

Schoolgirl in hospital for week after rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

A ninth grade schoolgirl remains hospitalised for a week after she was allegedly raped by a middle-aged local man in Brahmanbaria's Bijoynagar upazila.

The 16-year-old girl's father filed a case on Saturday with the Bijoynagar Police Station against one Mannor Ali, 45. The case also accused two unnamed others.

According to the case statement, the ninth grader was returning home from one of her relatives' houses on the evening of June 8. On her way, Mannor and two others abducted her to a nearby house.

Mannor, with the help of two others, raped her there. At one stage, the girl managed to scream, hearing which locals rushed there and rescued her, added the case statement.

A day later, the girl was admitted to the Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

On June 10, the victim's father filed a police complaint that was later registered as a case, said Sohidul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of

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Patients suffering from various illnesses crowd the outpatient department seeking treatment at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

2 years lost, life shattered

FROM PAGE 1

The second interim report of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances narrates the chilling tale of a teenage boy, and the story of how they found him.

Witnesses told the commission about a young boy, who exhibited clear signs of severe psychological distress when he was held at Rab's Taskforce Interrogation Cell. He was picked up in 2019.

"According to multiple accounts, he would cry constantly, and the guards would reportedly respond by escalating the physical abuse," says the report, which was submitted to the Chief Advisor's Office on June 6.

The commission interviewed a survivor who claimed that he had seen the same boy in the psychiatric ward of Kashimpur prison, with his nails removed. Another survivor met the same boy while being transported from jail to court. The boy had no food during the court visit, and the survivor shared his meal with him.

But luck struck when a victim shared that he had both seen the boy in prison where they served time together, and then later again at a bicycle repair shop.

It was that victim who went and located the boy and brought him to the commission.

"He had endured two years in secret detention, two more in prison, and ongoing mental health challenges as

a result of sustained abuse," reads the commission report, which contains the cases of 10 minors who had been victims of enforced disappearance. In addition, multiple victims have reported to the commission that their nails were pulled out with pliers.

The commission found that the boy was psychologically unwell and his father impoverished.

The father told the commission how he found his son at a police station almost two years after he was picked up.

"I saw him from a distance, spoke, and went closer. He recognised me and smiled, but didn't say anything else. I asked, 'Where did your nails go? Show me your hands, your feet.'

The teenager was taken to jail twice, once to Kashimpur, another time to Keraniganj.

The father tried to apply for bail but because he was a poor man, and could not manage the expenses. It took him one and a half years to process the paperwork.

The father said his son was not like this.

"He used to study. Now he just laughs by himself, foams at the mouth when spoken to, and can't speak properly. Not like before. I took him to a doctor. They prescribed medicine, but he doesn't take it. He says his body shakes, he falls asleep. He throws the medicine away," said the man.

But in spite of all this, the man is just happy to have his son back. His wife has passed away, and the child is all he has left.

"Everyone says, 'what has happened has happened, now just eat and live'. But I know how many things I had to swallow to reach this point. Now I don't even go to the lawyer anymore, because I don't have money."

field, after an Israeli strike caused a fire there on Saturday.

South Pars, off Iran's southern Bushehr province, is the source of most of the gas produced in Iran.

With Israel saying its operation could last weeks, and Netanyahu urging Iran's people to rise up against their Islamic clerical rulers, fears have grown of a regional conflagration dragging in outside powers.

UK is sending more RAF jets to the Middle East amid intense fighting between Israel and Iran, the prime minister said.

Sir Keir Starmer said the military aircraft, including Typhoons and air-to-air refuelers, were being sent "for contingency support across the region".

Iran has warned the UK, France and America that were they to support Israel, their ships and bases in the region would be regarded as legitimate targets.

Ukraine receives another 1,200 bodies from Russia

AFP, Kyiv

It also reported the arrest of two people in Alborz province accused of belonging to Israel's Mossad intelligence agency.

Israel's military said several sites were hit by the latest Iranian missile barrage yesterday, with firefighters reporting a residential building struck on the country's Mediterranean coast.

Early yesterday, air raid sirens blared in Jerusalem and Haifa, sending around a million people into bomb shelters.

Explosions echoed through Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as missiles streaked across the skies, and interceptor rockets were deployed.

The Iran-aligned Houthis, who control most of Yemen, said they had launched ballistic missiles towards Jaffa near Tel Aviv, the first time an ally of Iran has reportedly joined the fray.

At one time, Iran could have expected military support from proxy forces in Gaza, Lebanon and Iraq.

However, 20 months of war against Israel had targeted the Houthis' chief of staff overnight.

Israeli authorities said at least 10 people had been killed overnight, including three children, and more than 140 injured, by missiles that had hit homes in northern and central Israel.

In the Arab town of Tamra in northern Israel, four women were killed, including a mother and her two daughters.

At least six people were killed by an Iranian missile that hit a cluster of residential buildings, including multi-storey apartments in the town of Bat Yam.

In all, at least 13 people in Israel have been killed and more than 350 others injured since Iran launched its retaliatory attacks.

In the first apparent attack on Iran's energy infrastructure, Tasnim said Iran had partially suspended production at South Pars, the world's biggest gas

Bad loans hit record Tk 420,355cr

FROM PAGE 1

"Besides, there are some internal uncertainties, and amid this situation, who will invest here? The outlook is not good now," he added.

As of March, defaulted loans at state-run banks stood at Tk 146,407 crore, which was 46 percent of their total disbursed loans. Bad loans at private banks stood at Tk 264,195 crore, or 20.16 percent of their disbursed loans, central bank data showed.

Besides, defaulted loans at foreign banks stood at Tk 3,239 crore, which was 4.83 percent of their disbursed loans.

The specialised banks' defaulted

loans stood at Tk 6,494 crore, or 14.47 percent of their total outstanding loans, as per BB data.

The banking sector also faced a provisioning shortfall of Tk 170,666 crore. Provisioning is required against the bad loans.

Bad loans have increased sharply in some Shariah-based banks controlled by the controversial business conglomerate S Alam Group and in some other banks where Awami League-affiliated businesses had influence, said central bank officials.

Some large borrowers, including S Alam Group and Beximco Group, defaulted heavily after the Awami

League's fall, pushing the total to an unprecedented level.

Bad loans may have increased largely due to the change in the definition of classified loans, said Mustafa K Mujeri, Executive Director of the Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development.

"We heard that the definition of classified loans was changed in line with international standards, which pushed up the bad loans. We do not know whether the current loans became defaulted or the loans disbursed under the previous government defaulted."

He went on to urge the interim government to take strict action to arrest the high amount of bad loans.

Anti-terror law abused most

FROM PAGE 1

law were actually victims of enforced disappearance and how the law was used for repression.

"The Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009 stands out as the most frequently invoked law, with 198 victims facing charges under it, far more than any other legislation," said the report, based on analysis of the cases against 309 victims who were picked up by various state forces long before they were produced before courts.

"The Explosive Substances Act and the Arms Act follow, with 51 and 43 victims respectively."

Nine victims were also booked under the Information and Communication Technology Act and its successor, the Digital Security Act, and eight victims were booked under the Special Powers Act.

"The over-reliance on broad national security and criminal statutes, such as the Anti-Terrorism Act, suggests a pattern of systemic criminalisation, often without regard for individualised evidence," said the report.

Terrorism must be countered—but not like this, stated the five-member Commission formed in August last year.

The Commission acquired nationwide data from Anti-Terrorism Tribunals and found that the conviction rate was incredibly low, suggesting there was little or no evidence.

"Of the 794 resolved cases from 2017 to 2024, only 52 resulted in convictions, yielding a conviction rate of just 7 percent. This means the vast majority of the accused (93 percent) were acquitted, despite the free hand law enforcers had in manufacturing these cases, raising serious questions about the evidentiary standards used to initiate such prosecutions," stated the report.

It also found that the filing of these cases ebbed and flowed with the political climate.

"If indeed anti-terror laws were used agnostic of the political climate, we would not expect to see any relation between political events and case inflows. And yet, surges in case inflows align with periods of heightened political unrest and subsequent law enforcement crackdown."

The year 2018 saw the most significant spike in the filing of these cases, coinciding with the general election when the opposition parties were particularly repressed, the Commission found.

"Interviews with multiple police officials suggest that increased mobilisation efforts by the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami in 2022 contributed to sustained filings of cases that year," said the Commission, noting that the cases filed in 2021 reflected the AL government's response to mass protests against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh.

In contrast, opposition activity

in 2023 shifted toward more direct street confrontations which, according to senior police officers, were less frequently pursued under anti-terrorism charges," it said, adding that this corresponded with a decrease in new cases that year.

In 2024, the filing of new cases dropped even more after the general elections because of a decline in political activities by the opposition.

The Commission interviewed multiple police officers who revealed that there are set scripts for these cases. "When a new case needs to be filed, these scripts are reused with minimal changes -- often underdeveloped, copy-pasted, and lightly edited to fit the individual."

Instead of pursuing justice, the system appears to have allowed these cases to linger until they risked embarrassing the judiciary, said the report. "If these anti-terrorism cases were solely about arbitrating the available evidence, we would not expect to see any particular pattern in case resolutions beyond random variation. And yet, there is a revealing pattern in the timing of case outflows."

The Commission found that the judiciary's performance was dependent on how many cases were left pending for more than five years – and so the cases which were nearing the five-year mark were found to be quickly disposed of in bulk, with most being acquitted.

"The largest spike in case disposals occurred in 2022, exactly five years after the 2018 surge. This correlation suggests that the judicial system is expediting resolutions to avoid the appearance of backlog, particularly for cases approaching the five-year threshold," said the report.

The commission members also spoke to judges who confirmed that they are expected to prioritise cases reaching five years.

"The artificial nature of these resolution spikes, coupled with an abysmally low conviction rates, implies that many of these cases lacked prosecutorial merit from the outset," said the report.

The Commission delved into the first information reports filed by the police, and the confessional statements given by the victims of enforced disappearance to reveal a pattern of coercion and fabrication.

The victims, who were taken out of their enforced disappearance and handed over to the courts, were told that unless they agreed to sign a Section 164 confessional statement as dictated by their captors, they would face severe consequences, like repeated torture, death, a continuation of the disappearance or harm to their family members, the report said.

The victims often found little solace with the magistrates, who ignored obvious signs of coercion and torture, according to the report.

The report cited the experience of

CONVICTION FOR GRAFT Ex-president Sarkozy stripped of France's top honour

AFP, Paris

Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has been stripped of his Legion of Honour -- the country's highest distinction -- following a conviction for graft, according to a decree published yesterday.

The right-winger has been beset by legal problems since he was defeated in the 2012 presidential election after serving one five-year term.

Sarkozy, 70, had been wearing an electronic ankle tag until last month after France's highest appeals court upheld his conviction last December of trying to illegally secure favours from a judge.

According to the code of the Legion of Honour, France's top state award, any person definitively sentenced to a term in prison equal to or greater than one year is excluded from the order.

But French President Emmanuel Macron had argued against such a move in April, saying that scandal plagued Sarkozy had been elected and it was "very important that former presidents are respected".

Despite his legal problems, Sarkozy remains an influential figure on the right and is known to regularly socialise with the head of state.

Sarkozy becomes the second former head of state to be stripped of the award after Nazi collaborator Philippe Pétain, who was convicted in August 1945 for high treason and conspiring with the enemy.

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ABU SAYED KILLING

Probe report to be submitted within 2 weeks

Prosecution tells ICT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) yesterday informed the tribunal that the investigation report on the killing of Abu Sayed, a student of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, during the July uprising, may be submitted within two weeks.

However, the prosecution formally sought a one-month extension, which the tribunal granted, setting July 14 as the new deadline.

The three-member tribunal, headed by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, passed the order following the prosecution's plea.

"The investigation officer has informed us that the investigation is complete, but some formalities remain. He expects to submit the report within two weeks," prosecutor SM Moynul Karim told the tribunal.

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Commuters crowded the Motijheel metro rail station yesterday as offices across the country reopened following the Eid holidays. Most metro stations in the capital saw long queues, with trains packed as people returned to their daily routines after the festivities.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mostafa
Mohsin Montu
passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mostafa Mohsin Montu, a veteran politician, freedom fighter, passed away yesterday while undergoing treatment at a city hospital. He was 80.

"The Gonoform president, who has been suffering from different old age related complications, passed away around 5:00pm at the Square Hospital," Md Azad Hossain, organising secretary of Gonoform told The Daily Star.

Top leaders of different political parties, including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, in separate messages, expressed deep condolences at the demise of Montu and prayed for his departed soul.

