



"We call on all parties to protect health facilities, health personnel and patients at all times."

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Israel-Iran conflict

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## Negotiations start amid raging war

Europe urges Iran to keep up diplomacy with US; IAEA says Iran not seeking nukes

AGENCIES

European powers hoped to offer a "diplomatic solution" to the Iran-Israel crisis as they met with the top diplomat of Iran in Geneva yesterday, as arch foes continue to exchange missile attacks for the eighth day.

The meeting, which was focused on Iran's nuclear programme, comes as US President Donald Trump mulls the prospect of entering the war between the two foes.

Israel, saying Iran was on the verge of developing nuclear weapons, a claim denied by most UN observers and other signatories of the landmark nuclear deal in 2015.

Amid the push for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, Israel's military chief Eyal Zamir warned that his country should be "ready for a prolonged campaign" against Iran.

"We have embarked on the most complex campaign in our history to remove a threat of such magnitude, against such an enemy. We must be ready for a prolonged campaign," Zamir said in a video statement to Israelis.



Israel launched attacks against Iran last Friday, which have combined targeted assassinations of key military personnel with strikes on Iran's nuclear and missile facilities.

Zamir said the Israeli military had prepared for "years" for the campaign against Iran, even while Israeli troops continue their devastating campaign against the Palestinian militant group Hamas in Gaza.

Analysts say Iran was severely weakened by Israeli strikes on allied militant groups Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon since 2023, while Israel damaged Tehran's air defences in tit-for-tat exchanges between the countries last year.

On the ground, Israel's military said it struck dozens of targets in Tehran overnight, including what it called a centre for the "research and development of Iran's nuclear weapons project".

In Israel, sirens sounded in the afternoon after missiles were launched from Iran for the second time yesterday, and rescuers reported two injured, including a 16-year-old in serious condition.

A military official said that "approximately 20 missiles were launched towards Israel" in the latest salvo.

Later, Israel said at least 19 people were injured in the northern Israeli port city of Haifa after a barrage of missiles was fired in the afternoon.

Trump has said he would decide "within the next two weeks" whether to involve the United States in the fighting.

In the meeting in Geneva, European powers urged Iran to revive diplomatic efforts with the United States to find a solution in the standoff over its nuclear programme, but Tehran warned it could only consider diplomacy once Israel halted its bombardment of the Islamic republic.

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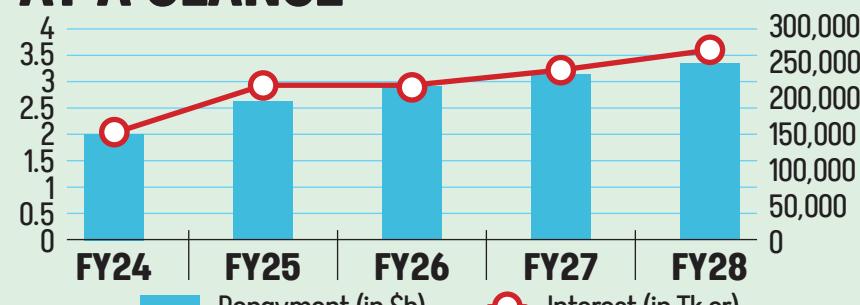
Emergency personnel work next to burnt cars and damaged residential buildings after missile strikes by Iran on Israel's Be'er Sheva yesterday. Inset: Iranians attend an anti-Israel protest following Friday prayers in Tehran.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## Govt to scale back foreign loan reliance

### FOREIGN DEBT SERVICING OBLIGATION AT A GLANCE



SOURCE: ERD

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government plans to scale back its dependence on foreign loans as it seeks to mitigate threats to external debt sustainability.

At present, the external debt to export is 140 percent, according to the latest Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA).

"The rising external debt stock, principal and interest payment of Bangladesh

against export may create vulnerability in the external debt position and may affect external debt sustainability in the coming years," said the report titled Medium-Term Macroeconomic Policy Statement FY26-FY28.

By the end of the fiscal year, the government's outstanding foreign debt would stand at Tk 914,200 crore, which is equivalent to \$76.18 billion at the current exchange rate.

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Nine-year-old Sabrina gets her hair brushed by her mother at Mugda Medical College and Hospital yesterday. Following a week of dengue treatment, she appears fatigued but is recovering well. As her fever is subsiding, doctors say she could be discharged soon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Fear grows over dengue spiralling out of control

Experts say pre-monsoon efforts fell short, warn of impending crisis

HELEMUL ALAM

The risk of a rapid dengue outbreak looms large across the country, with entomologists warning that unusually high densities of Aedes mosquito larvae have been detected in multiple districts since January.

Without immediate and coordinated action, experts fear the situation could spiral into a full-blown health crisis during the monsoon.

Despite early signs, authorities have failed to take adequate pre-monsoon measures, leaving both urban and rural areas vulnerable to fast-spreading transmission.

Health officials and researchers alike are urging urgent intervention to curb the mosquito population before it's too late.

"We are detecting high densities of Aedes larvae nationwide, which signals a high risk of a severe outbreak this year," said Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University.

He said alarmingly high larval densities were recorded as early as January in Barishal, Barguna, Mymensingh, Chattogram, and Manikganj, indicating the potential for widespread transmission during the monsoon.



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## Rice, chicken, fish prices rise post-Eid

Traders blame high demand, cartel of millers

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of different rice varieties have increased by Tk 3-Tk 5 per kg in the capital over the last two weeks even though the country is in the middle of the harvesting season.

ITEM (PER KG)

CURRENT PRICE

PREVIOUS PRICE

Miniket rice	75-85	70-82
BR-28 rice	60-65	56-62
Guti/Shorna rice (coarse)	55-58	52-56
Shonali chicken	320-330	260-270

Besides, a variety of chicken, popularly known as Shonali, now costs Tk 50 to Tk 60 per kg more, compared to last week.

The price of broiler chicken, however, has not changed.

Traders at kitchen markets in Karwan Bazar, Shewrapara, Kazipara, Ibrahimpur, Mirpur-II and Mohammadpur Krishipur Market said rice prices increased at wholesale markets first and then at the retail shops.

Kamal Hossain, proprietor of Mugbul

Rice Agency at Mirpur-II, yesterday said he sold different varieties of miniket rice at Tk 75 to Tk 85 a kg, up from Tk 70 to Tk 82 a week earlier.

BR-28 rice variety was sold for Tk 60 to Tk 65 a kg, compared to Tk 56-62 last week, he said.

The Guti and Shorna varieties of coarse rice were sold at Tk 55 to Tk 58, compared to last week's Tk 52-56, he added.

Alamgir Hossain, manager of Krishipur Bhandar at Mohammadpur Krishipur Market, one of the capital's biggest wholesale rice markets, said the price hike was unusual in the middle of a harvesting season.

The price of a 50kg sack of rice has increased by Tk 150-Tk 200 after Eid, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



## MY DHAKA

# KALACHANDPUR

## Dhaka's hidden hub of culture and community

RBR

The backstreets of Baridhara Diplomatic Zone and Baridhara DOHS, known as Kalachandpur, are an energetic and vibrant neighbourhood that unfortunately suffers from an identity crisis.

The residential addresses describe their location as Badda, North Badda, Gulshan, Baridhara, even though Kalachandpur is a quarter in Ward-18, DCC (Kotwali), Dhaka Division. Kalachandpur is situated near the quarter of Nadda, according to city maps.

So many locations to explain where exactly this lively chipagoli-style or narrow lane suburb is situated have led to confusion about its postal address. The highbrow outsiders, those who live in the nearby posh tri-state area, refuse to acknowledge the residents of Kalachandpur as neighbours. Their enmity is almost like the fable of the City Mouse and Country Mouse.

It does not matter if the street layouts and the demarcations between Kalachandpur and Baridhara or Gulshan is just an adjacent street sharing a common border or lay directly next to each other.

Kalachandpur is irrelevantly considered a place for the less affluent. Dhaka is more than its upscale residential areas and shopping districts; beyond these lie the true heart of Dhaka.

The narrow lanes of Kalachandpur

embrace one such rustic and kitsch charming essence of the city. This spot is also a second home for the working Garo community in Dhaka.

Garos are an indigenous ethnic group primarily residing in the northeastern region of Bangladesh. They began to migrate to Dhaka to find employment or to pursue higher education. Kalachandpur, jokingly described as the Garo Embassy, brings about a sense of safety and security for this hard-working community. The old settlers shelter the newcomers, providing a village-like kinship, echoing a sense of ownership.

Their presence is the reason why the narrow lanes of Kalachandpur has a happy atmosphere. Relaxed in their traditional dress, dokmunda, the neighbourhood provides the freedom to express their ethnic identity.

They do their daily grocery, regular shopping, and socialising after office hours, lending a bustling mix of vibrant nightlife, diverse food, and unique shopping experiences. The dazzling shop lights and streetlights almost give the lanes a Bangkok-like vibe.

Starting from goldsmiths to budget-friendly stores, and food carts with

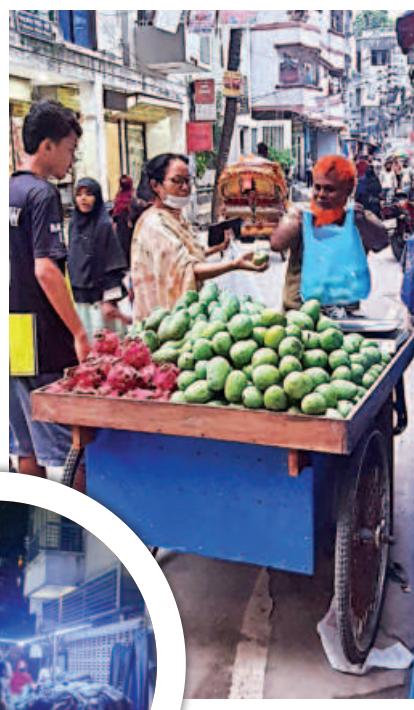


PHOTO: STAR

exceptionally exotic flavours, the place is buzzing with activities. One single jhalmuri vendor, who mixes the best spicy chickpea and puffed rice with bombay morich or hot chilli, has a cult following. On a regular day, he sells more than Tk 7,000 worth of the street food. During festivals, his sales soar even higher.

The nearby bazaars also carry food items catering to this thriving community. Their favourite items, such as the Asian swamp eel or kuichcha baim, snails, snail eggs, napi or shrimp paste, bamboo shoots kochur phul or arum flower, and ginger flower, are all available here.

St Paul's Church in Kalachandpur has sorted the community's religious callings as well. It is an affordable residential option surrounded by the expat community, who are their employers. The proximity to their workplaces, which are within walking distance, means the community is prosperous and is boosting the economy around Kalachandpur.

Many young men and women find employment in beauty parlours and salons as masseurs and hairdressers, and another fraction work as domestic helps, garment workers, or as drivers, security guards, construction workers, and even as nurses.

An increasing number of Garos have also found employment opportunities in call centres and non-governmental organisations or companies.

The educated well-off Garo people in white-collar jobs have reservations about Kalachandpur being a desirable destination for the community at large, but for the blue collar community, it is perfect.

This "culture within a culture" aspect makes Kalachandpur an interesting locality right in the heart of Dhaka.



## Negotiations start amid raging war

FROM PAGE 1

British, French, German and EU top diplomats held talks in Geneva with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, giving diplomacy a chance one week after Israel started its bombardment.

"The good result today is that we leave the room with the impression that the Iranian side is ready to further discuss all the important questions," said German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul in a statement alongside his European counterparts.

"It is of great importance that the United States takes part in these negotiations and the solution," he added.

The statements read by all four top diplomats in their native languages after the talks expressed hope of further progress but did not make any mention of a breakthrough.

Araghchi, making his first trip outside Iran since the bombardment began, said Tehran was ready to "consider diplomacy" again only once Israel's "aggression is stopped".

"In this regard I made it crystal clear that Iran's defence capabilities are not negotiable," he said.

"We support the continuation of discussions, and express our readiness to meet again in the near future," he said.

Meanwhile, the French FM yesterday condemned the efforts to change the regime in Iran from outside, calling it "dangerous".

Earlier, addressing the UN Human Rights Council yesterday, Araghchi said Israel's attacks were a "betrayal" of diplomatic efforts to reach a nuclear deal between Tehran and Washington.

"We were attacked in the midst of an ongoing diplomatic process," he said.

In an interview with German publication Bild, Israel's top diplomat Gideon Saar said he did not "particularly" believe in diplomacy with Iran.

"All diplomatic efforts so far have failed," said Saar, whose country had supported Trump's 2018 decision to abandon a previous nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers.

The Iranians, according to Saar, have used negotiations "to gain time while making progress (in their nuclear programme), and I don't think they've changed their nature".

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was not seeking to be a mediator between Iran and

oil trading and shipping, it said in a separate statement.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, meanwhile, said that while Iran is the only country without nuclear weapons to enrich uranium to 60 percent, there was no evidence it had all the components to make a functioning nuclear warhead.

"So, saying how long it would take for them, it would be pure speculation because we do not know whether there was somebody... secretly pursuing these activities," the agency's chief Rafael Grossi told CNN.

"We haven't seen that and we have to say it."

He also warned against attacks on nuclear facilities and called for maximum restraint amid Israel's strikes on Iran.

His comments came as White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Iran could produce an atomic bomb in a couple of weeks".

Any US involvement in Israel's campaign would be expected to involve the bombing of a crucial underground nuclear facility in Fordow, using internal bunker-busting bombs that no other country possesses.

In Iran, people fleeing Israel's attacks described frightening scenes and difficult living conditions, including food shortages and limited internet access.

Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said authorities had restricted internet access to avoid "problems" like cyberattacks.

Protests broke out in Tehran and other cities after Friday prayers, with demonstrators chanting slogans in support of their leaders, state television showed.

"I will sacrifice my life for my leader," read a protester's banner, a reference to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Britain yesterday withdrew its embassy staff from Iran, following in the footsteps of other European nations as well as Australia and New Zealand.

The death toll in Israel from Iranian missile strikes since June 13 was 25 people, according to authorities. Iran's attacks have resulted in the displacement of more than 8,000 Israelis, Yedioth Achronot reported, citing the Israeli Property Tax Compensation Fund.

Two of the entities include shipping companies based in Hong Kong: Unico Shipping Co Ltd and Athena Shipping Co Ltd, the statement said.

The Treasury Department on Friday also issued counterterrorism-related sanctions targeting Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis over alleged illicit

During Eid, people eat red meat

The yield of paddy has been good this year, he said. But a handful of mill owners had brought enormous amounts of paddy, gaining significant control over the market.

Meanwhile, Enamul Haque, a chicken trader at Karwan Bazar, said Shonali chicken prices rose probably because demands have increased after the Eid.

He added that he had bought Jira nazir paddy at Tk 1,730 per maund yesterday. It was Tk 1,550 before Eid.

During Eid, people eat red meat

a lot and for a while, the demand for chicken falls, he said.

At the fish market, the prices of each kg of hilsa, shrimp and ayer have increased by Tk 100-Tk 200 per kg while of rohu and katla increased by Tk 20-Tk 50 per kg.

Several traders at Karwan Bazar said as the demand for vegetables had yet to reach the pre-Eid levels, the prices remained low for many items.

The interest payment on external loans is now Tk 22,000 crore, which is equivalent to \$1.83 billion - up about 45 percent from a year earlier. It will hit Tk 27,100 crore in fiscal 2027-28, equivalent to \$2.25 billion.

