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Google Pay
to launch in
Bangladesh
next week

B1



First monsoon
downpour
submerges
Khulna

P4



India regulator
asks Air India
for training data
of pilots

P5



BKSP plans
big with Alif,
Sagor

P11

ISRAEL-IRAN CONFLICT

Trump wants 'real end', not ceasefire

Says 'we' have control of Iran's skies; tells Iranians to 'evacuate Tehran' as something 'much bigger' coming

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump yesterday dramatically stepped up his rhetoric against Iran, fueling questions about whether the United States would join Israel's attacks on Tehran's leadership and nuclear facilities.

He said he wants a "real end" to the conflict between Israel and Iran, not just a ceasefire, as the arch foes traded fire for a fifth day yesterday.

The US president also said on social media that the US knows where Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is but will not kill him "for now."

"But we don't want missiles shot at civilians, or American soldiers. Our patience is wearing thin. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" said Trump.

Minutes later, the US president followed up with another message simply saying: "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER!"

His comments came as Israeli warplanes yesterday targeted military sites in Iran,

- ▶ Israel pounds Iran's defences, 'kills top commander'
- ▶ Iran hits strategic targets, including Mossad's centre
- ▶ Trump says US will not kill Khamenei 'for now'
- ▶ China accused Trump of 'pouring oil' on the conflict
- ▶ G7 says 'Iran can never have nuclear weapons'
- ▶ Iran tells Israelis to evacuate Tel Aviv, Haifa

killing a senior commander and drawing retaliatory missile fire from Iran. Loud bangs were heard in Tehran on several occasions yesterday.

Explosions were also heard over Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as air raid sirens sounded in many parts of Israel following missile launches from Iran, the Israeli military said.

Iranian state television said the Tel Aviv headquarters of Israel's Mossad

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Israeli air defence systems are activated to intercept Iranian missiles over the Israeli city of Haifa. The photo was taken early yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

400 Bangladeshis at risk in Tehran

Embassy official's home damaged in Israeli attack; govt to prioritise relocating expatriates, says acting foreign secy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

About 400 Bangladeshi nationals, including embassy officials, staffers, and their family members, are at risk in Tehran as the Iran-Israel conflict continues to intensify with no resolution in sight.

Amid growing threats of targeted strikes, Bangladesh's Ambassador to Iran Majurul Karim Khan Chowdhury left his residence in Tehran and took shelter in a secure location on Monday night.

However, the residence of at least one Bangladeshi embassy official in Tehran's Jordan area was destroyed in an Israeli strike on Monday, reports BBC Bangla.

Walid Islam, first secretary at the embassy, confirmed that his home was destroyed in the attack.

Most of the residences of embassy officials are in the same area under Tehran's district-3. All Bangladeshi nationals, including embassy officials

**Around 2,000
Bangladeshis,
including students,
professionals,
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Tehran, while 40 are
affiliated with the
embassy.**

and staffers, have left the area as per instructions from Dhaka. They are all now in a different part of the city.

The area includes several key installations, including the building of Iran's state television, which was also attacked on Monday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

July Charter
to be unveiled
on uprising
anniversary

Says Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus said the July Charter will be announced next month on the anniversary of the July uprising.

He revealed this at a meeting with the newly appointed Australian High Commissioner to Dhaka Susan Ryle at the State Guest House Jamuna.

"Our focus remains on constitutional, judicial, and administrative reforms. These are the foundations for building a stronger Bangladesh," Prof Yunus said.

He said the interim government is working with all political parties to ensure a smooth transition. "For the first time in years, people, especially first-time voters, will have a real opportunity to cast their ballots freely."

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Consensus on MPs voting against party lines, with exceptions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political parties will allow MPs to vote against party lines except on no-confidence motions and finance bills.

While they have agreed to amend Article 70 of the constitution at yesterday's National Consensus Commission meeting, there is still debate on two other exceptions: national security issues during a war and constitutional amendments.

The parties also agreed on opposition MPs chairing at least four key parliamentary standing committees and increasing the number of reserved seats for women in parliament from 50 to 100.

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami was the only party to skip the talks.

At present, Article 70 disqualifies MPs who vote against their parties. The proposed change would relax this rule, allowing MPs to dissent.

The parties argue that critical matters like no-confidence motions and finance bills require unity and lawmakers should not be allowed to vote against their parties on such matters.

- Opposition MPs to chair at least 4 standing committees

- Women's reserved seat to increase from 50 to 100

- Bicameral legislature, CJ appointment still being debated

Jamaat skips
consensus
talks in
'protest'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday skipped the National Consensus Commission's discussion with political parties.

The party may issue a statement in this regard today, insiders say.

At the Doel Hall of the Foreign Service Academy where the meeting was held, the seats designated for Jamaat leaders remained empty, meeting sources said.

The second round of the commission's dialogue with political parties began around 11:45am.

The Jamaat informed the commission beforehand that it would not be attending the meeting, a member of the National Consensus Commission told this newspaper.

The party told the commission that it felt ignored after Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Every morning, a large fish market operates near the Jatrabari Police Station on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, considered the country's economic lifeline. Hundreds of fish traders occupy more than half the highway, causing traffic congestion and immense suffering for commuters. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Govt enacts law for July martyrs' families, injured. Provides framework for their welfare

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government issued an ordinance providing a legal framework for state-led welfare initiatives to rehabilitate the families of those killed and those injured during the July uprising.

The legislation was approved in draft form by the advisory council on May 15 and passed yesterday.

The ordinance codified the spirit of the revolution into law.

The law categorises injured participants into three groups and formally designates them as July Fighters while the deceased are to be recognised as July Martyrs.

The three categories of July Fighters include Injured, Critically Injured and Extremely Critically Injured. The ordinance outlined the rights to medical care and rehabilitation of each.

The government will bear all medical expenses, the law stated.

Under the ordinance, official lists of martyrs and injured individuals will be recognised as legally binding.

The ordinance upheld the previously published number of those martyred in the July uprising: 834 individuals.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

BNP doesn't want conflict with govt after London meeting. Senior leaders want Ishraque to call off movement

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has decided not to engage in any activity that might delay the election or reignite conflict with the interim government following the recent London meeting between the party's Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman and Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

The decision came at a BNP standing committee meeting on Monday night at the party chairperson's political office in Gulshan. The meeting was chaired by Tarique, who joined in virtually from London.

At the meeting, Tarique did not disclose the details of the discussion that took place at the one-on-one meeting with Yunus in London on June 13. The Daily Star has learnt from people with direct knowledge of the matter.

He termed the London dialogue "fruitful", while BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, "We cannot allow [this momentum] to slip from our hands."

His remarks received table thumping approval from all committee members.

The committee extended formal congratulations to Tarique for conducting

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9-yr-old raped at knifepoint in Meherpur

3 sent to jail over gangrape of woman in Cumilla

STAR REPORT

A nine-year-old girl was raped at knifepoint in Meherpur on Monday, while three men were sent to jail yesterday in connection with the gangrape of a woman in Cumilla.

In Meherpur, the child is currently undergoing treatment at an upazila health complex. Her father filed a case accusing 26-year-old Shakil Ahmed, who was arrested the same night.

According to the case statement, the girl was on her way to deliver food to her father, who was working in a field, around 10:00am when Shakil stopped her, forced her into another field at knifepoint, and raped her.

She later told her father, who, along with locals, caught the accused, beat him up, and handed him over to police, said Bani Israel, officer-in-charge of Gangni Police Station OC Bani Israel. Shakil was sent to jail through a court yesterday, he added.

In Cumilla, three men were sent to jail yesterday on charges of raping a 21-year-old garment worker.

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Govt enacts law for July martyrs' families, injured

FROM PAGE 1

The ordinance also declared 10,642 as the number of those injured in the July Uprising.

Of them 3,098 were injured in Dhaka division, 1,927 in Chattogram division, 1,315 in Rangpur division, 1,195 in Khulna division, 1,093 in Rajshahi division, 772 in Barishal division, 708 in Sylhet division and 534 were in Mymensingh division.

Rehabilitation support will include employment opportunities, skill-based training aligned with victims' capabilities, access to education, medical care, and low-interest loans for self-employment.

Extremely Critically Injured July Fighters will be entitled to advanced medical care both domestically and abroad, as recommended by medical boards overseen by the health department.

July Fighters will get priority medical care in all district and upazila-level government health facilities and specialised hospitals selected by the government.

Both the families of the martyrs and the July Fighters will get a one-off lump sum as aid for rehabilitation and a monthly stipend.

The newly formed Department of the July Uprising will oversee the implementation of the law.

A government fund will be created by the department, which will maintain government budgetary allocations, donations and foreign aid. The fund will be audited annually.

The ordinance includes strict penalties for fraudulent claims. Anyone who falsely identifies as a family member of a martyr or as an injured fighter to receive benefits will face up to two years in prison and a fine of Tk 2 lakh or twice the amount of the received benefit.

The law also codified the conditions of the revolution.

It said that the Liberation War was brought on by the racist, discriminatory and oppressive policies of Pakistani colonisation. An independent state was formed in 1971 after the armed struggle of Bangladeshi citizens, with the aim of creating a country that values human dignity and social justice.

However, an anti-discriminatory state based on justice and democracy has not been created even half a century after independence, despite the continuous struggle and sacrifice of its people, said the ordinance.

It said that since 2009, the fascist Awami League government has broken down all state institutions by encouraging politicisation, corruption and nepotism. It had conducted enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, and unjustly oppressed any opposition. It had deepened economic inequalities by allowing capital flight, subjected women and minorities to structural violence, deprived citizens of their voting rights, right to free speech and jeopardised the country's sovereignty.

The law stated that the student-led uprising was one where all citizens were united irrespective of gender, party, ideology or religion and that the fascist dictator was forced to flee the country in the face of popular resistance.

Unarmed, patriotic citizens were martyred and injured in brutal displays of violence, and it is mandatory to exhibit proper respect for their sacrifices, and uphold the uprising as a proud chapter of the country's journey to establish democracy, said the law.

It further stated that the government is committed to showing respect to their sacrifices, and work for their welfare and rehabilitation.



BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed speaks at a meeting of the National Consensus Commission with political parties at the Doel Hall of the Foreign Service Academy in the capital. The commission in the second round of dialogue yesterday continued discussions on recommendations made by various reform commissions.

PHOTO: PID

Trump wants 'real end', not ceasefire

FROM PAGE 1

intelligence agency was among the targets hit by the missiles.

The Israeli military said it killed senior Iranian commander Ali Shamdani in an overnight strike on a "command centre in the heart of Tehran", just four days after his predecessor, Golani Ali Rashid, was killed in a similar Israeli attack.

It also said it targeted multiple missile and drone sites in west Iran, including infrastructure, launchers and storage facilities, with black-and-white footage showing some of them exploding.

Trump had earlier issued an extraordinary warning on his Truth Social platform, saying: "Everyone should immediately evacuate Tehran!"

He said something "much bigger" is on the cards and predicted that Israel would not be easing its attacks on Iran.

"You're going to find out over the next two days. You're going to find out," he said.

Meanwhile, Iran's armed forces chief of staff Abdolrahim Mousavi yesterday urged residents of the major Israeli cities of Haifa and Tel Aviv to evacuate, warning of imminent "punitive" attacks.

He added that previous attacks on Israel have so far only been for "deterrence" purposes.

Meanwhile, Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth said the United States was deploying "additional capabilities" to the Middle East.

The US president has so far stressed that his country is not getting involved in the conflict, and has said that Iran could still take a deal to end its nuclear program that he had proposed before Israel's attacks.

But Trump has given mounting signals that Washington's intervention in some form may now be imminent.

Trump said Tuesday that "we" have complete and total control of the skies over Iran, hailing the use of US-made weaponry without explicitly mentioning

Israel.

Israel, the closest US ally in the Middle East, had recently made a similar claim.

Earlier, Trump told reporters on Air Force One while returning from Canada that he wanted "a real end, not a ceasefire" to the Iran-Israel conflict, and warning that "I'm not in too much of a mood to negotiate."

"I'm not looking for a ceasefire, we're looking at better than a ceasefire," he told reporters.

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China also urged its citizens to leave

Iran "as soon as possible".

Meanwhile, Russia said it was ready to act as a peace broker between Israel and Iran, but that Israel was showing reluctance to accept outside mediation.

After decades of enmity and a prolonged shadow war, Israel launched its surprise air campaign last week, saying it aimed to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons -- an ambition Tehran denies.

At least 24 people have been killed in Israel and hundreds wounded, according to Netanyahu's office.

Iran said on Sunday that Israeli strikes had killed at least 224 people, including military commanders, nuclear scientists and civilians. It has not issued an updated toll since then.

Netanyahu said Israel was "changing the face of the Middle East, and that can lead to radical changes inside Iran itself".

At the G7 summit, leaders called for "de-escalation" while stressing Israel had the right to defend itself.

"We urge that the resolution of the Iranian crisis leads to a broader de-escalation of hostilities in the Middle East, including a ceasefire in Gaza," G7 leaders said in a joint statement that also affirmed "Iran can never have a nuclear weapon".

It also said, "Iran is the principal source of regional instability and terror."

Yesterday, Iran accused the G7 of siding with Israel.

"The G7 must give up its one-sided rhetoric and tackle the real source of the escalation -- Israel's aggression," foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said.

"Israel has launched an unprovoked war of aggression against Iran... in violation of... the UN Charter," the spokesman said.

"Iran is defending itself against a cruel aggression. Does Iran really have any other choice?" he asked.

He pointed out that while certain political parties have been prioritised, it would be in the spirit of the July Uprising and the ensuing charter to also include other participating parties, civil society, professional groups, students, and families of martyrs.

Tasnim Jara said although NCP's position was to abolish Article 70, it agreed to retain it for certain exceptions in the spirit of consensus. However, she said her party was opposed to BNP's proposal to extend Article 70 to national security and constitutional amendments. "MPs must be free to express their views on such critical issues. On national security, particularly wartime decisions, there must be collective consensus. MPs' right to vote freely must be preserved."

Nur said that most parties supported the idea of a bicameral legislature. "Our party has long supported a proportional representation system. We agreed to back this model in the upper house for national unity."

Gazi Ataur Rahman, joint secretary general and spokesperson of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, criticised the commission for "pushing" the proposal to reserve 100 seats for women, saying it was contrary to the goals of the July Uprising.

"Women already have full rights to contest all 300 constituencies. True dignity comes when they lead political parties and compete equally, not through reservations, which is inherently disrespectful," he said. However, he also clarified that if all parties agreed to the proposal for 100 reserved seats for women, his party would not oppose it.

Political parties that joined Tuesday's session included the BNP, NCP, CPB, Islami Andolan, Nagarik Oikya, Gano Odhikar Parishad, and Ganosamhati Andolon.

The National Consensus Commission was represented by Ali Riaz, along with Abdul Mueed Chowdhury, Safar Raj Hossain, Badiul Alam Majumdar, and Dr Ittekaruzzaman.

400 Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 1

Yesterday, Israel warned civilians to evacuate Tehran's district-3 and the Iran Radio building before launching targeted strikes there. Eight Bangladeshis who worked in the building were moved to safe locations the night before.

With Iranian airspace closed, authorities are now working to relocate Bangladeshis to safer areas within the country.

However, sanctions on Iran, which effectively severed formal banking channels, are making it difficult to send money to those in need.

Speaking at a media briefing yesterday, acting foreign secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique said, "The Bangladeshis currently residing in mainland Iran, particularly in Tehran, along with our embassy officials, staffers, and their families are facing a very serious threat."

Asked whether the government is planning repatriation, Siddique said the immediate priority is relocating citizens to safety. "If they later wish to leave via land, the government will assist. For instance, those wanting to go to Pakistan or Turkey will be supported in reaching those countries."

The embassy had already begun the process of relocating about 100 Bangladeshis who contacted it for assistance. But the process has stalled due to financial hurdles. "We're trying ... But banking channels simply don't work in Iran. That's one of the main reasons for the delay."

A foreign ministry official added that embassy officials are still working from the building despite the risks. "They're risking their lives because their work is essential. But our decision is to move them to safer locations from where they can continue working."

Around 2,000 Bangladeshis, including students, professionals, tourists, and medical patients, are believed to be in Iran. Of them, about 400 are in Tehran, while 40 are

affiliated with the embassy.

Siddique said the Indians have managed to relocate their citizens to safer places within Iran. "One advantage the Indians have is that they don't face the same banking channel restrictions as we do, because their currency is convertible."

Meanwhile, Pakistan has opened up its shared border with Iran, and the nationals who wish to return are doing so through the open border point, he said.

