers. The pressure escalated when Shakhawat Hossain Shahin, an executive and national teams committee member, publicly demanded Cabrera's removal during the press briefing.

"As a member of the national teams committee, I want the resignation of Cabrera because it has been a demand of the country's 18 crore people," said Shahin, catching many in the room off guard.

Tabith, who also heads the National



Teams Committee, chose a more measured tone, terming Shahin's comments an "internal matter". He assured that Cabrera's future would be assessed thoroughly in the coming days.

Questions were also raised about Cabrera's swift return to Spain after the Singapore defeat, which many saw as a lack of accountability. Addressing the issue, Tabith said the "process" of evaluation was ongoing.

"... we also did it after the India match. After analysing our data as well as taking opinions from others, we will sit with the coaching staff and the management team

internally, because everyone from the head coach to the physio and doctor is accountable."

The BFF chief also admitted to organisational lapses during the Singapore fixture and promised improvements in future home matches.

Beyond the immediate controversy, Tabith touched on broader issues in local football. Citing the limited allocation for sports in the national budget, he urged the government to increase funding and reduce the high tax on sports equipment.

"We observed approximately Tk 2,000 crore allocation for sports in the national

budget, which is a small amount. Out of the budget, Tk 900 crore will be spent on salaries, bonuses, and maintenance," said Tabith.

"We have also seen a 36 percent tax on sports equipment. It is a country where we all want to develop sports, competitiveness and professionalism, but no one is investing in sport or allocating a budget behind it. Rather, we are punishing sport by imposing a large amount of tax on sports gear. I think the finance ministry will consider this."

He also laid out plans for youth development, pledging support for 220 BFF-accredited academies across the country, as well as the revival of district football through U-15 and U-17 tournaments leading up to inter-district competitions.

"We could not start district football yet, but it doesn't mean we are ignoring it," he said.

A former Arambagh KS player and now an industrialist, Tabith further committed to aiding clubs in the top-tier professional league, acknowledging their diverse and unmet needs.

"We will provide financial help to the clubs when we receive money from sponsors, because the federation, in the context of Bangladesh, also has a responsibility to help the clubs."

SHORT CORNER**David Beckham knighted**

Former England football captain and global fashion icon David Beckham was knighted on Friday for his services to sport and charity, with The Who singer Roger Daltrey and actor Gary Oldman also receiving the honour. Beckham, who played 115 times for England as well as for some of the world's most high-profile clubs including Manchester United and Real Madrid, will now be known as 'sir' and his wife Victoria, a former member of the Spice Girls pop group, will be known as Lady Beckham.

Cunha determined to change fortunes of Man Utd

Matheus Cunha says he is determined to help Manchester United bounce back from their worst league season in 51 years after becoming the club's first major signing of the transfer window. Brazil international Cunha, who completed his

£62.5 million (\$85 million) switch from Wolves on Thursday, said: "It is the most common phrase that you can say at this moment, but this is the dream come true."

Fritz beats Auger-Aliassime to reach Stuttgart final

Taylor Fritz has his eyes on a ninth ATP title after beating Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) in the Stuttgart semi-finals on Saturday to reach his first final this year. The tournament serves as a warm up for Wimbledon, where Fritz, even though his game is suited to grass, has never done better than the quarter-finals.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

PSG have sights set on Club World Cup glory

AFP, Los Angeles

Freshly crowned kings of Europe, PSG arrived this week in the United States for the Club World Cup and are treating FIFA's lucrative new competition not as a nuisance at the end of an exhausting season but as a serious objective.

"I think it is an incredible competition," PSG coach Luis Enrique said about the competition in Munich two weeks ago.

"Our aim is to be competitive and try to win a fifth trophy of the season."

The French giants could be forgiven for wanting some time to bask in the glory of their 5-0 victory over Inter Milan in Munich which allowed them to finally win the Champions League for the first time in their history.

"We have made history for the club, for the city and for the whole country," defender Lucas Hernandez told sports daily L'Equipe after the PSG squad paraded their trophy down the Champs-Elysees avenue in Paris, attended a reception with President Emmanuel Macron and celebrated with almost 50,000 fans at their



"The tournament itself is a really attractive prospect," Luis Enrique told FIFA.com.

"We have to strike the balance between managing the physical and mental fatigue we're experiencing now at the end of a long season and harnessing the motivation that comes with being involved in the competition."

PSG's opening game will be against another European heavyweight as they take on Antoine Griezmann's Atletico Madrid at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, just outside Los Angeles, this weekend.

on Sunday.

They will then also face South American champions Botafogo, of Brazil, before moving north to take on Seattle Sounders in their remaining Group B matches.

Expected to qualify for the knockout phase without too many issues, PSG could end up playing a total of seven matches if they make it all the way to the final in New York on July 13 - just a month before their scheduled first game of next season in the UEFA Supercup against Tottenham Hotspur.

The strain of such a long campaign is telling, with Ousmane Dembele -- their top scorer this season with 33 goals -- struggling with an injury picked up playing for France last week.