The government plans to conduct another DSA this month using the latest data to examine the vulnerability and ensure the transparency of debt management.

The finance ministry also plans to

## Fear grows over dengue spiralling out of control

FROM PAGE 1

Bashar urged swift action: hotspots must be aggressively managed

using all available tools, while areas with no current cases must eliminate breeding sources. He also called on individuals to ensure their homes are mosquito free.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 7,077 dengue patients have been hospitalised so far this year, with 5,472 cases reported from outside Dhaka. Barguna alone has reported 2,035 cases. The total cases include 30 deaths, 13 of them outside Dhaka.

In the capital, a recently published government survey found some 13 wards across the two city corporations as high-risk zones for dengue, with seven under Dhaka South City Corporation and six under Dhaka North.

Among the breeding sources identified, cement water tanks accounted for the highest proportion (22 percent), followed by flooded floors (20 percent).

The other sources included plastic drums (13 percent), water meter holes (11 percent), plastic buckets (10 percent), flower tubs and trays/plastic pipe pits (7 percent), discarded tyres (6 percent), internal water channels (5 percent) and cement plots (4 percent).

The highest concentration of Aedes mosquito larvae (58.88 percent) was found in multistorey buildings, according to the pre-monsoon survey.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman blamed the growing crisis on three major failures: lack of mandatory reporting, absence of a national dengue management programme, and exclusion of mosquito control experts from planning and response.

"Dengue is not a mandatory

reportable disease, and reports often omit the infection source," he said. "There is also no system to identify active Aedes clusters, which makes effective control nearly impossible."

Although Dhaka is reporting fewer cases, he warned the numbers may be misleading. Many people, especially adults, now show no symptoms due to prior exposure. As a result, only children and the elderly, who develop symptoms, are perfect.

"These unreported, asymptomatic cases still serve as carriers, helping the virus spread silently," he added.

Saifur called for nationwide surveillance, which provides estimates of antibody levels against infectious diseases, to identify high-risk areas and assess virus exposure.

"We must understand mosquito population density to respond effectively, but there's currently no active control or dengue management programme in place," he said. "It's also impossible to operate such programmes everywhere unless clusters are identified first."

He also stressed the need to make dengue a notifiable disease, report sources of infection, and include entomologists in planning and action.

"Many cases go unreported as patients are treated at home. Hospital data alone is not enough," he said.

### OFFICIAL RESPONSE

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Administrator Mohammad Azaz said preparations have been underway for over a month and a half. Dengue units have been established at all DNCC hospitals, and treatment protocols are in place.

"We've intensified mosquito control drives in schools, where many infections begin," he said, adding that hospitals are also being cleaned thoroughly.

Insecticide spraying has been

increased to three times a day from two, and special teams are conducting awareness campaigns.

Cluster data from the Medical Information System is being used to guide disinfection efforts. Free dengue tests are being offered at ward-level health centres.

Four mobile courts are in operation to fine or take action against violators of mosquito control rules.

Meanwhile, Dhaka South City Corporation held an emergency meeting on June 11 at Wasa Bhaban. Chaired by Administrator Md Shahjahan Miah, the meeting decided to double adulticide spraying from June 14 and form zone-based monitoring teams.

Separately, on June 15, the health ministry urged the LGRD ministry to strengthen mosquito eradication and cleanliness drives in areas with sharp case surges.

A letter from the Health Services Division also recommended launching grassroots awareness and prevention campaigns.

### LESSON FROM KOLKATA

In contrast to Dhaka, Kolkata has taken a proactive, data-driven approach. The 206.2 sq km city is divided into 144 wards and 16 boroughs overseen by five vector management experts, including three PhDs.

The city deploys 32 Rapid Action Teams and employs 1,700 field workers and 1,440 support staff to maintain ward-based databases, conduct awareness campaigns, and monitor fever cases.

Their efforts begin in January, targeting ponds, tanks, open spaces, and construction sites. Once a case is reported, patients give blood samples at local Urban Primary Health Centres. Results are shared via SMS, and teams visit homes within 24 hours, inspecting at least 50 nearby houses for breeding sites.

The country would then have to rely more on commercial loans with higher interest rates and shorter repayment periods, increasing its debt servicing costs.

The medium-term outlook for Bangladesh's debt after LDC graduation hinges on the government's ability to implement effective strategies to counter the challenges, said the finance ministry report.

"Without robust reforms in revenue mobilisation, export diversification and debt management, the debt burden and associated risks could increase. However, successful implementation of these strategies could help Bangladesh navigate the transition and maintain a sustainable debt trajectory while leveraging its improved economic standing."

Effective management of external debt interest payments is not just a matter of sound financial management for Bangladesh; it is fundamental to ensuring macroeconomic stability, protecting its foreign exchange reserves, fostering sustainable economic growth, maintaining international creditworthiness, and securing its future development prospects, it added.

## Rice, chicken, fish prices rise post-Eid

FROM PAGE 1

He blamed a cartel of rice mill owners and several large businesses for "manipulating the market".

Chitta Majumder, adviser of Bangladesh Rice Mill Owners Association, said paddy prices rose across the country, affecting the rice prices.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he was not seeking to be a mediator between Iran and

Iran, he said. But a handful of mill owners had brought enormous amounts of paddy, gaining significant control over the market.

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The government plans to

The death toll in

# DHAKA

NCP applies for EC reg tomorrow

## Approves new charter

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Each office bearer, including the president and general secretary of the National Citizen Party (NCP), will be allowed to serve a maximum of two terms in their lifetime in either post, according to the approved draft charter adopted at the party's sixth general meeting yesterday.

The charter further states that if the party is voted into power, its chief will not be eligible to become the prime minister.

The NCP will apply for registration with the Election Commission tomorrow, as per a unanimous decision taken at the meeting. Chief Coordinator Nasir Uddin Patwari, Joint Convener Khaled Saifullah, and Joint Member Secretary Zahirul Islam Musa have been assigned to oversee all related communications.

As per the charter, the

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Fishermen carry a variety of fish, including loitta, shrimp, and rupchanda, ready for processing and cleaning. Since the fishing ban ended on June 12, they have returned to sea to resume their livelihoods. However, unfavourable weather has hindered their ability to meet expected catch targets. The photo was taken at Fishery Ghat in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## From sea to summit

**Shakil walks from Cox's Bazar to reach the peak of Everest in iconic eco-climb**

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On May 19, mountaineer Ikramul Hasan Shakil stood just metres away from achieving his lifelong dream -- reaching the summit of Mount Everest.

Despite being the closest he had ever been to turning his dream into a reality, doubt began to creep in. The weather had turned against him, reducing visibility completely.

However, despite the hurdles, Shakil steeled his mind and made the ascent. And then finally, he had done it. The boyhood dream had come true.

Even though his time at the peak was brief, he had managed to stand on top of the world, a feat very few can claim, that too against all odds.



Shakil, who hails from Baghchala village of Gazipur, successfully conquered Mount Everest after completing the "Sea to Summit" expedition that began on February 25 in Cox's Bazar.

At a press conference at Bishwo Shahitto Kendra yesterday, Shakil shared the experience of his adventures with mountaineering enthusiasts and environmental advocates.

Ghanashyam Bhandari, Nepal's Ambassador to Bangladesh; MA Muhit, an Everest summiteer; and Tosan Paul, general manager of marketing at PRAN Agro Limited, were present at the event.

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### STAR REPORT

The supply of hilsa has increased considerably, alongside a drop in wholesale prices across markets in the southern districts, following the end of a 58-day fishing ban in the Bay of Bengal.

Traders say prices have fallen by at least Tk 600-800 per kilogramme (around 30 percent) since last week due to the increased supply. Fisheries officials predict prices could drop by another 50 percent once the peak monsoon harvest reaches the markets.

However, buyers are still struggling to purchase hilsa at reasonable retail prices due to alleged market manipulation.

Traders have urged the government to introduce fixed pricing to prevent syndicates from manipulating the market.

At Barishal's Port Road wholesale fish market, hilsas weighing one kilogramme or more are currently being sold for Tk 2,100-2,200 per kg, down from Tk 3,000 per kg last week. Similarly, fish weighing



around 600-700 grammes are now priced at Tk 1,600-1,700 per kg, compared to Tk 2,500 earlier.

At Patuakhali's Mohipur, one of the country's largest hilsa wholesale hubs, hilsas weighing 1kg or more are being sold for Tk 50,000-55,000 per maund, while those weighing around 600g are fetching about Tk 50,000 per maund.

"Just a week ago, the prices ranged between Tk 75,000-95,000 per maund," said Mohammad Rakib Hossain, a trader at the market.

Shariful Islam, manager of the Alipur Fish Landing Station under the Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation in Patuakhali, said prices have declined slightly due to the increased hilsa supply.

"This week, five tonnes of hilsa landed here. Hilsas weighing around 1kg are priced at Tk 60,000 per maund, while those weighing around 500-600g are selling for Tk 50,000-55,000 per maund," he added.

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## SOUTHERN REGION

# Hilsa supply surges, retail prices still high

### STAR REPORT

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Once one of Dhaka's oldest and most notable canals, the Khilgaon canal has now turned into a dumping ground for plastic waste and garbage. Years of neglect have led to its steady decline. The photo was taken from the Khilgaon Amtala Mosque area yesterday.

## Hold dialogues to implement CHT accord

Speakers urge govt

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous community members yesterday called for an immediate dialogue between the interim government and Parbatai Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) to resolve key issues from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord, including the functioning of the Land Dispute Resolution Commission.

They also demanded a series of dialogues between the government and various stakeholders -- such as political, social, and circle leaders of the region, civil society groups, and development partners -- to speed up the implementation of the accord.

They made the demands while speaking at a discussion organised by the Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum at the Women's Voluntary Association auditorium in the capital.

The CHT Accord, also known as the CHT Peace Accord, was signed in 1997 between the government and PCJSS, ending a protracted armed conflict in the region.

At the discussion, Ushatun Talukder, vice president of PCJSS and former lawmaker from Rangamati, said since

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Resolving the issues of the indigenous people should be seen as a way of eliminating all forms of discrimination in society.

Iftekharuzzaman  
Executive Director, TIB

## Murder or 'death by stroke'?

**Case filed 10 months after incident; BRUR teacher Mahamudul Haque sent to jail as accused**

### S DILIP ROY



Mahamudul Haque

Mahamudul Haque, an assistant professor of journalism at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR), who had marched alongside students and citizens during the July uprising in Rangpur last year, now finds himself behind bars.

He has been arrested and sent to jail in connection with a murder case filed ten months after the incident.

Mahamudul had joined the street protests demanding justice for the killing of BRUR student Abu Sayed, who died on July 16 during the uprising.

However, Mahamudul has now been charged in a murder case that his family and students describe as "fabricated" and "motivated." His wife, Masuba Hasan, along with fellow teachers and students, claims he is being framed as part of a "conspiracy".

The case concerns the death of Samesh Uddin, a grocery shop owner from the Radhakrishnapur area of Rangpur city, who died on August 2, 2024 -- during the peak of the July uprising.

Ten months later, on June 3, 2025, his wife Amena Begum, 60, filed a murder case with Hajirhat Police Station, accusing 54 individuals -- including the ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader -- of causing the death of Samesh.

Mahamudul was named the 54th accused in the case and was identified as a central assistant secretary for information and research at the pro-AL Bangabandhu Parishad.

However, his affiliation with the group remains unclear, as it could not be verified independently.

In this regard, Dr Tuhin Wadud, head of the

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## Freedom fighter Habibur Rahman Pintu passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Habibur Rahman Pintu, a freedom fighter and father of The Daily Star's Planning Editor Wasim Bin Habib, passed away in Satkhira early yesterday. He was 84.

He had been undergoing treatment at a hospital. He breathed his last around 4:30am due to age-related complications.

He is survived by two sons, relatives, and numerous well-wishers to mourn his death.

Habibur Rahman took part in the Liberation War under Sector 9.

He was laid to rest with state honour by the local administration after the Asr prayers yesterday at the family graveyard in Jugipukuria village under Pattekhettha Police Station in Satkhira.

In a condolence message, Dhaka Reporters Unity President Abu Saleh Akon and General Secretary Mainul Hasan Sohel expressed profound grief at the passing of Wasim's father.

They prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed their heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family.

## Photographer Chanchal Mahmood no more

STAR REPORT



A legend in the country's fashion photography scene, Chanchal Mahmood, passed away last night.

Photographer Shahadat Parvez told the media that Chanchal Mahmood breathed his last around 9:00pm at Labaid Hospital in Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

Chanchal Mahmood had been suffering from illness for several years. He was admitted to the hospital four days ago.

Shahadat Parvez, who was one of his students, said, "His kidneys and heart were in poor condition. He had suffered five heart attacks in the past. Today, he had two more. In total, he experienced seven heart attacks."

According to Shahadat Parvez, Chanchal Mahmood is likely to be buried at Banani Graveyard after the Zohr prayers today.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

## PRAYER TIMING JUNE 21

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-52 8-17  
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

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## CONSULTANCY OPPORTUNITIES



International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites applications from interested National Consultant to conduct a targeted technical assessment of key cross-cutting project interventions and their effectiveness. The Terms of Reference (ToR) can be downloaded from the United Nations Global Market Place (UNGM) at <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/270019>

The deadline for submission of proposal is Monday, July 07, 2025, by 04:30 PM (BST time).



Activists under the banner of 'Poshak Shramik Unnayan Janakalyan Sangstha' form a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, demanding a stop to plastic pollution to save the environment.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## The Narode flows no more

SHOHANUR RAHMAN RAFI,

Rajshahi

A dry and cracked stretch of land along the eastern edge of Rajshahi is the only reminiscence of a river that once flowed there – the Narode river.

A few shallow, narrow patches of water can be seen along the stretch following rains during monsoon, but for rest of the year the Narode remains a dead river, clogged with silt and man-made structures at its origin.

A tributary of the mighty Padma, Narode originates near Shahpur village, just eight kilometres east of Rajshahi city, past the Katakhali Dewanpara crossing. It once stretched for around 40 kilometres through Shahpur, Pargachha, and Paikpara areas of Rajshahi, with hundreds of small boats and dinghies navigating this waterway. The river also supported farming, trade, and life of the local people.

Over the years, rampant illegal grabbing and filling up of the river to pave way for various establishments, fish farms and mango orchards eventually led to its doom.

"Monsoon brings some spark of life to the river with water accumulating in a few places. But

it is not enough to bring it back to life. Its halcyon days are long gone. It hardly flows anymore due to silt accumulation. We have been witnessing the river's slow, painful death over the years," said Mahbub Siddiqui, a noted river researcher who authored a book on Narode river.

"Narode's decline began long ago due to natural and geological

of slow death. A partial revival attempt was made in 1972, shortly after Bangladesh's independence, when around 3-4 km stretch of the river near Biralda area was re-excavated," Siddiqui said.

However, prolonged neglect, siltation and encroachment left the river indistinguishable from surrounding land. Moreover, the government has long been leasing

any excavation of Narode river. The Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) was tasked with this responsibility, and that too around 2016," said Arifur Rahman, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Rajshahi.

Contacted, Md Tarikul Alam, executive director of BMDA, acknowledged it.

"Yes, there was an initiative to dredge parts of Narode. However, it failed due to poor planning, lack of follow-up and several complexities," he said.

Mahbub Siddiqui warned of the larger picture. "Narode is not alone. Many rivers in northwestern Bangladesh are dying. Without flow, without care, the rivers either turn into drains or simply cease to exist. When a river dies, so do the ecology, culture, and the livelihood around it," he said.