"There are Bangladeshis who have already lost their jobs. And even if the war ends, post-war conditions may no longer be livable or viable for work."

He said many Bangladeshis have married Iranians and settled in the country permanently. Others work in sectors like maritime fishing. Many are there without valid documentation, some are in detention centres.

The foreign ministry has issued alerts to Bangladesh missions across the Middle East and Gulf regions. Hotlines are active in Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan, and no attacks involving Bangladeshis have been reported there so far.

"The international community must act urgently to end this war," Siddique added. "Peace in the Middle East is critical. Otherwise, the consequences could be catastrophic."

One Bangladeshi national, AK Azad (not his real name), said he went to Tehran for his mother's medical treatment. But as hospitals close down, her condition is deteriorating.

"My mother needs dialysis ... I asked an embassy official for help. He suggested another hospital, which didn't even have a dialysis facility," he told this correspondent while speaking from Tehran's district-6, where he had heard explosions.

"My mother's condition will be worsening if she cannot have dialysis. Please help us, if you can, relocate to a safe place," Azad said, choosing anonymity as he fears his family back home will panic.

Jamaat skips consensus

FROM PAGE 1

and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman met in London on June 13 and issued a joint statement saying that the election could be held in February next year, a commission member told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

The Jamaat boycotted the talks yesterday as a mark of protest, the party informed the commission, added the member.

According to sources, the commission reached out to Jamaat and urged it to reconsider.

On June 14, a day after the meeting between Prof Yunus and Tarique, the Jamaat said holding a meeting and a joint press conference with one single political party in a foreign land were not "ethical" and were a "deviation from the country's political culture".

The chief adviser has shown he is leaning towards a particular party, and undermined his impartiality, the Jamaat said.

Meanwhile, Jamaat Central Working Committee Member Shafiqul Islam Masud yesterday said the nation's main expectations from the interim government were reforms, trial for the July mass killing, and a fair election.

"Instead, the government seems to have shown loyalty to a particular party, ignoring the aspirations of the people. This does not align with the spirit of the student-led July uprising," he said.

The nation expects a more responsible role from the chief adviser in building national unity."

After the consensus commission meeting yesterday, BNP Standing

Committee Member Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters that the commission itself was in the best position to explain why the Jamaat skipped the meeting.

Nurul Haque Nur, President of the Gono Odhikar Parishad, said, "As far as we understand, the Jamaat has symbolically boycotted today's meeting. There may be a number of issues on the commission's agenda that the Jamaat opposes."

Expressing dissatisfaction, Gazi Ataur Rahman, Joint Secretary General of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, said, "As a significant political force, the Jamaat should have been present at today's session. They haven't provided a clear explanation as to why they were absent."

Several political groups believe that Jamaat's absence stems from policy disagreements with the commission, particularly regarding the proposed reservation of seats for women.

In the first phase of meeting with the consensus commission, the Jamaat delegation was led by the party's Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher.

Yesterday's discussions covered a range of issues, including Article 70 of the Constitution, nomination of chairman to the parliamentary standing committees, and reserved seats for women in parliament.

The proposal for a bicameral legislature and the process of appointing the chief justice were also discussed.

The commission's meetings with political parties will end tomorrow.

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ঘরে বসেই
ব্যাংক
অ্যাকাউন্ট
খুলুন



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

We'll maintain
int'l standards
for justice
Says new ICT-2
chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury, the newly appointed chairman of the International Crimes Tribunal-2, said the tribunal would continue its proceedings without fear or bias, maintaining international standards of justice.

"I can assure [you], without fear, we will try to ensure justice maintaining international standards...," said Justice Nozrul during his felicitation programme at the tribunal in Dhaka.

He added, "This tribunal is not the same as other legal institutes..."

Joining the programme, Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman echoed the same expectations.

"The trial process must be transparent so that no questions are raised internationally," he said.

He added, "The people of

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Two patients on wheelchairs cross a busy road in front of the Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital. Due to the lack of disability-friendly footbridges and other accessible alternatives, they are forced to navigate traffic alongside other jaywalkers. The photo was taken yesterday.

DU presents
proposed
budget of
Tk 1,035cr

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University has presented a proposed budget of Tk 1,035.45 crore for the upcoming 2025-26 fiscal year.

The previous budget for 2024-25 was Tk 945.15 crore.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) will provide Tk 883.04 crore from the total budget as grants. The university will receive Tk 90 crore from internal sources, leaving a deficit of 62.41 crore.

DU Treasurer Prof M Jahangir Alam Chowdhury presented the annual budget around 3:00pm yesterday at the Administrative Building.

Regarding the budget deficit, Prof Jahangir said the university budget funding primarily comes from the UGC, but the UGC has not provided the

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No social safety net for 91% of street children

Shows survey by Caritas Bangladesh

AT A GLANCE

58% of street children have no birth certificates

51.6% not enrolled in school

71% don't know parents' NID numbers

5.7% receive govt support

The current monthly allowance of Tk 500 to Tk 650 under social safety nets is grossly inadequate and disconnected from the real needs of the poor. There are only a few government programmes for street and underprivileged children. If we fail to secure their future, we risk falling behind as a nation.

Daud Jibon Das
Programme Director, Caritas Bangladesh

have birth certificates.

"Among them, 71.4 percent do not know their parents' national ID numbers, making registration difficult or impossible," he added.

The survey also painted a grim picture of street children's education, as it found that 51.6 percent of the children surveyed are not recently enrolled in any school or madrasa.

Only 5.7 percent (38 children) are covered by government social safety nets, leaving nearly 94.3 percent outside formal social protection systems designed to support the most vulnerable.

Among the slum dwelling families surveyed, 12.7 percent fall within the low-income bracket, earning less than Tk 12,500 per month. Of these households, 91.7 percent reported receiving no government assistance.

In 38.1 percent of these families, at least one child had become a street child, as per the survey.

While 44.4 percent of families said all their children had birth certificates, 32.9 percent reported that none of their children were registered.

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Preserve Old Dhaka's historic structures Urban Study Group urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urban Study Group (USG), a voluntary organisation campaigning for conserving the heritage of Bangladesh, has expressed concern over the destruction of historic structures in Old Dhaka and urged the government to take necessary steps to preserve those.

At present, the organisation's work is mostly focused in Old Dhaka.

In a press statement issued yesterday, Taimul Islam, chief executive of UGC, said all listed heritage buildings in Old Dhaka must be properly protected and conserved.

"We are deeply alarmed and distressed by the recent wave of destruction targeting multiple historic and architecturally significant buildings in Old Dhaka. These acts of demolition have occurred in both privately owned and government-managed properties, often in blatant defiance of High Court injunctions or while appeals remain pending before the Supreme Court," he said.

Just before Eid-ul-Azha, the century-old Shankhanidhi House (Radakrishna Temple) on Tipu Sultan Road partially collapsed, including its iconic hanging balcony, due to the illegal construction of a bathroom, he also said.

"Despite being under the custody of at least four major government agencies tasked with its protection, this historic building has suffered from decades of encroachment, illegal modifications, additions,

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

DREAMLINER FLEET Biman begins precautionary inspection

STAR REPORT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has initiated a series of precautionary inspections across its entire Boeing Dreamliner fleet to ensure safety and operational integrity.

The national airliner came up with the move in the wake of a crash involving an Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner on June 12 that killed more than 275 people in India's Ahmedabad.

The national flag carrier, in a statement yesterday, said that although the cause of the Air India accident is still under investigation, Biman's Engineering Division has proactively launched a comprehensive assessment of critical systems in its fleet of Boeing 787 aircraft.

These include the engine fuel system, electronic engine control, electrical power, hydraulics, air conditioning and flight control systems.

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A farmer harvests green chillies in the Mougachi area of Mohanpur upazila, Rajshahi. Despite a good yield across various upazilas in the district, an oversupply has driven down prices. In local markets, chillies are selling for just Tk 20 per kilogramme, leaving farmers unable to recover their production costs. Many blame large wholesalers for manipulating prices, saying a similar situation occurred last year.

ঘরে বসেই
ব্যাংক
অ্যাকাউন্ট
খুলুন



পাই ব্যাংক (PI Banking) –
একটি পূর্বালী ব্যাংক অ্যাপস

Gender budget cuts may further marginalise women

Warn experts during discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Economists, rights activists, and development experts have raised concerns over a decline in gender-responsive allocations in the proposed national budget for the fiscal year 2025-26, questioning the government's commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality.

Speaking at a post-budget discussion organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday, they warned that gender-sensitive considerations are being increasingly sidelined, especially during crises -- an omission they called unacceptable.

The event, held at the organisation's headquarters in Segunbagicha, brought together policy analysts and civil society members who criticised both the reduced allocations and the persistent gaps in budget implementation and oversight.

Speaking as chief guest, Dr Manzoor Hossain, member (secretary) of General Economics Division, acknowledged the drop in gender budgeting allocation but said this would not necessarily reduce its impact.

He stressed the need for efficient spending by eliminating "non-essential sectors".

However, speakers cautioned that viewing gender budgeting solely through the lens of efficiency risks overlooking the needs of marginalised women and undermining the purpose of gender-responsive planning, especially amid rising social and economic vulnerability among women.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

Why Yunus- Starmer meeting did not happen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus' meeting with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer could not be held, despite commitment from the UK officials, for some reasons at the last moment, said Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique yesterday.

He, however, did not specify the reason but described how it happened.

He was asked why the bilateral meeting between Prof Yunus and Starmer was not held though the acting foreign secretary at the curtain raiser before the chief adviser's visit to the UK from June 9-14 had spoken of a possible meeting.

At a media briefing at the foreign ministry, Siddique said the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke, during a breakfast meeting with him before the visit, conveyed that the visit was upgraded to an official visit.

Later, she met the chief adviser and conveyed the same message to the Bangladesh side. Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Abida Islam was also conveyed by the UK side that it is an official visit, he said.

"The meeting was on agenda until the Chief Adviser reached London but the specific time was not marked. We had an expectation even at the last moment that the meeting would take place.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

First monsoon downpour submerges Khulna

Tk 823cr drainage project fails to stop waterlogging

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The first heavy downpour of this monsoon since Monday has left most areas of Khulna city under knee-deep water, while adjoining low-lying areas were submerged under waist-high water – exposing the inefficacy of the Tk 823 crore drainage improvement project of Khulna City Corporation (KCC).

The rain began overnight on Monday and continued till yesterday noon, triggering widespread waterlogging and causing severe disruption to the daily life of city dwellers, including day labourers, office-goers, and schoolchildren.

"In the 24 hours till 6:00am on Tuesday, 36mm of rain was recorded, while 47mm was recorded between 6:00am and 12:00pm on Tuesday. This pattern of intermittent rainfall is expected to continue until June 20," said Animesh Chandra Dhal, assistant meteorologist at the Khulna office of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

City dwellers blamed clogged drains and sewer systems, encroachment, and the lack of renovation of the city's 22 canals, along with the filling up of natural reservoirs and rivers, as the main reasons behind Khulna's longstanding waterlogging woes.

According to KCC's Conservancy Department, the city has a 1,165-kilometre drainage network. Most of the drains constructed under the drainage improvement project are now clogged and require manual cleaning – making regular maintenance difficult and inefficient.

Key areas of the city – including Ahsan Ahmed Road, Royal Intersection, Khan Jahan Ali Road, Bastuhara, Baipatpara, Chanmari, Labonchhara, Tutpara, Mistrupara, Mujgunni Road, and Rupsha Notun Bazar – have been severely affected. The stretch from Dakbangle Intersection to Ferryghat Intersection remained submerged under knee-deep water.

"While heading to work this morning, I found the entire road flooded. My motorcycle was halfway under water. I had to tread through Sabuj Sangha Field and Notun Rasta to reach the main road, facing immense hassle. Apart from the Khulna Jashore highway, almost all roads became waterlogged amid the rain," said Tushar Kanti Das, a resident of Ward 6.

Locals from wards 6, 7, and 9 said the rainwater is supposed to drain through the Bastuhara and Karigor Para canals into the Mayur river, but without regular maintenance, these canals can no longer function effectively.

After being re-elected in 2018, former KCC mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque made mitigating waterlogging his key campaign promise. A Tk 823 crore project was



Overnight rain that continued till yesterday noon left Khulna city waterlogged, severely disrupting daily life for day labourers, office-goers, and schoolchildren.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Badruzzaman elected fellow of Academy of Science

CITY DESK



Prof ABM Badruzzaman, vice chancellor of Buet, has been elected as a Fellow of the Bangladesh Academy of Science in its 16th council meeting on May 18, said a press release.

This honour recognises his contributions to engineering and environmental science.

A PhD holder from the University of Virginia, Dr. Badruzzaman is renowned for his research on arsenic contamination and water quality. He has received international accolades, including the Prince Sultan Award (2012) and ITEX Gold Medal (2019).

Ninth grader found dead in M'singh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the decomposed body of a ninth-grade student from a septic tank in Phulpur upazila of Mymensingh early yesterday, three days after he went missing.

The victim, Md Abu Raihan, 17, was the son of Tofazzol Hossain from Merigai village. He was a student at a local high school.

Quoting family and locals, police said Raihan was allegedly in a relationship with a neighbouring girl. Her family had recently assaulted and threatened him over the matter.

Dr. Zagrul Rahman Khan, PhD, M/No. 00001 (FCC, 2nd Batch) Honourable Founder (Donor) Member of Cadet College Club Ltd and an Ex-Cadet of Faujdarhat Cadet College has breathed his last around 04:00 pm on Monday, 16th June 2025 (Innah Lillahi Wainna Ilahi Rajiun). He was 81.

He left behind his 02 sons, 01 daughter, relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death. He was Founder President of Cadet College Club Ltd, Former Chairman of Old Faujians Association OFA and Member of Dhaka Club Ltd., Member of Gulshan Club Ltd., Member of Uttara Club Ltd., Baridhara Cosmopolitan Club Ltd and many more. He was double MA in Economics and Political Science from University of Dhaka and then his PhD from USA too. He was a Businessman and Chairman of Ambar Group.

May his departed soul rest in eternal peace. AMEEN.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dhaka, Bangladesh

An outstanding opportunity to join one of the largest international public-private joint ventures in the manufacturing sector of Bangladesh, engaged in production of ammonia / urea fertilizer with state of the art technologies. This successful and profitable business has been consistently operating to international standards, conformed to industry best practices and secured international accreditations. KAFCO seeks candidates for the position of its CEO, to lead current operations and propagate its further expansion/diversification. This is a unique career opportunity, which offers a 2 year contract, which may be renewed after successful completion.

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- Report to the Chairman and the Board of Directors of the Company and be accountable for the Company's day-to-day operations, profitability and growth. Together with other Chief Officers of the Company form the Executive Management of the Company.
- Forge strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders of the Company to win support for the Company's growth initiatives. Ensure global standards and best practices in all spheres of the Company's activities within the budgets as set forth by the Company's Board of Directors.
- Develop and lead strategic directions for improving the business of the Company through ensuring supply of its major raw materials, viz. natural gas, water, local and imported chemicals for continued high level efficiency/productivity/performance of its existing plant, while strongly pursuing its further expansion / diversification efforts.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Graduation or post-graduation degree in Technical, Business or any other relevant field from reputed universities. Outstanding academic achievements or professional qualifications will be treated as added qualifications. Having experience of at least 15 years in case of a post graduate candidate and at least 20 years in case of a graduate candidate, in a head of businesses / Senior Management / MD / CEO position in private or Government sector / MNC, exposures in strategic management system with renowned global firm and managing large scale production and sales volume in an industrial plant can apply. Expertise in IT will be considered as an advantage.

PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES:

- Unquestionable integrity, good communication skills at all levels and proficiency/fluency in English language, fair judgmental capability and strong common sense, motivational skills at all levels, high morale, having a good understanding of local culture and business.

Interested candidates, who meet the above criteria are invited to apply quoting 'Application for KAFCO CEO' along with their detailed resume, current salary details with necessary supporting documents and a passport-size photograph by 31 July 2025 to both the addresses, as mentioned below. Only short listed candidates will be contacted. KAFCO reserves the right to cancel the recruitment process at any stage.

Chairman, Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited (KAFCO) & Secretary, Ministry of Industries (MOI), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GOB), 91 Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
E-mail: indsecy@moind.gov.bd

Company Secretary & CCO, Karnaphuli Fertilizer Company Limited (KAFCO) IDB Bhaban (13th Floor), E/8-A Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.
Email: khwaja.s.rahman@kafcoabd.com
Phone: +8802223374660-64

Decline in WASH budget concerning

Says joint budget tracking analysis by PPRC, WaterAid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) and WaterAid Bangladesh have expressed deep concern over the declining budget allocation for the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector in the proposed Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the 2025–26 fiscal year.