They did not manage to add any new players to their squad during the brief transfer window that opened at the start of this month ahead of the tournament.

But the rewards for success in the Club World Cup are enticing and should be enough to keep Luis Enrique's squad focused on their objective, with up to a stunning \$125 million in prize money on offer for the winners.



Rain threat looms over GALLE TEST

SPORTS REPORTER

Day 4 and 5.

Bangladesh Test squad, which reached Galle in two separate groups on Thursday and Friday, had a gym session at the team hotel yesterday. The players also passed some time playing a volleyball game outside the team hotel.

Both Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are expected to begin their preparation for the first Test, which will also be the opening game of the 2025-27 cycle of the ICC World Test Championship, today but rain may force them to complete the first day's preparation indoors.

This is the first time since 2021 that Bangladesh are playing a Test in Sri Lankan soil. Bangladesh last played a Test at this venue in 2017 and suffered a 259-run defeat against the hosts.

THE BEST QUALITY
EVERY TIME GUARANTEED
BSRM

BSRM
building a safer nation

BANGLADESH'S

NO. 1 CEMENT BRAND

14 killed on roads in 5 dists

Another died after being hit by train while walking on rail lines

STAR REPORT

At least 14 people, including a mother and a child, were killed and 25 others injured in separate accidents across five districts yesterday.

In Chattogram's Mirsarai upazila, three people were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between a pick-up van and a CNG-run auto rickshaw around 3:00pm in front of Azmanagar School in the Chinkirhat area on the Baraiyarahat Khagrachhari road, said police.

The deceased were identified as Saiful Islam Shahin, 17, Sumi Akhter, 25, and her son Manarul, 3 -- all residents of Bamanisundar area in the upazila. Those injured are the auto-rickshaw driver Zia Uddin Bablu, 30, and his daughter Tanisha, 7.

Confirming the incident, Mostakin Hossain, sub-inspector of Jorarganj Police Station, said police seized the vehicles after the accident, but the pick-up van driver managed to flee.

In Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila, Shahin Islam, a 14-year-old ice-cream vendor from Sarkarpura village, was killed when a Nosimon -- a shallow-engine three-wheeler -- hit a battery-run cycle van.

Md Sohel Rana, officer-in-charge of Debiganj Police Station, told The Daily Star that Shahin was on duty and heading towards Debiganj town along the Debiganj-Nilsagar road. Around 5:00pm, a cow-laden Nosimon coming from the opposite direction rammed into his van in front of Alamanagar Government Primary School,

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1

Men in 'Rab uniforms' snatch Tk 1.08 crore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of men wearing uniforms resembling those of the Rapid Action Battalion snatched Tk 1.08 crore from employees of a Nagad distributor in Dhaka's Uttara yesterday morning.

The incident took place around 8:58am on Road 12 of Sector 13, said Ahmed Ali, additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Uttara Division.

Quoting the victims, police said the employees were transporting the cash on two motorcycles from the residence of Nagad distributor Abdul Khaleq Nayan to their office, located just a five-minute walk away, when a black microbus intercepted one of the bikes and took a bag containing the money.

"They said the motorcycle was carrying Tk 1.08 crore when it was stopped. We are investigating the matter," ADC Ahmed told The Daily Star.

CCTV footage shows two men on a motorcycle being blocked by the microbus. Moments later, the pillion rider is seen fleeing with the bag before several men wearing jackets marked "Rab" chase him down. The suspects were seen carrying small firearms.

Police said the employees were then taken in the microbus to Sector 17, where they were dropped off after the money was taken.

DMP's Uttara Division Deputy Commissioner Mohidul Islam told The Daily Star that the four employees went to Nayan's house to collect the money. Of them, three -- Kawas, Liaquat, and Abdur Rahman -- were forced into the microbus with the cash. The fourth, Omar Hossain, managed to flee with another bag containing over Tk 1 lakh.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

South Africa seal a 'special' victory

AFP, London

Aiden Markram's magnificent century was the cornerstone of South Africa's five-wicket victory over Australia in the World Test Championship final at Lord's on Saturday as the Proteas ended decades of cricket heartbreak by at last winning a major global title.

South Africa, set 282 to win, finished on 282-5 before lunch on the fourth day, with opening batsman Markram falling for 136 after taking South Africa to within six runs of the title.

"It's special in a lot of ways," said Proteas captain Temba Bavuma in front of what was effectively a 'home' crowd given the large number of South Africa fans who had packed into Lord's.

"Also, it's a chance for South Africa to be united," said Bavuma, who has now joined Springboks Rugby World Cup-winning captain Siya Kolisi in

SEE PAGE 8 COL 1



South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma lifts the ICC World Test Championship mace as he celebrates with teammates after defeating holders Australia by five wickets on day four of the final at Lord's Cricket Ground in London yesterday. The result ends a long trophy drought for the Proteas who last won a senior men's ICC title in 1998, when Bangladesh hosted the inaugural ICC Champions Trophy.