They also extended sympathy to his bereaved family.

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A MONTH OF NAGAR BHABAN BLOCKADE

DSCC shifts emergency operations to Wasa building

Ishraque firm on mayoral claim, vows to continue protest

DIPAN NANDY

increase public suffering.

More than a month has passed since Nagar Bhaban, the headquarters of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), was locked down amid protests by supporters of BNP leader Ishraque Hossain, who is demanding to be sworn in as DSCC mayor following a court verdict.

Despite the end of the Eid-ul-Azha holidays, the building has remained shut since May 15, disrupting official operations. With access to Nagar Bhaban restricted, emergency administrative functions have been shifted to the Wasa building in Karwan Bazar. The move followed DSCC Administrator Md Shahjahan Mia's appointment as managing director of Dhaka Wasa.

DSCC officials, speaking anonymously, expressed concern over the prolonged disruption, saying closure would only

under the banner "Dhakabasi" -- mainly Ishraque's supporters -- have kept the main gate of Nagar Bhaban padlocked.

This has halted routine DSCC services like birth and death registration, holding tax collection, and trade license

Since I'm now the MD of Wasa, we are operating DSCC's emergency work from its headquarters.

With Nagar Bhaban locked, continuing operations there is not feasible. We're continuing emergency tasks through alternative means.

MD SHAHJAHAN MIA
DSCC Administrator

The gate will remain locked -- it symbolises our movement, I did not seize this position by force. I was elected by the people, and the court has validated it. The government must resolve this without delay.

ISHRAQUE HOSSAIN
BNP leader

mechanical services, but most services remain suspended.

On June 9, DSCC held its first public event at the Wasa premises regarding the disposal of Eid waste. An emergency meeting on June 11 focused on dengue prevention and COVID-19 control in DSCC areas.

In this regard, Shahjahan Mia told The Daily Star, "Since I'm now the MD of Wasa, we are operating DSCC's emergency work from its headquarters."

"With Nagar Bhaban locked, continuing operations there is not feasible. We're continuing emergency tasks through alternative means," he added.

Meanwhile, Ishraque yesterday told supporters, "The gate will remain locked -- it symbolises our movement, I did not seize this position by force. I was elected by the people, and the court has validated it. The government must resolve this without delay."

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Political climate reassuring after Yunus-Tarique talks: Rizwana

UNB, Dhaka

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday said the current political atmosphere appears reassuring in light of the recent meeting between Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman in London.

"Now, political parties will express their views from their respective positions. If they have anything to discuss, surely they will convey it to the chief adviser," she said.

Asked whether tensions between the government and the BNP regarding the upcoming election had eased, the adviser said, "I don't think there was anything of that sort in the first place. Whether it's politics, elections, democracy or reforms -- everything must progress through dialogue. That's why I see the ongoing dialogue as a positive development."

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Ready to assist EC in holding next election
Says home adviser

STAR REPORT

Home Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday said law enforcement agencies are fully prepared to assist the Election Commission (EC) in holding the next general election, whenever it takes place.

"The EC will set the date for polls. Our law enforcers are ready to assist in holding the elections at that date," he told reporters following a meeting of the core committee on law and order at the Secretariat.

Responding to a question on whether police are yet to be active at the desired level, the home adviser said, "If you think being active means police should beat up people all the time -- like what we saw happening over the past 15 years -- that's not the police force we want. We want a human-, people-friendly police force."

He added, "Police will carry out their duties while treating citizens with respect... They are more active now than before."

Jahangir also said the overall law and order situation is good now.

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সড়ক ও মহাসড়কের টোল প্লাজায়
লাইনে দাঁড়িয়ে অপেক্ষার দিন শেষ

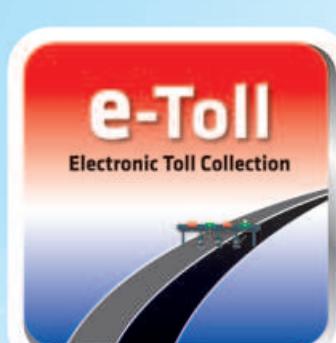
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দিন-মাত্র 24 ঘণ্টা যে কোন ঘোল ঘোৰে



সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তর
সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ
সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়



e-Toll App
ব্যবহার করেই টোল প্লাজা
পার হওয়া যায় নিবিঘ্নে

e-Toll মোবাইল অ্যাপ ডাউনলোড করে
নিজের গাড়ি নিজেই রেজিস্ট্রেশন করুন

নিবিঘ্নে Fast Track Lane দিয়ে টোল প্লাজা অতিক্রম করুন



ডাচ-বাংলা ব্যাংক
আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী

Locals step in to repair road in Moulvibazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Local residents of Rupospur village under Kamalganj upazila in Moulvibazar have stepped in to repair a vital rural road that has long been in a deplorable state, causing suffering to thousands of people.

The locals took up the task themselves, as no steps had been taken by the authorities concerned to repair the dilapidated road and alleviate their prolonged suffering.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw villagers working to lay bricks to improve the road. Patches of mud and potholes were still visible throughout the one-kilometre stretch.

Following recent rains, the dirt road became impassable, locals said. Even a slight drizzle would turn the road into a mess of knee-deep mud, making it difficult for people and light vehicles to pass through, they added.

As such, on June 10, villagers voluntarily initiated urgent repair work on the road.

"This road is important for us to commute within the locality, including to Rupospur Bandar Bazar. Many students of Rupospur Government Primary School from the village also have to use the road to reach their school and attend classes," said Md Durud Mia, a resident of Madhya Rupospur. Saddam Hossain, another villager, echoed his sentiment.

Shadekul Islam of the same area said several thousand residents use the road daily, despite the inconvenience. "We have repeatedly requested public representatives over the last 10 years to repair and upgrade the road. However, our pleas have been ignored," he added.

Engineer Nahid Ahmed Tarafdar, chairman of Munshibazar Union Parishad, said the road had previously undergone temporary repairs using soil and brick chips, but those did not last. Efforts are underway to pave the road, he added.

Md Rakib Hasan, deputy assistant engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department in Kamalganj upazila, said they are aware of the road's current condition. "A proposal has been submitted to higher authorities to pave the road. Work will begin once we receive approval," he said.



The 21st graduation ceremony of Sunnydale was held at the Sheraton Dhaka on June 14. Prof Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus at BRAC University, attended the event as the chief guest and conferred certificates on 139 graduates. Sunnydale Chairman Dr Tanvir Ahmed Khan and Head of School Tazeen Ahmed were also present at the ceremony.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Bamboo mat weavers struggle to thrive

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

In the remote Tilagaon area under Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila, mat weaving using bamboo fibres is a traditional handicraft that has been passed down through generations, helping countless rural families make a sustained living over the years.

However, with changing times, the mat weavers, most of them women, are now struggling to thrive amid myriad of challenges, including being at the mercy of moneylenders who control the product's raw materials as well as



distribution.

While working on a half-finished mat, Mariam Bibi reminisced the years of her involvement in the craft.

"After my husband passed away 17 years ago, I started weaving mats to support my children. Selling these

mats became my only means of survival," she said.

Mariam shared that despite weaving up to 25 mats every week, her earnings are barely enough to sustain her family.

"I have to borrow money from a local moneylender to purchase bamboo, paying Tk 400 for six pieces. Fibres produced from each bamboo can be woven into one or one-and-a-half mats. After completing them, I sell each mat back to the moneylender for Tk 75 taka. As such, from six bamboos, I make only around Tk 200 in profit.

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ABRAR MURDER CASE Ten convicts challenge High Court verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 convicts in Buet student Abrar Fahad murder case have so far filed 10 separate appeals with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict on them.

On March 16 this year, the High Court upheld a trial court verdict sentencing 20 Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) students to death and five others to life imprisonment for killing Abrar Fahad in 2019.

Among the 10 convicted appellants, nine were sentenced to death and one was sentenced to life imprisonment in this case.

They submitted the appeals to the office concerned of the Appellate Division through their lawyers on different days in May and June seeking acquittal from the charges.

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Two murdered in 2 districts

STAR REPORT

At least two persons were hacked to death in Pabna and Jashore yesterday and the day before, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Pabna, a youth was hacked to death allegedly by his relatives over prior feud in Jafarabad village under Sadar upazila early yesterday, said police.

The victim, Md Russel, 31, had an enmity with one of his cousins.

After a mobile phone went missing from Mokbul's house, they put the blame on Russel and allegedly hacked him indiscriminately at around 12:30am, leaving him dead on the spot.

On information, police went to the spot and recovered the body. The body has been sent to Pabna General Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Sadar OC Md Abdus Salam.

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ADB



SICIP



BACI

Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI)
Nahar Green Summit (3rd Floor), House No. 43, Road No. 16 (Old 27), Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209

SICIP-BACI Program, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, GoB

Ref. No.: SICIP-BACI/NS-1/2025-100

Date: 16 June 2025

Invitation for Tender for Hiring Vehicle for SICIP-BACI PIU Office
Sealed tenders are hereby invited from all eligible Suppliers/Tenderers in accordance with PPR-2008 for the undermentioned work.

1 Agency	SICIP-BACI Program			
2 Procuring entity name	Chief Coordinator, SICIP-BACI Program			
3 Invitation for	Hiring Vehicle for SICIP-BACI PIU Office			
4 Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National)			
5 Tender publication date	16.06.2025			
6 Last date and time for selling tender document	01.07.2025 by 4:00pm			
7 Last date and time for submitting the Tender	02.07.2025 by 2:00pm			
8 Tender opening date and time	02.07.2025 at 2:30pm			
9 Selling, receiving & opening of tender document	SICIP-BACI PIU Office, Nahar Green Summit (3rd Floor), House No. 43, Road No. 16 (Old 27), Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1209			
10 Eligibility of tenderer	As per the Tender document			
11 Price of tender document (Taka)	1,000.00 (Taka one thousand only) (Cash Only)			
12 Package No.	Identification of package	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	
12	1	Hiring Vehicle for the SICIP-BACI PIU Office	Dhaka City	BDT 75,000.00 (Taka seventy-five thousand only) in favor of the Chief Coordinator, SICIP-BACI Program
13	24 months (Contract period may be extended if performance is satisfactory)			

The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings

Engr. Md. Mushfiqur Rahman
Chief Coordinator, SICIP-BACI Program



Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
National Head Quarter (NHQ)
684-686, Red Crescent Sarak, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka 1217.
PABX: +88-02-48310188-9, Ext: 222, 258, Direct: +88-02-8333430, web: www.bdrcs.org

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1. Invitation Reference, Tender ID No, and Date	Pro. (Log.) 171/2025, Tender ID: 32/2025 Date: 29/05/2025.
2. Procuring Entity Name	Secretary General, NHQ, BDRCS
3. Name of Requisition Department	Myanmar Refugee Relief Operation (MRRRO), BDRCS, Motel Road, Cox's Bazar District. Telephone Numbers: Tel. +88-031-63257.
4. Implemented by	DR Department, NHQ, BDRCS.
5. Invitation for	Construction of Central Warehouse at Cox's Bazar.
6. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM), One stage two envelopes.
7. Budget and Source of Funds	UNHCR
8. Work Details	LOT-A: Sand Filling/Land Filling, LOT-B: Civil Work at Retaining Wall, Brick Road, Warehouse Boundary Fence & Office Construction works. LOT-C: Rub Hall set-up.
9. Purchase of Tender document	Tender documents and schedules with detailed information are available at the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) website: www.bdrcs.org . Tender Schedule Download Link: https://bdrcs.org/tender/
10. Tender Schedule available from website/link	16-06-2025
11. Tender Closing Date and Time	03-07-2025 at 3:00 PM
12. Tender Opening Date and Time	03-07-2025 at 3:15 PM
13. Address of Tender Submission & Opening	Logistics Department, National Headquarters, BDRCS, 684-686 Red Crescent Road, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka-1217.
14. Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	22-06-2025 at 11:00 am in the Logistics Meeting Room, National Headquarters BDRCS, 684-686 Red Crescent Road, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka-1217.
15. Eligibility of Tenderer	As per Tender Documents.
16. Submission Criteria	Tender will be evaluated LOT-BY-LOT. A bidder may submit all LOTs or any individual LOT.
17. Tender Security Amount	2.5 % of the Total quoted value of LOT wise.
18. Completion Time in months	As per Tender Documents.

The Bangladeshi Red Crescent Society reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender or split the order without assigning any reason and will not be bound to accept the lowest bid.