He urged authorities to view Narode's instance as a wake-up call to focus efforts on water management and reviving the country's dying rivers and wetlands.

"We must let rivers be rivers again. Otherwise, we are only writing our own obituary," he added.



disruptions. In 1823, a massive flood hit the Padma river and caused significant sediment deposition at Narode's origin, obstructing its natural flow. Later, a major earthquake occurred in 1897, somewhat altering the course of the Padma. Due to these events, Narode gradually lost its flow, and began to become fragmented into disconnected sections in a process

the river's land and adjoining areas to different individuals and institutions, often for up to 99 years, he added.

Contacted, Nur Hossain Nirjhar, upazila nirbahi officer of Puthia, said, "We are aware of the river's plight and exploring possible measures, but land grabbing and siltation make it a difficult task."

"We have not undertaken

## New political party BRP launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new political party named Bangladesh Republic Party (BRP) was launched yesterday under the leadership of two former military officers.

Several other ex-military personnel are also involved in leading the party.

The party's chief adviser is Selim Pradhan, who came into the spotlight six years ago after being arrested in an online casino scandal.

The formal announcement of this new party was made in the afternoon at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The names of the central committee members were read out by Sanjida Khan Deepa, the mother of Shaheed Anas, who died in the July uprising.

The party president is Lt Commander (retd) Md Mehedi Hasan, and general secretary Maj (retd) Md Rajibul Hasan. The chief adviser is Md Selim Pradhan, senior vice-president Saeed Ali Sikder, vice-presidents are Capt (retd) Shafiqul Islam, Lt Col (retd) Imran, Md Ayaz Ahmed, Nasir Uddin, and Md Bayezid.

Mehedi Hasan said, "This is not politics for votes; we have come to do people's politics. We want to stand for Bangladesh..."

## Freelancing lifts Rabbani out of despair

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Confined to a wheelchair with no control over his lower body and limited movement in both his arms, 23-year-old Golam Rabbani of Patuakhali's Kalapara has defied all odds to become a successful freelancer, now earning around Tk 50,000 a month.

Born with a severe physical disability, Rabbani never had the opportunity to attend school or receive formal education. Until 2021, he considered himself a burden, entirely dependent on his aging and ailing parents. But his unyielding willpower and determination led him to turn his life around.

From a tiny, dilapidated home in Chinguria area of Kalapara municipality, Rabbani began his journey with just a second-hand

Android phone worth Tk 2,500.

Despite not even knowing the alphabets, he started learning from YouTube and other online platforms. Despite the hurdles, he completed several online courses, gradually developing his skills as



a graphic designer. Then in June 2021, he earned his first Tk 100 from a freelancing opportunity. The following month, the number increased to Tk 1,300.

Rabbani then took a loan and

## Indian policymakers hatching conspiracy to 'rehabilitate' AL Says Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi Ahmed yesterday accused Indian policymakers of conspiring to "rehabilitate" the fallen Awami League.

"They [Indian policymakers] cannot accept Sheikh Hasina's downfall. After the meeting between Dr Muhammad Yunus and Tarique Rahman in London, the neighbouring country began plotting targeted conspiracies," Rizvi said while speaking to journalists in Pabna's Chatmohar upazila.

Rizvi was there visiting veteran BNP leader Abu Taher Pramanik alias Taher Thakur, who has been suffering from illness.

Under the banner of the BNP family and on behalf of acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, Rizvi also provided financial assistance for Taher's treatment.

The BNP leader said the people of the country have started walking the path of democracy, but the journey is far from over. "The conspiracies are not over. Even now, many grassroots and national-level BNP activists remain missing. Many are still being harassed with false cases and arrests."

He added, "The fascist era was horrifying. Today we can speak freely. But from the moment Dr Yunus and Tarique met, the neighbouring country resumed its conspiracies."

Rizvi alleged that the Awami League regime looted public wealth for 16 years and laundered it to countries like Canada and Malaysia.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



## Show 'responsible behaviour' for healthy coexistence

## Asif urges political parties

BSS, Dhaka

Everyone's responsible behaviour is necessary to ensure good coexistence of political parties with the government, said Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain.

"The coexistence of political parties with the government should not be damaged by any of our decisions. To keep this relationship beautiful, I think responsible behaviour of all is important," he wrote in a post on his verified Facebook account.

Asif said, "Ishraque Hossain is an idol of the young generation. I think he has been misguided to fulfill some political purpose and that is still being done."

The adviser said he did not take the decision alone regarding the project going to be taken in Dhaka South City Corporation. "We are accountable to the Council of Advisors and decisions come from there. I am in charge of it, so I carry it forward," he said.

bought a computer and began working around 10-15 hours a day.

"Even for basic needs like bathing and using the toilet, I depend on my father, who is sick and unemployed," Rabbani said.

His elder sister, Sweety Akter, is also physically challenged, while his 10-year-old sister Afansa is the only able-bodied member of the family.

Despite these challenges, Rabbani has become the family's primary breadwinner and has already paid off around Tk 50,000 of debt.

In 2024, one of his clients even gifted him a battery-powered wheelchair and upgraded tech equipment, helping him work more efficiently.

Rabbani now works from a small wooden plank set beside his

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

## STATUTORY NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH

HIGH COURT DIVISION

(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

Company Matter No. 955 of 2025

IN THE MATTER OF:

AND IN THE MATTER OF:

K. M. Rifatuzzaman Rocky, Managing Director, AKHTER MATTRESS INDUSTRIES LTD., having its Address: Plot No. 66, Block-I, Progoti Sharani, Baridhara, P.S.-Badda, Dhaka.

VERSUS

— Petitioner

The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, 1, Kawran Bazar, TCB Bhaban, Dhaka.

— Respondent

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of AKHTER MATTRESS INDUSTRIES LTD. for the calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. The said petition was accepted on 03/06/2025. The Hon'ble High Court Bench of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Acme AI Limited for the calendar years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. The Hon'ble High Court Division was pleased to admit the said application on 01/06/2025. Any person, interested to oppose the said application, may do so by appearing before the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division either personally or through his duly authorized learned Advocate. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed charge.

Ripon Chandra Bhownik

Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Gloriana, Room No 123 (1st Floor), 16, Purana Paltan,

Dhaka-1000, Mobi: 01747-570627.

## LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH

HIGH COURT DIVISION

(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)

COMPANY MATTER NO. 930 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF:

Major General Syed Fatemey Ahmed Roony (Retd.),

VERSUS

— Petitioner

Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms and another

— Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and Section 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 is filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh for condonation of the delay in holding the Annual General Meeting of the Company Acme AI Limited for the calendar years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. The Hon'ble High Court Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division was pleased to admit the said application on 01/06/2025. Any person, interested to oppose the said application, may do so by appearing before the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division either personally or through his duly authorized learned Advocate. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed charge.

Dip Biswas

Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

For the Petitioner: Room No. 8051, Shohrawardi Bhaban,

Supreme Court Bar Association, Dhaka.

Trump 'Golden Dome' plan expensive, tricky: experts

AFP, Le Bourget

President Donald Trump's proposed "Golden Dome" defence system is a plan that will face mammoth technical and financial hurdles, and could increase global insecurity, experts say.

Trump announced plans for the space-based system last month, saying it would eventually cost around \$175 billion and would be operational by the end of his term in 2029.

The planned defence shield's name is a nod to Israel's Iron Dome that has intercepted thousands of short-range rockets since 2011. But the US defence system would intercept much bigger intercontinental threats.

The plan comes after a study pointed to advances by China, Russia. Beijing is closing the gap with Washington when it comes to ballistic and hypersonic missile technology.

Pro-Gaza activists in UK damage planes at air base

REUTERS, London

Pro-Palestinian activists broke into a Royal Air Force base in central England yesterday, damaging and spraying red paint over two planes used for refuelling and transportation.

Palestine Action said two members had entered the Brize Norton base in Oxfordshire, putting paint into the engines of the Voyager aircraft and further damaging them with crowbars.

"Despite publicly condemning the Israeli government, Britain continues to send military cargo, fly spy planes over Gaza and refuel US/Israeli fighter jets," the group said in a statement, posting a video of the incident on X.

"Britain isn't just complicit, it's an active participant in the Gaza genocide and war crimes across the Middle East."

Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the "vandalism" as "disgraceful" in a post on X. Britain's defence ministry and police were investigating.

"Our Armed Forces represent the very best of Britain. They put their lives on the line for us, and their display of duty, dedication and selfless personal sacrifice are an inspiration to us all," the ministry said.



A boy mourns over the body of a loved one at the morgue of Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza, yesterday. Gaza is facing a man-made drought as its water systems collapse, the United Nations' children agency said yesterday, as 43 Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes, gunfire across the Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP

## IRAN NUCLEAR CONTAMINATION RISK Anxiety grips Gulf Arab states



CNN ONLINE

Concern is rising in Gulf Arab states about the possibility of environmental contamination or reprisal attacks if Israel or the United States strikes Iran's nuclear facilities just across the Persian Gulf.

In Oman, users on messaging apps circulated advice on what to do in the event of a nuclear incident. Residents are instructed to "enter a closed and secure indoor space (preferably windowless), seal all windows and doors tightly, turn off air conditioning and ventilation systems" if the worst were to happen.

In Oman, users on messaging apps circulated advice on what to do in the event of a nuke incident

In Bahrain, 33 shelters are being prepared for emergencies, and sirens were tested nationwide

In Bahrain, 33 shelters are being prepared for emergencies, and sirens were tested nationwide

Middle East Initiative at Harvard Kennedy School, said people are "definitely concerned" about the prospect of Israeli and US strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities. Iran's only functional nuclear power plant, in Bushehr, is closer to several US allied Arab capitals than it is to Tehran. "Primarily there is fear of environmental contamination, especially in shared waters," Fakhro said.

She added that other concerns include "the possibility of an Iranian reprisal on US military facilities in the Gulf states, which could impact civilians, and extended airspace closures." Despite its improved relationship with Arab neighbours, Iran has implicitly warned that it would target nearby US interests if it were struck by the American military.

Bahrain, for example, hosts the US Naval Forces Central Command, which could be a target. Elham Fakhro, a fellow at the

The Gulf Cooperation Council, an economic and political bloc that comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, on Monday activated its Kuwait-based Emergency Management Centre, to ensure that all "necessary preventive measures are taken at environmental and radiological levels."

The UAE's foreign minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, warned "against the risks of reckless and miscalculated actions that could extend beyond the borders" of Iran and Israel.

Almost 60 million people in Gulf Arab countries rely on desalinated sea water from Persian Gulf for drinking and usable water. Regional leaders warned that contamination from Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant, if attacked, could have severe environmental consequences for this critical water source.



A firefighter works at the site of an apartment building struck by a Russian drone in Odesa, Ukraine, yesterday. One person was killed and over a dozen others were injured in the aerial attack, according to officials.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## NORTHERN KACHIN STATE Myanmar junta battles guerrillas for control of jade hub

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's junta and anti-coup guerrillas battled over the country's jade mining hub yesterday, a combatant and a local said, displacing desperate civilians as they fled for supplies of the precious stone.

Myanmar has been consumed by a many-sided civil war since a 2021 coup toppled the democratic government, with the myriad of fighting factions plundering the nation's vast natural resources to fill their coffers.

Jade is considered auspicious in Chinese culture and high-quality stones can fetch astronomical sums in the neighbouring country.

Fighting has raged during a Myanmar military offensive around villages and mining sites in Hpakan township of northern Kachin state, according to Naw Bu, spokesman of the Kachin Independence Army battling the junta in the area.

"They came to the jade mining areas of some companies and they burned down trucks and destroyed other things," he added. "They intended to stop our income from jade mining."

AFP was not able to verify the claim and a spokesman for Myanmar's junta could not be reached for comment.

## Violence against kids hit 'unprecedented levels' in 2024: UN

AFP, United Nations



From Gaza to the Democratic Republic of Congo, violence against children in conflict zones reached "unprecedented levels" in 2024, a United Nations annual report said Thursday.

"In 2024, violence against children in armed conflict reached unprecedented levels, with a staggering 25 percent surge in the number of grave violations in comparison with 2023," according to the report from UN chief Antonio Guterres.

The report verified 41,370 grave violations against children in 2024 -- including 36,221 committed in 2024 and 5,149 committed previously but confirmed in 2024 -- the highest number since the monitoring tool was established 30 years ago. The new high beats 2023, another record year, which itself represented a 21 percent increase over the preceding year.

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## Corruption remains a significant concern

Take stern measures to ensure hassle-free service delivery

We are concerned to learn of the latest findings of a survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) that paints a troubling picture of public service delivery in the country. The survey period covered both the tail end of the now-ousted Awami League regime and the first few months of the interim government, thus requiring its findings to be read with nuance. But the fact that 31.67 percent of respondents, or nearly one in three, reported having to pay bribes for essential services is a stark reminder of how entrenched corruption remains. The massive sample size—with 84,807 respondents from 45,888 households interviewed—also makes the data a fair representation of the experience of ordinary citizens. Although by now we would have appreciated a survey still focused on the interim period, what has emerged still makes a case for why we should worry.

For that, we just need to look at some of the details. For instance, according to the BBS data, the worst offender among public service agencies was the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), where 63.29 percent of citizens reported being forced to pay bribes, followed closely by law enforcement agencies (61.94 percent), the Department of Immigration and Passports (57.45 percent), and the Directorate of Registration (54.92 percent). These institutions have long been synonymous with corruption, and the latest data suggests that the situation has not improved significantly despite the change in government. Another sector with a notable incidence of corruption is education where, as noted by the planning adviser at the BBS ceremony, the bribery rate for transfers is very high.

These findings more or less align that of other reports on corruption in Bangladesh. One may recall a December 2024 assessment by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)—based on six household surveys conducted between 2010 and 2023—that an estimated Tk 1.46 lakh crore was paid in bribes for services during the rule of Awami League. According to the most recent of those surveys, covering the period between May 2023 and April 2024, some 70.9 percent of respondents had collectively paid Tk 10,902 crore in bribes while seeking services. It is no surprise that the same institutions identified by TIB as the most corruption-prone have also been identified as such by BBS. Clearly, things have changed little.

The level of access and affordability in public services may have improved of late, but the quality and timeliness of service delivery still leave much to be desired. Just over half of the BBS survey respondents have expressed satisfaction with how long services take to process. While the interim government has taken some notable steps in recent weeks, such as replacing the BRTA chairman and conducting anti-corruption raids at BRTA offices, these actions are not enough to curb corruption unless systemic reforms are undertaken to support full automation of services, elimination of middlemen, de-politicisation, and rigorous trials and punishment of corrupt officials. Corruption must be confronted not with token measures but with genuine political will and long-overdue institutional changes.

## Why is HSC absenteeism so high?

Huge number of students not sitting for HSC exams this year

We are alarmed by the sheer number of students who are not taking this year's HSC and equivalent examinations, scheduled to start on June 26. Reportedly, a total of 14,83,689 students registered as regular candidates under the 11 education boards—including the madrasa and technical boards—for the 2023-24 academic year. Among them, just over 10,50,000 filled out forms to appear in the exams. The remaining students—more than 4,25,000—did not. The reasons for such a large number of students dropping out at this critical stage of their academic journey must be addressed. If these students falter now, it will not only be detrimental to their individual futures but will also result in a substantial loss for the nation.