In a joint budget tracking analysis released yesterday, the two organisations noted that WASH allocations have dropped from Tk 182.28 billion in 2022–23 to a proposed Tk 109.01 billion for the upcoming fiscal year.

Although the proposed allocation marks a slight increase from the current year's revised ADP figure of Tk 91.41 billion, it remains far below what is needed to meet growing sector challenges, they said in a press release.

"This sharp decline undermines efforts to ensure citizens' rights to safe water and sanitation," the statement read.

The policy brief also highlighted stark inequities in budget distribution.

Dhaka Wasa alone is set to receive over Tk 31.4 billion, while allocations for the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) – which is responsible for providing WASH services nationwide – have been reduced, they stated.

Only 7 out of 12 city corporations received WASH allocations, leaving out Rajshahi, Rangpur, Cumilla, and Sylhet, among others.

"Intra-urban disparities continue to persist, with Dhaka North City Corporation and Gazipur receiving the lion's share once again," the analysis noted.

Speaking on the findings, Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of PPRC, said, "Water and sanitation are not merely technical issues. They are fundamental human rights and essential to health, dignity, and resilience. Budgetary priorities must reflect this, especially as climate pressures grow and inequalities deepen."

Job Opportunity at Texperts Limited.

"Texperts Limited is a Hong Kong Based Textile Sourcing Company For Bangladesh Liaison Office Require Following Candidates:"

Position	Vacancy	Education & Experience
1.Spun yarn Technician	01 (One)	Textile Background Minimum 05-10 Years in Textile.

Deadline: 17th July'2025

Possible date of Joining: As soon as possible
Candidates Should Send their CV this E-Mail Address: admin.bd@thetexperts.com

Legal Notice

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 996 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF:

K.M. MOBARAK HOSSAIN

-Versus-

K.M. RAKIB HASAN AND OTHERS

.....RESPONDENTS

Notified that an application under Section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994 read with Rule 8 of the Companies Rule 2009 has been filed by the applicant praying for establishment the right of the minority Shareholders and also prayed for direction to disburse the payments and bills from the Respondents No.4 and 5 Bank which was moved on 16.06.2025 before the Hon'ble Company bench comprising with Mr. Justice Ahmed Sohel who after hearing the same was very much pleased to admit the application directing to notify the parties and also directed to publish the notice in the DAILY STAR and the DAILY KALERKONTCHA and further directed to file compliance within 04 weeks from date, therefore, if any one interest, requested to appear before the Hon'ble Court within or before 24.07.2025. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of necessary costs.

Through,

Md. Rezan Islam 17.06.2025
Md. Rezan Islam Advocate for the Petitioner
Membership No. 2101, Room No.113, S.C. Bar main
Building, Dhaka-1000, Mobile: +8801711977428
email: rezaulislam80@gmail.com

Tehran people caught between fear, resolve as air war intensifies

AFP, Tehran

As Israeli air strikes on Tehran show no sign of abating, many residents have fled the Iranian capital. But for others, escape is not an option.

"I've heard multiple explosions near my home in western Tehran," said Mina, a 37-year-old computer scientist. "I wanted to leave, but I have several cats and I can't abandon them."

Israel launched a devastating attack on Friday that has killed at least 224 people -- including women and children -- leading many parts of the Iranian capital to empty out.

Israel on Monday warned residents to leave a northern district of the capital before striking

Traffic in central Tehran was visibly thinner, with sporadic lines forming outside pharmacies.

the headquarters of state television -- an attack the broadcaster said killed three people.

It came two days after Israel declared it had "opened a path to Tehran" by knocking out Iran's air defences. But amid the ensuing exodus, those left behind are grappling with fear, shortages and a sense of defiant endurance.

Yesterday, long queues stretched outside bakeries and petrol stations -- some several kilometres (miles) long -- as remaining residents rushed to stock up on fuel and basic supplies.

Grocery and convenience stores stayed open, but markets and jewellery shops across the city remained closed.

Security checkpoints have been set up across Tehran, adding to the atmosphere of tension as authorities monitor movement in and out of key districts. Traffic in central Tehran was visibly thinner, with sporadic lines forming outside pharmacies.

Images posted online -- though unverified -- showed extensive damage to homes: shattered windows, collapsed facades and debris-filled living rooms.

In Tajrish Square, workers scrambled to repair a water pipeline damaged in an earlier strike, while some residents relocated temporarily to access running water.

"The regime (Israel) must await harsh punishment," read one banner in downtown Tehran, displayed alongside portraits of slain Iranian military commanders and nuclear scientists.



People arrive with their luggage before the departure of buses evacuating foreign passport holders, mainly European and Polish nationals, from Israel at a meeting point in Tel Aviv yesterday. The operation, coordinated by the Polish embassy, aims to evacuate several hundred people who will board buses headed to Sinai, Egypt, and then continue to Warsaw, Poland.

PHOTO: AFP

ISRAEL'S ATTACKS ON IRAN

Is the world close to a nuke radiation incident?

Experts say Israel's attacks on Iran's atomic facilities have increased fears of nuclear and chemical contamination

AGENCIES

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to launch strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities has sparked concerns among sections of the global community, atomic energy regulators and experts on the risks of nuclear contamination.

WHAT DID THE IAEA SAY?

Addressing an urgent session of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on Monday, Grossi said radiation levels appear normal outside both the Natanz nuclear installation and another facility in Isfahan also targeted in Israeli strikes.

However, the IAEA director general warned that military escalation "increases the chance of a radiological release". Grossi had on Friday told the UN Security Council that Israel's strike on Natanz destroyed the above-ground part of the facility. While the main centrifuge facility underground was not hit, it lost power because of the attack.

HAVE NUKE FACILITIES BEEN HIT BEFORE?

Al Jazeera cannot find a record of an operational nuclear installation coming under attack, but power plants have often been attacked while under construction -- mostly in the Middle East.

A week into the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, Iran's Operation Scorch Sword damaged Iraq's unfinished Osirak nuclear reactor in the world's

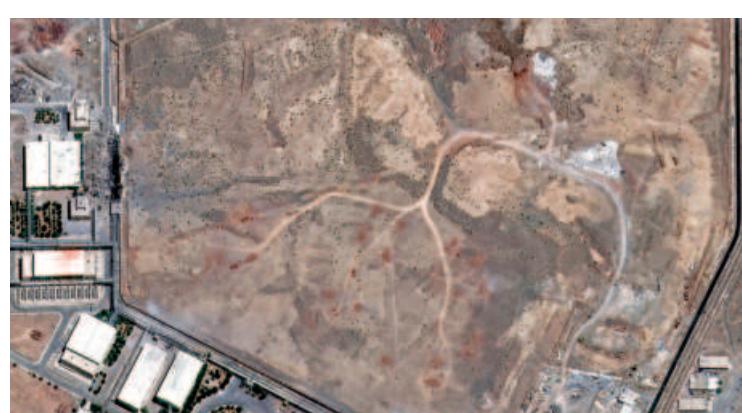
first attack on a nuclear power plant. Israel conducted another air attack the following year, destroying the French-built reactor in Operation Opera. A decade later, US Operation Desert Storm attacked the Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Centre, of which Osirak was a part.

Iraq also attacked Iran's incomplete nuclear reactor at

open information to show we were so close to disaster is the Petrov incident in September 1983 -- a false alarm in the Soviet early warning system that he [an engineer] refused to report," Smith said.

RUSSIA-Ukraine WAR ADDED TO RISKS TOO?

A more recent nuclear contamination scare came early in



Bushehr during the Iran-Iraq War, damaging it. The Soviet Union eventually completed the reactor in the early 2000s, and it went into operation in 2009.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, Dan Smith, the head of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, said the world has rarely been in much danger from accidental nuclear weapons use. Previously, risks have primarily arisen from the threat of miscalculations.

"The last time that there was

Russia's invasion of Ukraine when it seized the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) on March 4, 2022. The ZNPP has six reactors, and it stands on the left bank of the Dnipro River, which forms part of the front line between Ukrainian and Russian forces.

The IAEA eventually intervened to ensure all six reactors were powered down and hostilities around the plant ceased, but the plant still needs a steady supply of water and electricity to cool spent fuel rods and reactors.

9-yr-old raped at knifepoint in Meherpur

FROM PAGE 2

The accused are Enayet Rahman alias Sakkhu, an auto-rickshaw driver, and his associates Md Sagor and Swapna Mia -- are all residents of Laksam municipality, police said.

According to the case, the woman had gone to Laksam Bazar on June 8 and spent the night at the railway junction. The next morning, four men allegedly took her to an abandoned spot near the station and raped her.

Her cousin later filed a complaint with Laksam Police Station, said OC Nazneen

July Charter to be unveiled

FROM PAGE 1

Ryle, in her first official meeting with the chief adviser, announced that Australia had resumed visa processing in Dhaka. "Visa applications can be submitted online," she said, adding that over 65,000 Bangladeshis now live in Australia, apart from 14,000 students. Bangladeshis had been applying for the Australian visa via the consulate in India.

Australia will provide

Nagad official robbed

FROM PAGE 2

in-charge of Monirampur Police Station said the statements given by the Nagad officials appeared inconsistent.

"We cannot comment further until the investigation is complete," he added.

The robbery bears a striking resemblance to the June 15 incident in Dhaka's Uttara, where criminals with apparent insider knowledge tracked and intercepted Nagad employees carrying Tk 1.18 crore.

In both cases, investigators have pointed to the possibility of insider involvement.

Investigators in that case said the robbers seemed to have detailed information about the money's movement and even wore Rab uniforms to stage the ambush.

Police are yet to make arrests in that case.

scholarships and urged Canberra to scale up support for nearly one million Rohingya refugees.

Ryle said Australia recently pledged AUD 9.6 million in humanitarian aid, bringing total support for the Rohingya and host communities in Bangladesh to AUD 553.6 million since 2017. "We will continue to support safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation once conditions in Myanmar allow."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Senior Assistant Director

Regional Duck Breeding Farm including Hatchery, Patuakhali

Department of Livestock Services (DLS)

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Phone: 01722431423

Date: 17/06/2025

Invitation for e-Tender

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no hard copies will be accepted. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Reference No	Name of Tender	Last Selling Date and Time	Opening and Closing Date & Time
01	1126277, 33.01.0000.932.07.003.25-68	Procurement of Duck Starter Pellet feed, Duck Grower Pellet feed, Duck Breeder Pellet feed and Rice husk under Regional Duck Breeding Farm including Hatchery, Patuakhali	01-Jul-2025 14:00	01-Jul-2025 16:00

17-06-25

(Dr. Md. Atikur Rahman)

Senior Assistant Director

Regional Duck Breeding Farm including Hatchery, Patuakhali

Department of Livestock Services (DLS)

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

PLANE CRASH PROBE

India regulator asks Air India for training data of pilots

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's aviation safety watchdog has asked Air India for the training records of the pilots and dispatcher for the plane that crashed last week as part of its investigation into the incident that killed at least 271 people, government memos showed.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation also asked all flying schools to conduct training compliance checks, according to the confidential memos, seen by Reuters.

The DGCA said the requests were part of a "regulatory" review of the accident, and also sought details of action taken following the watchdog's audits of Air India in the last few months. It asked for details to be provided by Monday.

It was not clear whether Air India had complied with the directive. The airline and the DGCA did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

24 rescued as oil tankers collide off UAE

AFP, Dubai

Twenty-four crew have been rescued after two oil tankers collided off the UAE, sparking at least one fire, the United Arab Emirates coastguard and a shipping company said yesterday.

British maritime security monitor Ambrey said the incident, which took place at a time of high tensions as an air war rages between nearby Iran and Israel, was "not security-related".

Shipping company Frontline said a fire was extinguished on its Front Eagle tanker after the collision with Adalynn, another oil transporter, 15 nautical miles off the UAE's Gulf of Oman coast.

"We are (also) aware of reports of a fire onboard the Adalynn following the collision," a Frontline statement said.

WIFE'S FAKE JOB

French ex-PM Fillon given suspended sentence

AFP, Paris

Former French prime minister Francois Fillon was yesterday given a four-year suspended prison sentence over a fake jobs scandal that wrecked his 2017 presidential bid.

Fillon, 71, had been found guilty in 2022 on appeal of embezzlement for providing a fake parliamentary assistant job to his wife, Penelope Fillon, that saw her being paid from public funds although the court found that she never did any work in the National Assembly.

The Paris appeals court also ordered him to pay a fine of 375,000 euros (\$433,000) and barred him from seeking elected office for five years.

The sentence was milder than the one handed down in 2022, when he had been ordered to spend one year behind bars without any suspension.

But France's highest appeals court, the Court of Cassation, overruled that decision and ordered a new sentencing trial.

End this farcical mayoral standoff

Protracted paralysis of DSCC is hurting residents

We are appalled by the absurdity of the situation unfolding at Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC). As if the monthlong paralysis of Nagar Bhaban following a siege led by BNP leader Ishraque Hossain was not enough, the latter has now seemingly taken the step of unilaterally assuming mayoral power, running a "parallel administration" without taking the required oath of office. On Tuesday, he held a meeting with nearly 70 ward secretaries. The day before, he met with over 70 sanitation inspectors and announced the resumption of emergency civic services—all while being introduced as "Honourable Mayor" on a banner displayed behind the podium. He also formed a so-called "Mayor's Cell". Ishraque, it may be recalled, had earlier threatened to take the oath himself if the government failed to administer it. His mayoral posturing now serves not only as a challenge to the interim administration but also a reckless disregard for democratic processes.

The justification he provided—that the court cleared the way for him to take charge—is legally and politically tenuous. The ruling he refers to may have restored his claim to mayorship, but it did not authorise him to begin discharging mayoral duties without completing the mandatory swearing-in process. Nor did it address the disputed nature of elections held under the authoritarian Awami League regime. In the absence of political consensus on such matters, a mere legal clearance—controversial in its own right—cannot resolve the underlying crisis of legitimacy. In reality, what we are witnessing is an unauthorised takeover dressed up as a "citizen-led" movement.

That said, we're also disturbed by the authorities' handling of this crisis. Despite being fully aware of the disruptions being caused by the siege, they have remained shockingly passive. If, as top officials claim, there are legal and procedural complications preventing Ishraque's swearing-in, those should have been addressed swiftly and transparently. Failing that, stronger action should have been taken to end the unlawful lockdown of a public institution. Neither has happened. The most regrettable aspect of this saga is the message it sends to citizens. When a leader, however aggrieved, occupies a public office with the help of loyalists, it sets a dangerous precedent for our already fragile democracy. And when the government chooses to let this drama play out, it too abdicates its duty.

The longer this farce continues, the more it damages trust in both the interim government and those positioning themselves as alternatives to the ousted authoritarian regime. Political legitimacy cannot be acquired by force or theatrics. It must be earned through transparency, public mandate, and the rule of law. We urge both sides to end this impasse immediately and ensure that the DSCC runs without any further disruptions.

Hilsa contaminated with microplastics!

Address growing plastic contamination in our aquatic ecosystems

We are alarmed by the level of microplastic contamination in our aquatic ecosystems. A recent study has found microplastic particles—smaller than 5 millimetres—in the intestines, liver, and even muscle tissue of hilsa fish. Heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, mercury, and arsenic have also been detected in the fish's body. These particles, originating from plastic bags, bottles, synthetic fabrics, tyres, and cosmetics, are ingested by fish as they make their way into rivers and oceans. This raises serious concerns about food safety in the country as hilsa is a widely consumed fish here.

Plastic pollution, especially microplastic contamination, has now become a global issue, and Bangladesh seems to be in a more vulnerable state in this regard. Reportedly, between 2005 and 2014, Bangladesh experienced a 169 percent surge in plastic production, which is significantly higher than the global average growth rate of 25 percent. The presence of microplastics is higher in our coastal areas, where fishing boats and cargo ships dispose of plastic waste. Household waste disposal also contributes to this. So, fish in this area tend to ingest a higher amount of microplastics. Several studies have estimated that 10 to 30 billion microplastic particles are discharged into the Bay of Bengal daily through the Ganges River and its tributaries. The impact of this contamination is clearly visible at the Meghna estuary, which is the most important habitat and breeding ground of hilsa fish. Previous research also found the presence of microplastics and heavy metals in hilsa fish from the Meghna basin and the Bay of Bengal.