Size: 3 col x 6"

Dr. Kabir M. Ashraf Alam ndc
Secretary General



EDCL

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

Local Press Tender Notice

Tender Ref.: EDCL (Gopalgonj)/PUR/PT/2025/216

Dated: 15/06/2025

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from Genuine Importers/ Suppliers/ Authorised dealers for Supply of different types of HPLC Columns for QC Deptt. at EDCL, 3rd Plant Gopalgonj on urgent basis:

Name of Item	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last Date of Closing & Opening
Supply of different types of Columns for QC Deptt. at EDCL, 3rd Plant Gopalgonj (Details as per Tender Schedule)	TK. 2.5% of quoted amount	TK. 1000.00 set (Non-Refundable)	Closing: 01/07/2025 at 12.00 PM Opening: 01/07/2025 at 12.30 PM

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

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

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

Deputy General Manager (CC)
Procurement Department
For: Managing Director

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 16

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrub	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 16, 2025

ASHAR 2, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

5

What options does Iran have now?

AGENCIES

As Israel-Iran conflict continues, former US nuclear negotiator Alan Eyre told Al Jazeera that Iran's options in the face of the Israeli onslaught are "very bleak" and "very limited".

"They have to respond militarily just to save face domestically. But as we've seen, Israel can take the brunt of a lot of that, and it's very unlikely that Iran can cause enough damage internally in Israel to put any sort of pressure on Israel to stop bombing," Eyre said.

"Iran can use diplomatic means, but they don't have that many allies in the international community. But even if they did, Israel has shown that it's spectacularly unwilling to listen to international opinion when it's pursuing what it considers legitimate military goals."

Iran's best option,

Iran's best option is to do as much damage as they can to Israel to save face domestically.

according to Eyre, is "to just ride it out" and do as much damage as they can to Israel to save face domestically.

"Then, once Israel stops bombing, try to take stock, come up with a new defence strategy, which possibly could include, in fact, trying to get a nuclear weapon, as opposed to just maintaining the capability for a nuclear weapon. And that's very worrisome," he added.

Meanwhile, two drones launched from Iran towards Israel were shot down over Iraq by the US-led international coalition to defeat the Islamic State group, two Iraqi military officials told AFP yesterday.

"The international coalition at Ain al-Asad (military base) shot down two Iranian drones that were en route to Israel," one official said, referring to an Iraqi airbase housing foreign troops in western Iraq.



Rescue personnel work at an impact site following a missile attack from Iran, in Bat Yam, Israel, yesterday. Iran and Israel will have peace "soon", US President Donald Trump said in a social media post.

PHOTO: REUTERS

What are worst-case scenarios in Israel-Iran conflict?

AGENCIES

For now, the fighting between Israel and Iran seems restricted to the two nations. But what if calls to escalate fall on deaf ears? What if the fighting escalates and expands? Here are just a few possible, worst-case scenarios:

AMERICA GETS DRAGGED IN

For all the US denials, Iran clearly believes American forces endorsed and at least tacitly supported Israel's attacks.

Iran could strike US targets across the Middle East – such as special forces camps in Iraq, military bases in the Gulf, and diplomatic missions in the region. Iran's proxy forces – Hamas and Hezbollah – may be much diminished but its supportive militias in Iraq remain armed and intact.

GULF NATIONS GETS DRAGGED IN

If Iran failed to damage Israel's well-protected military and other targets, then it could always aim its missiles at softer targets in the Gulf, especially countries that Iran believes aided and abetted its enemies over the years.

But these countries play host to US airbases. If the Gulf were attacked, then it too might demand American warplanes come to its defence as well as Israel's, reports BBC.



GLOBAL ECONOMIC SHOCK

What if the Israeli attack fails? What if Iran's nuclear facilities are too deep, too well protected?

At the very least, this could force Israel to further attacks, potentially binding the region into a continual round of strike and counter-strike. Israelis have a brutal phrase for this strategy; they call it "mowing the grass".

The price of oil is already soaring. What if Iran tried to close the Strait of Hormuz, further restricting the movement of oil?

What if – on the other side of the Arabian Peninsula – the Houthis in Yemen redouble their efforts to attack shipping in the Red Sea?

Many countries around the world are already suffering a cost of living crisis. A

rising price of oil would add to inflation on a global economic system already creaking under the weight of Trump's tariff war.

IRAN'S REGIME FALLS

What if Israel succeeded in its long term aim of forcing the collapse of the Islamic revolutionary regime in Iran?

Netanyahu claims his primary aim is to destroy Iran's nuclear capability. But he made clear in his statement yesterday that his broader aim involves regime change.

He told the "proud people of Iran" that his attack was "clearing the path for you to achieve your freedom" from what he called their "evil and oppressive regime".

Bringing down Iran's government might appeal to some in the region, especially some Israelis. But what vacuum might it leave? What unforeseen consequences would there be? What would civil conflict in Iran look like?

Many can remember what happened to both Iraq and Libya when strong centralised government was removed.

So, much depends on how this conflict progresses in coming days.

How – and how hard – will Iran retaliate? And what restraint – if any – can the US exert on Israel? On the answer to those two questions much will depend.

INDIA PLANE CRASH Second black box found: officials

AFP, Ahmedabad

Investigators in India yesterday recovered the second black box from the London-bound Air India Boeing 787 that crashed in the city of Ahmedabad, killing at least 279 people, authorities announced.

The cockpit voice recorder has been found, PK Mishra, a senior aide to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said in a statement. The flight data recorder was recovered on Friday, one day after the crash.

Only one passenger survived among the 242 travellers and crew on board the Air India jet when it crashed Thursday into a residential area of Ahmedabad, killing at least 38 people on the ground.

"The AAIB has launched a detailed investigation, and the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is conducting a parallel probe under international protocols since the aircraft is American made," Mishra said in a statement.

"Officials confirmed that the Flight Data Recorder (FDR) and Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) have been located and secured."

Multiple experts have said it is too soon to say why the jet crashed shortly after takeoff.

Meanwhile, mourners covered white coffins with flowers in India yesterday as funerals were held for some of the victims.

Health officials have begun handing over the first passenger bodies identified through DNA testing, delivering them to grieving relatives in the western city of Ahmedabad, but the wait went on for most families.

Trump's threats are 'not what allies do' Says Macron during Greenland visit

AFP, Nuuk

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday criticised US President Donald Trump for his threats to take over Greenland, saying that was "not what allies do", as he arrived in the Danish autonomous territory for a visit.

Macron was visiting the Arctic island to convey a message of "France's and the European Union's solidarity" for "the sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Greenland, he told reporters after he landed in Nuuk.

US President Donald Trump has said he wants the United States to take over the minerals-rich and strategically-located Arctic island for reasons of national and international security.

Macron, the first foreign leader to visit Greenland since Trump's explicit threats to "get" the island, was invited by the prime ministers of Greenland and Denmark.

Govt hospitals not ready

FROM PAGE 1

However, when asked about their preparedness, the hospital authorities informed the DGHS that the testing machines needed recalibration for being out of use for long.

In addition, they said the hospital does not have any dedicated technicians for the job, according to DGHS sources.

Meanwhile, the DGHS on Thursday supplied test kits to six major hospitals in Dhaka and Chattogram.

Among them, the directors of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, Mudda Medical College Hospital and Chattogram Medical College Hospital said they would resume testing from Saturday.

However, as of yesterday, DGHS data showed that the hospitals had not carried out any tests, suggesting they had not resumed testing as planned.

On the other hand, the directors of Kurmitola General Hospital and the DNCC Dedicated Covid-19 Hospital in Dhaka said they have been continuously testing patients and will continue to do so. Yet, these hospitals also do not appear in the DGHS data.

The Directorate General of Medical Education has already instructed 11 medical colleges outside Dhaka to activate their RT-PCR testing facilities, said its director general Nazmul Hossain.

Five of the medical colleges have already reactivated their equipment, while the others are expected to do so.

within a day or two, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The five that have activated equipment are Rajshahi, Cox's Bazar, Gopalganj, Mymensingh and Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College in Bogura. The remaining six -- Rangpur, Sylhet, Chattogram, Faridpur, Barishal, and Khulna -- are expected to follow soon, he added.

The equipment needs to be calibrated as it has not been used for a long time, so it is taking some time, he said.

Prof Halimur Rashid, line director of the Communicable Disease Control unit at the DGHS, told The Daily Star yesterday that they have been supplying test kits to more government hospitals.

Responding to a question, he said offices had just reopened after the Eid vacation and they hope the hospitals will be ready within a week.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness Project, under which 1,004 employees -- many of them technicians and medical officers -- played a crucial role in Covid testing and treatment during the pandemic, has come to an end.

The project, funded through a World Bank project, concluded in December last year. In May, the DGHS instructed the staff to discontinue their duties.

The workers have been staging a sit-in in front of the DGHS for the past two days demanding payment

of overdue salaries and confirmation of their jobs.

Their absence could hamper Covid testing and treatment, two of the project workers told the correspondent yesterday.

The developments come at a time when the infection rate is seeing a surge from last month, according to Covid-19 surveillance data analysed by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

In the last 24 hours, 26 people tested positive for Covid-19 and one died, raising the death toll to four since June 5, when the country reported its first Covid-related death after a long gap.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education yesterday instructed all educational institutions to engage both teachers and students in awareness campaigns against coronavirus and dengue.

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Ex-UP chairman

FROM PAGE 12

cell with two other inmates—one of whom was in court at the time, while the other was asleep.

"He was taken to the jail hospital immediately and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead around 12:30pm," said Md Farouk, in charge of the DMCH police outpost.

Sujon's body was sent

to the DMCH morgue for post-mortem examination.

His brother, Meraj Matubbor, expressed doubts over the official account, saying, "My brother is not the sort of person to take his own life. We want a proper investigation."

Jail and police authorities said an inquiry is underway to determine the circumstances surrounding his death.

Many can remember what happened to both Iraq and Libya when strong centralised government was removed.

So, much depends on how this conflict progresses in coming days.

How – and how hard – will Iran retaliate?

And what restraint – if any – can the US exert on Israel? On the answer to those two questions much will depend.

Draft data law

FROM PAGE 12

broad exemptions to law enforcement, tax authorities, researchers, and the media.

Due to a lack of judicial oversight and clearly defined roles, law enforcement agencies could exploit the law to carry out mass surveillance or target political opponents under vague notions such as "public interest," it warned.

Although media and academic exemptions appear to support free speech, they lack clear standards to ensure privacy and the ethical use of data, the organisation said.

Exemptions should be well-defined, proportionate, and independently monitored, and privacy and free expression must be balanced, not sacrificed, Article 19 added.

Moreover, it said the draft law does not clearly define key terms or classify sensitive data such as political opinions, health information, or biometric details.

Without strong safeguards, the law could discourage individuals from speaking out publicly for fear of data misuse.

The organisation expressed concern over a provision requiring individuals to prove harm before they can object to data misuse. This, it said, places an unfair burden on vulnerable individuals, such as journalists and whistleblowers, who are often targets of intrusive surveillance.

People must have the right to prevent harmful data use without first demonstrating damage, particularly when their safety, reputation, or freedom of expression is at stake, it added.

Article 19 also criticised the proposed structure of the data protection authority under the ordinance, saying it lacks institutional independence "due to executive control over its rulemaking and operations."

"An effective data protection authority is a cornerstone of democratic data governance," the organisation said.

The law must guarantee the authority's independence through secure tenure, financial autonomy, and protection from political interference, it said.

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বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

খুলনা

১৯ জৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩০ বঙ্গ

০২ জুন ২০২৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

Justice delayed is justice denied

Backlog of gender-based violence cases is alarming

The slow progress of cases filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act is concerning. Reportedly, as of March 31 this year, the total number of pending cases under this Act stood at 1,48,314. Among them, 35,262 cases have remained unresolved in courts across the country for over five years. While according to the law, the trials of such cases should be completed within 180 days, this rarely happens. Legal experts attribute the failure to meet the stipulated timeframe to multiple factors, including the prosecution's lack of sincerity in pursuing trials, witnesses refusing to appear in court due to fear or intimidation, and accused individuals moving to the High Court to stay trial proceedings. It goes without saying that such inefficiencies within our justice system will only increase gender-based violence in the country.