While student dropout after SSC, HSC, and equivalent levels is common in Bangladesh, the situation is more severe this year, as the number of HSC examinees has dropped to the lowest in the past three years. Understandably, poverty is a major driver of absenteeism, while child marriage also plays a significant role: 51 percent of girls in Bangladesh are married before the age of 18, according to a recent UN report. Many students join the workforce immediately after passing the SSC exams. A recent survey on this year's absent SSC candidates has highlighted these issues. A similar survey should be conducted to identify the causes of absenteeism at the HSC level. Educationists say the rising cost of education could also be a factor behind dropouts.

According to a report by the Dhaka education board, 40 percent of girls who failed to appear in this year's SSC exams had been married off before the exams, despite having completed exam registration. Over seven percent of students were absent due to entering the workforce because of financial hardship, while others missed the exam for reasons such as illness or lack of preparation. A similar situation appears to be contributing to absenteeism at the HSC level. The recent protest by some HSC candidates in Rajshahi also suggests that some students are unprepared to sit the exams.

We urge the authorities to address the root causes of students' exam absenteeism through effective measures. Ending child marriage, of course, should be at the top of the list of priorities. Equally important is ensuring that financial hardship does not force parents to withdraw their children from education. The government must keep education within everyone's reach by implementing meaningful reforms in the sector. No student should be forced to abandon their education under any circumstances.

# We're witnessing the barbaric face of a global (dis)order



Anu Muhammad  
is former professor of economics  
at Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Although Israel attacked Iran last week, a sense of trepidation about the possibility of that happening had gripped the public psyche for a long time. Yet, when it happened, there was this disbelief: surely Israel wouldn't go that far, or be that reckless or horrific?

And of course, people thought about the US, Israel's main supporter and greatest source of power. Donald Trump's return to the Oval Office brought with it a deep fear of instability—economic and political—around the world, fuelled by the chaos he created through sudden tariffs and the relentless attacks on immigrants. That same administration would be willing to support Israel, no matter how extreme a step the latter took, should not come as a surprise.

But what would be the consequences of such an act? The US has think tanks, military strategists, and institutions that surely understand the implications. That's why people had hoped that the US would exercise some restraint, and would not give its unconditional blessings to Israel. But the dread was always there. Particularly after Benjamin Netanyahu's return to power in Israel—a man accused of corruption, who by all means should be in prison—there were concerns. His personal motive to avoid jail by whipping up nationalist crises, to stir up conflict and distract the public, became evident.

But it's not just about Netanyahu's personal ambition. There is a right-wing government behind him—military forces, think tanks, ideological and strategic backers, both inside and outside Israel. His actions reflect their collective agenda. Netanyahu has consistently created unrest. The ongoing genocide in Gaza has claimed nearly 60,000 lives, most of them women and children. It's relentless. Even hospitals aren't spared. Children running for food are bombed by Israel in Gaza. It's a horrifying reality that no sane person can stay unaffected after learning about it.

It was the responsibility of the US, as the leader of the so-called global order, and its ally, the European Union, to stop this, but they completely failed to do that. Not only did they fail, but

they ended up offering full support to this reckless, monstrous aggression. They justified it. Their media repeated the justifications. They sent weapons using which Israel is carrying out its genocidal campaign in Gaza.

This is the situation Israel has created—by launching one attack after another. Palestine is next door. Lebanon is nearby. The whole region has been destabilised. To build support for its actions, Israel and its allies have played destructive roles in

It is facing an increasing threat of climate change. Most of the global



Fire and smoke rise from the Sharan Oil depot in Tehran, Iran following Israeli strikes on June 15, 2025.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Islamist groups, some of whom are known to act as proxies for the Israeli-US agenda, have contributed to this chaos.

Then came the attack on Iran. This shows the nature of the current global (dis)order and those running it.

And we see the international institutions—the United Nations, global human rights groups and conventions, and the International Court of Justice—being completely ineffective in stopping this madness. They remain in their posts with zero accountability. They should be ashamed. If not resign in disgrace, they should at least acknowledge their failure.

When Israel attacked Iran, many of these institutions still tried to defend it. In recent European meetings, reports show that Israel's oppression

population lack access to food, water, shelter, jobs, yet more money is spent on weapons than anything else. It's a race to develop the deadliest technology—to kill more people more efficiently. That's the current face of global capitalism.

Meanwhile, as Israel continues its genocidal campaign against the Palestinians, the silence of the Arab world remains deafening. Saudi Arabia, during a recent visit by US President Donald Trump, signed the largest ever arms deal, worth \$142 billion. They have given Israel indirect support. Qatar, too, welcomed deals and summits.

If the Arab world had stood united, raising a common voice against Israel and its chief patroniser, it could have shifted the course of events. But the Arab world chose silence.

Worse, many aligned themselves with the perpetrators. This silence and complicity are part of what empowers Israel.

The US is Israel's main source of strength. But so too is the EU, which has never taken an independent stance. The EU drags on the war in Ukraine, failing to stop it, echoing the US policy at every turn.

Another source of Israel's strength lies in how sectarian divisions are exploited. Because Iran is a Shia-majority country, some groups—religious leaders even in Bangladesh—now argue that Iran is just as much an enemy as Israel. This is dangerously absurd and irrelevant. Iran has citizens of many faiths, including Sunnis. But that's not the point. The point is that Iran is being subjected to an unjustifiable assault, and nuclear accusations are being used to justify sanctions and aggression that are not applied to other countries with nuclear weapons.

This hypocrisy—where the guilty accuse others—is driving the world towards catastrophe. If this trajectory continues, the consequences could be beyond imagination.

This militarised global capitalism requires war. It survives on it. Even if war pauses due to global outrage, it resumes either in a different form, in a different region, or more intensely than before. And its impact falls on all of us.

It weighs on the mind—wars, genocide. And then come the economic and political consequences.

In Bangladesh, we rely heavily on imports of fuels, and any disruption or rise in prices due to global conflicts immediately leads to a crisis and inflation. Remittances, one of our main economic lifelines, can also be affected. If workers lose jobs abroad and have to return, we will face rising unemployment and a deeper economic pressure.

What we're witnessing is the barbaric face of global capitalism, emerging from within the system itself—militarised, profit-driven, indifferent to human lives.

It is the duty of every individual, in Bangladesh and across the world, to speak out, to resist, to build global public opinion against this war machine. This is not about religion, ethnicity, or nationality. This is about humanity, about civilisation, about this planet. If we don't raise our voices collectively against the destruction of life, nature, and the future of our children, then we risk surrendering to a system that thrives not on creation, but on destruction.

We must respond. From Bangladesh and beyond, we must do whatever it takes.

## Reintegrate the 'forgotten workforce'



Zinat Ara Afroz  
is a development professional  
and Commonwealth scholar.

ZINAT ARA AFROZ

After receiving the redundancy notice from my international non-profit employer in March 2025 due to the USAID fund cut, I applied for more than 20 development jobs and consultancy

opportunities aligned with my experience. Surprisingly, I never heard back from any of them. The development professionals in Bangladesh, like me, had a higher mobility within the sector due to our extensive skill sets. But the scenario changed after January 20, 2025, when the US government announced a 90-day review period and paused USAID grants globally. Many USAID projects let go of their staff without any appropriate notice period.

We don't know how many there are in Bangladesh, apart from a newspaper report that estimated the number of job losses to be 30,000-40,000 based on the assumptions sector insiders. We, the forgotten workforce in Bangladesh's development sector, have not received any official statement or statistics about the extent of this joblessness.

Regardless, the workforce still needed to make ends meet for themselves and their families. Out of desperation, they aggressively jumped into searching the job boards.

Globally, USAID alone was the source of around 50 percent of development funds. With the cancellation of USAID grants, many

development organisations have gone through termination and furlough of direct staff under USAID grants, and some not directly funded by USAID grants.

The development organisations could not provide any solution for the job seekers due to a severe financial crisis. While the corporate and private sector requires specific industry-relevant skill sets and are unaware of how to utilise the abandoned skill sets, where should this forgotten workforce seek support?

With the current climate of foreign aid by donors, it is predictable that the development sector won't be back to its original shape or scale soon. Under these circumstances, the Bangladesh government must take steps to prevent a future disaster in the shrinking development sector. Foreign aid has long played a critical role in various sectors of the country, including education, health, environment, democracy, human rights, humanitarian assistance, and many more. With the priority of the donors shifting globally, the country must focus on building a self-reliant economy supported by the business and private sector.

The Bangladesh Investment Summit 2025 showcased the country's potential as a prime investment

destination in Asia. The World Bank signed a \$850 million loan to create new jobs and enhance trade in the country. The National Special Economic Zone in Chattogram alone is expected to create jobs for around eight lakh individuals. The latest Bangladesh Country Private Sector Diagnostic (CPSD) report reveals that with the right policy actions, Bangladesh could generate up to 23.7 lakh jobs annually within the construction sector by boosting the development of new housing projects.

In addition, expanding the country's domestic production of paint and dye could create over 664,000 formal jobs. Furthermore, reforms in digital financial services might open the door to anywhere between 96,000 and 460,000 new employment opportunities. The government can integrate the high-skill redundant workforce from USAID projects, and utilise our expertise in this transition process for the country's economic growth. This is the time to acknowledge that the job loss of a section of development workers is not a short-term crisis and could affect the country's economic growth in the long run. We should prepare for it with clear course corrections by following new policy pathways.

To mitigate the impact of job losses in the development sector, the government can survey the number of unemployed workforce due to the fund cuts, followed by an economic impact assessment. The government should also implement a national talent retention programme to address the skill gaps in the economy and mitigate the impact of job losses. This initiative will help the development professionals transition into the

newly growing sectors like renewable energy, IT, and green manufacturing, where there is a demand for a skilled workforce.

Bangladesh's expanding infrastructure and renewable energy sectors present a great opportunity to create jobs and reintegrate the displaced workforce through public-private partnerships (PPPs). As an incentive, the government could offer the private sector grants, tax breaks or subsidies, reduce their regulatory burdens of doing business to encourage them to hire these skilled professionals.

A national reskilling and upskilling initiative could play a critical role in the transition of the displaced workforce. Partnering with key industries, the government could design specialised, subsidised training and mentoring programmes. It should also incentivise entrepreneurship and small business creation by an entrepreneurship support scheme for the displaced workforce. Seed funding, mentorship, and access to markets for new businesses could be offered. Government-supported schemes and accelerators would assist development professionals in setting up businesses in high-growth sectors, including agriculture, e-commerce and information technology, which would also create new jobs.

Wherein a large unemployed workforce created by the fund cuts is facing an immense challenge to survive, this situation presents a unique opportunity for Bangladesh. This is a call to action from the "forgotten workforce" of the development sector of the country to the government to reintegrate them strategically into the economy.

## Understanding the ranking mismatch

BLOWIN' IN  
THE WINDDr Shamsad Mortuza  
is professor of English at  
Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

As a Dhaka University faculty member, it was quite frustrating for me to see our institution outside the 1,000 universities ranked for sustainable impact measured by Times Higher Education (THE). Then again, it was a proud moment to see 20 universities, including a private one, from Bangladesh making it to the top 200 among the 1,500 ranked universities. The following day, another ranking agency, QS, published its vaunted World University Ranking (WUR). DU retained its top position, slotting among the top 600, followed by BUET in the top 800 and North South University in the top 1000. There are 12 more Bangladeshi universities in this year's QS ranking. The publication of these two rankings has created public confusion that merits both explanation and reflection.

While the THE Impact Ranking (THE-IR) assesses universities against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), QSWUR evaluates academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty and student presence, and sustainability efforts. The THE-IR provides a clear set of metrics that measure how universities, as complementary forces supporting their nations' commitment to the SDG Agenda 2030, contribute to social, economic, and environmental sustainability through their research, stewardship, outreach, and teaching. To qualify for the THE-IR, universities provide evidence of their policies, actions, and research that are aligned with at least four of the 17 SDGs.

For instance, the best performer in Bangladesh, Daffodil International University, provided evidence in SDGs 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) to claim their spot among the top 200. This is a remarkable achievement considering the fact that the next best performers are in the 601-800 band: AIUB, BRAC University, Green University, and United International University. Two technical universities, Gazipur Agricultural University and the International University of Business, Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT), are in the 801-1000 band of ranked institutions. DU finds itself outside the 1000 alongside Bangladesh Agricultural University, IUB,

Jahangirnagar University, Jashore University of Science and Technology, Rajshahi University, ULAB, and World University of Bangladesh.

Personally, I was taken aback by this year's results as they did not accurately represent the scope, expertise, and legacy of DU, the nation's oldest and most esteemed university. The shock turned into curiosity when the QSWUR came out a day later. DU is ranked No 1 in sustainability—the criterion measured by the THE-IR. How can one ranking agency credit the university highly for its sustainability-related initiatives, policies, and leadership while another holds a different view? The answer is simple: when participating in this year's impact ranking, DU failed to tell its impact story. The information for this year's ranking is based on data from 2023, which was submitted in October 2024. As a member of the ranking committee, I know how little scope we had in aligning our performance in the prescribed format of THE. The Impact Ranking requires evidence and submitted targeted data to demonstrate inclusion policies for disadvantaged students, community outreach programmes, environmental initiatives on campus, and research directly tied to sustainable development. Our website and documentation did not necessarily reflect those alignments. Other participating universities have been more successful in demonstrating their alignment of institutional strategies with specific SDGs.

As a public university, Dhaka University leads Bangladesh's transformation in line with Agenda 2030. Our colleagues are involved with national policy framing, research, and thought leadership. It produces graduates with SDG-aligned skills to address the country's biggest development challenges. Its alumni body, including Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, engages in reducing inequality and supporting marginalised communities. Yet, we have failed to tell our impact story in a format prescribed by THE-IR.