Not only hilsa, other fish and aquatic creatures are also vulnerable to plastic pollution. A 2022 study revealed that 17 species of fish and three species of shellfish from three key rivers in the Sundarbans were contaminated with microplastics. The study estimated that an adult consuming 300g of microplastic-contaminated fish muscle per week would ingest 74,282 microplastic particles annually, while a child eating 50g weekly would absorb 12,380 particles a year. These findings underscore the severity of plastic pollution in our aquatic ecosystems and the risks it poses to both marine life and human health. We need drastic action to reverse the trend.

Unfortunately, despite the ban on single-use plastic, the authorities are failing to prevent its use or discharge into rivers, and they are also failing to enforce the ban on polythene bags. We therefore urge the government to take strict action to ensure enforcement, raise public awareness, and make alternatives to plastic products widely available for a greater effect.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Submersible Titan implodes

On this day in 2023, the experimental submersible 'Titan' imploded during a dive to the wreck of the Titanic; all five people on board were killed.

EDITORIAL

A blueprint for health reform



Dr Syed Abdul Hamid
is professor at the Institute of Health
Economics at the University of Dhaka, and
convenor of Alliance for Health Reforms
Bangladesh (AHRB) and Network for
Healthcare Excellence (NHE).

SYED ABDUL HAMID

The recommendations of the government-constituted Health Sector Reform Commission represent a timely, comprehensive, and transformative initiative. These recommendations go beyond merely enhancing services or improving infrastructure. They call for a fundamental shift in perspective. At the heart of this transformation is the commitment to ensuring people-centric, universal, accessible, and high-quality healthcare. However, recommendations alone are meaningless without action. What is urgently needed now is a clear implementation roadmap and its effective execution.

A central proposal of the commission is to recognise primary healthcare as a constitutional right, ensuring that every citizen has access to free and equitable healthcare. The report recommends integrating existing primary healthcare facilities—union sub-centres, family welfare centres, and community clinics—into a unified service framework. This would address shortages in manpower and equipment, ensure efficient service delivery, and prevent confusion among service recipients. For urban populations, the establishment of ward-based primary healthcare centres is proposed. Additionally, the report suggests introducing creative health education programmes in schools and healthcare centres to foster health awareness among children and adolescents. Emphasising public health services, the commission recommends restructuring public health administration and clinical health administration into separate frameworks.

The commission proposes introducing specialised healthcare at the district level and advanced tertiary care at the divisional level to reduce Dhaka-centric patient travel. This would save time, money, and inconvenience. By separating public health and clinical administration into distinct, efficient structures, accountability and capacity in both sectors can be enhanced.

The commission recommends establishing a national health emergency service network for swift responses in crises. Similarly, creating national networks for pharmacies, blood transfusion, diagnostics, and patient transportation would ensure seamless and high-quality healthcare across all regions.

To address medicine shortages in public hospitals, the commission suggests introducing 24/7 pharmacies. It emphasises a transparent, centralised procurement system, promoting generic medicines, incentivising active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) production, controlling medicine prices, and ensuring quality through centralised oversight. The report also proposes mandating generic names in prescriptions, along with training and audits to ensure evidence-based prescribing practices.

The establishment of a National

Women's Health Institute is proposed to provide women with centralised, high-quality, and specialised care for maternal and reproductive health.

The commission recommends setting a standard where every patient receives at least 10 minutes of consultation time with doctors. It also emphasises measuring service quality, implementing digital complaint mechanisms, and ensuring training and safety for healthcare workers.

To address leadership crises in health administration, the commission proposes forming an independent and permanent "Bangladesh Health Commission" as the apex body for policymaking, standard-setting, and oversight. Additionally, it suggests introducing a unified administrative framework called "Bangladesh Health Service" by merging the Directorate General of Health Services and Medical Education and Family Welfare Division. The commission also recommends establishing three divisions (public health, clinical services, and education)

and 11 autonomous regional authorities, alongside decentralising administration at the district and upazila levels.

A separate "Public Service Commission (Health)" is proposed to make recruitment, promotions, and policies in the health sector more professional and transparent. The commission suggests forming a pay board to create a fair and incentivised salary structure for healthcare workers. It also recommends establishing a Food, Drug, and IVD Medical Device Administration to ensure expertise and safety in medicines and medical technology.

The commission recommends modernising curricula and training methods in line with the World Federation of Medical Education standards. It proposes closing substandard medical colleges, reducing political interference in education, introducing community and skill-based education, and establishing family medicine courses and continued medical education programmes.



FILE VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

The report advocates transitioning the entire healthcare system to a digital platform, introducing unique health IDs and electronic health records. It also proposes digital logistics and procurement systems to ensure transparency in supply chains.

The commission suggests strict policies, such as banning doctors from accepting gifts from pharmaceutical companies, regulating participation in conferences, mandating financial transparency for medical conferences, and prohibiting product promotion in doctors' chambers.

The commission proposes increasing the health sector budget to 15 percent and establishing a national health fund.

The report recommends gradually granting autonomy to the eight older medical colleges and specialised institutions. Public health institutions like NIPSOM, IEDCR, IPH, and IPHN should also be brought under policy-level autonomy.

Proposals include a "one-stop service" for licensing and administrative

processes of private healthcare institutions, quality-based grading systems, management boards led by senior doctors, and public-private partnerships to reduce dependency on foreign healthcare and establish advanced services.

Implementing a reform programme is a significant challenge for any government, but it is particularly complex for an interim government. Structural or policy reforms are not merely administrative decisions. They require clear political commitment, typically outlined in party manifestos before elections. An interim government naturally lacks this political groundwork. Additionally, with national elections likely in early 2026, the few months remaining are insufficient for fully implementing structural reforms.

Nevertheless, despite these constraints, some policy reforms can be initiated. For instance, restructuring the primary healthcare system, establishing a permanent health commission, and forming the "Bangladesh Health Service" could be started immediately. Such initiatives would serve as a positive precedent for the interim government and lay a foundation for future governments.

Some initiatives can be launched through simple government orders (GOs), such as integrating primary healthcare services in rural areas and establishing an effective referral system, as well as introducing primary healthcare with referral systems in urban areas through administrative directives.

However, certain critical areas require legislation or ordinances, such as establishing a permanent health commission and the "Bangladesh Health Service" as a professional and impartial administrative framework. These proposals need to be implemented through legal and institutional frameworks, not just policy decisions.

Additionally, some reform initiatives require finalising frameworks beforehand, such as drafting the structure and operational guidelines for the "Bangladesh Health Commission" and "Bangladesh Health Service." A technical committee should be formed to finalise these drafts and prepare necessary ordinances.

Furthermore, an inter-ministerial high-level steering committee, comprising advisers of the interim government, is needed to provide guidance and ensure coordination among relevant ministries and departments. Crucially, both the technical and steering committees should operate under the direct supervision of the Chief Adviser's Office, not the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), to avoid administrative bottlenecks and conflicts of interest, as past experiences suggest.

Rethinking our investment strategy



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NAWSHAD AHMED

Investment is the lifeblood of an economy. There is ample evidence showing that both domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI) have a significant positive effect on economic growth. Ideally, investment spurs employment, which drives up production, leading to higher consumption and savings. Macroeconomics examines these factors since they influence growth and addresses issues like unemployment, inflation, falling growth rates, and trade gaps, providing policy guidance.

It is commonly believed that investment in consumer goods production is key to achieving higher growth. However, both theoretical and empirical literature recognise that additional investments in infrastructure, energy, industrial plants, and new technology drive economic growth through a ripple or multiplier effect. Infrastructure is built by the public, private sectors, and NGOs, while most new plant and technology investments are made by the private sector. These create jobs and enhance effective demand for goods and services. Furthermore, investments are made to build human capacity by the government, through budgets for education and training, and by the private and non-profit sectors. Investments in healthcare, nutrition, housing, sanitation, agriculture, and clean water are also critical to creating an enabling environment for growth. All forms of quality investment are

spending, monetary policy, interest rates, incentives for private investors, FDI, exchange rates, inflation, political stability, and legal frameworks.

Bangladesh has achieved significant

industrial growth due to higher

investment in the sector. The industrial

sector's contribution to GDP increased

from about 10 percent in 1990 to

38 percent in 2024, and its share of

long-term goals.

These factors are equally important for local investors. FDI should not be seen as an alternative to domestic investment. Local investment is responsible for most employment in both formal and informal sectors. It is unrealistic to formalise all informal sector jobs quickly in Bangladesh, but modernisation, skill-building, and formalisation of employment should be long-term goals.

FDI has had mixed results in different countries. In some, it has brought capital, new technology, and decent jobs. But in others, it has been concentrated in industrial sectors with limited impact on employment and economic growth. In Bangladesh, FDI has been mainly focused on manufacturing, power, and gas.

However, there is significant potential for foreign investment in sectors like construction, transportation, ports, telecommunications, information technology, healthcare, and tourism, where local and foreign investors could collaborate.

Foreign investment is generally preferable to borrowing. Paradoxically, while FDI inflows to Bangladesh have declined over the last eight years, foreign borrowing has increased sharply. Between 2017 and 2022, the average annual FDI in Bangladesh was \$2.92 billion—less than 1 percent of GDP. In 2023, FDI net inflows fell to \$1.27 billion, and in 2024, to \$1.46 billion. Meanwhile, the country's external debt has doubled from \$51 billion in FY2016-17 to \$103 billion by December 2024. This decline in FDI is concerning, and it is crucial to assess the reasons behind this trend. A review of the Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act of 1980 and other relevant legal frameworks is necessary to address barriers and improve the investment climate to attract more foreign investment to Bangladesh.

FDI should not be seen as an alternative to domestic investment.

essential when made according to actual needs and in balance. For instance, high investment in infrastructure like roads and bridges but low investment in education and training will not result in higher growth.

The gross investment as a share of GDP for Bangladesh and India is about the same—slightly over 30 percent in 2024. The level of investment depends on various factors, and many developed countries have lower investment GDP ratios: 20.7 percent in the US, 18.2 percent in the UK, 26 percent in Canada, while China's ratio is 41 percent. Bangladesh's private investment GDP ratio was 23.51 percent, with the public sector ratio at 7.47 percent in FY 2024. Investment levels are influenced by factors such as private sector investment, government

total exports grew from 86 percent to 98 percent. The services sector now contributes over 50 percent of GDP.

The recent focus on FDI by the interim government requires careful analysis of the factors motivating multinational companies to invest in Bangladesh. Five key factors stand out: i) potential domestic market opportunities; ii) availability of raw materials; iii) labour costs; iv) technological assets; and v) export platforms such as e-commerce. Traditional factors like political stability, government incentives, and social order remain important, but Bangladesh should also focus on technologically advanced trading platforms, people with internationally demanded managerial capacities, green and environmental skills, and increased investment in R&D to boost future FDI.



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Submersible Titan implodes

On this day in 2023, the experimental submersible 'Titan' imploded during a dive to the wreck of the Titanic; all five people on board were killed.

Israel-Iran conflict: The outcome depends on the US



Ramisa Rob
is Geopolitical Insights Editor at The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

After a year-long shadow war, Israel directly bombarded Iran on Friday, June 13, hitting key nuclear and military sites and assassinating top figures. Iran, in turn, launched drones and ballistic missiles at Israel. Israeli strikes have allegedly killed 224 people so far, according to Iran's health ministry on June 15, 2025, while Iran's attacks have killed 24 people in Israel, including civilians, according to the BBC on June 16. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remains steadfast in continuing strikes on Iran for "as many days as it takes" to degrade Iran's nuclear programme and devastate its military. Iran's leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, threatened "severe punishment" and claimed residential areas had been targeted. More bloodshed seems inevitable, but the outcome of the war, which is at a critical juncture, remains bleak.

On June 16, one Israeli source told CNN, "The end will be diplomatic, not military," adding that the Israeli hope is now that its ongoing military action "weakens Iran's negotiating hand" in any future nuclear talks. US President Donald Trump has openly said he intends to use the war that Israel started to bring Iran to the negotiating table. When asked by reporters at Axios whether Israel's attack jeopardises nuclear diplomacy talks between the US and Iran, Trump said, "I don't think so. Maybe the opposite. Maybe now they will negotiate seriously." He stated that he had given Iran 60 days, to which he claims Iran did not cooperate. Trump also mentioned that Israel had used "great American equipment" during the attacks.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Netanyahu said on June 15, "I leave the US position to the US. What are they going to do now? I leave it to President Trump. He made clear that Iran must not have a nuclear weapon." Netanyahu's intentions are clear—it is well documented that he has wanted to drag the US into a war with Iran under every US administration he has encountered in his career, even if it comes at the cost of Israeli civilian lives. Now, Netanyahu's success in his aim—as he puts it himself—as well as Iran's responses, depend heavily on Trump's next steps. It is worth noting that Trump has

demonstrated miscalculations regarding the Russia-Ukraine war, by approaching Russian President Vladimir Putin directly, which did not lead to the "peace" that Trump had claimed it would. Still, it is plausible that the Israeli attacks could very well weaken Iran and bring it to the negotiating table for the US, as Trump would have it. But that logic of using Israel's war on Iran to "negotiate" with Iran contradicts itself, as Israel does not want successful diplomacy between the US and Iran. In other words, Trump's tactics could also backfire—significantly.

The confusion surrounding the scenarios ahead also arises from the US handling of the current conflict, which has been discordant, to say the least. The White House's messaging at first was Marco Rubio stating that the Israeli attack was a "unilateral action," and Trump claiming he preferred "the more friendly path" with Iran. It quickly shifted to Trump claiming on June 15, that they knew "everything about" the Israeli strikes as reported by Reuters. Meanwhile, Trump announced that he would be leaving the G7 summit in Canada earlier than planned to address the crisis in the Middle East, after issuing an ominous warning for Iranians to "immediately evacuate" Tehran. G7 leaders called for a resolution to the crisis in the Middle East in a joint statement on June 16, which an official familiar with the matter told CNN was signed with the support of US President Donald Trump, after language in the draft was adjusted to reiterate support for Israel's right to defend itself against its rival, Iran.

According to a report by NBC News on June 16, "over the past week, he [Trump] came to accept that Israel was determined to neutralise Iran's nuclear capabilities and that the United States would have to lend some military support for defensive purposes, as well as some intelligence support." Trump's change of heart—from negotiations to tacit support for Israel—also stemmed from "the Thursday declaration by the United Nations' watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, that Iran was in breach of its non-proliferation requirements," the report

states. Two US officials told NBC, "After the start of their military campaign, the Israelis collected intelligence that could have allowed them to target and kill Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Netanyahu presented the operation to Trump, who opposed the plan altogether and wouldn't allow the United States to participate," as "No Americans had been killed in the conflict, so

"bomb someday"—and Israel's decision to attack appears to stem from the fact that an Iranian bomb would eventually limit Israel's ability to use force in the region with the impunity that it currently enjoys. As recently as March, US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard testified that "Iran is not building a nuclear weapon" and said that Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei "has not authorised the nuclear

[the US] acted in a way that makes dialogue meaningless. You cannot claim to negotiate and at the same time divide work by allowing the Zionist regime [Israel] to target Iran's territory."

As of June 16, Israel has said it has achieved "aerial superiority over Tehran's skies," but according to the IAEA, no damage has been observed near Iran's Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant. Israel's ability to destroy Fordow remains under serious question. Israel's aerial superiority could mean repeated airstrikes on the same location to destroy Fordow, according to military analysts—reportedly the way that Israel destroyed Iranian-backed weapons production sites for Hezbollah in Syria last September, in the largest known Israeli operation in Syria. But Fordow is located under a mountain and is "much bigger, more secure" than the facility in Syria, so the "risks of failure are enormous," writes David E Rosenberg of *Foreign Policy* magazine. Research by the American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project has reportedly shown that Israel's penetration of Fordow can only be achieved using the US-produced 15-tonne bunker-buster bomb, the GBU-57A/B Massive Ordnance Penetrator.

On the other hand, the status of Iran's stockpiles of enriched uranium—which it would need to feed into its centrifuges to produce weapons-grade uranium for bombs—is unknown. According to the IAEA, Israel targeted Esfahan nuclear facilities, including the Uranium Conversion Facility and the Fuel Plate Fabrication Plant, which Iran would require to produce more gas and enrich uranium. The killing of nuclear scientists, as well as the damage caused to its proxies in the region by Israel in the past year, also puts Iran in a weakened position.