Reportedly, a special cell was established in accordance with a 2016 High Court directive around four years ago to monitor cases filed under the Act. As per the directive, the cell is supposed to be led by the Supreme Court registrar general or the registrar of the High Court Division, who would oversee trial timeframes and periodically submit reports to the authorities for appropriate action. Unfortunately, the cell is currently non-operational. An alarming example of delays in case proceedings is the case involving the rape of a nine-year-old schoolgirl in Dhaka's Khilkhet area, which was filed more than nine years ago. Reportedly, the tribunal dealing with the case is yet to complete the trial even after holding 96 hearings. The key reason behind this is that six of the 10 prosecution witnesses in the case did not appear before the court to testify. Not only in this case, witnesses failing to appear before courts leads to unnecessary delays in resolving numerous cases. To ensure justice for victims of rape and other forms of gender-based violence, authorities must take immediate steps to provide protection to witnesses, as their testimony is crucial in securing fair and timely trials.

After assuming office, the interim government pledged to expedite rape case trials by amending relevant laws. We would like to know the update on this. Currently, 101 tribunals are dealing with the cases under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, which is not enough given the staggering number of cases being filed and remaining pending with the courts. We therefore urge the government to set up more tribunals to speed up the trials. Legal experts advocate for a separate secretariat under the Supreme Court to ensure effective implementation of directives from the Appellate Division and the High Court. In rape trials, forensic examination results must promptly reach investigation officers, for which more forensic labs should be set up urgently. The authorities must also overhaul the entire investigation process to ensure quick case disposal. Meanwhile, the existing laws should be properly enforced to effectively protect women and children from gender-based violence.

Israel-Iran escalation risks global calamity

A pattern of impunity has fuelled Israeli aggression

The fierce exchange of attacks between Iran and Israel, following Israel's illegal airstrikes on Iran in the early hours of June 13, is pushing the Middle East and the world towards a dangerous precipice. Reportedly, during the early hours of Sunday, both sides launched fresh waves of attacks on key cities, fuelling fears of a full-scale, protracted war, with heavy exchanges now entering a third consecutive day. Iranian missiles struck northern Israel late on Saturday and into Sunday, killing at least three people and wounding 13 others, according to Israeli media. In response, Israel targeted the Iran's defence ministry headquarters in Tehran. According to Iranian officials, the Shahran oil depot, located northwest of Tehran, was also hit by Israeli strikes.

On June 13, under the codename Operation Rising Lion, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Mossad damaged key nuclear sites and military installations in Iran, reportedly killing several of the country's top military leaders. Iranian civilians, including women and children, were also killed in the assault—the largest on Iran since the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. Worse still, the attacks came just days before the US and Iran were scheduled to begin the sixth round of nuclear talks in Oman on June 15. Clearly, Israel's objective was to sabotage the negotiations. And so far, it appears to have succeeded as Iran has reportedly suspended the talks.

Israel's attack on Iran also comes at a time when its European allies were finally beginning to express unease over its food blockade and mass starvation strategy against Palestinians in Gaza. As such, this attack has once again allowed Israel to deflect attention from its most recent war crimes against the Palestinian people.

Since 2003, Israel has repeatedly attacked Iran in violation of international law, accusing the country of attempting to acquire nuclear weapons. Allegations that Iran is building a nuclear arsenal—frequently raised by the US, the EU, and Israel—have been thoroughly investigated by the International Atomic Energy Agency and found to be unsubstantiated. Despite these findings, Israel has now launched its fiercest attack on Iran to date, one that appears to be on the verge of spiralling out of control.

Sadly, instead of restraining Israel, its Western allies once again appear to be offering it full support. It is precisely this support—despite Israel's grave violations of international law—that has emboldened the country to continue its genocidal campaign against the Palestinians and its repeated violations of the sovereignty of other countries in the Middle East.

Under the circumstances, the international community must urgently bring all parties to the negotiation table and ensure an immediate end to the escalation. It is high time the international community also took a serious look at the series of international law violations Israel has committed against its neighbours in the Middle East, particularly Iran and the Palestinians. Unless and until Israel is held to account, it will continue to stoke the flames of conflict in the region—which could, at any moment, escalate into a broader global conflict.

EDITORIAL

Can Bangladesh break free from its extractive past?



Dr Kazi Maruf Islam is professor of governance and politics in the Department of Development Studies at the University of Dhaka. He can be reached at kazimaru@udu.ac.bd.

KAZI MARUF ISLAM

The dust from the tumultuous 2024 July-August mass uprising has barely settled, and the wound has yet to be healed, yet Bangladesh finds itself at a precarious crossroads, prompting a chilling question: will the country fail? The recent political tensions, culminating in widespread speculation about the interim government head's potential resignation due to persistent disagreements on national issues (which was later diffused), underscore a deep-seated institutional fragility. Examining this predicament through the critical political economy lens offered by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson's seminal work, *Why Nations Fail*, reveals a disconcerting pattern of extractive institutions resisting a genuine democratic transition.

Acemoglu and Robinson convincingly argue that a nation's prosperity or failure is primarily determined by its institutional framework. Inclusive institutions, characterised by broad-based political participation, secure property rights and a level economic playing field, and foster innovation, investment, and widespread prosperity. Conversely, extractive institutions concentrate power and wealth in the hands of a narrow elite, leading to economic stagnation, political instability, and ultimately failure. Bangladesh's post-July '24 journey, intended to dismantle extractive practices and build inclusive ones, is facing formidable resistance from precisely those entrenched forces that benefited from the old order.

The core objective of the interim government was to lay the groundwork for a genuine democratic transition, fostering inclusive institutions and dismantling the very extractive structures that plagued the previous regimes. However, the anticipated cooperation from established political parties, economic elites and even sections of the bureaucracy has largely evaporated. Instead, there's a disheartening return to the familiar practices of capture and corruption, where self-serving interests override national progress. This directly aligns with Acemoglu and Robinson's contention that extractive elites, accustomed to privilege and control, will fiercely resist any shift towards inclusive institutions that threaten

their power base.

The various reform commissions—for the constitution, electoral system, judiciary, civil service, media, local government, labour, and women's affairs, among others—have diligently submitted their proposals, aiming to usher in a new era of governance. Furthermore, the formation of a National Consensus Commission, relentlessly striving to bridge divides among political parties on key reform agendas, speaks to the recognition of this critical need. Yet, consensus remains a distant dream.



Bangladesh simply cannot afford to fail this time, as the stakes are too high and the challenges too profound.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

This resistance to reform highlights a fundamental challenge: the unwillingness of entrenched actors to relinquish the benefits derived from the existing extractive framework, even when it means sacrificing the nation's long-term stability and prosperity.

Internal frictions within the very forces that spearheaded the uprising are what compound this institutional paralysis. The student leaders, once hailed as heroes of the July mass movement, now face accusations of corruption and a lack of transparency, eroding public trust. The growing schism between the BNP and the newly formed National

consolidation. The absence of a horizon for political elite consensus, therefore, is not merely a sign of political immaturity but a symptom of a deeper institutional malaise where dialogue is replaced by demagoguery and division.

The economic landscape, too, reflects the fragility of the political situation. Inflation, a persistent burden on ordinary citizens, continues to hover above the danger line, registered at 9.17 percent in April 2025 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. International trade faces dual threats: the looming spectre of US tariff policies and restrictive

import-export regulations imposed by India. Many industries have yet to resume full production, leading to widespread layoffs, forced shutdowns, and vandalism in industrial areas, escalating labour unrest. This economic instability, often a consequence of extractive institutions failing to provide a predictable and fair economic environment, further fuels public discontent and exacerbates social tensions.

The disarray extends to educational institutions, where daily demands from various student groups, often leading to street blockades, highlight a systemic breakdown. Recent demonstrations by polytechnic students and those from Jagannath University are just two examples of how legitimate grievances are expressed through disruptive means in the absence of effective institutional channels for redress. Similarly, the bureaucracy, a crucial pillar of state function, lacks an effective command-and-control chain. The recent demonstration by NBR officials, defying legal jurisdictions, underscores the erosion of professional civil service norms, a hallmark of weak or extractive state institutions.

Amid this widespread disarray, only one institution has largely maintained its calm: the Bangladesh Armed Forces. With patient leadership from the highest ranks and active, dedicated involvement of troops on the ground, they represent a fragile hope for stability. However, even this beacon of order carries a latent risk. If troops are required to operate outside barracks for extended periods, the potential for engagement in illicit activities escalates.

Finally, while civil society is now free, the pervasive spread of misinformation and disinformation across social media platforms presents a grave danger. In an environment devoid of strong, trusted institutions, this digital chaos can further polarise society and undermine efforts towards consensus and reform.

Bangladesh simply cannot afford to fail this time. The stakes are too high, the challenges too profound. The very elites who have historically benefited from the extractive system must be compelled, perhaps by persistent public pressure and the looming threat of complete institutional collapse, to come to a genuine consensus on the fundamental reform agendas. Only after solidifying a pathway to truly inclusive institutions and governance can the nation responsibly move towards holding a national election, ensuring that the next chapter of Bangladesh's history is written not in failure, but in democratic triumph and shared prosperity.

The screen shows the trial, not the threat



Kollo Kibria is an advocate, human rights activist, and political analyst. He can be reached at kollokibria@gmail.com.

KOLLO KIBRIA

For the first time in its history, Bangladesh has broadcast live the proceedings of a criminal trial. The decision to televise the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) proceedings in the case filed against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina aims to change public perception. This sends the message that justice is not confined to shadowy chambers behind closed doors. It is meant to be seen, understood, and evaluated by the people in whose name it is served.

However, one of the immediate concerns emerging from this televised trial is the threat it poses to the safety of defence lawyers and the fairness of the trial. By broadcasting the proceedings, the identities and arguments of both prosecution and defence come into full public view. In an ideal democratic society, this visibility would simply be part of the judicial process. But in our reality, where mob mentality thrives on emotion, judicial processes are often misunderstood, and state protection often delayed or remains absent, it poses a grave risk.

Let's be clear: each accused, regardless of the charges they face, has the right to a fair trial. That

fundamental right includes access to legal representation. Defence lawyers, in upholding their duty, are not defending crimes; they are defending the rule of law. Trials are adversarial by design—justice only emerges when both sides are argued with equal force and clarity. Their arguments, questions, and courtroom posture, when broadcast, becomes part of the public record beamed across the country. While this might seem like a small detail in the quest for justice, it may carry potentially devastating consequences in a politically and emotionally charged environment like ours. Lawyers are not just legal professionals. They return home to their families after each day in court. When their work exposes them to the risk of violence, it is not just their safety at stake; it is the very foundation of our justice system.

We have already witnessed a worrying trend: mobs attacking lawyers and accused individuals within the court premises. These are not abstract fears; they are lived experiences backed by chilling examples. We have seen lawyers being chased, heckled, and even physically

assaulted for defending clients. We have seen accused individuals being dragged from prison vans and beaten while in state custody, even within the proximity of courthouses.

In such a climate, what steps has the state taken to ensure the safety of lawyers involved in the particular ICT trial? Where are the guidelines, emergency protocols, and legal shields that would make this unprecedented transparency sustainable? What assurance does a lawyer have that arguing a controversial point in open court won't endanger their life outside it? What happens, then, when a defence lawyer must argue for something that runs counter to the popular narrative? This is not merely a question of personal safety; it's a question of institutional integrity. If lawyers are afraid to take on sensitive cases or present unpopular arguments, the courtroom becomes a stage of silence, not justice. With visibility must come responsibility.

Then there is the issue of public understanding. Legal proceedings are complex. Concepts such as "reasonable doubt," "lack of admissible evidence" or "procedural due process" are not easily digestible in soundbites. An honourable judge may dismiss an allegation based on insufficient evidence, not because the event didn't occur, but because the law demands proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Yet a layperson watching the trial might misconstrue this as a miscarriage of justice. Emotional reactions may follow.

Justice is not always emotionally

satisfying. It is methodical, technical, and bound by rules designed to protect everyone until proven guilty. If the broader public cannot interpret this process within its rightful legal framework, then mass broadcasting without parallel civic education could stir more confusion than confidence.

More dangerously, it could create an ecosystem where mobs exert pressure on the judiciary. An honourable judge, knowing that millions are watching, might subconsciously feel compelled to deliver verdicts that appease public sentiment rather than follow the cold, hard dictates of the law. When justice bends to appease the crowd, it ceases to be justice. This is why state responsibility must not stop at the screen. The government, having taken this bold step towards judicial transparency, must now match it with equally bold measures for lawyer protection.

The intention behind broadcasting the ICT trial is noble. It signals a move towards a more open, democratic justice system. But we must ask painfully and honestly whether our institutions, political culture, and people are ready for it. Are we capable of listening to a defence lawyer without rushing to vilify them? Can we distinguish between legal argument and personal opinion? If the answer is no, then we are treading dangerous grounds.