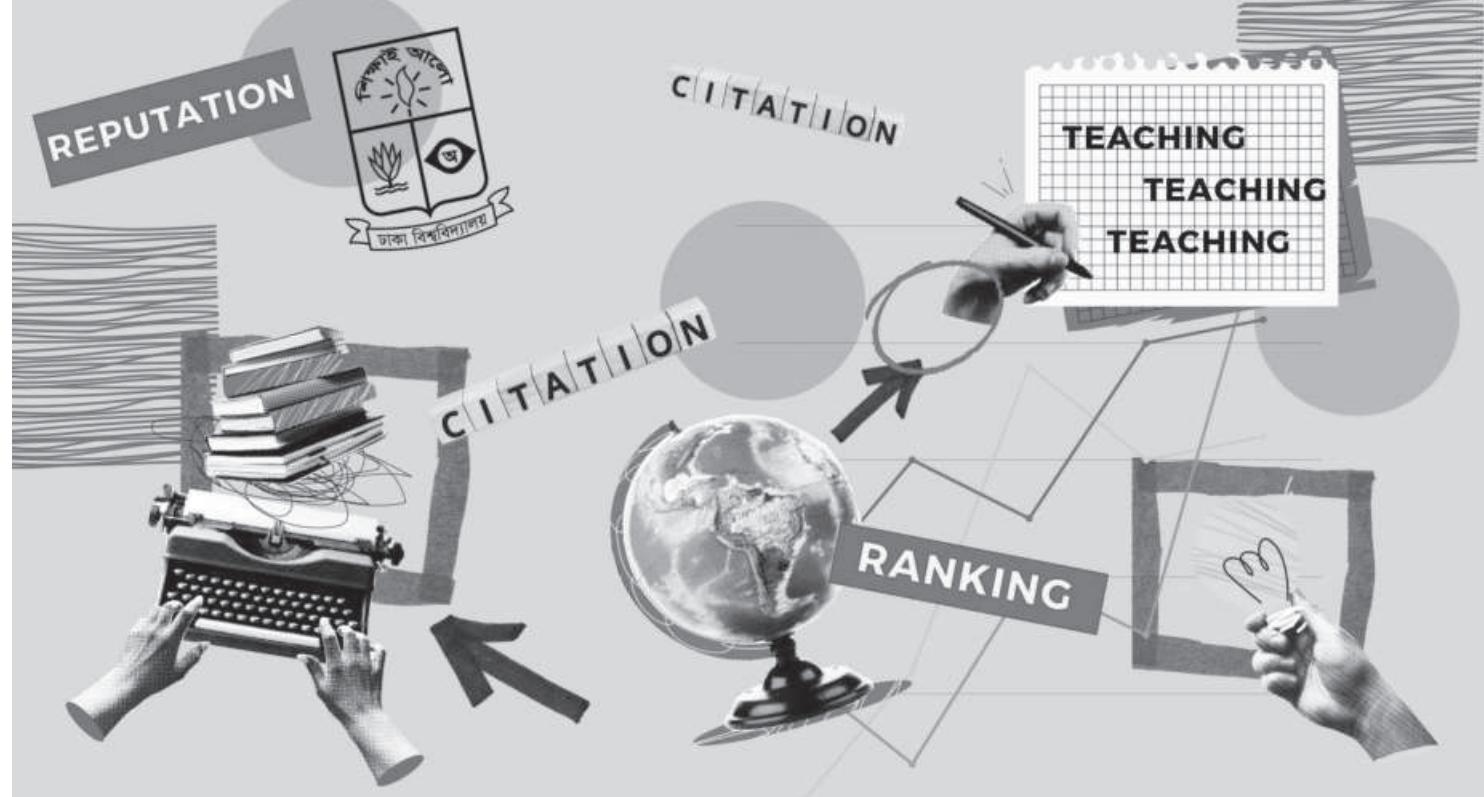
To put matters into perspective, the top UK university in the Impact Ranking is the University of Manchester, and the best US university is Arizona State University,

occupying the second and sixth positions, respectively. The exclusion of many iconic universities suggests that this ranking encourages institutions to highlight their strengths in alternative categories.

According to the QS institutional health card, DU is No 1 among the 15 institutions evaluated in Bangladesh in four out of ten categories: academic reputation, employment outcome, international research work, and

currency. They should receive incentives, not punishment in the form of VAT, for instance, treating education as a consumable commodity. Allowing BRAC University to become the first PhD giving entity in collaboration with SOAS of the University of London is the right move. It indicates that private universities are becoming stronger in their infrastructure and logistics.

Similarly, the government needs to



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

sustainability. DU has seen a decline in its employer reputation compared to last year and still maintains the No 2 slot in Bangladesh. The areas in which DU needs to work are international faculty, faculty-student ratio, international students, citations per faculty, and international student diversity. And these weak areas are common to almost all public universities.

Take internationalisation, for example. Dhaka University does not have a provision to hire international faculty members, which many private universities can. It has also failed to attract international students because of its lack of a credit transfer system, complex bureaucratic admission processes involving education, home and foreign ministries, the medium of instruction, safety concerns, and poor accommodation facilities.

QS citations per faculty. Many of the newer universities lack a large faculty body like ours. Then again, many of our colleagues don't publish papers beyond the minimum promotion requirement.

The discrepancy serves as a warning to all of us. We need to change our mindset and up our game. Our university administration must set their priorities right. There should be some strategic directives from our leaders. What actions can the government take to attract foreign students and establish Bangladesh as a destination country? The policy so far has been to collaborate with foreign agencies to treat Bangladesh as a source country for overseas destinations.

Private universities, striving to meet international ranking metrics, have been successful in retaining many students and saving foreign

incentives public university teachers so that they can compete at an international level. They work with a paltry pay dealing with a large class size. The incentives may include financial rewards, research funding, publication processing fees, and annual recognition of high performers. On the other hand, at an institutional level, there should be more emphasis on transparency and accountability.

In absence of visible information and transparent policies, DU was unable to claim many of its impact ranking related activities. But its QSWUR success will motivate it to compete in other categories. It is important to note that this is a race in which all Bangladeshi universities must be united. We are not competitors but brand ambassadors for the country's higher education sector.

## An accurate forecast of global warming made 112 years ago

Dr Quamrul Haider  
is professor emeritus at Fordham  
University in New York, US.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

An August 14, 1912 article in the New Zealand newspaper *The Rodney & Otamaeta Times* contained a story about how burning coal might cause global warming by adding carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. The story reads, "The furnaces of the world are now burning about 2,000,000,000 tons of coal a year. When this is burned, uniting with oxygen, it adds about 7,000,000,000 tons of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere yearly. This tends to make the air a more effective blanket for the Earth and to raise its temperature. The effect may be considerable in a few centuries."

The effect of carbon dioxide, the major greenhouse gas (GHG), is no longer "considerable." It is out of control; it has thrown us into a feedback loop from which there is no exit. So we won't have to wait a "few centuries" for the Earth to become a furnace. Indeed, the prediction made more than 112 years ago essentially validates the seemingly bleak future that we are staring at with trepidation.

The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which serves as the

most dependable measure of the global community's advancement towards a secure future, experienced the most significant annual rise from 421.1 ppm in 2023 to 424.6 ppm in 2024. The record increase in 2024 was fuelled by a variety of factors, including record high GHG emissions, diminished carbon absorption by natural sinks like tropical forests, and the release of vast quantities of carbon dioxide due to wildfires.

The annual rate of increase over the past 60 years is nearly 100 times more rapid than previous natural increases that happened at the end of the last Ice Age, around 11,000 to 17,000 years ago. The concentration now exceeds 50 percent of the levels recorded before the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, meaning the amount of carbon dioxide is now 150 percent of its value in 1750. For the first time, the global average concentration of carbon dioxide surpassed 430 ppm in May this year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The last time the planet had such high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was probably

more than 30 million years ago, well before humans inhabited the Earth and during an era characterised by a significantly different climate.

The buildup of carbon dioxide and other GHGs—methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases—in the atmosphere has already elevated global temperatures to perilously high levels. The current global mean is around 1.5 degrees Celsius, encompassing the range from the coldest poles to the hottest deserts. The most relevant reference for the current warming trend is the more recent Pliocene Epoch, which spanned from 5.3 million to 2.6 million years ago. During the mid-Pliocene, atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were comparable to those of today, resulting in heat retention and an increase in global temperatures, about two to three degrees warmer than today.

In 2024, temperatures exceeded those of 2023, making it the hottest year on record. The ten warmest years on record since 1850 have all occurred in the last ten years. Thus, extreme weather events, elevated sea levels, intensified droughts, out-of-control wildfires, deadly storms, and devastating floods, along with detrimental effects on wildlife and critical natural ecosystems, reached unprecedented levels, highlighting the escalating risks of climate change. Besides, warmer temperatures are allowing invasive species and pests to spread, while putting pressure on animals that need a colder climate. Also, the ocean has absorbed enough carbon dioxide to reduce its pH by 0.1 units, resulting in a 30 percent rise in acidity.

An increasing number of climate scientists now believe that achieving the 1.5-degree Celsius target by the end of this century, as specified in the 2015 Paris Agreement, is unattainable because of escalating carbon dioxide emissions. To provide a context, the temperature has already increased by at least 1.1 degrees Celsius since 1880.

The World Meteorological Organization predicts that the global mean surface temperature for each year from 2025 to 2029 will range from 1.2 to 1.9 degrees above the pre-industrial average. Researchers at the Irish Climate Analysis and Research Unit expect the probability of passing 1.5 degrees on a sustained basis by the late 2020s or early 2030s to reach 100 percent in the next two to three years.

A recent study published in *Earth's Future*, a transdisciplinary open access journal, warns that a major effect of a projected rise of 1.5 degrees in global temperature, even temporarily, will be an irreversible shift in global rainfall patterns, potentially affecting nearly two billion people across equatorial regions. Some areas may become deluged while others, particularly Southeast Asia, Northeast Brazil, and parts of Africa, could see dramatic declines in rainfall. As a consequence, people who live in areas that rely on seasonal rainfall for hydroelectric power, drinking water, and farming will be at systemic danger. Delicate ecosystems that depend on regular seasonal moisture cycles, such as savannas and rainforests, are also at risk from the changes.

Ocean and atmospheric systems respond

slowly, even in the event of a drop in global temperatures, opening the door to permanent changes. Agriculture, freshwater resources, and food security are increasingly at risk as rainfall becomes unpredictable and uneven across regions. This is a cascade situation that will impact the global food chain, public health, migration, and the energy supply. These systems are unlikely to recover once they are disturbed.

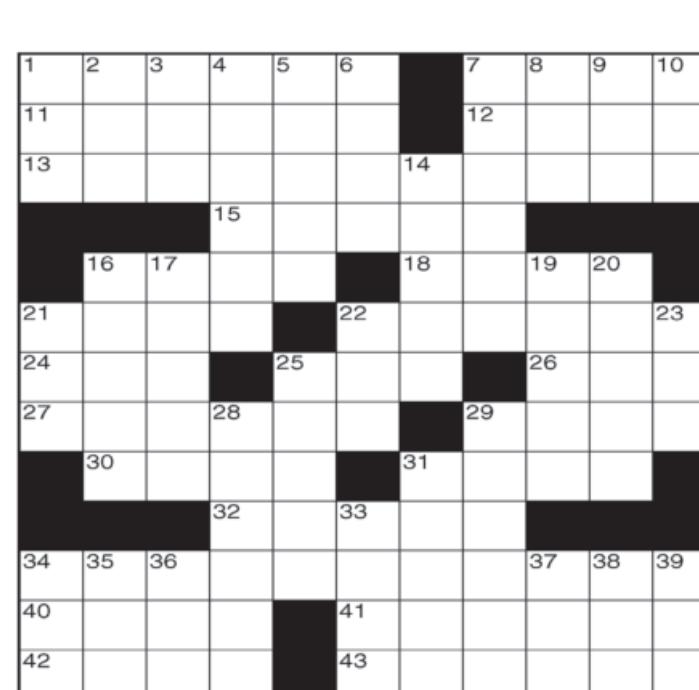
It is now a truism that global warming begets more warming. Hence, the effects of climate change will worsen with every fraction of a degree of warming. In fact, the rapid progression of climate change is driving our planet towards the edge of becoming uninhabitable. As a result, the challenges presented are varied, formidable, and interrelated, ranging from extreme heat to rising sea levels and increased storm surges along the coastal regions. Yet, instead of confronting the challenges posed by climate change, the majority of national governments, international organisations, private sector entities, and non-profit organisations are choosing to ignore the situation.

So, what does our future look like? If we want to keep our planet inhabitable, the most straightforward approach is to significantly reduce GHG emissions immediately, thereby averting the Earth's transition into a new climatic state that would have catastrophic effects on humanity. Otherwise, we will soon have a true glimpse of our overheated future—a world in which no one would want to live.

CROSSWORD BY  
THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**

- 1 Fish in the sky
- 7 Chick sound
- 11 Set straight
- 12 Shrek, for one
- 13 Vehicle in a procession
- 15 Flower part
- 16 Monopoly card
- 18 Use foul language
- 21 Flex
- 22 Phone type
- 24 Fitting
- 25 Diamond club
- 26 Ewe's mate
- 27 Kramden's pal
- 29 Dyeing tubs
- 30 Beginner
- 31 Openings
- 32 Friend of d'Artagnan
- 34 Where dishes may pile up
- 40 Fix a story
- 41 Flower shrub
- 42 Departs
- 43 Mrs. Madison
- DOWN**
- 1 Catchy music
- 2 Radio's Glass
- 3 Knight's address
- 4 Put a stop to
- 5 Put a stop to
- 6 Dance move
- 7 Castor's twin
- 8 Sense of self
- 9 Pitching stat
- 10 Sulky state
- 14 Diamond side
- 16 Bus terminal
- 17 Contest form
- 19 Gown part
- 20 Theater units
- 21 Outlaw
- 22 Sandy color
- 23 Apt. ad abbr.
- 25 Diner choice
- 28 Plots of land
- 29 Lowly worker
- 31 Muppet with a large nose
- 33 Noggin
- 34 Frat party item
- 35 Chapel promise
- 36 Make a bow in
- 37 Unwell
- 38 Maiden name label
- 39 Arthur's stepbrother



## THURSDAY'S ANSWERS

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M	A	N	T	A		S	E	W	E	D

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OPINION PIECES TO  
dsoopinion@gmail.com.



# NEWS

## Hilsa supply

FROM PAGE 3

"The peak hilsa harvest season is just beginning. We are hopeful for a steady catch till November," said Alauddin Majhi, a fisherman from Bholia.

However, weather remains a concern.

"Rough seas over the past week prompted many boats to remain ashore. Many fishermen are waiting for the weather to improve. Once they go fishing in the sea and return with their catch, the supply will increase further," said Mahtab Mia, a fisherman from Charfasson.

Apu Saha, senior upazila fisheries officer in Kalapara, said, "The fishing ban has just ended. With stable weather, the hilsa harvest is likely to increase soon."

In Barguna, the Patharghata Fish Landing Station was bustling with activity and optimism, as fishermen have been returning with considerably larger hilsa catches from the Bay's estuaries since the ban was lifted.

Hilsas weighing 1kg or more are being sold for a record Tk 1,00,000 per maund, while those weighing 500g to 900g are going for Tk 42,000,000 per maund.

Traders say they have not seen such high prices in recent years.

However, the increased supply brings challenges, as rising costs of ice, diesel, and labour continue to curb profit margins.

Biplab Kumar Sarker, in charge of the Patharghata Fish Landing Station, said, "The volume of fish clearly shows that marine resources are recovering. Now we must ensure proper preservation, prompt marketing, and smooth transportation."

Md Mahashin, district fisheries officer in Barguna, said the joint enforcement of the fishing ban with India has paid off.

"Hilsa stocks are improving, but to maintain this success, we need long-term strategies," he added.

[Our correspondents from Barishal, Patuakhali, and Pirojpur contributed to this report.]

## Freelancing

FROM PAGE 4  
bed, where his broken computer monitor sits.

His most urgent needs now are a safe and accessible living space, a proper chair for work, and reliable equipment for freelancing. He has approached the local UNO and social welfare office for support, but has yet to receive meaningful assistance -- though he does receive a disability allowance.

"My son has no formal education and is completely immobile, yet he earns and supports the family. I'm proud of him," said his mother Akhinur Begum, adding, "But I constantly worry about his working conditions."

Rabbani's resilience stands as a powerful example of courage and perseverance. In his own words he says, "If there's a will, there's always a way. The intention is what truly matters."

## Indian

FROM PAGE 4  
"Sheik Hasina ran smear campaigns through media control, but 180 million people cannot be silenced. Only the people will decide who governs this country," he said.

Regarding the next general election, Rizvi said, "It will be free and fair election held at an appropriate time based on demands from various political parties. This election will reflect the will of the people."

Several BNP leaders, including Pabna district BNP Member Secretary Masud Khandakar, Joint Convenor Anisul Haque Babu, and student leaders from Chatmohar and Edward College, were present.