But undeniably, Iran's trust in the US has eroded over the past week, and if the US does not impose restrictions on Israel's attack, Iran will have even fewer reasons to come to the negotiating table with the US. Amid the strikes, on June 15, it was reported that Iran is preparing a law to invoke the withdrawal provision from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)—the treaty that provides the key legal basis for the presence of international inspectors in Iran. With many possibilities for where the current conflict could head, uncertainty is widespread.

But what is certain is that US foreign policy—succumbing to Israel's smokescreen of using nuclear threats to dismantle Iran's regime—will open a new era of unprecedented rivalry between the US and Iran, the repercussions of which will ripple across the world.



Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

PHOTO: REUTERS

to remove Khamenei, the political leader, and recommended against the Israelis conducting the operation."

The Trump administration's reasoning to not get involved in the Israeli government's risky operation in order to protect the US first does shed hope that Trump might well be able to control the situation. But Netanyahu's relentless politics, entangling the US in a conflict for his own personal ambitions, complicates the situation. Analysts such as Stephen M Walt of *Foreign Policy* magazine have similarly speculated that Netanyahu's aim regarding Iran ranges from ending US negotiations with Iran, to dragging the US into a war, and at a maximum, weakening Iran to the point that the regime collapses.

The IAEA's report did not state that Iran had developed nuclear weapons. But Netanyahu justified his first attack on Iran, saying, "a nuclear weapon in a very short time—it could be a year, or it could be a few months." That justification is an unproven existential threat—a risk that Iran would

weapons programme he suspended in 2003." Ultimately, Israel's plan to damage Iran severely depends on US cooperation, while the plan simultaneously risks blowing Iran-US diplomacy which is needed for regional and international security.

As attacks intensified on the premise of Iran's supposed imminent acquisition of a nuclear bomb, the IAEA's Director General Rafael Grossi said in an emergency session at the United Nations on June 16, "Military escalation threatens lives... and delays indispensable work towards a diplomatic solution for the long-term assurance that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon." Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has confirmed to Al Jazeera that the next round of Iran-US nuclear negotiations, which was scheduled for Sunday in Oman, has been cancelled. Tehran currently accuses the US of supporting Israel's attack. On June 14, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Esmail Baghaei as saying, "The other side

epistemological asymmetry renders global publics and policymakers vulnerable to persuasion through repetition rather than verification.

Disinformation as a weapon of mass distraction

In the unfolding Israel-Iran conflict, disinformation is not peripheral—it is central. But unlike a level playing field of contested claims, the disinformation war is lopsided. With algorithmic amplification and the strategic backing of US and European intelligence and media infrastructures, Israel wields disproportionate influence over what becomes the dominant narrative.

Iran counters by alleging that such leaks are fabrications designed to incite pre-emptive war or sanctions. But lacking equal access to global media platforms and credibility with Western audiences, Iran struggles to gain traction. This imbalance tilts diplomatic outcomes: sanctions regimes, arms sales, and UN resolutions are often influenced by narratives crafted within Western echo chambers, many of which are informed by intelligence sourced from or aligned with Israeli interests.

Suppressing dissent, manufacturing consent

Internally, disinformation serves a dual purpose: discrediting foreign adversaries and stifling domestic dissent. Iran frequently invokes the spectre of Israeli sabotage or Western espionage to delegitimise protests and arrest critics, labelling them foreign agents. Israel, particularly during military escalations, equates opposition to its actions with antisemitism or treachery, creating a climate of fear that chills journalistic and academic freedom.

This convergence of security, nationalism, and information control is hardly unique to these states, but its intensity in the Israel-Iran conflict illustrates how disinformation has become central to regime maintenance. In both societies, the space for debate narrows as truth itself becomes suspect.

A new type of fog: Epistemic chaos

The classical "fog of war" refers to the uncertainty commanders face in the chaos of combat. Today, that fog is epistemic. What is real? What is manipulated? What is staged? In the Israel-Iran conflict, this is no accident—it is design. The goal is not to assert a truth, but to overwhelm the informational field with conflicting claims, delaying action and deepening division.

Israel's alliance with Western media ecosystems and intelligence apparatuses ensures that its narratives often appear first, and more authoritatively. Iran, in contrast, must labour to dispute these with fewer tools, less credibility, and greater risk. This

Disinformation and the Israel-Iran conflict



Dr Faridul Alam
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FARIDUL ALAM

In the high-stakes theatre of Middle Eastern geopolitics, few rivalries are as fraught and consequential as that between Israel and Iran. Their confrontation, long waged through proxies, covert operations, and cyberwarfare, has increasingly become a war not only of missiles and militias but also of narratives and perception. As the spectre of full-scale conflict looms, disinformation emerges not merely as a side-effect of war, but as a weapon of war itself. This is not unique to the Israel-Iran standoff. Recent conflicts such as the Ukraine-Russia war, and even the brief but intense India-Pakistan clashes, reveal how disinformation is now central to shaping international sympathy, diplomatic alignments, and battlefield legitimacy.

Disinformation—intentionally misleading or false information—has assumed a strategic role in contemporary warfare, shaping the informational terrain upon which public opinion, international diplomacy, and battlefield decisions rest. In the Israel-Iran conflict, disinformation is used to justify pre-emptive strikes, delegitimise opponents, rally domestic support, and neutralise global condemnation. Unlike the propaganda of the 20th century, today's disinformation is algorithmically amplified, digitally disseminated to be globally consequential. Crucially, it is disproportionately and deliberately shaped by a powerful consortium of US, Israeli, and European intelligence infrastructures—granting one side a decisive upper hand in monopolising interpretation and totalising perception on the global stage.

Psychological warfare by other means

For both Israel and Iran, the goal is to shape how their actions are perceived rather than merely to carry them out. Israel often justifies its operations as preventive measures against existential threats. When Iranian-backed militias are targeted in Syria or Gaza, Israeli officials frame their actions as limited, precise, and necessary. Iran, conversely, portrays such attacks as unlawful aggression, appealing to international norms and casting itself as the

victim of Zionist and imperialist designs.

Yet these competing narratives are rarely anchored in transparent evidence. Casualty figures are selectively reported; satellite images are curated or doctored; and metadata is manipulated. But the informational advantage lies squarely with Israel and its allies. With robust support from the US and European intelligence agencies—often with access to global surveillance systems, sophisticated AI-driven media monitoring, and diplomatic channels—Israel enjoys a structural upper hand in controlling the flow and framing of information.

This intelligence collaboration doesn't simply defend interests. It pre-empts critique. Leaked dossiers, anonymous briefings to Western media, and selective disclosures are orchestrated to generate strategic doubt about Iran's intentions while shielding Israel's actions under a cloak of necessity and legitimacy.

Weaponising social media

The battleground has expanded from physical territory to digital terrain. On platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Telegram, Instagram, and TikTok, armies of bots, trolls, and ideologically aligned influencers wage a perpetual contest over meaning. Israel, bolstered by its cyber units and coordinated hasbara (public diplomacy) efforts, systematically targets trending narratives, deploying content that emphasises Iranian threat perceptions and casts its own military responses as moral imperatives.

Iran, meanwhile, leverages a network of regional proxies and sympathetic voices in the Global South to counter this narrative. But Iran's digital influence—fragmented, reactionary, and linguistically segmented—rarely achieves the same reach or credibility in the Western mainstream. The asymmetry is glaring: Israeli-aligned privileged narratives often appear in prestigious outlets through op-eds, embedded journalism, and think tank publications, while Iranian messaging is filtered through the lens of suspicion and

delegitimisation.

Here, the algorithm becomes an ally. Content critical of Israel or sympathetic to Palestinians or Iran is more frequently suppressed, flagged, or shadow-banned on Western platforms—a reflection of the deeper entanglement between Silicon Valley, Washington, and Tel Aviv.

The proxy dimension

Proxy groups further complicate this information ecosystem. Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iranian militias in Iraq and Syria, and Hamas in Gaza operate not only as military actors but as narrative warriors. Through videos, statements, and martyrdom imagery, they craft emotional appeals aimed at mobilising regional solidarity and global outrage. These tactics often blur the line between information and spectacle.

But proxies also provide Iran with plausible deniability. When disinformation is disseminated through unofficial channels, Iran can distance itself while still benefiting from the resulting confusion or sympathy.

In the unfolding Israel-Iran conflict, disinformation is not peripheral—it is central. But unlike a level playing field of contested claims, the disinformation war is lopsided. With algorithmic amplification and the strategic backing of US and European intelligence and media infrastructures, Israel wields disproportionate influence over what becomes the dominant narrative.

Israel, in turn, leverages this ambiguity to cast wide suspicion on all Iranian activities, branding even peaceful dissent as subversive or terror-linked.

The disinformation advantage here again rests with Israel and its allies, who can quickly flood the zone with counter-narratives, backed by deep intelligence archives, press access, and institutional trust.

Influencing international diplomacy

Disinformation does not remain confined

SABRINA CARPENTER'S 'Manchild' debuts at No 1 on Billboard Hot 100

Sabrina Carpenter's latest single *Manchild* has debuted at No 1 on the Billboard Hot 100, marking her first No 1 debut and second overall chart-topper after *Please Please Please* from her Grammy-winning album *Short n' Sweet*.

Released on June 5, *Manchild* is the lead single from her upcoming album *Man's Best Friend*, set for release on August 29.

The track earned 27 million streams, 14 million radio impressions, and sold 20,000 units, including 14,000 vinyl copies.

Carpenter described the song as "the embodiment of a loving eye roll." Meanwhile, Alex Warren's *Ordinary* dropped to No 2, and Morgan Wallen and McRae's *What I Want* rose to No 3.



Films postponed during Eid now eye Durga Puja release

Four Bangladeshi films—*Nadan*, *Sardar Barir Khela*, *Shironaam*, and *Pinik*—initially set for release during Eid-ul-Azha are now targeting a premiere during the Durga Puja holidays.

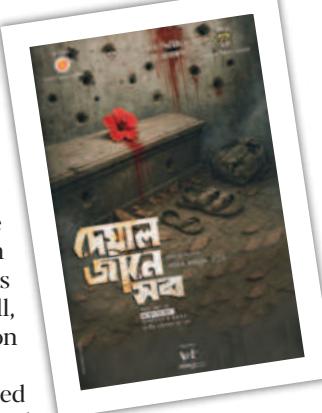
Nadan, directed by Farhad Hossain with Shamol Mawla in the lead role, delayed its release due to technical issues. The team will begin promotions this September.

Jahid Jewel's *Pinik*, a psychological thriller starring Ador Azad and Bubly, was postponed due to unfinished VFX. *Sardar Barir Khela*, directed by Rakhal Sabuj and featuring Roshan and Bubly, is also in the lineup for the Puja release.

Meanwhile, Anik Biswas's *Shironaam* was close to wrapping when it was slated for Eid. Unwilling to compromise on production, the release has been postponed to later this year.



Spandan Theatre to stage 'Deyal Janey Shob' this week



Spandan Theatre Circle will premiere its new play, *Deyal Janey Shob (The Wall Knows Everything)*, on June 19 at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy's National Theatre Hall, with a second show on June 20.

Written and directed by Shakil Ahmed Sonnet, the production is backed by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and explores themes of death, resistance, and rebirth, inspired by monsoon revolutions.

Sonnet describes it as a "chronicle of our times," where silence and loss give way to hope. The cast includes Jeetaditya Barua, Jayanto Tripura, Akash Mia, and Nusrat Jahan.

Set design is by Utpal Neel, music by Arpa Khandakar Chandni, and choreography by Krishna and Jayanto.

James Gunn has blamed Hollywood's output-driven model for the decline in superhero film quality, pointing specifically to Marvel's rushed Disney+ content. In a recent Rolling Stone interview, the DC Studios co-head stressed that no project under his leadership moves forward without a completed script.

Gunn revealed that a DC project was recently scrapped due to an unfinished screenplay, underscoring his commitment to storytelling over speed. He noted that audiences haven't lost interest in superhero films—studios are simply prioritising quantity over quality.

Gunn also clarified that Warner Bros places no pressure on DC to release a fixed number of films annually. His first film in this new era, *Superman*, hits theatres next month, with *Batman* and *Wonder Woman* titles in development.



James Gunn blames Hollywood's output pressure for Marvel's decline

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Glenn Close boards 'The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping'

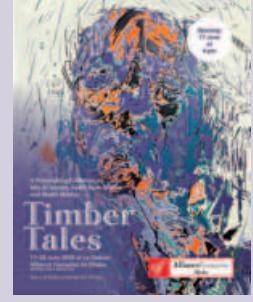
Glenn Close has officially joined the cast of *The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping*, the highly anticipated prequel to the hit franchise. She will play Drusilla Sickle, the cold and commanding escort for District 12's Tributes.

Billy Porter stars as Magno Stift, Drusilla's estranged ex-husband and the Tributes' disillusioned stylist. Directed by Francis Lawrence, the film also features Joseph Zada, Whitney Peak, McKenna Grace, Jesse Plemons, Kelvin Harrison Jr, Maya Hawke, Lili Taylor, Ben Wang, Ralph Fiennes, Elle Fanning, and Kieran Culkin.

Billy Ray wrote the screenplay, while Nina Jacobson and Brad Simpson produce under Color Force. With Lionsgate backing the project, *Sunrise on the Reaping* promises to deliver a powerful new chapter in the franchise.

WHAT'S THE HAPS?

'Timber Tales'



Alliance Française de Dhaka will present *Timber Tales*, a printmaking exhibition featuring woodcut works by Abu Al Naeem, Rakib Alam Shanto, and Shakil Mridha. The group show will explore themes of identity, environment, memory, and social narratives through layered textures and prints. Visitors will be invited to engage with the dynamic dialogue between emerging and established artists.

Date: Monday-Saturday | June 17-25, 2025

Time: 3-9pm

Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, Dhanmondi

NEWS

Ishraque holds meeting with DSCC

FROM PAGE 12
protests began earlier at 11:00am. Supporters, along with some DSCC staffers, continued the sit in until 1:00pm, as previously announced.

Demons in support of Ishraque have been ongoing since May 14, with protesters demanding that he be officially handed mayoral responsibilities.

On May 15, demonstrators locked all entrances to the building. Under the banner of "Dhakabashi", they have since kept the Nagar Bhaban gates under lock and key.

Inside an auditorium of the Nagar Bhaban, Ishraque met with the ward secretaries and asked them to ensure uninterrupted civic services, including birth and death registrations, and the issuing of inheritance and citizenship certificates.

"Please continue providing these services so that citizens do not suffer," he was quoted as saying.

Administrative officers and former commissioners were also present at the

meeting.

As on Monday, the programme banner displayed behind the podium Ishraque spoke from described him as the "Honourable Mayor" of Dhaka South City Corporation.

That day, he also met with over 70 sanitation inspectors.

According to Ishraque's supporters, he is scheduled to meet officials and employees of the DSCC's health department today.

Despite conducting several meetings with DSCC officials, he has denied taking on mayoral responsibilities.

Expressing solidarity with his supporters, he said, "I haven't assumed the position of mayor on my own. According to the Local Government Act, I cannot perform the duties of mayor without taking the oath. The law clearly requires an oath-taking ceremony. Believe me, if the law didn't require it, I would have already taken on the mayoral responsibilities."

He also reiterated his demand for the resignation of Asif Mahmud, accusing

the adviser of "violating his oath of office" and "undermining the judiciary and democratic processes".

Criticising Asif as being "ignorant of the basic functions of a city corporation", Ishraque noted that services like immunisation under the EPI programme, mosquito control, and waste management were still running at ward level.

He described the situation as "a blatant disregard for democracy" and an "outright insult to the people's mandate".

Ishraque further alleged that the LGRD ministry had failed to arrange a swearing in ceremony by "hiding behind vague legal interpretations", and accused officials of using potential legal appeals and questions about the gazette's validity as excuses to delay the process.

"If someone gazetted as the winner [of the mayoral election] cannot be sworn in, it sets a dangerous precedent that could undermine all future elected representatives and render court verdicts meaningless."

its plaque.

She was known as "Khatki Begum" among locals and had been listed as a freedom fighter.

In her final years, Sakhina lived with her niece, Fairunnessa Akhter, in Hilmia, Bajitpur upazila, as she had no immediate family in Nikli.

Her story is documented in Kishoreganj's Liberation War history.

In recognition of her heroism, Sakhina received a grant of Tk 50,000 from the government in 1998 and received a monthly freedom fighter's allowance.

regarding his swearing in as mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation is sending a conflicting message to the interim government.

Given that the term of the current city corporation has already expired, the senior leaders felt it was time for Ishraque to call off the movement.