PHOTO: AFP

Law enforcers ready for election
Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcement agencies are fully prepared to provide security in the upcoming elections, said Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

"Law enforcers will be ready whenever the election date is announced," he told reporters in response to a question about election security when he visited the Rab-1 headquarters in the capital's Uttara.

When asked about the recent incident in Patuakhali, where Gono Odhikar Parishad President Nurul Haque Nur was attacked allegedly by BNP activists, the adviser said isolated political violence did not indicate a collapse of the rule of law.

"Small incidents will

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Severe congestion near Jamuna bridge in Sirajganj with the tailback stretching for almost 20 kilometres yesterday, causing thousands of people returning to the capital after the holidays to suffer for hours. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: STAR

Israel kills 23 more in Gaza

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli fire and airstrikes killed at least 23 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip, most of them near an aid distribution site operated by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, local health authorities said.

Medics at Al-Awda and Al-Aqsa Hospitals in central Gaza areas, where most of the casualties were moved to, said at least 15 people were killed as they tried to approach the GHF aid distribution site near the Netzarim corridor.

The rest were killed in separate attacks across the enclave, they added. There has been no immediate comment by the Israeli military or the GHF on Saturday's incidents.

The GHF began distributing food packages in Gaza at the end of May, overseeing a new model of aid distribution which the United Nations says is neither impartial nor neutral.

The Gaza health ministry yesterday said in a statement that at least 274 people have so far been killed, and more than 2,000 wounded, near aid distribution sites since the GHF began operations in Gaza.

Later yesterday, the Israeli military ordered residents of Khan Younis and the nearby towns of Abassan and Bani Suhaila in the southern Gaza Strip

to leave their homes and head west towards the so-called humanitarian zone area, saying it would forcefully work against "terror organisations" in the area.

Since October 7, 2023, Israel's offensive has killed nearly 55,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to health authorities in Gaza, and flattened much of the

Most deaths reported near an aid distribution site; Egypt blocks activists' bid to march to Gaza border

densely populated strip, which is home to more than two million people. Most of the population is displaced, and malnutrition is widespread.

Meanwhile, Egyptian authorities have blocked activists' efforts to hold a march to the Gaza border to draw attention to Israel's blockade of the war-torn Palestinian territory, organisers said yesterday.

Several dozen activists hoping to join the planned Global March to Gaza

SEE PAGE 8 COL 5

54 pushed in thru 4 border districts

STAR REPORT

At least 54 people were pushed into Bangladesh from India through different border points in Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, and Moulvibazar yesterday.

In Panchagarh, 16 people were detained after they crossed into Bangladesh illegally in the early hours.

Members of Mistrirpara and Pediaghach border outposts (BOPs) made the detention in separate phases between 12:30am and 6:00am.

Of the detainees, 12 have been identified as Bangladeshi citizens. The four others claimed to be Indian citizens.

They had earlier been detained in different parts of Mumbai before being handed over to the BSF, who then pushed them through border pillars 42I, 430/2-S, and 432/1-S, said Lt Col Monirul Islam, commanding officer of BGB 18 Battalion, quoting returnees.

"We held a flag meeting

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Google turns queries into conversations

AFP, San Francisco

Google on Friday began letting people turn online searches into conversations, with generative artificial intelligence providing spoken summaries of query results.

With Audio Overviews, Gemini AI models quickly sum up query results in conversational style, according to Google.

"An audio overview can help you get a lay of the land, offering a convenient, hands-free way to absorb information whether you're multitasking or simply prefer an audio experience," Google said in a blog post.

"We display helpful web pages right within the audio player on the search results page so you can easily dive in and learn more."

Google is beefing up online search with generative artificial intelligence, embracing AI despite fears for its ad-based business model.

CEO Sundar Pichai recently unveiled a new AI mode in Google search.

The search engine's nascent AI mode goes further than AI Overviews which display answers to queries from the tech giant's generative AI powers above the traditional blue links to websites and ads.

Gunman kills Minnesota state lawmaker, husband 2 more injured; manhunt launched

REUTERS, Minneapolis/Washington

A gunman posing as a police officer killed a senior Democratic state assemblywoman and her husband yesterday in an apparent "politically motivated assassination," and wounded a second lawmaker and his spouse, said Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and law enforcement officials.

A major search backed by the FBI was underway for the suspect, who fled on foot after firing at police and abandoning a vehicle in which officers found a "manifesto" listing other legislators and officials, law enforcement officials said.

A police official said there were "people of interest that we are looking for."

The pre-dawn Minnesota killings come amid a surge in US political attacks in recent years, underscoring the dark side of the nation's deepening political divisions. Planned anti-Trump demonstrations in Minnesota organised nationwide by the "No Kings" coalition have been cancelled following the shootings, the group said.

President Donald Trump said he was briefed on the "terrible shooting that took place in Minnesota, which appears to be a targeted attack against State Lawmakers."

"Such horrific violence will not be tolerated in the United States of America. God Bless the great people of Minnesota, a truly great place!" he said in a statement.



Melissa Hortman

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1