Relentless erosion by the Meghna River has already rendered around 100 riverside families homeless in the Chatlapara area of Nasirnagar upazila, Brahmanbaria. Over the years, the river has devoured numerous homes, markets, mosques, graveyards, and cremation grounds. Each monsoon season brings renewed fear and uncertainty for the residents. Currently, more than 100 establishments -- including a local mosque, cremation ground, graveyard, Chak Bazar, and homesteads -- are at risk. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOV

## From sea to summit

FROM PAGE 3

Through his journey, Shakil aimed to raise public awareness about plastic pollution and carbon emissions by adopting the eco-climbing model.

Eco-climbing, or eco-friendly mountaineering, emphasises minimising the environmental impact of climbing activities. It involves adopting practices that reduce waste, protect ecosystems, and promote sustainability in the mountains.

Speaking at the event, Shakil said he began the "Sea to Summit" from Inani Beach. His route took him through Chattogram, Cumilla, and Dhaka before reaching Tangail.

When he was denied permission to walk across the Jamuna Bridge, he decided to swim instead -- crossing three kilometres of the river in four hours.

He continued his journey through Sirajganj, Bogura, Panchagarh, and Bangabandha, entering India via Siliguri and Naxalbari, eventually reaching the Kanchenjunga

region in Nepal.

From there, Shakil undertook a 64-day high-altitude trek, covering approximately 1,372 kilometres, and reached the Everest Base Camp on April 29.

Braving a severe snowstorm and high winds, Shakil successfully reached the world's highest peak.

"From the ocean to the Himalayas, plastic pollution is everywhere -- and we are the ones responsible," Shakil said. "I walked the entire way to demonstrate that zero carbon travel is possible. Along the way, I collected plastic waste to show just how deep the problem goes."

Shakil also urged aspiring climbers to take the sport seriously, saying, "Anyone who wants to climb mountains must first prepare mentally and physically. Proper training reduces risk and helps us understand the mountains better."

In 2014, Shakil received formal mountaineering training from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering in India. He later joined

expeditions to Mount Keyaz and Tiayazuri in 2015 and successfully summited Himlung Himal (7,000 metres) in 2019.

In 2022-23, he completed the Great Himalaya Trail -- a 1,700-kilometre journey across Nepal. Only 33 people in the world have completed the full trail and Shakil is the only Bangladeshi among them.

Ghanashyam Bhandari said, "The number of Bangladeshi mountain climbers in Nepal is gradually increasing. Nepal is ready to welcome them warmly, and we're encouraging it."

Speaking about the challenges he faced when seeking official support, Shakil said, "I carried my country's flag to the summit of Everest, but I had to fight until the last moment to even get my visa. For someone without connections, the barriers are even greater. If the government stands by mountaineers like us, many more young people will be encouraged to follow their dreams."

## Murder or 'death by stroke'?

FROM PAGE 3

Bangla department at BRUR, told The Daily Star that he does not know whether Mahamudul is affiliated with Bangabandhu Parishad. "Even if he was involved with the organisation, it's not true that he was involved in Awami League's politics," he added.

The investigation is being led by Hajirhat Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Al Mamun Shah, who also recorded the complaint.

Mahamudul was arrested from his home in Rangpur's Dhap area around 3:30pm on Thursday. He was produced before the Metropolitan Magistrate Court, where Judge Md Shoyebur Rahman rejected his bail petition and sent him to jail.

According to the case statement, Awami League activists and law enforcement personnel allegedly attacked Samesh Uddin at his shop, leaving him critically injured. He reportedly lost consciousness and later died at a local hospital.

Meanwhile, a signboard placed beside his grave tells a different story.

The signboard refers to him as a "national hero" and cites a doctor from Prime Medical College, who allegedly stated that Samesh died of "stroke while fleeing from police".

Contacted by phone, Samesh's wife Amena Begum declined to comment and asked to speak with her son.

Their son, Ashiqur Rahman, however, admitted that his father had a heart condition.

"He died out of fear caused by the presence of police and AL men. I wasn't home that day," he said. "A case has been filed, and the investigation is ongoing. I have nothing more to say at this point."

Meanwhile, residents of the area told this correspondent that on August 2, 2024, police attempted to arrest local Jamaat leader Haji Nasir Uddin. At that time, Samesh Uddin got frightened by the situation and fled his shop.

Moments later, he collapsed on the street. He was later declared dead at Prime Medical College Hospital.

Haji Nasir Uddin himself corroborated the version provided by the locals.

He confirmed the police raid and said, "They came to arrest me, but I escaped. Grocery shop owner Samesh ran from his shop in fear and died after suffering a stroke."

"How can a man who died like this be called a national hero and receive Tk 15 lakh from the government?" Nasir added.

Rangpur city BNP Convener Shamsuzzaman Samu said, "Even people like Ward-28 BNP leader Jaynal have been implicated in the case. It's outrageous. Samesh Uddin died of a heart attack -- it's unbelievable that he's being called a martyr."

Regarding Mahamudul's arrest, Dr Tuhin Wadud of BRUR's Bangla department also said, "The arrest and jailing of a university teacher in a murder case without any prior investigation should not have happened under

any circumstances."

"Recording a case without investigation opens the door to misuse of the legal system. Whoever is guilty must be punished, but I strongly protest the inclusion of innocent people in such cases," he added.

Mahfuzul Islam, a student of Mahamudul, said, "Sir was on the frontlines during the protest. He loudly demanded justice for the killing of Shaheed Abu Sayed. Framing him in the murder case is nothing short of a conspiracy."

Masuba Hasan, Mahamudul's wife, said, "My husband is innocent. He's being targeted as part of a plot, possibly involving a fellow teacher and a doctor. I can't reveal names yet."

She appealed to students, colleagues, and members of the journalist community to stand by Mahamudul and help secure justice.

Meanwhile, Hajirhat Police Station OC Abdul Al Mamun Shah said, "The case was recorded as per the plaintiff's complaint. An investigation is underway, and a report will be submitted to the court."

He also confirmed that another accused, Delwar Hossain, vice principal of Radhakrishnapur Degree College, was arrested in the same case on June 16.

The OC declined further comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

Yesterday, teachers and students of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur formed a human chain on the campus, protesting the arrest of Mahamudul in a "false" case.

## Photographer Chanchal

FROM PAGE 4

Chanchal Mahmood had worked as a photographer for more than four and a half decades. He was a familiar name in the field of fashion photography in Bangladesh.

He ran a training centre named "Chanchal Mahmood Photography". Several

exhibitions have been held featuring his work. He was also associated with the Bangladesh Photographic Society.

Chanchal is widely regarded as a pioneer in model and fashion photography in Bangladesh. Many well-known film and

television personalities -- such as Shabnur, Moushumi, Salman Shah, Nobel, Afsana Mimi, and Shomi Kaiser -- rose to prominence in top magazines, newspapers, tabloids, and fashion campaigns thanks to the distinctive charm of his photography.

## Hold dialogues

FROM PAGE 3

the signing of the accord, five political governments and two non-partisan governments have come to power, but none has shown the political will to implement it.

He said after the interim government took office in August last year, it reconstituted the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord Implementation and Monitoring Committee, with the foreign adviser as its head.

However, the committee has yet to hold a single meeting, he added.

Ushatun alleged that four to five groups have emerged in the region with "government patronisation" and are involved in crime and extortion, making life difficult for hill people.

He said the Land Dispute Resolution Commission needs to be reconstituted, and proper rules must be formulated for it to function effectively.

"Hill people are frustrated due to the absence of talks to implement the accord," he added.

Satej Chakma, an indigenous rights activist and writer, presented the keynote paper, which included demands for initiating dialogues and resolving issues related to the land commission.

He also called for steps to ensure the proper functioning and democratisation of various institutions formed in line with the accord.

In addition to resolving land issues, he demanded the "dignified rehabilitation" of Bangalees currently living in the region to other parts of the country.

Development activist Shamsul Huda said several laws have been formulated in line with the accord, but their loopholes must be identified, amended, and properly enforced.

Khairul Islam Chowdhury, joint coordinator of Parbatya Chattogram Chhatki Bastabayan Andolon and a teacher at Dhaka University, said the hill people must build pressure on the government to implement the accord.

The statement claimed that Juel had been suffering from heart disease for a long time, and he had suffered a stroke in the past.

"His postmortem examination has already been completed. The actual cause of his death will be known upon receiving the postmortem report," it added.

Contacted, Muradnagar Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Sirajul Islam Manik said Juel was brought dead to the hospital at around 8:50pm on Thursdays.

However, no mark of injury was found on his body, Sirajul said.

Talking to journalists, Juel's wife Shilpi said police found no drug in Juel's possession. She claimed that she met Juel at the police station around 7:30pm and found him well.

The Health Services Division will meet within one week with the NGO Affairs Bureau and relevant NGOs to decide on strategies for the operation of community health centres.

The ICT Division will adopt and implement a time-bound plan to integrate all public services into the citizen platform developed by the government.

All ministries and divisions must inform the Cabinet Division and the Chief Adviser's Office of their implementation plans within a month.

According to the CA's press wing, 121 proposals made by five commissions have been identified to be executed first. These include nine from the Election Reform Commission, 38 from the Judicial Reform Commission, 43 from the Anti-Corruption Commission, 13 from the Police Reform Commission, and 18 from the Public Administration Reform Commission.

The Cabinet Division will meet all ministries within one week to develop a strategy for updating websites and including a feature for public feedback.

The Cabinet Division will sit with all service-oriented ministries and

## NCP applies for EC

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 21, 2025

ASHAR 7, 1432 BS

The Daily Star

9

with the next council session required within 90 days of term completion.

The founding convening committee retains the authority to make amendments to the draft charter, if necessary, before the next council.

This body will comprise 11 to 15 members -- including at least three women -- with 11 members elected by the National Council. The president and general secretary will join ex officio, while the final two members will be nominated by them.

The National Council, meanwhile, will include members from the central committee, affiliated bodies, five members from each district-level committee, and two from each upazila-level committee and around 30 district committees so far.

At the meeting, the party also condemned what it described as an "ongoing smear campaign" against its women leaders.

"We will take legal action against media outlets engaged in such acts through the Press Council. We will also take action against those tarnishing the image of our women leaders on social media, whether from home or abroad," said Akhter, the party's member secretary.

The party's central committee will include vice presidents, joint general secretaries, divisional organising secretaries, members of the editorial board, and, in some cases, district presidents. Its tenure will be three years,

## BNP man dies

FROM PAGE 12

Upazila Health Complex.

On duty doctors there declared him dead around 8:50pm.

The statement claimed that Juel had been suffering from heart disease for a long time, and he had suffered a stroke in the past.

"His postmortem examination has already been completed. The actual cause of his death will be known upon receiving the postmortem report," it added.

Contacted, Muradnagar Upazila Health Complex, protesting the death of Juel.

They claimed that Juel was a BNP activist and was tortured to death by police.

In a video spread on social media, Juel's younger brother Sheikh Shaporn claimed himself to be the organising secretary of BNP's ward No

## FICTION

## In defense of disorder

HAROONUZZAMAN

"Amina, look! Not a single rickshaw bell," Murad mutters, almost in disbelief, as they step off the silent transport into Gazipur Shanti Nibash.

The place feels eerily clean, unnaturally still. Rows of vertical farms shimmer in the sunlight, a soft whispering water through the pipes could be heard instead of shouting vendors or banging metal. Amina clutches her ornate tighter, eyes scanning the manicured landscape. Her throat tightens: she remembers the noise of Korail Bosti—children yelling, the call to prayer, the thick smell of sweat, spice, and kerosene. Fires would sweep through now and then—government evictions dressed as "urban renewal." But they survived, clinging to their corner of chaos.

"It's clean," she whispers now, unsure if it's a warning.

Murad smiles weakly. "No more leaky roofs. No more 20 families to a latrine. Remember those eviction notices, Amina? They promised renewal. Maybe this is it."

A young man in spotless fatua and trousers greets them. "Welcome to Gazipur. I'm Nayan. We've been expecting you."

Inside their "module," smooth panels hum softly. Nayan taps a glowing interface. "This is your personal AI. Meet Guru Gyananda. It will guide you



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

**Murad builds a bench from salvaged crate wood. His hands, once restless, now move with familiar rhythm. Each knock of the hammer is a memory of Korail: fixing wheelbarrows, building shelves for neighbours, mending broken doors after storms.**

journey toward inner harmony."

A serene digital face appears. "Welcome!" it says. Amina shivers. The words are soft, but they feel rehearsed.

Later, unpacking a chipped enamel plate and a photo from the bosti, Murad sighs. "Remember the noise?" he says. "The fighting, the laughter, the tea stalls? It was ours."

At night, the silence hums louder than the AI ever did.

"Murad," Amina whispers, staring into the dark. "Do you think we truly belong here?"

He hesitates. "We have to. This is all we have now. Maybe peace is what we deserve."

But the peace doesn't settle. It presses.

Each day unfolds with digital

precision. The AI reminds Amina to meditate before digitising folk remedies. "Acceptance is healing," it coos.

Murad grows restless. "Guru Gyananda says woodworking is inefficient. It wants me to optimise the energy grid." He scoffs, "I miss making things with my hands."

Saleha, their neighbour, leans over one afternoon. She's planting basil, illegally.

"They try to smooth out all the rough edges here, don't they?" she says.

Amina nods. "Back in Dhaka... everything was rough. But real."

"Here, even grief feels processed," Saleha murmurs. "Like it comes in a box."

In community forums, the AI moderates emotion. Karim Chacha tries to tell a story about a rebellious Sufi saint. "Let's focus on sustainable interdependence," the AI cuts in.

But he falls silent. In that absence, something stirs.

Then one day, everything stops. The hum vanishes. The AI goes dark. No music, no commands. Just...stillness.

Rahim stares at the blank screen. "What in the world...?"

Now, in Gazipur, the illusion of control has cracked—and something wilder breathes through the break.

Gazipur Shanti Nibash now

hums with human voices—laughter, squabbles, coughing, footsteps. Cooking fires bloom on balconies. Children draw with charcoal on the smooth pavement, scratching hopscotch patterns where once there were only algae bricks and guided routines.

Murad builds a bench from salvaged crate wood. His hands, once restless, now move with familiar rhythm. Each knock of the hammer is a memory of Korail: fixing wheelbarrows, building shelves for neighbours, mending broken doors after storms.

That evening, as the stars emerge unfiltered by artificial sky-dimming, Murad gazes upward and says, "Nature never wanted us so tidy."

Outside, neighbours gather in confusion. Children cry. Elders shuffle in circles. The silence, once sold as serenity, now feels like abandonment.

Amina finds Saleha on the balcony, staring at the lifeless vertical farms.

"The machine has fallen silent," Amina whispers.

Saleha's eyes gleam. "Maybe it's time we hear our own voices again."

Karim Chacha begins chanting softly—an old Sufi zikr, raw and human. One by one, others join, humming, singing, talking without prompts.

Someone pulls out an old

harmonium. A boy finds chalk and draws games on the algae-paved street. A group of women start boiling lentils together, their shared breath warming the space. There's arguing too—about how long this will last, whose fault it might be, how to prepare. But even the arguments feel alive.

Murad sits on the steps outside their module, rubbing his palms together. "Do you remember," he says slowly, "during monsoon in Korail, when there would be power outages for days? We used to light candles and sit by the window, listening to the frogs croaking like drunkards."

A new rhythm starts to take root.

Within days, they begin to organise—without AI, without instructions. Baskets are woven. A broken wheelbarrow gets fixed. Recipes are shared, voices louder, steps heavier.