Tarique expressed concern that Bangladesh's economy is struggling and the law-and-order situation remains dicey.

Subsequently, he asked the party leaders to begin drafting concrete policy solutions so that if the BNP wins,

they can take action from day one and begin restoring public trust.

Damage to nation's image

FROM PAGE 12
file appeals before the Appellate Division, a HC source said.

The bench delivered its verdict on October 30, 2023, rejecting appeals against the lower court's ruling.

On July 1, 2016, five militants armed with firearms, machetes, and grenades stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan, killing 20 hostages—three Bangladeshis, seven Japanese, nine Indians, and one Indian—during a 12-hour siege. Two police officers were also killed. The militants died in a commando operation. A chef and another injured employee also later died.

The attack, which drew global condemnation, led to a nationwide crackdown on terror networks.

On November 27, 2019, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal sentenced seven militants to death, calling the attack "disgraceful" and an attempt to undermine Bangladesh's non-communal character. One accused was acquitted.

The High Court commuted those death sentences to life imprisonment.

The convicts are Jahangir Hossain, Aslam Hossain Rash, Hadisur Rahman, Rakibul Hasan Regan, Md Abdus Sabur Khan, Shariful Islam Khaled, and Mamunur Rashid Ripon.

The HC observed they had direct roles in selecting and recruiting the five attackers, providing shelter, training, funds, and weapons, and inciting the killings. The court found the charges against them proven

beyond doubt under Section 6(2)(aa) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2009.

Defence lawyer Md Amimul Ehsan Zubayer, representing Shariful, argued that his client was abroad during the attack and was not directly involved.

He said his client should have been acquitted as the judgment was given under a section of the Anti-Terrorism Act 2009, which is supposed to be applied against the offenders directly involved in the offence.

He said he has yet to receive any instructions from his client regarding filing an appeal against the HC judgement.

All seven convicts remain in jail. Attorney General Md Asaduzzaman could not be reached for comment.

ACC files case

FROM PAGE 12

Tk 256.98 crore. Of this, Abul Khair and his wife misappropriated Tk 29.94 crore by concealing its source in tax returns. Khair also conducted suspicious transactions worth Tk 542.32 crore through 17 bank accounts.

The ACC said Shakib colluded with the main accused, Abul Khair, in manipulating shares of Paramount Insurance, Crystal Insurance, and Sonali Paper Mills, earning Tk 2.95 crore in "realised capital gain" from general investors' funds.

The case was filed under the Corruption Prevention Act, 1947, and the Penal Code following a preliminary inquiry and ACC approval.

Most dists lack Covid testing

FROM PAGE 12

said test kits have been distributed to 40 government hospitals since Thursday.

"We are focusing on increasing the number of tests," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Covid-19 surveillance data, analysed by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), shows that the infection rate has been rising since last month.

Of 1,409 samples tested last month, 9.51 percent were positive—the highest positivity rate since January 2023.

Freedom Fighter Sakhina

FROM PAGE 12
prayers, she was given a guard of honour by Nikli Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rehana Majumder and Nikli Police Station Officer in-Charge Kazi Arif Uddin at Gurui Eidgah ground of the upazila in the evening.

She was later buried near the historic Gurui Shahi Mosque.

UNO Rehana said, "She was a true daughter of the nation. The courage and heroism she showed in 1971 will be remembered for generations."

Born in Gurui village, Nikli upazila, Sakhina was the daughter of Sonamor

regarding his swearing in as mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation is sending a conflicting message to the interim government.

Given that the term of the current city corporation has already expired, the senior leaders felt it was time for Ishraque to call off the movement.

Tarique expressed concern that Bangladesh's economy is struggling and the law-and-order situation remains dicey.

Subsequently, he asked the party leaders to begin drafting concrete policy solutions so that if the BNP wins,

they can take action from day one and begin restoring public trust.

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As a result of the London meeting,

the distance between the BNP and the interim government has been resolved, and the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming 13th parliamentary election has also been cleared.

Yunus has expressed willingness to hold elections in the week prior to Ramadan next year.

"If they don't follow through on the election commitment, there will be ample time for stronger movements. But for now, we want to maintain a positive posture and focus on election preparation," said one senior leader.

Subsequently, the ongoing protest led by BNP leader Ishraque Hossain

regarding his swearing in as mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation is sending a conflicting message to the interim government.

Given that the term of the current city corporation has already expired, the senior leaders felt it was time for Ishraque to call off the movement.

Tarique

NEWS

Biman begins

FROM PAGE 3
In addition, power assurance checks on the engines have been undertaken to verify full performance capability, the statement added.

Biman officials said the airline is fully prepared to promptly implement any maintenance directives that may be issued by the aircraft manufacturer Boeing, following the completion of the investigation.

At present, Biman's fleet includes six Boeing 787 Dreamliners, four of the 787-8 variant and two of the 787-9, operating on various international destinations.

The maintenance of these aircraft is carried out in strict adherence to the Aircraft Maintenance Programme approved by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), according to the statement.

This programme, based on Boeing's Maintenance Planning Document and other regulatory guidelines, outlines specific tasks, schedules and procedures to be followed by certified engineers.

All maintenance activities are conducted

under the supervision of type-rated engineers in accordance with Boeing's official manuals.

"All completed task are verified and documented through a stringent quality assurance process before being archived in the Maintenance Planning Department," the statement continued.

Furthermore, Biman uses real-time monitoring tools such as the Aircraft Health Management and Engine Health Management systems to continuously track the condition of its aircraft.

This proactive system allows for early detection and preventive maintenance planning before any issues can arise, read the statement.

Reaffirming its commitment to passenger safety, Biman said it consistently upholds international standards in all aspects of aircraft maintenance and service delivery.

"Biman Bangladesh Airlines remains dedicated to ensuring the highest levels of flight safety and passenger satisfaction," it added.

Gender budget cuts

FROM PAGE 3
Ishrat Sharmin, deputy director at SANEM, expressed disappointment over what she described as a continuing lack of understanding within government ministries regarding gender budgeting.

"Despite years of advocacy, many ministries still don't fully understand what a gender-responsive budget means," she said, adding that the Finance Division's assumption that gender priorities are already addressed is "far from the truth".

She also highlighted the lack of reliable, disaggregated data to measure how gender budgets affect women's lives -- an information gap that weakens accountability and reform efforts.

Sharmin Islam, gender team leader at UNDP, echoed similar concerns. She called for a deeper review of how ministries plan and implement gender allocations and whether those efforts truly lead to positive outcomes for women.

"Without effective monitoring and oversight, gender priorities risk being sidelined," she said, urging the government to strengthen ministries' monitoring and evaluation capacities and introduce comprehensive tracking systems to ensure results.

Umme Marjana, lecturer of economics at East West University, linked increasing rates of gender-based violence with women's economic dependency, especially in the informal sector.

She criticised the budget for failing to address this link and pointed out that rising education costs and limited support for informal workers further marginalise women.

International Crimes Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Tajul Islam and a team of prosecutors were present at the courtroom.

On May 8, the law ministry appointed former High Court Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury as the chair of the ICT-2, and named former

district and sessions judge Manjurul Bashid and current Madaripur District and Sessions Judge Nur Mohammad Shahriar Kabir as its members.

Additionally, the registrar's office of ICT yesterday published notices in two newspapers asking ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan to appear before it on June 24.

In connection with a case over crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising, the registrar's office published the notices in two newspapers -- one English and one Bangla -- declaring both the accused absconding.

It said the two must appear before the tribunal on June 24.

If they fail to do so, the court will appoint defence counsel on their behalf and begin proceedings in their absents, ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim said yesterday.

The consultation was attended by Caritas officials, including Chandra Mani Chakma, Kusum Gregory, Asim Cruz, and Anthony Prince Gomez, along with representatives from various organisations, guardians, and street children.

The budget provides no roadmap or targeted

funding to address this deep-rooted inequality," she said.

Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu appreciated the timely presentation of the budget but criticised weak monitoring and inconsistent gender budgeting practices across ministries.

"The recognition of unpaid domestic labour is a step forward, but much more remains to be done," she said.

Closing the session, Mahila Parishad President Dr Fauzia Moslem called for including more women economists in policy analysis, especially in evaluating the gendered impact of budgets.

"We must institutionalise the recognition of unpaid and informal work, reduce barriers to education, and address the structural inequalities women continue to face," she said.

Prof Sharmind Neelormi of Jahangirnagar University and Shahnaz Sumi, director of Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, also spoke at the session, among others.

The event was moderated by Mahila Parishad's Movement Secretary Rabeya Khatun Shanti.

We'll maintain

FROM PAGE 3
this country deserve justice for the injustices they have endured over the past 17 years."

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district and sessions judge Manjurul Bashid and current Madaripur District and Sessions Judge Nur Mohammad Shahriar Kabir as its members.

Meanwhile, another highly significant heritage structure -- Mangalajila in Farashganj -- came under attack again. This building is among the structures listed by the USG and is protected by court injunctions, said the statement.

Although past attempts to demolish the building over the last two years were stopped with police intervention, the attacks have resumed. While police involvement has again

temporarily halted the destruction, the building's intricate ornamentation has already suffered extensive damage, the statement also read.

USG demanded preserving the entire Farashganj area as a heritage zone.

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DU presents

FROM PAGE 3
full amount DU proposed in their budget, so there was nothing the university administration could do about it.

He further said, "Our main source of internal revenue is student fees, which have remained unchanged at 10-12 takas [monthly] for the past 20-30 years."

The proposed budget allocates 2.08% of funds (Tk 21.57 crore) for research grants. This compares to 2.02% or Tk 20.07 crore in the 2024-25 fiscal. Asked about maintaining similar research funding levels as last year, Jahangir said they could not increase the research allocation because the UGC did not provide the full proposed grant amount.

Asked if the government

Why Yunus-Starmer

FROM PAGE 3
At the last moment, for some reason, the meeting did not take place," he said.

He said, however, said some responsibilities come onto their shoulders as they (MoFA) were part of the preparation of the visit.

Asked if the government will officially communicate with BBC during the visit, Prof Yunus, on the meeting with Starmer, said, "I don't know whether I should be disappointed or he should be disappointed. It's a missed opportunity."

When asked if Downing Street had given a reason for not scheduling a meeting with Starmer, he said, "I don't think we have received an explanation from that kind of thing. Probably he is busy with other important things."

Except for the meeting with the prime minister, he said, the chief adviser had more meetings than planned and he was provided

Kaun

FROM PAGE 4
paddy due to flood risks," recalled Badiar Rahman from Char Jatrapur in Kurigram Sadar. "So kaun was our staple. Now we cultivate hybrid paddy and high-yield maize. Nobody consumes kaun anymore."

Kaun's nutritional benefits -- being rich in fibre, iron, and protein -- are not lost on the older generation, unlike modern consumers. "We used to eat kaun porridge regularly. It gave us strength. But now, we've forgotten the taste," said Badiar.

Bimal Chandra Roy, a farmer from Char Jatrapur in Lalmonirhat, said, "I once grew kaun on 8-10 bighas. Now I grow sweet pumpkin, maize, and BR-28 rice. They bring better yields and easier market access."

At present, kaun's marketability thrives not for human consumption, but as bird feed.

"I collect kaun from farmers and send it to pet markets in Dhaka," said Mamta Ali, a trader from Jorgach Bazar in Chilmari. "Now, bird lovers are its main buyers."

Shafiqul Islam, additional director of DAE in Rangpur, opined that kaun's drought resistance and low-input nature make it an ideal crop in a time of climate change.

"Yet, without policy intervention or market incentives, farmers remain unwilling to continue its cultivation," he added.

No social safety net

FROM PAGE 3
At the event, street children shared their daily struggles with hunger, abuse, and exclusion.

They called on the government to include them in cash allowance schemes, provide birth certificates, ensure safe housing and education, and offer rehabilitation services.

"We are the most marginalised and neglected," said one child. "We have no guarantee of food, shelter, education, or healthcare. Without a clear plan for us, our future is bleak."

Caritas Bangladesh Programme Director Daud Jibon Das criticised the current monthly allowance of Tk 500 to Tk 650 under social safety nets as grossly inadequate and disconnected from the real needs of the poor.

"There are only a few government programmes for street and underprivileged children. If we fail to secure their future, we risk falling behind as a nation," he said, urging shared responsibility between the state and families.

He called for simplifying the birth registration process for orphaned children and recommended door-to-door or ward-based campaigns to ensure full birth registration.

He also suggested

registering births immediately at hospitals and community clinics.

Special programmes must be launched to bring street children off the streets, including conditional cash allowances to encourage families to improve their children's living conditions, he said.

He also stressed the need to eliminate child labour, identify children who have dropped out due to child labour or other causes, and reintegrate them into the education system.

Creating a supportive environment to help street children enrol and stay in school is crucial, he said.

Das further urged the government to raise social protection allowances to realistic levels and simplify the application process to widen access.

Caritas also called on NGOs to raise awareness about the importance of birth registration and the dangers of child labour, and to run flexible education centres tailored to the needs of vulnerable children.

The consultation was attended by Caritas officials, including Chandra Mani Chakma, Kusum Gregory, Asim Cruz, and Anthony Prince Gomez, along with representatives from various organisations, guardians, and street children.

The budget provides no roadmap or targeted

and over the past five and a half years, around 200 drains were developed and seven canals -- including the Mayur -- were dredged at a cost of Tk 600 crore.

"Over the past decade or so, waterlogging has continued to worsen despite so many drains being constructed. We rickshaw pullers suffer the most due to this -- with fewer passengers, difficulty in riding, lower earnings, and yet we still have to pay full rent to owners," said Azmal Haque who is living in the Shirish Nagar for 30 years.

Babul Hawlader, member secretary of the Khulna

First monsoon downpour

FROM PAGE 4
Nagarik Committee, called for the involvement of both the government and local stakeholders to resolve the city's waterlogging crisis.

Mahfuzur Rahman

Zaman, president of the Greater Khulna Development Coordination Committee, called for restoring all 22 canals.

KCC Chief Engineer Moshizuzzaman Khan said, "While most of the work under the project has been completed, several key aspects -- such as repairing pump stations and sluice gates -- are still pending.

"But, no effective eviction drive followed. Although the Mayur was partially dredged, it was a poorly executed job," he said.

"The connection between the Mayur and Rupsha rivers

at Alutala Gate must be restored to allow tidal flow and revitalise the waterway so that rainwater can drain into the Rupsha," he added.

Sheikh Ashraf Uz-

Zaman, president of the Greater Khulna Development Coordination Committee, called for restoring all 22 canals.

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"While most of the work under the project has been completed, several key aspects -- such as repairing pump stations and sluice gates -- are still pending.

"Once those are done, the city will witness real improvement."

Preserve Old Dhaka's historic structures

FROM PAGE 3
and destruction -- stemming from administrative negligence, failure to perform duty, and, in some cases, deliberate inaction by these very institutions," Taimur added.

Meanwhile, another highly significant heritage structure -- Mangalajila in Farashganj -- came under attack again. This building is among the structures listed by the USG and is protected by court injunctions, said the statement.

Although past attempts to demolish the building over the last two years were stopped with police intervention, the attacks have resumed. While police involvement has again

temporarily halted the destruction, the building's intricate ornamentation has already suffered extensive damage, the statement also read.

USG demanded preserving the entire Farashganj area as a heritage zone.

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storey structure, despite having an appeal pending with the Supreme Court.

The building used to be the residence of journalist Mohammad Nasiruddin, a pioneer of Muslim awakening in the early 20th century, and his illustrious daughter, women's rights advocate Nurjahan Begum.

A general diary was filed the following day with Gandaria Police Station, which temporarily halted the destruction, Taimur said.

Even though seven years have passed since the landmark High Court ruling in 2018 on heritage conservation, there has been no meaningful implementation owing to bureaucratic tangle, he said.

Moreover, on June 10, it came to light that the Nasiruddin Memorial Building was being illegally demolished to pave the way for constructing a multi

storey structure, despite negligence, lack of political will, and particularly the controversial role of the Department of Archaeology, he also said.

As a result, these heritage structures have not yet been fully assessed and officially listed, leaving them vulnerable.

Alarmingly, the DoA has even declared the residence of Nurjahan Begum as "not important enough for preservation", Taimur said.

USG demanded all the buildings listed by it be protected under the HC's ruling until a final comprehensive list of Dhaka's heritage structures is published.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

স্পেশাল প্রাইভেট, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা

মুক্ত প্রবেশ ক্ষেত্র



LAW OPINION

Between blasphemy and sedition Parity of justice for freedom of expression



KAWSAR MAHMOOD

The ruling class recognised that if the offence of blasphemy and sedition could be adulterated, a controlled alteration among the citizens would ceaselessly continue. Thus, they will be able to manipulate public debate and subtly subjugate judicial oversight of the "inalienable constitutional right".