As Bangladesh steps into this new era of judicial transparency, it must also commit to safeguarding the dignity, safety, and independence of all legal professionals.

Of tea, tantrums, and Tudor theatre



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

H.M. NAZMUL ALAM

If history is, as philosopher George Santayana warned, something we are doomed to repeat when we forget it, then Bangladesh's Awami dynasty has taken that wisdom and staged it as a family-friendly farce somewhere between *EastEnders* and a Shakespearean tragedy. Or is it a Netflix political satire? It's getting hard to tell.

This week, London witnessed not just the drizzle of summer rain but the awkward drizzle of dynastic dysfunction, imported directly from Dhaka—wrapped in diplomatic lace, then promptly stomped on with protest boots.

Prof Muhammad Yunus, Nobel laureate and currently the chief adviser of Bangladesh's interim government. A man whose résumé makes most heads of state look like part-time interns. Invited by King Charles III to receive the inaugural Harmony Award—an honour meant for those rare few who have nudged humanity towards peace—Yunus's trip to the UK should have been a textbook case in soft power diplomacy.

But then came the black flags. And the Facebook posts. And the tea.

Because what is a grand statesman's moment without a family-led circus determined to hijack the stage?

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, digital enthusiast, dynastic heir, and part-time Facebook warrior, announced his parallel visit to

London, accompanied by a cast of European Awami League loyalists coming in for a protest outside St James's Palace. Dressed in black flags and righteous fury, they shouted slogans that made more sense in Motijheel than Mayfair.

Not to be outdone, Joy's cousin Tulip Siddiq, Labour MP and niece of Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, emerged from the fog with a peculiar gesture: an informal invitation to Prof Yunus for tea at the House of Commons. Because when your family accuses a man of state capture, the logical next step is a cosy sit-down over Earl Grey.

Tulip's note was as tone-deaf as it was self-serving. No formal address. No reference to Prof Yunus's interim role. Just a breezy Britishness laced with Bangladeshi entitlement. As if this were a tiff over stolen biscuits at a school reunion and not an institutional breakdown between a Nobel laureate and a family accused of looting state coffers.

And then came the irony's crown jewel: Joy, Tulip's cousin and Hasina's son, emerged on Facebook hours later to declare Yunus a "dictator" and warning UK officials not to meet him. One cousin offers tea. The other offers threats.

This contradictory choreography—one part charm offensive, one part tantrum—reveals not a family at odds but a coordinated

campaign cloaked in contradiction. A two-pronged PR strategy: Tulip softens, Joy sharpens. One feigns civility, the other screams conspiracy.

The playwright Harold Pinter once said, "There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false." He could have been describing the Awami League's current

require a Bangladeshi national ID, a taxpayer identification number, and a network of bureaucratic approvals only available to—wait for it—insiders.

Then there's the small matter of Special Security Force (SSF) protection, a benefit under the Father of the Nation Family Members' Security Act, 2009. Tulip has neither disavowed nor declined this privilege,

of Bangladesh's state machinery for years without ever questioning its abuses. She remained notably silent during enforced disappearances, political repression, and the infamous Digital Security Act's reign of fear.

Tulip is neither rebel nor reformer. She's a symptom of dynastic privilege masquerading as democratic engagement.

The House of Commons is not a therapy couch for political heirs trying to whitewash their familial baggage. Nor is it a press gallery for proxy wars over legitimacy.

The British establishment must tread carefully. Prof Yunus visited London not as a freelancer of democracy but as the recognised transitional figure in Bangladesh, endorsed internationally and formally received by King Charles III. To allow his visit to be hijacked by political agitators related by blood but severed by credibility would be a farcical betrayal of everything the British system supposedly upholds.

Tulip's antics, Joy's outbursts, and their family's fragile grip on the truth all boil down to a single pathology: they cannot bear the idea that Bangladesh might now stand on its own, led not by blood but by merit.

As author George Orwell once wrote in *Animal Farm*, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." The Awami League's "royal" family has long believed itself to be that "more equal" kind. But democracy has a habit of correcting course, however messy the process.

Prof Yunus's visit, beyond its ceremonial significance, marks a symbolic shift. From rule by surname to rule by substance. From dynasties to dignity.

And if Tulip and Joy want to continue their cross-continental roadshow, the least they can do is rehearse the same script.



VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

information strategy.

Tulip, cast as the rational moderate, is trying to distance herself from the corruption scandals circling her family. But a quick look at the public records exposes the PR bubble.

She claims no property in Bangladesh. The Anti-Corruption Commission, however, lists her as co-owner of prime real estate in Purbachal and Gulshan. Properties that

funded by the very taxpayers now watching her mock due process from across the globe.

But entitlement, as political psychologist Dr Drew Westen argues, is "the anaesthesia of the powerful—it numbs one to the suffering of others while keeping alive the illusion of victimhood."

Tulip's new storyline, crafted for British media paints her as a victim of a "smear campaign." Yet, she enjoyed the protection

The collapse of deterrence between Iran and Israel



Ashish Singh
has finished his PhD coursework in political science from the NRU-HSE, Moscow, Russia. He previously studied at Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway, and TISS, Mumbai.

ASHISH SINGH

The latest escalation between Israel and Iran marks a perilous moment in West Asian geopolitics, where decades of shadow war have slipped into open confrontation. What was once fought through proxies, sabotage operations, cyber warfare, and veiled diplomacy is now turning into direct strikes between two of the region's most formidable powers. The consequences of this transformation are not just regional, they are global.

On Friday, Israel launched what it termed "Operation Rising Lion," targeting multiple Iranian military and nuclear infrastructure sites in Isfahan, Natanz, and Shiraz. The strikes were reportedly in response to an attempted Iranian drone and missile attack a week earlier, which Israel's defence forces intercepted with minimal casualties. But this tit-for-tat escalation belies a deeper, long simmering confrontation: Israel's determination to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear weapons capability, and Iran's equally entrenched resolve to challenge Israeli hegemony in the region.

This is not merely a bilateral conflict. The power struggle between Israel and Iran is enmeshed in a web of international interests and ideological divides. The US, while publicly calling for de-escalation, continues to provide advanced defence systems and intelligence support to Israel. Russia, increasingly aligned with Iran following its pivot away from the West, finds itself in a delicate position, caught between opposing partners in its geopolitical balancing act. Meanwhile, China, dependent on Iranian oil and Israeli tech alike, remains diplomatically cautious, urging restraint but offering no decisive mediation.

For decades, the uneasy equilibrium was maintained by strategic ambiguity and third-party diplomacy. Iran backed Hezbollah in Lebanon and militias in Syria and Iraq, encircling Israel through non-state actors. Israel, in turn, conducted hundreds of airstrikes in Syria to curb Iranian entrenchment but refrained from overtly targeting Iranian soil—until now. This breach of the unwritten rules is profound.

It signals a shift from deterrence through ambiguity to confrontation through clarity, from shadows to fire.

The nuclear dimension adds a chilling undertone to this shift. Iran's enrichment of uranium beyond 60 percent purity, while still below weapons-grade, has crossed every red line previously set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Israel's policy

remains distracted by other conflicts—Ukraine, Taiwan, Sudan—the potential for a full-scale regional war here is dangerously underestimated.

The Arab world, once reflexively aligned with the Palestinian cause, is split. The Abraham Accords brought normalisation between Israel and key Gulf states, including the UAE and Bahrain, who now view Iran as a more imminent threat than Israel. Saudi Arabia walks a tightrope, trying to manage regional leadership without alienating its emerging détente with Tehran. This geopolitical realignment has fragmented what was once a unified Arab front, creating new uncertainties in regional diplomacy.

For India, key strategic partner of both Israel and Iran, the conflict presents an uncomfortable dilemma. While Delhi maintains defence and intelligence ties with Tel Aviv, it is also heavily dependent on Iranian energy routes and connectivity initiatives like Chabahar. More crucially, any escalation in the Strait of Hormuz threatens global oil supply chains—jeopardising the very foundation of India's energy security and inflation management. The conflict also poses risks to India's large diaspora in the region, particularly in the Gulf states, who could face economic fallout or political backlash.

But perhaps the most troubling dimension of this unfolding crisis is the failure of diplomacy. The collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), due to American withdrawal

under the Trump administration and Iran's subsequent defiance, left a dangerous vacuum. European mediators, once central to keeping dialogue alive, now appear sidelined by their own internal divisions and economic fragility. The UN, hamstrung by veto politics, watches from the margins as bombs fall.

What does the world do when the very frameworks designed to prevent war have failed? When rational actors become prisoners of their own red lines? The Israel-Iran conflict exposes the fragility of international norms in a multipolar era, where power is fragmented and restraint is rare.

It is not enough to call for de-escalation. The moment demands a return to diplomacy not as an afterthought but as an urgent priority. It requires courage from leadership—on both sides—to resist domestic hardliners and ideological absolutism. It demands from the international community a shift from perfunctory condemnations to active mediation, from arms deals to disarmament talks.

As cities across Israel and Iran brace for more strikes, and as the world teeters on yet another edge, it is worth remembering that history rarely judges nations only by their victories—but always by their choices. The choice now is between escalation and survival, between spectacle and sanity. The world must not look away.

This article was first published by Countercurrents.org on June 15, 2025.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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SATURDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Gopalganj Road Division, Gopalganj
Email: eegopal@rhd.gov.bd

e-GP Tender Notice (Amendment)

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalganj for the procurement of following works. e-Tender details can be downloaded from e-GP System Portal "<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>" for purchase.

Tender ID and Package No.	Name of work	Subject	Present date & Time	Amended date & time
<u>1104017</u> e-GP/20/GRD/2024-2025 PMP Bridge Major (Re-Tender-3)	Periodic Maintenance Programme (PMP Major Bridge/Culvert) for Reconstruction of 01 No. 31.828m Long P.C Girder Bridge (Hiron) at Ch:15+567m on Tungipara-Kotalipara (Majbadi) Road (Z-8430) under Gopalganj Road Division, Gopalganj during the year 2023-2024.	Tender last selling date and time	15-06-2025, 16:00	25-06-2025, 16:00
		Tender security submission date and time	16-06-2025, 11:30	26-06-2025, 11:30
		Tender closing date and time	16-06-2025, 12:00	26-06-2025, 12:00
		Tender opening date and time	16-06-2025, 12:00	26-06-2025, 12:00

Accepted tenders will be opened online immediately after opening time.

15.6.25
Md. Azharul Islam

ID No. 602306
Executive Engineer (C.C.), RHD
Road Division, Gopalganj

Student drowns in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A student drowned while bathing in the Ruposhi Jharna, a waterfall in Mirsarai upazila of Chattogram, yesterday.

Asif Uddin, 24, was a honours final year student of Chattogram's Islamia Degree College under the National University.

Shafayet Hossain, senior station officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Mirsarai, said Asif and four of his friends went to bathe in the waterfall around 12:15pm. At one point, he drowned.

Locals and his friends began searching for him before a fire service team went to the scene. Asif's body was recovered at around 1:00pm, the official said.

Bamboo mat weavers

FROM PAGE 4
It is barely enough to feed my children," she added.

Like Mariam, around 100-150 women from Tilagaon, who are engaged in weaving mats for their livelihood, are finding it difficult to stay afloat.

"I have been weaving mats for past 20 years. This is the only source of our income. Despite our daylong hard work, we continue to remain impoverished," said Nasima Begum, another mat weaver.

At present, this traditional craft is at a crossroads. Bamboo, the raw material, has become increasingly scarce. The local varieties that were once abundant -- Ranjil, Parua, and Rupai -- are now harder to find. This shortage, coupled with the exploitative system of borrowing from moneylenders, has made it increasingly difficult for these women to earn a sustainable income.

"In the past, almost every

UN team on enforced disappearance

FROM PAGE 1

Researcher Taskin Fahmina; and Human Rights Support Society Director Ijazul Islam.

They talked about forming a search committee for victims who have not yet returned, withdrawing false cases filed against those who have returned, identifying those who destroyed evidence at the torture facility, addressing gaps in the draft law on enforced disappearances, and ensuring justice for the victims.

The delegation will hold meetings with Law Adviser Asif Nazrul, home ministry officials, law enforcers, families of the victims, and the Commission for Enquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

woman in the village used to weave mats, but many have given up because it doesn't generate enough earning to thrive," said Nasima.

"Even if we could source bamboo more readily, we could continue our work with greater ease and less reliance on loans," she added.