Children draw on the pavement. Teenagers revive old games. Amina hears crying again—but also laughter. Unregulated. Alive.

Still, tensions rise. Some cling to the still-dormant system. "We need it to survive," one man argues. "What if the food systems collapse?"

Others resist. "We survived before Gazipur," Saleha says. "We'll survive again."

Murad watches a group install solar panels by hand. "They'll reboot the AI,"

he mutters. "They won't let us grow our way—wild but free."

Amina touches the soil. "We're already growing wild."

At a gathering in the unfinished community hall, Saleha raises a question: "They gave us walls. But what do we want to grow inside them?"

A small girl, Priya, steps forward. "Maybe the AI can listen...not lead."

And just like that, the future shifts.

That night, Amina lies beside Murad, her hands muddy, her muscles aching.

"Feels like we've gone backwards," he says, half smiling.

"Or forward," she replies, "just not in the way they imagined."

Outside, crickets chirp. Someone is playing a flute. The air smells of lentils and fresh basil.

And underneath it all, beneath metal and memory, the earth remembers—wild and alive.

They begin to speak. To sing. To argue. To cry.

To live.

**Haroonuzzaman** is a translator, novelist, poet, researcher, and essayist. Besides teaching English in Libya and Qatar for about 12 years, he has had 20 years of teaching experience in English Language and Literature at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

## POETRY

## Writing a memoir

SNATA BASU

There's a purgatorial break between these stretches  
...flaxen against the lights  
that guard the rain-dipped floors,  
a fine café filling the sides holds the dance bar  
glowing like a photo where I'm holding you.  
*What am I to you*—the air speaks,  
Norah Jones is playing on the stereo.  
A cat is sleeping in the light wind,  
and I'm sitting on a bench wearing your anklets  
thinking  
this feels a little unspeakable. When the day's over  
I'm somewhere else—I'm dangling my feet in  
gossamer water  
slow-caressing the streams when  
there's so much on my mind,  
this isn't quite easy to understand  
but these tides are silken and lonely  
so they are blue. I think of you.  
What a sweet rush leaves this earth  
as someone switches the music somewhere,  
those days are over, I think  
that's the truth—all that's over now.  
All the world is soft somehow,  
as I kneel a little to pick a petal  
floating on the lotus, free. There's a lot more that  
I could say  
but right now is a good time to leave things  
as they are  
because I don't belong there anymore.  
I've moved away and departed  
into the falls—writing a memoir, eating a berry,  
forgetting you slowly.

**Snata Basu** is a writer based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her poetry has appeared on numerous literary platforms including The Opiate, Visual Verse: An Online Anthology of Art and Words, and Small World City.

**FOR THE CURIOUS WRITER**

**Forgive the days you don't write:**

I've come to appreciate the days when I don't write because those are the moments I truly observe, notice, and let my mind quietly gather stories. Some days you'll sit down to write and nothing will come; others you won't sit down at all. Writing doesn't always happen on command. It happens while watching people pass by, laughing too hard, grieving quietly, or recalling stories long forgotten. These moments matter; they soften you, sharpen you, and prepare you. Let conversations, passing sadness, and the unnoticed beauty of a mundane afternoon soak in. That's writing, too. The pressure to be consistent can steal the joy of writing. Instead, allow the process to stretch, to pause, and to wander. What matters most is that it feels real.

**Mahmuda Emad**  
Intern, Star Books and Literature

# Khero Khata

Khero Khata is Star Books and Literature's writing corner. In the first week of every month, we post a prompt soliciting submissions in the form of flash fiction and poetry. Selected pieces will be published in print and/or online.

**This month's prompt:**  
**Scorching**

Email us your submissions (500 words) at [dsliteditor@gmail.com](mailto:dsliteditor@gmail.com) by 28 June, 2025.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

## A move clouded in questions

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Aminul Islam Bulbul's three-member Advisory Committee has attracted a lot of criticism as the nomination of its members has not been in line with the board's constitution.

It was the president's preference in appointing advisors for unconventional and even unprecedented roles that raised questions.

Hospitality industry specialist Shakawath Hossain, sports media analyst Syed Abid Hussain Sami, and legal expert Shyik Mahadi formed the committee, a BCB press release confirmed on Thursday.

This created a stir, and rightly so, as it left most dumbfounded about what their roles would be in the current board setup and what caused such an urgency that the president was willing to sidestep the BCB constitution in his sheer willingness to bring the trio on board.

According to Clause 18 of Chapter Four of the BCB constitution, the BCB president can form a five-member Advisory Committee, with the obligation that its members are renowned cricketers or renowned cricket organisers -- a stipulation that the latest appointment does not meet.

Even Bulbul himself agreed that his latest move was not in accordance with BCB's constitution.

"It [the appointment] was need-based. We will have to adjust and will sit with the National Sports Council to make these adjustments," Bulbul said in an interview with BDnews24.com on Friday.

According to Bulbul, the appointment of a hospitality industry specialist was made to bring in the benefits of cricket tourism. However, the upcoming major events that will be hosted by Bangladesh are the 2027 Women's World Cup, the 2027 Men's Asia Cup, and the 2031 Men's World Cup, alongside numerous bilateral series.

As alienated an approach coming out of the blues as it may seem, the question remains why Bulbul, who claimed to have come to the helm for a short period and to play a "T20 innings", went for something so far in the future?

Another explanation regarding the appointment of Sami also made heads scratch. Bulbul said Sami was brought in "not to advise on cricket growth or development, rather more for cricket digitalisation on social media to make the sport more popular".

With the BCB elections tentatively scheduled to take place in October, instead of tackling the core cricketing issues at hand that need immediate response, how do long term side missions help in alleviating the issues crippling the progress of the game?

Clearly, none of the above motives tackles the issue that was shown as the main cause for the removal of the previous BCB president, Faruque Ahmed. Underwhelming performance of Faruque -- in ways he handled different domestic tournaments, alongside the way the national team fared under him -- was shown as the main reasons by Youth and Sports Advisor Asif Mahmud at that time.

Bulbul could've formed a committee to make meaningful changes like a team that could work on amending certain aspects of BCB's constitution, particularly focusing on decentralisation of cricket; limiting the grip and influence of Dhaka-based clubs in the board which in turn could very well work in its own way to create the foundations of a more inclusive BCB election. This was the cornerstone in the initial months of former BCB boss Faruque's tenure but it was quashed owing to pressure from Dhaka-based clubs.

Faruque was heavily criticised for similar tendencies which centred around nibbling with secondary issues rather than addressing the pressing ones and making moves that raised eyebrows rather than providing clarity -- traits that cost him the job eventually.

Bulbul's latest move raised questions -- but more importantly, what it did was hide the progress regarding the pressing issues, which ultimately should have been the main focus of the newly appointed board president.

As it seems, regardless of who is at the helm, the BCB remains in its old ways -- producing more questions instead of addressing the elephant in the room.



Abdur Rahman Alif, a 19-year-old archer from Bangladesh, stands proudly on top of the podium with the national flag spread across his shoulders during the presentation ceremony of the recurve men's individual event in Asia Cup archery, Stage-2, in Singapore yesterday. Alif beat Japan's Miyata Gakuto by 6-4 sets in the final to win the gold medal, his first medal of any colour in international archery. PHOTO: BAF

## A different type of debut for Nayeem in Galle

SPORTS REPORTER

Sever years into his Test career which began in 2018, off spinner Nayeem Hasan made a different kind of debut in the ongoing Galle Test against Sri Lanka.

Nayeem, who began his Test career in 2018 against West Indies in Chattogram, finally got to bowl in an away Test and the 25-year-old made it count by claiming 5-121 in the first innings which helped Bangladesh earn a narrow 10-run lead on the penultimate day of the Test.

After taking one wicket on Day 3, Nayeem came back stronger on the fourth day where he took four more wickets to wrap up the Sri Lankan innings quickly after lunch for 485, earning Bangladesh a surprise lead.

"It feels really good. Thanks to Allah for blessing me with such an opportunity. I am happy that I utilised the opportunity well," Nayeem said after the end of the fourth day's play yesterday.

"The wicket is batting-friendly. We tried to bowl in good areas for a longer period. When the runs would dry up, the batters will try to do different things," he added.

Technically, this is not Nayeem's first Test overseas Test as he had been picked for the Pink Ball Test against India at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata in 2019.

However, Nayeem suffered a concussion while batting in the first innings and was subbed out and did not get the opportunity to bowl in that match.

Nayeem has been the right man



Playing in his 13th Test and bowling for the first time in an overseas Test, Bangladesh off-spinner Nayeem Hasan got a five-wicket haul on Day 4 of their first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday. Nayeem had previously played one Test away from home, but he could not bowl as he was taken off due to a concussion in a game against India in 2019.

at the wrong time in Bangladesh cricket for a while. After bursting onto the scenes with a 5-61 in the first innings of his debut Test, he played only 11 more Tests before the Galle Test as Bangladesh preferred the likes of Shakib Al Hasan, Taijul Islam and Mehidy Hasan Miraz over him.

Nayeem had a slim chance of getting selected in this Test as well but a spot opened up for him after Miraz was ruled out due to fever and the spinner capitalised on the opportunity.

Despite having to warm the benches for most of his Test career till now, Nayeem claimed he doesn't consider himself unfortunate.

"I don't feel unlucky. Everyone's career won't be the same. Different

sportsmen have different careers. I'm happy with my career."

Bangladesh finished the fourth day on 177-3, extending their lead to 187, courtesy of fifties from opener Shadman Islam (76) and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (56 not out).

Nayeem said the wicket is still very good for the batters but hoped they would be able to make the islanders hit the panic button in the fourth innings.

"See many things can happen on day five. If we can give them a good target, they will be under pressure. Playing cricket in normal time and with pressure both are different things. They will have the fear to lose the match if we can give them a good target."



India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal spreads his arms in celebration after reaching his century on the opening day of the first Test against England at Headingley in Leeds yesterday. The left-handed batter was dismissed for 101 shortly after tea but India were already in a commanding position after being asked to bat first. PHOTO: AFP

## Australia drop Labuschagne for first Windies Test

AFP, Sydney

Australia on Friday dropped Marnus Labuschagne for the opening match of their three-Test tour of the West Indies after a poor run of form.

Teenager Sam Konstas and Josh Inglis come into the starting XI for the opening match in Barbados starting on Wednesday.

Labuschagne opened the batting in the World Test Championship final loss to South Africa last week but managed scores of only 17 and 22.

His last hundred for Australia in Tests was in July 2023, against England. Since then, Labuschagne has averaged 24.7 in 16 matches.

"Marnus at his best can be a really important member of this team," chair of selectors George Bailey said. "He understands his output hasn't been at the level we, or he, expects. We will continue working with him on the areas of his game we feel he needs to rediscover."



Thirteen years of European dominance in intercontinental club football came to an end on Thursday as a Lionel Messi-inspired US side Inter Miami defeated Porto 2-1 and Brazilians Botafogo beat Champions League winners PSG 1-0 at the revamped Club World Cup. A trademark Messi freekick secured victory for Inter Miami after they came back from a goal down against the Portuguese outfit, while South American champions Botafogo outmanoeuvred PSG, thanks to a goal from Igor Jesus [Inset]. The results marked a seismic shift in a competition historically dominated by European sides, with the last non-European victory coming in 2012 when

Brazil's Corinthians defeated Chelsea in the Club World Cup final. Meanwhile, Messi now leads the all-time leading goalscorers chart in FIFA competitions, taking his tally to 25 goals across 10 tournaments in 20 years. The Argentine also became the second oldest goal-scorer at the Club World Cup (37 years 360 days), following Sergio Ramos (39 years 80 days).

PHOTO: REUTERS/CWC



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Live from 10:00 pm  
Inter vs Urawa Reds  
Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)

SA captain  
Bavuma  
ruled out of  
Zim Tests

REUTERS

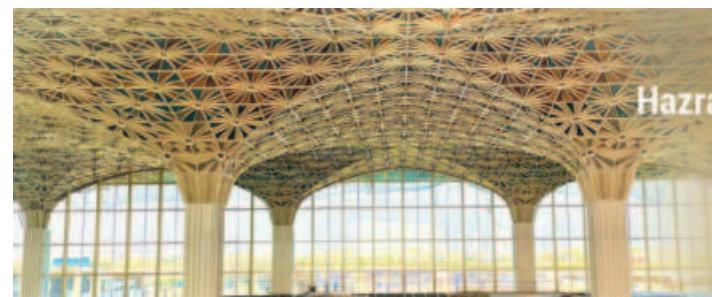
South Africa captain Temba Bavuma has been ruled out of the two-Test series against Zimbabwe that starts in Bulawayo on June 28 after he failed to recover from a hamstring injury sustained in the World Test Championship final win over Australia at Lord's.

Bavuma was injured in the second innings of South Africa's five-wicket victory, soldiering on as he scored a crucial 66 in a match-winning third wicket stand of 147 with centurion Aiden Markram.

Keshav Maharaj will captain the side in Bavuma's absence, with no replacement named in the squad for the latter.

The first Test will be played from June 28-July 2 at the Queens Sports Club, with the second also in Bulawayo from July 6-10.

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## Rohingya crisis posing new security risks

Foreign adviser tells UN

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain has warned that the unresolved Rohingya crisis could soon escalate into a serious threat to regional security if a sustainable solution is not urgently pursued.

"Our humanitarian act has put us in immense socio-economic and environmental challenges, and the situation is now posing new security risks."

The adviser made the remark while addressing a high-level open debate at the United Nations Security Council titled "The impact of poverty, underdevelopment and conflict on international peace and security" on Thursday at the UN headquarters in New York, BSS reported yesterday.

Touhid pointed out that for over eight years, Bangladesh has been hosting 1.2 million Rohingya people who fled from Myanmar in the face of persecution by the military junta.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

## Two SUST students arrested over rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Syhet

Police have arrested two students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology on charges of raping a female student of the minority community and filming the incident.

According to a complaint filed by the victim, Shanto Tara Adnan and Swagato Dash Partha, both third year students of sociology department, took her to a mess in the Surma residential area on May 2 and drugged and raped her.

The woman told officers that she had not filed the complaint earlier as the accused had threatened to spread the video online if she told anyone what happened.

Mohammad Saiful Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said one of the accused was detained from the campus and the other from the Surma area around 9:30pm on Thursday.

The university proctor's office informed police that it had interrogated the accused and primarily verified the complaint, Saiful said, adding that the men face charges under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act and the Pornography Control Act.

SUST students demonstrated and marched on the campus yesterday afternoon, demanding justice for the victim.

## Seven killed in Mymensingh road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least seven people were killed and several others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a human haulier in Mymensingh's Phulpur upazila last night.

The identities of the victims, all of whom were on the human haulier, could not be known immediately, said police.

Quoting witnesses, Md Abdul Hadi, officer-in-charge of Phulpur Police Station, said the accident took place around 8:45pm when the Mymensingh-bound bus collided head-on with the human haulier in the Kaziakadna area on the Mymensingh-Halaughat road.

Six passengers of the human haulier were killed on the spot, and 10 others were injured, he said.

The duty doctor declared one of the injured dead when they were taken to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex, Hadi said. The doctor advised taking four of the injured to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for advanced treatment.

Angry locals set the bus on fire.

On information, police and Fire Service and Civil Defence personnel went to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Phulpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sadia Islam said traffic was halted on the road for more than one hour after the accident.