Although in postmodern values, both ideas of religion and nationality are disregarded as subjective truth, which exist only in the psychological realm; historically, people of this subcontinent demonstrated affinity for the homeland and fostered devotion for their deity at the same time. They fought for political autonomy but managed to successfully subdue various forms of communal discord within the territory. The reflection of their history can also be seen in the Penal Code 1860, which sanctioned blasphemy and sedition in sections 124A and 295A, respectively. But imperceptibly, the country has been indoctrinated towards a new trend that the presentation of piety and celebration of patriotism cannot coexist in our democratic dynamics. Faithwears are often regarded by many as a threat to the body politic. In contrast, a revulsion against symbols of statehood, such as the flag and the national anthem, is on the rise.

This trend began with a deliberate attempt to confuse the cognitive orientation of the general mindset about the idea of "freedom of expression". It is the author's opinion that the ruling class recognised that if the offence of blasphemy and sedition could be adulterated, a controlled alteration among the citizens would ceaselessly continue. Thus, they will be able to manipulate public debate and subtly subjugate judicial oversight of the "inalienable constitutional right".

Originally, Article 39 of the Constitution guarantees the freedom of "thought and expression," which is, however, "subject to [certain] reasonable restrictions". Restriction is reasonable if it is imposed by law, *inter alia*, in the interests of public order, or to prevent criminal incitement. Because one's unfettered opinion cannot completely ignore the social setup in which our audience is addressed, Article 39 justifiably attempted to reconcile the right and the responsibility to look after the effect of its exercise.

Later, the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (ICTA) and the Digital Security Act 2018 (DSA) came to the forefront. Section 57 of the ICT Act criminalises the publication of any material that prejudices the image of the State or person or creates any possibility to hurt religious belief. The question popped up—what is the test to determine 'level of the image' and the 'magnitude of the hurt' to call an expression an offence? Judicial review was expected to safeguard the sacredness of free speech, yet, by this stage, it was predisposed to unprecedented legal philosophies.

As a general rule, an act is considered an offence if it is committed with malicious intention and causes some detectable harm. But in the digital era, the subjective reaction of the person at the end of the communication became an all-important element. One High Court Division Bench felt "shocked and humiliated" by a documentary titled "All the

Prime Minister's Men". It declared in the case *Md. Anamul Kabir Emon v Bangladesh and Ors.* [WP No. 1839 of 2021] that "when millions of people across the globe have viewed the documentary and made adverse comments on it obviously demeaning the dignity and honour of the highest authority of the republic." Again, one host Khadijatul Kubra was charged under the DSA for "anti-government propaganda and tarnishing the country's image" because her guest in an interview spoke against the government. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh was reported to have said that "being a university student Khadija [no matter she is a minor] has to bear the liability of any comments her interviewee may makes." [vabangla.com, 10 July 2023]

With the advent of the DSA and ICTA, a way to curb the constitutional guarantees was laid out. The process commenced with the creation of a delusion as to the concept of freedom of expression. All of a sudden, everyone felt intimidated by the views of everyone else. That resulted in a muted hostility between theology and civics. An infatuation, in turn, for socio-political wrangling engulfed social media and the internet. Sometimes, the suppressed feelings of antipathy to one another erupted into violent resentment.

In such a course, pretext was found to curtail freedom of expression by making draconian laws. Under a pretentious justification for ensuring public order, a popular mandate for the legislation was managed. A textbook exemplification of the warning given in *Turner Broadcasting System v FCC* (1994) that "Laws of this sort pose the inherent risk that the Government seeks not to advance a legitimate regulatory goal, but to suppress unpopular ideas or information or manipulate the public debate through coercion rather than persuasion" could be seen.

The salvation from such statutory clutches lies in the true notion of the freedom of expression and balancing between individual rights and the community interests. The whole enigma is explained in the works of philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. We suspend the peripheral practices of the freedoms in order to save their core existence. Unless the urge for unfettered freedom is restrained by ourselves, nobody is actually free except the ones who sits under a powerful tree and has the reign in their hands.

The writer is Assistant Registrar (Assistant Judge), High Court Division, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

The enforcement of unenforceable constitutional rights

ABUZAR GIFARI

In 1937, Ireland, for the first time, incorporated the Economic, Social and Cultural (ESC) rights in its Constitution as unenforceable directive principles. Countries such as India and Bangladesh followed the same model in their respective Constitutions. However, there has been a ubiquitous practice by the Courts of these countries to interpret the Civil and Political (CP) rights (e.g., the 'right to life') in such an extended manner by which several ESC rights, despite being textually unenforceable, have been enforced indirectly. In my view, such an interpretation is immensely problematic and rather, an amendment of Article 8(2) of the Constitution is required.

It is traditionally believed that the enforcement of ESC rights implies the imposition by the judiciary of positive obligations on the executive. In other words, giving a positive mandate to the Government often involving budgetary implications is considered to be the main way of 'enforcement' of such rights. For instance, a judicial order to rehabilitate victims of arbitrary eviction, or a mandate to manage necessary food supplicants for a petitioner, etc. are considered enforcement of ESC rights.

In this regard, the true scope of 'judicial review' should also be reconsidered. The doctrine of judicial review does not only encompass the power of the Court to strike down a law inconsistent with the Constitution but also includes the power of judicial scrutiny. Thus, the Court may find a right judicially enforceable, but it may not always direct the government to take positive actions. Rather, it has the power to determine, based on the



'reasonableness doctrine', whether the applicant is eligible to get the said order.

The case of South Africa is illustrative in this regard. The Constitution of South Africa (1998) made all rights (both ESC and CP) enforceable, and the Courts of South Africa played a pivotal role in enforcing them. For instance, in the *Soobramoney v Minister of Health* (1997) case, the Court denied access to emergency medical care from the state hospital considering resource constraints, although the right to health care was enshrined in Article 27 of the Constitution.

On the other hand, in the *Minister of Health v Treatment Action Campaign* (2002) case, the Court directed the government to make the Nevirapine vaccine available where they are required. Thus, the two cases show how the South African Courts have used judicial scrutiny to enforce ESC rights without breaching the doctrine of separation of power.

Clearly, the framers of the

Constitution of Bangladesh in 1972 did not intend to enforce ESC rights as 'right to health care' through the umbrella term of 'right to life'. They had deliberately excluded the enforceability of the ESC rights contained in Part II of the Constitution under Article 8(2). Such a decision was inevitable due to the then persisting vulnerable economic situation of the country.

Besides, ESC rights were deemed unenforceable in the 1970s due to the absence of any enforcement mechanisms of the International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at that time. But in 2013, such normative inconsistency was removed with the adoption of an Optional Protocol to the ICESCR. Many countries, such as South Africa, have made ESC rights enforceable subject to resource constraints and progressive realisation.

In fact, members of our constituent assembly did not intend to keep ESC rights unenforceable forever. Tajuddin

Ahmed, for instance, stated in the Constituent Assembly that the future parliament may take decisions on their enforceability. Since the situation has changed and the country's economy has become economically stronger than in 1971, the parliament may now amend Article 8(2) and make Part II of the Constitution enforceable subject to resource constraints progressively.

Therefore, in every consideration, ESC rights should be made enforceable through parliamentary amendment to align with the current global trend and 'judicial enforcement' must be understood as 'judicial scrutiny' for actual enforcement of those rights.

In every consideration, Economic, Social and Cultural rights should be made enforceable through parliamentary amendment to align with the current global trend and 'judicial enforcement' must be understood as 'judicial scrutiny' for actual enforcement of those rights.

Without expressly making ESC rights enforceable, it is submitted that their indirect enforcement through the 'right to life' can be regarded as one kind of deception on the constitution.

The writer teaches law at Presidency University, Bangladesh.

LAW ADVOCACY

A review of tobacco control laws in Bangladesh

FAIYAZ HASAN

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), smoking kills nearly 8 million people yearly, while secondhand smoke causes another 1.3 million deaths annually. Despite this horrific number, it is shocking that our government is not taking this issue more seriously. It needs to be noted that Bangladesh ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2004 in order to discourage smoking and using tobacco products. In line with the FCTC, the Government of Bangladesh enacted the Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products (Control) Act 2005, with several key amendments in 2013. However, despite these, widespread lack of awareness and enforcement of the laws has led to a significant gap between legal provisions and the actual reality.

Most people do not even know that smoking in public places is totally prohibited in Bangladesh due to such non-enforcement. Additionally, the sale of tobacco products to underaged individuals persists, despite being explicitly forbidden in the law. The failure to effectively implement these laws undermines public health objectives and the protection of vulnerable populations.

According to section 4 of the Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products (Control) Act, 2005, no person shall smoke in public places and in the public vehicles. Any individual found contravening this provision is liable to a penalty, with a fine not exceeding three hundred Taka for the first offence and for repeated offences, the fine will increase. Similarly, according to section 6A, the sale of tobacco or tobacco products to any person under the age of eighteen years has been prohibited, with a penalty up to five thousand Taka in case

To effectively protect public health, it is crucial for the government to not only enact laws but also ensure the proper implementation of such laws. A combined approach involving stricter enforcement, public education, and legislative reforms is necessary to close the gap between the law and its real-world application.

of contravention for the first time, and for repeated offences, the fine will increase.

On the other hand, under section 9 of the Act, the authorised officer has the right to enter and inspect into any public place or vehicle for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act. Also, according to section 14, no court can directly take cognizance of any offence under this Act unless the authorised officer files a written complaint. Thus, the exorbitant power given to the officers compared to that of the Court robs people off the access to justice and further aggravates the state of enforcement of the law.

Additionally, mobile courts are vested with the authority to enforce provisions related to the Act. However, the mobile courts have not been regular in taking actions against such violations until recent times. This absence of enforcement further contributes to render the Act ineffective and undermines its objectives. Furthermore, according to section 15A, a National Tobacco Control Cell has been established in 2007, but its overall effectiveness remains questionable.

Additionally, a major problem with the current law is that it does not impose any explicit restrictions on the use, advertising, promotion, sponsorship, or packaging, and labeling of 'e-cigarettes'. Although recently the Government has issued a ban on the import of e-cigarettes and electronic nicotine delivery systems, the efforts remain insufficient unless the existing Act is amended to include provisions that explicitly prohibit the use of e-cigarettes, along with comprehensive regulations governing their advertising, promotion, sponsorship, and labeling.

Hence, to effectively protect public health, it is crucial for the government to not only enact laws but also ensure the proper implementation of such laws. A combined approach involving stricter enforcement, public education, and legislative reforms is necessary to close the gap between the law and its real-world application.

The writer is law student at American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB).



Twin tons transmit new vitality

SPORTS REPORTER

Unbeaten centuries from Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiqur Rahim on the opening day of the Galle Test yesterday brought welcome relief to Bangladesh cricket, who have been under scrutiny in recent months for both on- and off-field issues.

Bangladesh arrived in Sri Lanka following back-to-back T20I series defeats to Pakistan and the UAE. Across formats, success has been scarce in 2025. Their only wins so far came against Zimbabwe in a home Test -- following a shocking defeat in the opener -- and against the UAE in the opening T20I in Sharjah, although they went on to lose the series 2-1.

Instability within the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and surrounding controversies have only deepened concerns, with public interest in the game beginning to wane.

So, while it was only the first day of the opening Test, Bangladesh's position at 292 for three -- courtesy of a 247-run unbroken stand between Shanto (136*) and Mushfiqur (105*) -- offered a rare moment of control and a breath of fresh air amid a trying period.

However, the day didn't start as brightly as it ended for the visitors.

Even after winning the crucial toss at the Galle International Stadium, which favours the batters most

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH

292-3 in 90 overs (Shadman 14, Anamul 0, Mominul 29, Shanto 136 not out, Mushfiqur 105 not out; Tharindu 2-124, Asitha 1-51)

in the first two or three days, Bangladesh's top-order batters failed to make use of the conditions, and the first three wickets were thrown away in similar fashion as they reached for deliveries outside off stump only to be caught behind or in the slip cordon.

Opener Anamul Haque was dismissed for a duck in the fifth over by pacer Asitha Fernando, while debutant spinner Tharindu Ratnayake removed Shadman Islam (14) and Mominul Haque (29) in successive overs to reduce Bangladesh to 45/3. A familiar collapse seemed to be looming.

Instead, Shanto stepped up, anchoring the innings with poise. His measured stroke play helped stabilise the innings and allowed Mushfiqur to grow into his knock. They guided Bangladesh to lunch at 90 for three, then added 92 and 110 runs in the following two sessions to close the day strongly.

After the day's play, senior campaigner Mushfiqur also hailed Shanto's efforts in building a memorable partnership, which is already the sixth-highest overall in their Test history, spanning almost 25 years.

"What I liked the most, it was a controlled innings so far from him (Shanto). He has previously scored a Test century in Kandy but it is also right up there. It's important to play controlled innings. He didn't give chances as well and I hope those who will bat next can learn from his batting," said Mushfiqur.

The centuries came at a crucial time for both Shanto and Mushfiqur, who had gone 20 and 13 innings, respectively, without reaching three figures -- with Shanto managing just two fifties and Mushfiqur none during that period.

Criticised for their recent form in the longest format, the duo responded when it mattered, and may have set the tone for a much-needed reset as a new World Test Championship cycle begins.

- ➊ Bangladesh Test skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto put an end to his century-less streak of 21 innings with his sixth Test ton against Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday. He did, however, manage two half-centuries during this period.
- ➋ This was Mushfiqur Rahim's fourth Test ton against Sri Lanka. He had no half-centuries in his last 13 innings and this is the first time he has reached the three-figure mark in 14 innings.
- ➌ With 12 Test tons to his name in 97 Tests, Mushfiqur is one shy of matching Mominul Haque, who has the highest number of tons for Bangladesh -- 13.
- ➍ Bangladesh batters have now pulled off 200-run stands 15 times in Tests, with the highest six instances coming against Sri Lanka.
- ➎ Shanto and Mushfiqur's unbroken 247-run stand is the second-highest fourth-wicket partnership in Galle, just behind the 259-run stand between Australia's Steve Smith and Alex Carey earlier this year.
- ➏ Bangladesh's highest fourth-wicket stand in the format also came against Sri Lanka in 2018 when Mushfiqur and Mominul Haque forged a 266-run stand in Mirpur.

Galle, Mushfiqur, and another statement

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Mushfiqur Rahim is playing only one format -- Test.

Perhaps one of the last of a dying breed of players to focus solely on Test cricket, Mushfiqur showed with his latest ton -- against Sri Lanka in Galle on Day 1 of Bangladesh's first Test yesterday -- that there is still that reservoir of patience left in the tank of a 38-year-old in the twilight of an enduring Test career.

Mushfiqur is three matches shy of hitting the century mark in Tests. But a lean patch saw him without a Test fifty for 13 straight knocks, with criticism surfacing whether a veteran, no matter how important, should be allowed just to reach a personal landmark despite poor form.

However, by the time Mushfiqur raised both hands after running a quick single to complete his 12th Test ton yesterday, he had answered all the doubts regarding his abilities. He did so at a ground which, in fact, made his name in Test cricket, with Galle being the venue of the first of his three Test double tons.

A bunch of single digit scores and a 40 had preceded Mushfiqur's latest century. Even with the pressure mounting, he came through it with all the patience he had in store. There was no hurry to go for boundaries; rather, there was a lot of craftsmanship in another terrific day in Test cricket for both Bangladesh and Mushfiqur.



Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mushfiqur stitched an unbroken 247-run fourth-wicket stand. Shanto's 136*, Mushfiqur's 105*, and Bangladesh's 292 for three at close of Day 1 sees the Tigers barge ahead through the gloom of recent performances.

Is Galle a favourite hunting ground for Mushfiqur? One might say so.

Out of the six 200-plus stands Bangladesh have produced against Sri Lanka, Mushfiqur has been involved in four. With 1451 runs at an average of over 58, Sri Lanka may just be his favourite opponent.