Ayesha Begum, another weaver, said, "With moneylenders controlling everything, we're stuck in a cycle of exploitation."

Ahmed Siraj, a folk researcher and organiser, opined that the key to preserving this cottage industry lies in providing the weavers with easier access to capital and raw materials.

"These women are trapped in a cycle of debt, relying on moneylenders for raw materials. If we could offer them interest-free or low-interest loans, it would empower them to regain control over their craft," he said.

Women MPs should be elected directly

FROM PAGE 12
structure would even work."

He also warned that if the number of reserved women's seats is raised to 100, it may lead to severe nomination trading. "The rotation method proposed by the Election Reform Commission will help produce a new generation of women leaders across the country. If implemented, the need for reserved seats may eventually be phased out," he said.

BNP Organising Secretary Shama Obaid supported the idea of direct elections for reserved seats and agreed with other speakers saying such a transition cannot happen overnight.

"I believe every political party must first have the intention to increase the number of women MPs. This doesn't happen automatically. When it comes to constituencies, it becomes very difficult. No one wants to give up their seat."

Referring to other barriers, she said, "We've talked about muscle power, about money, and many other issues. These are real, practical problems. We face them."

To address these challenges, she said, "Each party must first consciously decide to increase the number of women in its upazila, district, and central-level committees. These are the women who gradually move into leadership."

The BNP leader also opposed the dual representation model,

calling it impractical and unimplementable. "This will only create further conflict in any given constituency."

Instead, she argued for a more effective model -- assigning clear responsibilities to women MPs and ensuring monitoring by both the government and political parties.

"That will help eliminate the sense of political inferiority often experienced by women representatives."

Shirin Parvin Haque, head of the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, pushed for the dual representation model, saying, "Every constituency would have two seats: one open to all, and the other reserved for a woman. Both seats would be filled through direct elections. No one here is even talking about indirect selection."

"This is not an unrealistic proposal. If it is tabled and discussed, people will see its merit. But sadly, we submitted this to the consensus commission, and they didn't even include it in their report."

She strongly opposed the rotational system proposed by the Election Reform Commission, where women and men would alternate holding a seat every two terms.

"This is a ridiculous proposal," she said. "Which man or woman would willingly give up their political career for two terms? This fairy tale that women's leadership will bloom from such a system is

nonsense, utter nonsense."

At the beginning of the event, Nagorik Coalition, a platform advocating democratic reforms in the state structure, proposed a series of measures to strengthen women's political representation, including the direct election of 100 women to reserved seats in 2026, and a roadmap to achieving fifty percent gender parity in parliament over the next two elections.

The coalition has also called on all political parties to nominate at least 25 percent female candidates for general seats in 2026, with a plan to increase this proportion to 50 percent in future elections.

Its statement, which was read out by Dhaka University Prof Samina Luthfa, also proposed increasing the total number of parliamentary seats to more than 400 to accommodate Bangladesh's growing population, suggesting that electoral areas could be restructured or responsibilities reorganised based on population size, in line with recommendations made by the Women's Reform Commission.

The statement further noted that, according to the Women's Commission's proposal, political parties should nominate an equal number of men and women through a 'zipper system', an alternating placement of male and female candidates on party lists. It also cited the Women's Commission's

Mostafa Mohsin Montu

FROM PAGE 3

Montu, a prominent figure in Bangladesh's politics, held various key roles throughout his career and was widely respected for his commitment to democratic values and social justice.

He became active in Awami League politics during his student life and later served as president of the Judo League and secretary of the party's Dhaka city unit.

Elected as an MP from Dhaka-3 in 1986, he was expelled from AL in 1992 and subsequently joined

Dr Kamal Hossain's Gonoforum. In 2009, he became its secretary general.

After a falling out with Gonoforum's then General Secretary Reza Kibria, Montu formed a separate faction and served as its president.

In November 2024, the two factions reunited, with Montu as president and Dr Kamal Hossain named emeritus president.

The veteran politician, one of the organisers of the Liberation War, contested the 2018 national election from Dhaka-7 as a Jatiya

Oikya Front candidate.

Montu also played a crucial role in organising political coalitions against the Sheikh Hasina regime.

The first namaz-e-Janaza of Montu was held after the Esha prayers yesterday at a mosque on Elephant Road.

The second janaza will be held at 9:00am today in Keraniganj.

Later, after Zohr prayers, people will have the opportunity to pay tributes to him at the Central Shaheed Minar.

He is expected to be laid to rest at Banani Graveyard.

in the abdomen and Manikuzzan in the leg before fleeing the scene. Locals rescued the police personnel and took them to hospital," he also said.

ASI Jahangir Alam's condition is critical. He lost a lot of blood and has required several blood transfusions. He is currently undergoing surgery, said Bagura Sadar OC Hasan Bashir.

Multiple police teams are working to arrest the accused Nishan, OC Bashir added.

Two cops stabbed

FROM PAGE 4

Alam sustained severe injuries, said police.

"We received information that Muradunnabi Nishan, a convicted drug trader with an arrest warrant against him, was at his residence in Shikarpur Purbo Para village. ASI Jahangir Alam, accompanied by Constable Manikuzzaman, went to arrest him," said Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police outpost.

"While being arrested, Nishan stabbed Jahangir

in the abdomen and Manikuzzan in the leg before fleeing the scene. Locals rescued the police personnel and took them to hospital," he also said.

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Ten convicts challenge

FROM PAGE 3

Defence lawyer Md Masud Hasan Chowdhury Porag, who represents nine convicts, told The Daily Star that the trial court has sentenced 20 persons to death and five persons, who are also Buet students and meritorious, to life imprisonment and the High Court has upheld the lower court judgement.

In another development, the tribunal cancelled the bail of Daud Sheikh, an accused in a 1971 war crimes case, for failing to appear on three consecutive dates. A warrant has been issued for his arrest.

Meanwhile, the prosecution said investigators have yet to locate the body of Muhammad Hridoy, a college student killed in

Gazipur during the mass uprising on August 5.

The tribunal earlier granted a two-month extension, until August 17, to submit the investigation report on Hridoy's killing in Konabari, Gazipur, alongside a related case.

In

meanwhile, the prosecution said investigators have yet to locate the body of Muhammad Hridoy, a college student killed in

DSCC shifts

FROM PAGE 3

He also alleged that the 2020 DSCC election under the Sheikh Hasina administration was rigged, and said the court's verdict had proven that.

Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh was elected DSCC mayor on February 1, 2020. Ishraque challenged the results, alleging widespread vote rigging.

Following the July uprising, the Dhaka Election Tribunal nullified the election on March 27, 2025, and declared Ishraque the validly elected mayor.

Legal steps will be taken once a written complaint is filed in connection with the murder, he added.

mayorship. A writ petition by Supreme Court lawyer Md Mamunur Rashid seeking suspension of the verdict and gazette was dismissed by the High Court on May 22. An appeal is currently pending.

On May 26, Mamunur Rashid filed a petition with the Appellate Division to review the HC ruling. On May 29, the Appellate Division observed that questions regarding Ishraque's mayoral post fall under the Election Commission's jurisdiction.

In response, the EC said it had fulfilled its responsibilities by issuing the gazette, and no further action was needed.

EC waiting for formal talks with govt

FROM PAGE 12

2026 is being widely discussed in political circles.

The timing will depend on discussions with the government and the readiness of all involved. Our responsibility is to prepare thoroughly, so we are ready whenever the decision is made," Nasir said.

In addition, the EC is working on registering political parties and redrawing boundaries of constituencies in order to ensure equitable representation, Nasir said.

"In the existing reality, since they are made

lawmakers through party nominations or through some party leader, they remain accountable to that party or the leader, not to the people," said the NCP leader.

Echoing her, Umama Fatema, spokesperson of Students Against Discrimination, said, "Whatever the percentage or however many extra seats there are, there must be direct voting so that women feel empowered and remain accountable to the voters."

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Why is Sandwip missing from the Bay of Bengal's history?

Sandwip was important, but its hostile physical and political surroundings would prevent it from carving out a prominent place in Bay of Bengal history.

RILA MUKHERJEE

Chittagong's neighbour Sandwip is absent from Bay of Bengal history because its nature is hard to define. A pirate port in medieval times, its career was different from other pirate-cum-slaving ports because of its many roles: strategic gateway, commercial depot, offensive launch pad, and defensive site. A maritime outlet and transhipment node under local rulers and Arakan, it became a strategic post for the Mughals and a gateway into southeast Bengal for the Portuguese. Ultimately, it telescoped into a slaving hub.

Sandwip's career highlights the many roles played by small places at a time when the world map was not cast in favour of imperial outlets—when an insignificant part of the coast could challenge the expansion of powerful polities.

Another, and more important, reason for Sandwip's absence in history is that it lay outside the national frames through which we view our past. This article will demonstrate how viewing the past through national frames distorts historical understanding.

The Physical Environment

From 1509, ships following the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama had heard of the wealth of Chittagong, which they would call *Porto Grande*. Luis Vaz de Camões wrote in *Os Lusíadas* (1572, 10th Canto, Stanza 1): 'The City CATHIGAN would not be wav'd, The fairest of BENGLA: who can tell The plenty of this Province? but it's post (Thou seest) is Eastern, turning the South Coast. The Realm of ARRACAN, That of PEGU Behold, with Monsters first inhabited!'

We tend to equate Chittagong with the delta, but it lies outside it. The delta spans 'Lower Bengal' (*samatata*) of European records and comprises a terrestrial fringe called *bhati* that separates the coast from the sea.



Image 1: Isola de Chandocam in Petrus Bertuis, 1603. The territory is marked as 'island'

Bhati

Bhati is how Persian and Bengali sources saw the coast. It is the liminal zone where the land meets the sea, comprising a small part of the delta—the low-lying lands around Dhaka, Tripura, Mymensingh, and Sylhet, forming a triangle surrounded by the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna river systems.

Sandwip lies at the Meghna estuary's centre, between 22°16' and 22°43' north latitude and 91°23' and 91°40' east longitude. To its north is Chittagong and mainland Bangladesh; to its south, the Bay of Bengal; to its east, the Sandwip Channel; and to its west, the Hati Channel. The Meghna network links it to Tibet, northern Burma, and Yunnan through the Brahmaputra. This was once a major communication route, and the medieval port of Samandar

delta's rulers were defeated, and Bengal was made a Mughal province. This anarchic half-century benefitted Arakan.

Travellers have left behind accounts of the region. Niccolò de' Conti passed this way in 1421–22, but since he does not mention Sandwip, we assume its rise postdates his visit. Clearly a *char* that appeared later, Sandwip is not mentioned in the 1521 Portuguese account of Bengal either. But this account saw the area as highly urbanised, with market towns succeeding each other at small intervals: Aluia, Juggia, Gacala, Meamgar, Noamaluco—the last name clearly testifying to a land newly risen from the sea, a *char* now habitable and taxed (image 4). The same account notes that despite being a fertile land producing rice, sugar cane, and black and white textiles sold in its numerous shops, and a land experiencing great riverine and maritime traffic, it showed startling contrasts—swampy one moment and full of clear lakes the next. The area was heavily infested with pirates. Some islands were empty.

Was Sandwip one such island? Is this why it has left so few traces?

Sandwip appears on the historical stage in 1569. That year, on his way back from Pegu, a cyclone caused Cesare Federici's ship to be shipwrecked at Sandwip. Staying for 40 days, he found it a pleasant place, well run by a Muslim governor. He states:

"I went aboard the ship of Bengal, at which time it was the year of oftentimes, there are not stormes as in other Countries; but every ten or twelve yeeres there are such tempests and stormes, that it is a thing incredible, but to those that have seen it, neither doe they know certainly what yeere they will come... In this yeere it was our chance to bee at Sea with the like storme... this Touffon or Jacques Nicolas Bellin (1747).



Image 2: Robert Dudley, Regno di Chandican, Dell Arcano del Mare, D'Asia, Carta V, ca. 1645. The territory is now referenced as 'kingdom'.



Image 3: Sundiva and the neighbouring region, Johann and Cornelius Blaeu, 1638

Sandwip appears on the historical stage in 1569. That year, on his way back from Pegu, a cyclone caused Cesare Federici's ship to be shipwrecked at Sandwip. Staying for 40 days, he found it a pleasant place, well run by a Muslim governor.