Among foreign batters, Mushfiqur is the fifth in the list



What to WATCH

TSPORTS

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh
1st Test, Day 2
Live from 10:30 am
[DAZN WEBSITE AND APP](#)
Club World Cup

Monterrey vs Inter
Live from 7:00 am
Man City vs Wydad AC
Live from 10:00 pm
Real Madrid vs Al Hilal
Live from 1:00 am
(Thursday)

BKSP aims big with Alif, Sagor

SPORTS REPORTER

Archer Abdur Rahman Alif made it to the final for the first time at the senior level when the 19-year-old archer from Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) advanced to the Recurve Individual final of Asia Cup Archery stage 2 beating beat Chinese Taipei's Pin-An Chen 6-4 in semifinal in Singapore yesterday.

Alif had before represented Bangladesh in the World Cups, Asian Archery Championships and Asian Grand Prix but never won an individual medal. He, however, was a silver triumphing member of Bangladesh recurve team in Asian Grand Prix twice in 2022 and 2024 respectively.

Alif, a 12 grader of BKSP, however, played the recurve individual final of Asian Archery U-21 Youth Championships in Chinese Taipei in September last year but he had to stay content with a silver medal suffering defeat at the hands of Li Cheng Huang.

Before beating 22nd-ranked Chen in the semifinal, the lad from Pabna also overcame the hurdles of China's 26th-ranked Alin in 6-2, 10th-ranked Malaysian Muhammad Syafiq Bushthamin in 6-4 and 2nd-ranked Tai-Yen Liu of Chinese Taipei.

By confirming the final against Miyata Gakuto of China on Friday, Alif also confirmed his first-ever individual medal at the senior level as the lanky archer, who once climbed up 95th in world archery ranking, once lost his way in the national team before BKSP brought him back to the track.

When Alif put his brilliant performance to make sure the final berth despite the absence of top archers like Hakin Ahmed Rubel and Ruman Sana who migrated to USA, the country's lone sports educational institute -- BKSP -- is taking to take an ambitious project with Alif and Sagor Islam, who has already played 2024 Paris Olympic Games in his own merit.

In a view exchange meeting with the high-ups of 21 disciplines BKSP also trains up, BKSP's Director General Brigadier General Munirul Islam expressed his desire to take care of national archers Alif and Sagor upto 2028 with a target to win medal in Olympic Games.

"Among new disciplines, the successes are coming from archery and we want to gamble with two archers for 2028 Archers by providing them a long term training if we get a few sponsors for them," said Islam. "I believe if we can provide them round the year training, it is not impossible to win a medal in Olympics because they have that standard."

The BKSP DG also urges the corporate houses like telecoms, banks, insurances and others to come forward to provide BKSP only Tk 26 lakh for next four years to realise the dream of winning a medal in Olympics.

"Both of them are going to sit in HSC exam and BKSP can't hold them after they pass the examination. So, we are seeking sponsors for both to keep them at the BKSP because we plan to provide them Tk 30k salary each along with some facilities and we need a total of Tk 26 lakh," said Islam adding that BKSP will bear all expenditure of accommodation, food, training, primary treatment, local and foreign coaches and transports.

Meanwhile, both Alif and Sagor have been in the national archery team under the guidance of German coach Martin Fredrick, who guided archers Ruman Sana and Sagor to make them qualify directly for the 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games respectively.

Gill hailed as blend of KOHLI AND ROHIT

REUTERS

Shubman Gill's style of captaincy blends the fire of Virat Kohli with the ice cool composure of Rohit Sharma, but India's new Test skipper will carve out his own identity as he leads them in the upcoming Test series in England, Jos Buttler said on Tuesday.

India named Gill as their new Test captain in May, picking the 25-year-old top-order batter over pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah after Rohit quit the format.

India have long recognised Gill's leadership qualities, previously naming him vice-captain in both white-ball formats, while he also had two seasons as skipper of Indian Premier League (IPL) side Gujarat Titans.

"He's a really impressive player and an impressive young man..." Buttler, who played under Gill at Gujarat, said on the 'For the Love of Cricket' podcast.

"I feel like, on the field, he's got a bit of fight about him -- a bit of intensity, quite passionate. I think he'll be a mix of Kohli and Rohit."



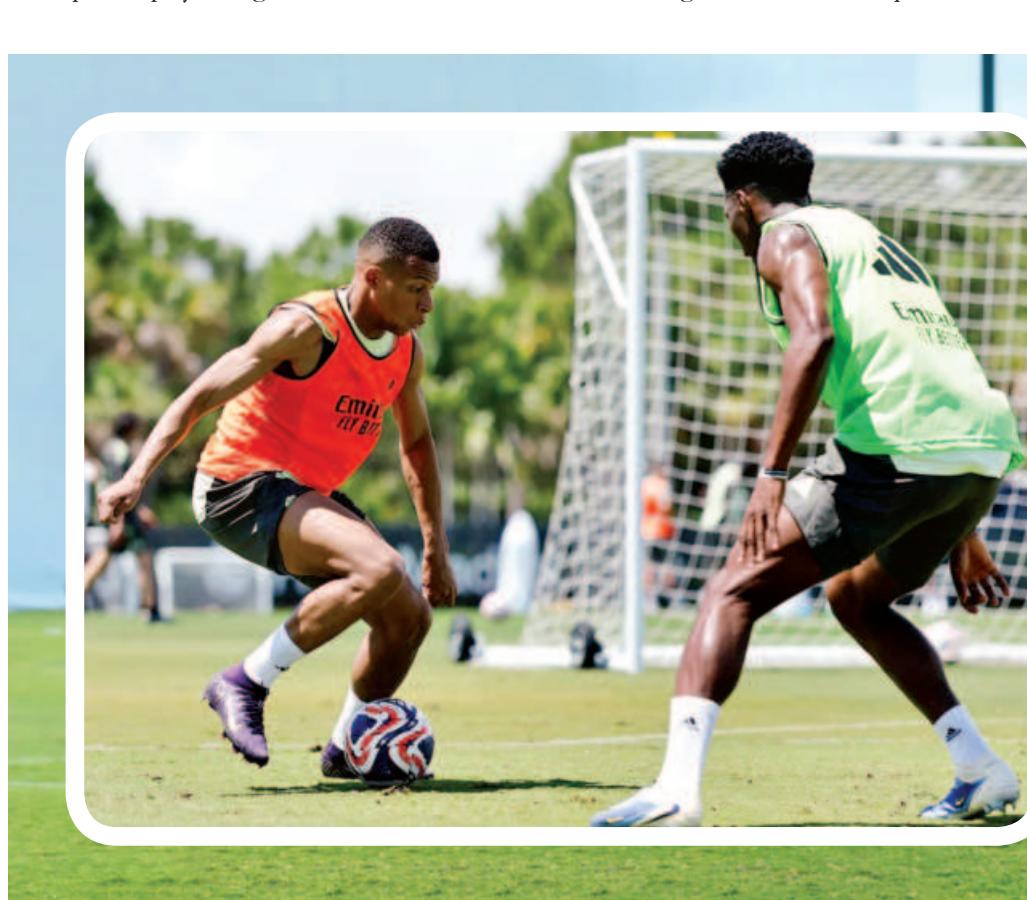
"Kohli (was) that sort of real aggressive (character), really transformed the Indian team, in your face, up for the contest. Rohit a bit on the other side, a bit more laid back, very cool, calm, collected customer, but with that sort of fight."

"I feel like, from my time knowing Shubman so far, he'll be a bit in the middle. He's obviously learned from those two guys ... but he'll be very much his own man."

India play England in a five-match Test series starting on Friday at Headingley, and Buttler said Gill will be in the spotlight.

"Kohli is the king, Shubman is the prince -- that's the narrative that they spin out there, and I feel that he's the coming man," said Buttler, who stepped down as England's white-ball captain in February after their Champions Trophy exit.

"Stepping into that number four, it's big shoes, isn't it? Coming behind Virat, and Sachin Tendulkar before that as well. That's obviously a huge role."



Kylian Mbappe had a phenomenal season, scoring the most goals in debut season as a Real Madrid player (43 goals and five assists in all competitions), but the Frenchman and the club missed out on the top accolades (Champions League, LaLiga, and Copa del Rey). Real, however, won the UEFA Super Cup and the Intercontinental Cup, with Mbappe scoring in both the finals. Now, under new coach Xabi Alonso, Mbappe would be looking to end the campaign with a silverware by lifting the FIFA Club World Cup trophy, as Los Blancos take on Saudi side Al Hilal in their tournament opener at the Hard Rock Stadium on Wednesday night. Meanwhile, a revamped Manchester City, bolstered by new signings and coaching staff, will also begin their Club World Cup campaign against Moroccan club Wydad AC at the Lincoln Financial Field and will rely on an in-form Erling Haaland to lead the charge.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID/MANCHESTER CITY



Most dists lack Covid testing facilities

Two more die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most districts still lack access to Covid-19 testing facilities, despite government efforts to expand them amid rising cases and deaths.

According to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least two people died of Covid-19 in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

During this period, 18 people tested positive from 312 samples, raising the total number of cases to 331 this year. So far, seven people have died of the disease.

Amid the rising cases, health authorities said yesterday that they have supplied test kits to 40 government hospitals.

However, as of Monday, only 15 health facilities were conducting tests, up from just three private hospitals on June 1.

Of these facilities, 10 are in Dhaka, two in Chattogram, and one each in Cox's Bazar, Mymensingh, and Sylhet, leaving most districts without access to Covid-19 screening.

Only two of these are government-run hospitals.

Prof Halimur Rashid, line director of Communicable Disease Control at DGHS,

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Mushfiqur Rahim flashes a broad smile, with unmistakable joy and relief quietly evident, after reaching his 12th Test century on the opening day of Bangladesh's first Test against hosts Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday. The 38-year-old, unbeaten on 105, ended a seven-Test lean patch and reminded everyone why he is nicknamed 'Mr Dependable', combining with captain **Najmul Hossain Shanto** (136*) in a 247-run unbroken fourth-wicket stand that lifted the visitors from early trouble to a commanding 292 for three.

PHOTO: AFP



Ishraque holds meeting with DSCC ward secretaries

Denies carrying out mayoral duties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite not being officially sworn in, BNP leader Ishraque Hossain, for the second day yesterday, took up the role of "mayor" of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

Following Monday's controversial assumption of mayoral duties, he visited Nagar Bhaban yesterday and held a meeting with secretaries from all 70 wards, where he reportedly issued administrative instructions.

Ishraque, however, denied performing "mayoral duties".

Prior to the meeting, he joined a sit-in led by his supporters in front of the building, demanding the resignation of LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan.

Ishraque arrived at the DSCC headquarters around 12:30pm, while

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HOLEY ARTISAN CASE
Damage to nation's image, brutality considered
Says HC on sentencing convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court, in the full text of its verdict on the Holey Artisan Bakery attack case, said it sentenced seven convicts to imprisonment until death considering the brutality of the 2016 terrorist act and the damage it caused to the country's global image.

"Considering the brutality of the murders, the terrorists' overall cruel behaviour, and the tarnishing of Bangladesh's image abroad, we believe justice will be served by sentencing each of the seven convicts to life imprisonment [till natural death]," said the HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman in the 229 page judgment.

The full verdict, uploaded to the Supreme Court website yesterday, opens the door for the state and the convicts to

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'Spectacular' Viking burial site found in Denmark

AFP, Aarhus

In an accidental find, a 10th-century burial site believed to have belonged to a Viking noble family has been discovered in northern Denmark, packed with a "spectacular" trove of ancient objects, a museum announced yesterday.

The discovery came when pearls, coins, ceramics and a box containing a gold thread were unearthed during construction work near Lisbjerg, a village located seven kilometres north of Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city.

Archaeologists found the site contained around 30 graves dating from the second half of the 10th century, when the famous King Harald Bluetooth reigned, said the Moesgaard Museum in Aarhus.

According to the museum's archaeologist Mads Ravn, the graves are most likely linked to a noble family from the Viking Age -- which lasted between the eighth and 11th centuries -- whose farm was discovered less than a kilometre from the burial site in the late 1980s.

Israeli tank fire kills 59 in Gaza aid crowd

221 injured; IDF acknowledges firing in Khan Younis site, says it is investigating

REUTERS, Gaza

Israeli tanks fired into a crowd trying to get aid from trucks in the Gaza Strip yesterday, killing at least 59 people, according to medics, in one of the bloodiest incidents yet in mounting violence as desperate residents struggle for food.

Video shared on social media showed around a dozen mangled bodies lying in a street in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. The Israeli military acknowledged firing in the area and said it was looking into the incident.

Eye witnesses interviewed by Reuters said Israeli tanks had fired at least two shells at a crowd of thousands, who had gathered on the main eastern road through Khan Younis in the hope of getting food from aid trucks that use the route.

"All of a sudden, they let us move forward and made everyone gather, and then shells started falling, tank shells," said Alaa, an eyewitness, interviewed by Reuters at Nasser Hospital, where wounded victims lay sprawled on the floor and in corridors due to the lack of space.

"No one is looking at these people with

mercy. The people are dying, they are being torn apart, to get food for their children. Look at these people, all these people are torn to get flour to feed their children."

Medics said at least 59 people were killed and 221 wounded, at least 20 of them in critical condition. Casualties were being rushed into the hospital in civilian cars, rickshaws, and donkey carts.

The United Nations rejects the US-led aid distribution system as inadequate, dangerous and a violation of humanitarian impartiality rules. Israel says it is needed to prevent Hamas fighters from diverting aid, which Hamas denies.

In a statement, the Israeli Defence Forces said: "Earlier today, a gathering was identified adjacent to an aid distribution truck that got stuck in the area of Khan Yunis, and in proximity to IDF troops operating in the area.

"The IDF is aware of reports regarding a number of injured individuals from IDF fire following the crowd's approach. The details of the incident are under review. The IDF regrets any harm to uninvolved individuals and operates to minimise harm as much as possible to them while maintaining the safety

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➤ Injured victims lay sprawled on the floor of Nasser Hospital

➤ UN rejects the US-led aid distribution system

SHARE SCAM

ACC files case against Shakib, 14 others

BSS, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed a case against cricketer and former lawmaker Shakib Al Hasan and 14 others for allegedly embezzling Tk256 crore from the stock market through fraud.

ACC Director General Md Akther Hossain disclosed the information at a press briefing at ACC's Segunbagicha headquarters. The case was filed by ACC Assistant Director Sajjad Hossain.

Deputy Registrar of the Department of Cooperatives Md Abul Khair Hiru has been named the main accused in the case. The other accused are his wife Kazi Sadia Hassan, Abul Kalam Madbar, Konica Afroz, Mohammad Bashar, Sajed Madbar, Aleya Begum, Kazi Fuad Hassan, Kazi Farid Hassan, Shirin Akhter, Javed A Matin, Md Jahed Kamal, Md Humayun Kabir, and Tanvir Nizam.

According to the ACC, the accused conspired to artificially inflate share prices for personal gain through illegal transactions, fraudulent trading, and market speculation. These actions caused heavy losses to general investors.

The group allegedly misappropriated



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Palestinians react beside people wounded in an Israeli strike while waiting for aid, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

6 die on roads

Mother, son among them

STAR REPORT

At least six people, including a mother and her three-year-old child, were killed and three injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday.

Of them, three were killed in Gazipur after a bus hit their CNG-run auto-rickshaw.

The accident took place in the afternoon when a Kishoreganj-bound bus hit the CNG-run auto-rickshaw in the Jamira Char area of Gazipur's Kapasia upazila, said Sohag Hossain, sub-inspector of Kapasia Police Station.

The deceased are Ratna Akhter, 23, of Kamalpur village and her son Sharay, and Md. Tahidullah Mia, 25, of Krushtapur village under Kishoreganj's Itna upazila, he said.

Shayan and Tahidullah were brought dead to the Kapasia Upazila Health Complex, while Ratna was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition for advanced treatment, according to Krishna Kumar Das, the hospital's medical officer.

She succumbed to her injuries on her way to Dhaka, according to the SI Sohag.

Police are trying to identify the bus and arrest its driver, he said.

Over in Dinajpur, two people on a motorcycle were killed after a pickup hit their vehicle near the Rangamati BGB camp in Phulbari upazila.

The deceased were identified as Abu Taleb, 27, and Saju Islam, 33, both residents of Kaharul upazila, the police said.

The incident happened around 6:30am on the Dinajpur-Phulbari regional highway when the driver of a Dinajpur-bound pickup lost control of the vehicle and

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Freedom Fighter Sakhina no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Freedom fighter Sakhina Begum, known for killing five Razakars with a machete during the 1971 Liberation War, passed away in Kishoreganj's Nikli upazila early yesterday. She was 92.

Her death was confirmed by her caregiver and niece, Fairunnisa Akhter.

Sakhina had been suffering from age-related ailments for a long time, she said.

Before her funeral

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