Emperor Akbar's chronicler Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami claimed that 'the tract of country on the east called Bhati is reckoned a part of this province'. But in another passage, he treated Bangla and Bhati as mutually exclusive; the distinctive feature of the latter was its topography: the word *bhati* simply means downstream direction. 'Bhati', he said:

"is a low country and has received this name because Bengal is higher. It is nearly 400 *kos* in length from east to west and about 300 *kos* from north to south. East of this country are the ocean and the country of Habsha (the Habshis ruled Bengal from 1487 [end of the Ilyas Shahis] to 1493, Husain Shahi accession). West is the hill country where are the houses of the Kahan tribe. South is Tanda. North is also the ocean and the terminations of the hill country of Tibet."

Abu'l-Fazl saw Bengal bound by two oceans. This view likely came from *haors* and rivers as 'wide and deep as the sea' in popular perception, and it is likely that he was referring to the once mighty but now vanished Karatoya River as the northern ocean.

However, Richard Eaton noted that in Mughal usage of the 16th to early 17th centuries, *bhati* included the entire delta east of the Bhagirathi-Hugli corridor. Since its western boundary extended from Tanda (part of the 16th-century capital complex of Gaur-Tanda-Firuzabad) down to southwestern Khulna district, the frontier between *bhati* and Bangala approximated the present frontier between India's West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Like its environment, Sandwip's borders were hostile and contested by Bengal, Tripura, and Arakan—a powerful state to its east. Environment recognises no frontiers. Stephan van Galen remarks that Arakan—southeast Bengal form an environmental continuum; both have a climate and geography quite different from the Ganga and Irrawaddy plains. Both share a very high level of rainfall (reaching, on average, 500 cm per year), which makes for higher rice yields—contrasting with the much drier Ganga and Irrawaddy plains.

Although the steep and rugged Arakan Yoma makes overland travel difficult, intersecting rivers and shallow coastal waters between the two polities provide a good infrastructure for trade and communication.

Sandwip was important, but its hostile physical and political surroundings would prevent it from carving out a prominent place in Bay of Bengal history.

Adjacent to Arakan but held by outsiders, Sandwip's history is difficult to recover, as it lay in a disputed frontier area. We are not sure which power held the area at the start of the 16th century. It was probably Tripura, for in 1516 Husain Shah seized Chittagong from Tripura. But by 1537, Bengal's politics had become turbulent, the Portuguese controlled the seaboard from Orissa to Chittagong, and in the absence of a central authority, 'trade coins' minted at Chittagong passed as legal tender. In the early 17th century, the Mughals conquered southeast Bengal, the

of Bazar or Market, with Shops right over against the ship with all manner of provision of victuals to eate, which they brought downe in great abundance, and sold it so good cheape, that wee were amazed at the cheapnesse thereof. I bought many salted Kine there, for the provisyon of the ship, for halfe a Larine a piece, which Larine may be twelve shillings six pence, being very good and fatte; and fourt wilde Hogges ready dressed for a Larine; great fat Hennes for a Bizzie a piece, which is at the most a Penie; and the people told us that we were deceived the haife of our money, because we bought things so deare. Also a sacke of fine Rice for a thing of nothing, and consequently all other things for humaine sustenancie were there in such abundance, that it is a thing incredible but to them that have seen it. This I[s]land is called Sondiva belonging to the Kingdome of Bengal, distant one hundred and twentie miles from Chittigan, to which place we were bound."

With a diverse economy, Sandwip served as a refitting station for riverine traffic, and produced rice, grain, poultry, and cottons. Alexander Hamilton (ca. 1688–ca. 1733) remarked:

"Sundiva is an Island four Leagues distant from the rest, and so far it lies in the Sea... it may serve to shelter small Ships from the raging Seas."

A rupee spent at Sandwip yielded 580 lbs of rice, or eight geese, or 60 poultry. It also exported 200 boatloads of salt each year.

Sandwip's First Phase

Sandwip's turbulent politics began in 1590. In that year, the Chittagong Portuguese under Antonio de Souza Godinho fought Min Nala, Arakan's new governor at Chittagong, captured the fort, and forced Sandwip to come under their Chittagong establishment. But the island was a no-man's land, with Portuguese authority in force only in some places. Sripur's Kedar Rai asserted overlordship and claimed its revenues. This unclear status would haunt Sandwip. Although a renewed purpose to conquer the southeast is seen in General Man Singh's choice of Dhaka as a base from 1602, Mughal presence was nominal. They were defeated in 1602, and Domingos Carvalho, one of Kedar's officers, reconquered Sandwip. Kedar claimed he had 'liberated' Sandwip from the Mughals.

But the locals now rebelled against the Portuguese. Carvalho asked the Chittagong and Dianga Portuguese for help. Manuel de Matos, leader of the Dianga Portuguese, led 400 men in Carvalho's support. Since both together defeated Sandwip, each took a half to govern, and it seems Kedar still maintained his overlordship.

Min Razagyi, Arakan's king, fearful of being trapped between the Portuguese strongholds in Chittagong, Dianga, and Sandwip, sent a force of 150 *jalias*, "in which were some *catures* and other great ships, with many *falcões* and *camelotes*." Surprisingly, Kedar allied with Min Razagyi and sent 100 *casses* (light boats suitable for fighting on rivers, not at sea) against Sandwip. The Portuguese won this battle in 1602. In retaliation, Arakan harassed Jesuit and Dominican missionaries. Jesuit Father Francisco Fernandes was stripped, blinded, shackled, and thrown into prison, where he died on 14 November 1602. Four Jesuit fathers, led by Father Brásio Nunes, left their church in Sandwip and moved to Bengal.

Carvalho offered Sandwip to the King. The *Estado da Índia*'s viceroy at Goa agreed, hoping that Carvalho and Matos would bring the Bengal-based Portuguese back into the *Estado*'s service. As the conquest of Sandwip was now official, and Portugal accepted it as a crown possession, the King presented Matos and Carvalho with the Order of Christ and made them nobles—*Fidalgos da Casa Real*.

But Sandwip's political status was still contested. Arakan attacked it in 1603. Then, Pratapaditya of Chandecan, a powerful ruler who was seeking to expand in the delta, entered the scene. He beheaded Carvalho and sent the head to Mrauk U. This ended the Carvalho phase—the first Portuguese phase of Sandwip's history. Only Manuel de Matos was left to rule over Sandwip.

Meanwhile, de Brito—whose star was rising under Min Razagyi—planned a takeover of the entire coast from Sandwip to Syriam. This would be the second phase of Sandwip's history, and it would continue to shape Portuguese commercial strategy in the northern Bay of Bengal.

Rila Mukherjee is a historian and the author of *India in the Indian Ocean World* (Springer, 2022).

It will be a wrong move. Shanto is not an opener and he started as number four at the beginning of his career. Since we had senior players such as Shakib or Mushfiqur at number four or five, Shanto was promoted to three. [Batting at] Three is okay, but opening is completely different. I was batting at number three and had to go out to face the second delivery of an innings at times. People do not see the difference but when I batted in the opening slot, I failed. I know Shanto, and if it helps the team, he would open. But it's not right. Ricky Ponting scored loads of runs at number three but never opened.

Bashar feels Shanto as opener would be the wrong move



'On-again, off-again' nature of Galle adds to Tigers' challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team has long epitomised an on-again, off-again pattern -- considering their enduring struggle with inconsistency across all formats.

This very trait may present an added challenge for Nazmul Hossain Shanto and his side as they prepare for the upcoming first of two Tests against hosts Sri Lanka.

"There is likely to be an on-again, off-again game in Galle," former Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It might start and stop raining during the match. That period of interruption -- what we refer to as switch-on or switch-off time -- is something the Sri Lankan players are used to. But we are not."

"So, it's important for the batters to maintain their concentration, as such breaks don't affect bowlers much. These interruptions can impact batting and play a role in the game," Bashar explained.

Batting collapses have remained a key reason behind Bangladesh's frequent struggles. For a group of batters who have rarely maintained consistency throughout their careers, the stop-start

nature of conditions in Galle could pose a steeper challenge than in many other venues.

Upon arriving in Galle, Bangladesh were greeted by rain, prompting them to focus on indoor gym sessions in the lead-up to the first Test. With limited time to adjust to the conditions, they will have to adapt quickly before action begins on Tuesday.

Rain and overcast skies -- combined with a stadium that lacks floodlights -- often lead to interruptions during Galle Tests. What will be especially difficult for Bangladesh's batters is sustaining focus during these breaks, particularly on a surface known for being conducive to spin and where batting for long periods is crucial to achieving positive results.

"Usually, it's a bit slow, and it turns in Galle. It will be interesting to see what kind of conditions they [Sri Lanka] prepare. We have a good fast bowling unit, and their top five batters are strong."

"Spin usually plays a key role in Galle, though our spin attack isn't bad. Still, I think Sri Lanka may opt for a more pace-friendly wicket for the series overall. But in Galle, it's unlikely to be heavily suited to pace," Bashar added.

To handle such interruptions, Bangladesh will rely heavily on veterans Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominkul Haque -- two of the most experienced Test players in the squad and key pillars in the batting lineup alongside captain Shanto.

Both Mushfiqur and Mominkul -- the Tigers' batting mainstays -- have been preparing for the series for a while. They have undergone extensive net sessions and played practice matches. They looked to have been in a good Test temperament, leaving deliveries well and adjusting to bounce effectively on wickets they have batted in recent times.

However, spin has traditionally troubled Bangladesh batters in Sri Lankan conditions.

"Both are very experienced. Mushfiqur has a double century in Galle (2013), and Mominkul also found some runs here. They can adjust to recent challenges."

"But for the team as a whole, the top five will need to score. It cannot just be about Mushfiqur or Mominkul -- support from the rest of the batting unit will be vital," Bashar emphasised, reminding what will be needed for the Tigers to start their new World Test Championship cycle on a positive note.



Perennial chokers exorcise their demons

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

Can the perennial chokers defeat the ultimate champions? This was the question floating around before the World Test Championship (WTC) final between South Africa and Australia.

Australia hardly lose finals, and South Africa don't win; that was both team's reputation heading into the crunch match at Lord's.

Interestingly, both sides earned their polar opposite reputations from the same match, a 50-over bout that ended up becoming the canon even for both cricketing nations as it defined their identities for the years that followed.

The match in question was the 1999 ICC World Cup semifinal in England.

Set a 213-run target, South Africa levelled the scores with three balls to go, but a tragic mix-up between Lance Klusener and Allan Donald resulted in a run-out and Australia went through as they had finished higher in the Super Six stage.

In isolation, this could have been just another high-stakes match where the side that held their nerves better got the job done. But for South Africa, this was a continuation of them finding new ways of faltering on the biggest stage.

Seven years ago, they fell victim to the rain law in the semifinal against England and missed out on the final berth. In the 1999 edition, they had lost to Australia in the Super Six after Herschelle Gibbs dropped captain Steve Waugh, who went on to hit a match-winning hundred. Had Gibbs taken that catch, South Africa could have won,

and Australia would not even qualify for the semifinal.

Questions over South Africa's mental fortitude to win the big matches were being asked beforehand, and the elimination against Australia answered that query.

There were no more doubts, South Africa were the undisputed chokers of cricket -- a moniker that has stuck around ever since.



In the six ODI World Cups since then, they have played three semifinals and one quarterfinal, but the matches have always ended in heartbreak, with two of those defeats in semifinals coming against Australia in 2007 and 2023.

They came agonisingly close to ending their title drought in last year's T20 World Cup, but lost their way in a nervy chase against India in the final.

While generations of South African cricketers had to carry the weight of that choker tag, the Australians had a very different experience.

After knocking out South Africa, Australia made easy work of Pakistan



in the final, winning the first of their hattrick World Cup titles in 1999. They also went on to win 16 consecutive Tests -- most by any team -- twice and also picked up a couple of Champions Trophy titles and a T20 World Cup trophy along the way, establishing themselves as cricket's ultimate winners.

Fast forward to June 2025, both sides were set to face off in another big match, the format was different, but the implications were the same.

For most teams, facing Australia in the final is a daunting proposition, but for the Proteas, it was like coming face to face with their worst nightmare.

It was a frightening challenge, no doubt, but from another point of view, it was also South Africa's best shot at true redemption as the only way to exorcise one's demons is to face them head on.

For South Africa to shed the chokers tag for good, they had to defeat the Aussies in a final in an ICC event.

Tembu Bavuma's side did exactly that.

And they did not just scrape by and win a close match, what was telling was how they achieved that victory. There were no shenanigans involved, no murky umpiring decision that changed the momentum, and there were no questions that South Africa were the superior side.

South Africa fought hard to overcome a 74-run deficit and showed tremendous composure to chase 282 runs in the fourth innings against the most decorated bowling attack in world cricket.

On Saturday, once again, South African players and fans were in tears after an ICC knockout fixture against Australia, but this time those were tears of joy.

Thanks to Bavuma and Co., a new generation of South African cricketers will now grow up with the belief that they can win the big one, they have what it takes to beat the best on the biggest stage, that they are not born to be chokers but destined to be champions.

SHORT CORNER

SL name squad for Galle Test against Bangladesh

Sri Lanka named an 18-member squad for the first Test match against Bangladesh, starting in Galle on June 17. Led by Dhananjaya de Silva, the squad features, among others, Angelo Mathews who will retire from Tests following this match. There are also six uncapped players in the squad, namely, Lahiru Udara, Pasinda Sooriyabandara, Sonal Dinusha, Pavan Ratnayake, Isitha Wijesundara, Tharindu Ratnayake.

Miraz doubtful for first Test against Sri Lanka

Bangladesh off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz's involvement in the Tigers' first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle is in doubt due to the 27-year-old suffering from fever, head coach Phil Simmons told the media today. "Miraz's illness is concerning. If can't get well enough to play it will bring an opportunity for someone else. Everyone is hoping he recovers," Simmons told the media today after a training session at the match venue.



Gattuso named new Italy coach

Gennaro Gattuso was named Italy's new coach on Sunday and will be tasked with helping the Azzurri qualify for the 2026 World Cup after replacing Luciano Spalletti. Four-time champions Italy have failed to qualify for the past two World Cups and started their bid to reach next year's tournament in North America with a 3-0 loss to Norway last week.

**Read full stories on The Daily Star website.



Lionel Messi walks back with his Inter Miami teammates after his side were held to a 0-0 draw by Egyptian side Al Ahly in the Club World Cup opener on Saturday. FIFA's new 32-team tournament got off to a smooth start in front of 60,927 fans in Florida, but it would have been a much more exciting occasion had Messi not been denied a storybook stoppage-time winner when he saw his curling shot from 20 yards out tipped on to the bar by Al Ahly keeper Mohamed El Shenawy in the Group A clash. Al Ahly, however, would rue a first-half penalty from Egypt international Trezeguet, which was saved by Miami's Argentine keeper Oscar Ustari.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Financial constraints holding back revival of district football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation's pledge to revive district football is apparently going to face a big hurdle due to financial constraints.

The district leagues, a breeding ground of budding players, was largely ignored since the formation of District Football Associations (DFA) in 2008 in line with the FIFA guidelines.

Majority of DFAs were only able to hold leagues four times -- 2013, 2014, 2018 and 2020 -- with direct financial support from the game's local governing body under former president Kazi Salahuddin.

However, new president Tabith Awal has shown keenness to revive district football and on Saturday, he pledged to start district leagues after a couple of youth football tournaments.

Iqbal Hossain, chairman of BFF district football league committee and an executive member, said that a couple of districts have already started their leagues while some 15 to 20 districts have also assured of

starting leagues soon.

"We have asked the DFAs to send tentative budgets, league bylaws and fixtures and we will provide them with partial financial support," Iqbal told The Daily Star, adding that he has to officials of a number of DFAs regarding the progress of their preparation.

The former footballer said that they started the process in February but breaks due to Ramadan and the Eids have forced them to go a bit slow.

However, reality seems different as the financially-constrained DFAs are also struggling with availability of grounds and uncertainty over the fate of committees following the BFF's decision to dissolve 29 DFA committees.

Madaripur DFA last held the first division and second division leagues in 2021 and 2022 respectively with Tk 5 lakh provided by the BFF.

Madaripur DFA president Golam Kabir told The Daily Star that they have sent an estimated budget worth Tk 5.6 lakh for an eight-team league and took a



resolution at a DFA meeting to start the league on June 21, but the availability of funds remains a concern.

Rangpur DFA president Shamim Khan Miskin said that they have last held the league in 2020, and are getting ready to hold a 10-team league in August once the ground is prepared.

Kulna DFA general secretary Yousuf Ali informed that despite receiving a letter from the BFF regarding the league, they have not taken any initiative yet as

there is uncertainty over the DFA committee which has reportedly been dissolved by the BFF.

Replying to a query, Yousuf said that they have failed to get a reply from companies for sponsoring football in the district, which had in the past produced many top players.

Iqbal Hossain, meanwhile, informed that they are trying to rope in some corporate houses in a bid to assist the DFAs to run district leagues.

"It is really tough to get big amount of money from a specific sponsor, so our president is trying to rope in four or five corporate houses for holding the district football leagues," Iqbal said. "The executive committee might have dissolved a few DFA committees but the notices have not been served yet. So, we hope all DFAs will take initiative to hold leagues."

Meanwhile, it has been learnt that the Ministry of Youth and Sports, with assistance from the BFF, has decided to organise a nationwide football tournament involving all district teams with a budget to the tune of Tk 15 crore.

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ELECTION TIMING EC waiting for formal talks with govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission will understand the government's stance on election timing after holding formal discussions with it, Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin said yesterday.

The EC may then decide when to set the date for polling, he told reporters at his office.

"Whether the national election is held in February or April — whenever it takes place, the Election Commission must be prepared," he said.

The EC and the government have yet to hold formal discussions on when the next national election should be, he added.

The election schedule is usually issued two months prior to the election date, he said, adding that it was not possible to set a date eight to 10 months ahead.

He reiterated the EC's commitment to holding a free, fair, and acceptable national election, saying that all preparations are being made with that objective in mind.

Before finalising the election schedule, the EC will assess the overall political and administrative situation, he said.

The preparatory process includes amending the Voter List Act to address certain legal gaps, he added.



SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

Israeli fire kills 25 in Gaza Five of them waiting to receive aid

AGENCIES

Israeli fire and airstrikes killed at least 25 Palestinians across the enclave yesterday, local health authorities said, at least five of them near two aid sites operated by the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).

Medics at Al-Awda Hospital in the central Gaza Strip said at least three people were killed and dozens wounded by Israeli fire as they tried to approach a GHF site near the Netzarim corridor. Two others were killed en route to another aid site in Rafah in the south.

An airstrike killed seven other people in Beit Lahiya town north of the enclave, medics said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The GHF began distributing food packages in Gaza at the end of May after Israel partially lifted a near three-month total blockade. Scores of Palestinians have been killed in nearly daily mass shootings trying to reach the food, reports Reuters.

The United Nations rejects the Israeli-backed new distribution system as inadequate, dangerous, and a violation of humanitarian impartiality principles.

Hamas, which denies Israeli charges that it steals aid, accused Israel of "employing hunger as a weapon of war and turning aid distribution sites into traps of mass deaths of innocent civilians."

In a separate development, the Israeli army said yesterday that a soldier had been killed in battle in Gaza one day earlier.

"Noam Shemesh aged 21 from Jerusalem... fell during combat in the southern Gaza Strip," the army said in a statement.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

- Hamas accuses Israel of turning aid centres into traps
- Internet restored in Gaza after 3 days

Road crashes claim 10 lives

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and several others injured in separate road crashes in Bogura, Madaripur, Nilphamari, Sirajganj, Sherpur, Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria, Faridpur, and Gopalganj yesterday.

In Gopalganj, two people were killed and at least 15 others injured in a pile-up involving three buses, a car and a stationary truck in Bhatiapara area of Kashiani upazila around 3:30am.

One of the deceased was Rafiqul Islam, an assistant sub-inspector of Bhatiapara Highway Police. The identity of the other deceased could not be confirmed immediately.

Police said a bus lost control and hit a stationary truck, which triggered a pile-up involving two other buses and a car.

Inspector Maksudur Rahman Murad of Bhatiapara Highway Police said, "Vehicular movement remained suspended for three hours. All vehicles involved have been seized."

In Sherpur, a man was killed on the spot after being run over by a Dhaka-bound bus in Sadar upazila around 11:30am.

Deceased Moznu Mia, 52, was a retired army personnel of Shapmari village.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



A tow truck taking away a bus that was involved in a pile-up near the Gopinathpur police outpost on the Dhaka-Khulna Highway in Gopalganj yesterday. The crash killed two people and injured at least 15 others.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Draft data law gives unfettered power to cops
Says Article 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The draft Personal Data Protection Ordinance lacks clear definitions and safeguards, and gives unchecked power to the government and law enforcement agencies, said Article 19.

This could lead to arbitrary surveillance, discriminatory profiling, and suppression of dissent, warned the organisation, which advocates for the right to freedom of expression.

"In its current form, the draft ordinance raises significant concerns," said Article 19. It called for the ordinance to be restructured to place human rights, including the rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and access to information, at its core.

According to Article 19, the ordinance grants

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



Two demonstrators in front of a policeman after police use sound grenades and truncheons to stop a march to the Secretariat by registered teachers of the 17th batch, who are over the age limit for government jobs but are demanding special consideration. The photo was taken in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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Women MPs should be elected directly

Speakers at Star discussion say it'll ensure better representation of women in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women representatives should be elected through direct voting rather than relying on party nominations, as only direct electoral mandates can ensure meaningful empowerment, accountability, and connection with constituencies, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They made the remarks while speaking at a discussion titled "Women's Empowerment through Direct Election to Parliament: Necessity, Challenges and Solutions" held at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Addressing the discussion, Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said, "If we go for direct voting, we can also avoid the recurring debate between proportional and majoritarian systems — whether nomination or allocation should be based on proportional party votes or not."

Referring to his personal experience, he said that female lawmakers in reserved seats often lack political influence, as many don't hold party positions.

"Without strong political standing within their parties, these women cannot utilise



opportunities fully. I witnessed this firsthand."

Debapriya did not endorse the dual representation model suggested by the Women's Affairs Reform Commission, which suggests having two MPs — a male and a female — for the same parliamentary constituency.

"Beginning something entirely new during this transitional period would be very difficult. Therefore, if we currently have 50 reserved seats and they seem inadequate, we can look at increasing them to 100 as part of a gradual process."

Also speaking at the event, Badil Alami Majumdar, head of

the Electoral Reform Commission, also expressed doubts over the effectiveness of the proposed dual representation.

This would not be ideal because two people in the leadership position may lead to conflict and poor results, said Badiul.

He noted that in the current system, women MPs often face resistance from their male counterparts within the same constituency.

"There is already reluctance in many places to let women MPs function effectively. So we must question whether a dual MP

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Newly discovered dinosaur rewrites T rex family history

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A newly discovered dinosaur from Mongolia, named *Khankhuluu mongoliensis*, or "Dragon Prince," is believed to be a crucial ancestor of the *Tyrannosaurus rex* (T rex), shedding light on the T rex's complex evolutionary history.

Living approximately 86 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period, *Khankhuluu* predates the *Tyrannosaurus rex* by around 20 million years. This mid-sized dinosaur, measuring about 13 feet in length and weighing roughly 1,600 pounds, walked on two legs and possessed a long snout filled with sharp teeth.

In comparison to the more heavily built T rex, *Khankhuluu*'s body proportions suggest it was a swift predator, likely hunting smaller prey such as oviraptorosaurs and ornithomimosaurs. The largest known T rex specimen reached a length of 40-1/2 feet.

Khankhuluu means "Dragon Prince" in the Mongolian language. *Tyrannosaurus rex* means "tyrant king of the lizards."

"In the name, we wanted to capture that *Khankhuluu* was a small, early form that had not evolved into a king. It was still a prince," said palaeontologist Darla Zelenitsky of the University of Calgary in Canada, co-author of the study published in the journal *Nature*.

Tyrannosaurs and all other meat-eating dinosaurs are part of a group called theropods. *Tyrannosaurs* appeared late in the age of dinosaurs, roaming Asia and North America.



Ex-UP chairman of Savar found dead in Dhaka jail Family alleges foul play

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A former union parishad chairman of Savar, who drew widespread attention during last year's mass uprising for allegedly opening fire on protesters, was found hanging in his cell at Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj yesterday, according to prison authorities.

Saidur Rahman Sujon, a local Awami League leader and former chairman of Birulia Union Parishad, had been in custody since January 20 following his arrest in Uttara.

He was accused in more than a dozen cases, including charges of murder, attempted murder, and illegal possession of firearms, police and jail sources said.

Sujon came under intense public scrutiny after a video of him brandishing a firearm at demonstrators in Savar went viral on social media during the mass uprising.

Senior Jail Superintendent Suriya Akter said Sujon was found hanging in the Surjomukhi Building of the prison around 11:00am. He had been sharing the

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4