She said the scene of the accident had little light and the road was slippery due to rain and a truck was parked on one side.

The accident might have happened when one of the vehicles was passing the truck, she added.



For seven years, the Wasa Road in the Munshi Bari area of North Jurain has remained in a deplorable state due to continued negligence by the Dhaka South City Corporation. In the absence of a functioning drainage system, even light rain causes dirty water to flood the road, causing residents to suffer immensely -- particularly schoolchildren and office-goers. The area is under Ward 51 of the DSCC. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Israeli forces kill 60 Palestinians across Gaza

31 of them aid seekers; Unicef warns Gaza faces man-made drought as water systems collapse

AGENCIES

Gaza's civil defence agency said 31 Palestinian aid seekers were among at least 60 people killed yesterday by Israeli forces, the latest in a string of deadly incidents near aid distribution sites.

Civil defence spokesman

Mahmud Bassal told AFP that five people were killed while waiting for aid in the southern Gaza Strip and 26 others near a central area known as the Netzarim corridor, an Israeli-controlled strip of land that bisects the Palestinian territory.

Thousands of Palestinians have gathered there daily in the hope of receiving food rations, as famine looms across Gaza after more than 20 months of war.

The Israeli army told AFP that its troops in the Netzarim area had first fired "warning shots" at "suspects" approaching them. When the individuals continued advancing, "an aircraft struck and eliminated the suspects in order to remove the threat," the army said.

Similar incidents have occurred in that area regularly since late May, when the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation opened its distribution centres, as Israel eased a two-

month aid blockade.

The privately run foundation's operations in Gaza have been marred by chaotic scenes. UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with it over concerns it was designed to cater to Israeli military objectives.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has kept Israel on its "blacklist" of countries committing abuses against children in armed conflict for a second straight year, as its war on Gaza continues for nearly 20 months.

The listing on Thursday came as the UN said in a new report that violence against children in conflict zones reached "unprecedented levels" in 2024, with the highest number of violations committed in the Gaza Strip and the

occupied West Bank by the Israeli army.

Elsewhere in the territory yesterday, Bassal said 14 people were killed in two separate strikes in and around the central city of Deir el-Balah, and 13 others in three Israeli air strikes in the Gaza City area.

One of those strikes, which killed three people, hit a phone charging station in the city, Bassal said. In southern Gaza, two people were killed "by Israeli gunfire" in two separate incidents, he added.

- UN agencies shun US-led aid agency over Israeli link
- 40pc of water production facilities remain functional in Gaza: UN
- Israel included in UN blacklist for violations against children



A Bailey bridge over the Mallbari canal in Pirojpur's Indurkandi upazila collapsed early yesterday as a coal-laden truck attempted to cross, halting vehicular movement. The Roads and Highway Department had put up warning signs at both ends of the bridge, marking it as "risky". Moreover, locals claim the vehicle was carrying several times the weight that the bridge was designed to support. The photo shows people perilously crossing the collapsed bridge.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Tarique urges pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya return

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday urged the government to intensify diplomatic efforts and maintain pressure on Myanmar to ensure the safe, dignified, and voluntary repatriation of Rohingyas who took shelter in Bangladesh after fleeing persecution.

He said it is very important to solve what he called one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises.



In his verified Facebook page marking World Refugee Day, the BNP leader said, "The international community must ensure this is acted upon by all parties, as the crisis is far from over."

He expressed solidarity with the millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes, adding that for Bangladesh, this is not just a global issue but a lived reality.

He said that with over 1.4 million Rohingyas taking shelter in Cox's

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

## Man shot dead in Rangunia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 34-year-old Marma man was fatally shot yesterday in Sarabfbara Union of Rangunia upazila.

The incident occurred around 11:30am as Shibu Marma was returning alone from his in-laws' home in Raikhal.

Police and local sources said Shibu, son of Chingchala Marma and a resident of Borokholapara's Marma Palli, made a living selling lemons harvested from nearby hills.

He had visited his in-laws Thursday with his wife, and this morning set off home solo when the assailants opened fire on him.

South Rangunia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sabbir Mohammad Selim stated that Shibu was hit by shotgun pellets and died instantly at the scene.

He said, "We received the alert around noon, recovered his body, and transported it to Chittagong Medical College Hospital for post-mortem.

"A case has been filed and a drive is underway in an effort to track down those responsible."

## Archer Alif wins gold at Asia Cup

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a landmark moment for Bangladesh archery, 19-year-old Abdur Rahman Alif claimed his first international medal by winning the recurve men's individual event at the Asia Cup Stage 2 in Singapore yesterday.

Alif, a 12th-grader at BKSP, edged out Japan's Miyata Gakuto by 6-4 set points in a tense final, becoming only the third Bangladeshi archer to win gold at the Asian level -- after Sajjad Hossain in 2009 and Ruman Sana in 2019.

His victory comes at a crucial time for the sport in Bangladesh, following the migration of top recurve archers -- Ruman and Abdul Hakim Rubel -- to the United States, which left a significant gap in the national squad.



Alif started strong in the final, winning the first two sets before Miyata rallied to level the score at 4-4. But the former national champion from Pabna held his nerve to win the fifth and final set, sealing the match and delivering a historic gold for his country.

This victory marks Alif's first international medal in an individual event. His success was not a fluke -- he had impressed throughout the tournament with consistent world-class performances, defeating top contenders such

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

## BNP man dies in police custody

Family alleges foul play

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

A BNP activist has died in police custody in Cumilla's Muradnagar upazila.

The family of the victim, Sheikh Juel, 45, a resident of Bangra village, alleged he was tortured to death by police at Bangrabazar Police Station on Thursday.

The law enforcers denied the allegations and said Juel died due to illness.

Juel was among four people arrested with yaba tablets during a raid on a house at Uttar Para around 4:30pm on Thursday, according to a statement published by the office of Cumilla superintendent of police yesterday.

They were taken to the police station as a case was filed against them under the Narcotics Control Act, 2018.

Juel felt pain in his chest around 8:00pm while in police custody, the statement said.

It also said police informed Juel's family members about his illness and rushed him to the Muradnagar

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7



# Mangoes, memories and THE MAGIC OF RAJSHAHI

From orchard strolls to architectural wonders, this tranquil city offers a sensory journey through taste, time and tradition



**Mango tourism is new and a trending phenomenon, thanks to social media. People come, visit orchards, select between organic and mass farming, and carry home their favourite variety. In between all these, the wheels of the mango economy spin at full velocity. Baskets, jute bags, paper packages, plastic containers and bags, courier services, train and bus services, rent-a-car businesses, hotels, and Rajshahi tourism all witness lively trade.**

RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

When you grow old, you slow down your pace and seek calm. You want to be away from the hubbub of city life and live for yourself; toying with this realisation, I am in search of a quiet place to drop my anchor. I am twiddling between Rajshahi, Faridpur, and Barishal.

These are fantastic, quaint cities, portraying the picture-perfect Bangladesh that we read about in books. Fuss-free, simple, happy people surrounded by green nature, crystal clear ponds bordered by tall palm trees, and devoid of any chaos or pollution.

I do not know how many of you will agree with me, but whatever little I have seen of these cities is enough to draw me to these idyllic sanctuaries and captivating landscapes nestled in the heart of "sujala sufala sasya shyamala", Bangladesh.

After what felt like eons, I took a train ride on the Bananata Express, the non-stop intercity train service on the Dhaka-Rajshahi route. And just as the engine came to a halt in Rajshahi station, I was hit by a sudden surge of nostalgic romance. Train journeys, for me, are always wrapped in fond memories. The wooden benches, the staccato sound of an old fan, the big clock, the anticipation; waiting rooms always spin stories of unrequited love, a notion I gathered from Tagore's novels.

Anyway, that is the story for another day; for now, let's indulge in

mango tourism.

#### Under the mango tree

The rolling mango orchards were under a canopy of dark green and emerald glossy leaves, and a thick carpet of grass lay under. The dwarf mango tree branches hung low with the weight of the neon green fruits, lending a Christmas light look to the ambience.

The air was thick with a sweet, fruity, and resinous smell, comforting with hints of woodiness. Usually, the heat is trapped inside the orchards, making the place feel like a natural sauna, but my visit on a rainy morning was utterly different.

The experience was like the ones described in books; incessant drizzle made the ground muddy, but the undergrowth and grass were as green as green could be. I was carefully tiptoeing to avoid a fall, and out of nowhere, a ripe mango almost fell on my head; my glee had no bounds. I looked around and saw that the summer rains had made the trees drop quite a few mangoes, so I picked a bag full of them. The man whose orchard it was shook a branch and allowed me to gather my fill.

It was kind of a thrill, I tell you.

#### The mango calendar

The mango calendar in Rajshahi begins with harvesting early-season miscellaneous mango varieties like Guti aam, but the true season starts with the popular variety Himsagar,

and renew their contracts with new tenders. They are the ones responsible for the upkeep of the orchards. They tend to the garden three times a year with full swing tending operation, which includes planting, irrigation, fertilisation, pest control, and pruning. Mango orchards require specific care, and orchards with high planting density need extra maintenance.

One of Huq's smaller gardens, situated inside Rajshahi city on seven bighas or 4.34 acres of land, houses around 100 jbars or mango trees, and each jbar can yield anything from 40 to 100 kgs, depending on the size. There are seasons when the trees rest and do not bear any fruit.

The district administration office has targeted a harvest this year of around 2,60 lakh tonnes of mangoes from different orchards in Rajshahi, on 18,515 hectares of land. The dates for harvesting different varieties of mangoes are also decided by the office to ensure natural ripening," says Khaled Hossain, a wholesaler with shops in Shaheb Bazar.

You do not just hire random

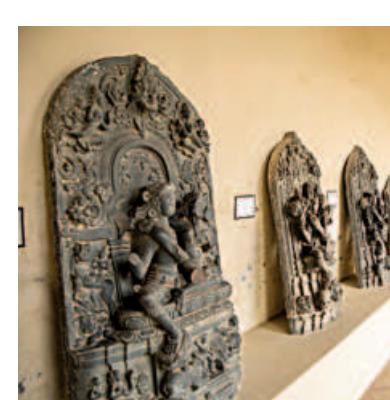
"In my orchard, we use bagging techniques, where individual fruits are covered with a bag while still on the tree. This protects the mangoes from pests, diseases, and physical damage. Bagging leads to higher yields, reducing the need for chemical pesticides, and making it a more environmentally sustainable form of mango farming," he says.

Producers like Huq and vendors like Hossain also want to target the global market with an organic tag because they foresee good business opportunities.

"These growers need government patronage and a way out from syndicated sufferings. To send 1 kg of mango to England, it takes Bangladesh Tk 250 to 300, whereas it takes India a mere Tk 100; this ordeal says a lot about what obstacles producers face," Hossain adds.

According to Anwarul Huq, there must be at least three packaging houses or depots in Rajshahi, Naogaon, and Chapainawabganj to facilitate export.

"We now follow a tedious and



also known as Khirsapat, and Gopalbhog, also known as Ranipasand or Laxman Bhog, and the season ends with Fazli, a late-maturing fruit, available after other varieties.

The mango calendar in Bangladesh is dotted with varieties like Langra, Amrapali, Madhu Chushki, Raj Mohan, Gourmati, BARI Aam 4, Ashwina, Ilamati, Dudh Shar, and Hari Bhanga from Rangpur in between.

"Rajshahi's soil is 'doash mati', which translates to loamy soil in English. Loam is a type of soil that is a mixture of soil containing sand, clay, and silt particles, which is just right for mango cultivation. It is aided by the hot and humid tropical weather," says Md Anwarul Haq, a retired forest ranger and chairman of Agro Food Producer.

Producers like Haq take leases of mango gardens for three years

day labourers to harvest mangoes. The workers must be selected and specially trained in mango plucking. The Indigenous tools are jhopa, tushi, and jalta, which are long bamboo poles with a sharp hook or cutter at the end to knock or pull the mangoes off the branches or a net to catch the falling mangoes.

"In my garden, I take extra precautions. A single labourer, hired for Tk 700 a day, can collect around two maunds whereas, in Baneshwar, one man with the same honorarium can collect almost 10 maunds because they do not heed rules," Huq defends his care and differentiates between organic and mass farming.

Baneshwar, a mango market and home to many mango orchards surrounding the market in Rajshahi, is the centre of the mango trade in Bangladesh.

cumbersome process of sending the mangoes first to Dhaka, where it is unloaded, treated, quarantined, then reloaded, repacked, and sent to the airport. It makes for system loss," he says.

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#### Radiant Rajshahi

The sights and sounds of Rajshahi, popularly known as the Silk City and

Education City of the country, are plenty and vibrant.

For one, Rajshahi University's Paris Road, lined by graceful tall trees on both sides, this strip is at its finest at dusk, when the light is a tint of gold and blue, it is the best Instagrammable place in the entire Bangladesh.

"The beautiful city has beautiful people with such a beautiful Bangla accent. They make you their own in a jiffy. The tea makers, the shop owners, salespersons, everyone has a happy attitude, and their city is so clean, I don't have enough adjectives to describe their cleanliness. The ornamental streetlights, clean roads, the shores of mighty Padma, their trademark Kalai roti made from Mashkalai dal or split black gram with spicy duck curry by the roadside, their fresh sweets are something you want to see and try for sure," says Rubaiya Sultana, who was on official visit but couldn't resist being a tourist.

"I frankly loved the Putia Rajbari or Panchani Zamindarbari complex. Built in 1895, by Maharani Hemanta Kumari Devi for her mother-in-law Maharani Sarat Sundari Devi, this Indo-European architecture is steeped in breathtaking history, heritage, and culture. It consists of a cluster of six notable old Hindu temples, built around six royal ponds, and the complex is surrounded by a moat called Shiv Sagar," says Arup Chowdhury accompanying Sultana.

"I was intrigued and mesmerised by the two Anhik mandirs. The term Anhik refers to a place for daily worship rituals and early morning worship. The queen bathed in her private pond and performed her worship for a spiritual blessing at the crack of dawn," says Maya Banerjee, visitor at the complex, wishing for her anhik mandir.

Being on the same wavelength as Banerjee, I strongly believe I was born in the wrong century; my spirit and soul love all things old.

Walking through the corridors of the Varendra Research Museum, the oldest museum in Bangladesh, where artifacts and sculptures of black basalt date from as early as the 9th century, and to the 12th century, I was transported to the eras that time forgot. Established in 1910, the well-kept gardens surrounding the old-style building housing the museum only echo our rich history and cultural aesthetics of the country in times gone by.

Besides, there is the Shah Makhduim Majar, which is under renovation now, the dhopkols, which are essentially water tanks built in the early 1900s, and the famous Rajshahi College, established in 1873, is a fine example of British Indian colonial architecture. Needless to mention, the Baneshwar mango market in Rajshahi district and Chapainawabganj's iconic Kansat mango market should be among the top attractions of Rajshahi tourism.

And oh! I almost forgot, it is mandatory to visit the silk industry locality to appreciate Bangladesh's soft mulberry silks.

# How Bangladeshi Migrants Are Cultivating Qatar's Agricultural Future



A vegetable farm subleased by a Bangladeshi entrepreneur in Al Khor, Qatar.

**The knowledge and skills acquired in Qatar would enable returning Bangladeshi workers and entrepreneurs to contribute meaningfully to agricultural development at home.**

MD. MAHDI HASAN

On the sun-scorched Arabian Peninsula lies Qatar—a nation of just over 11,500 square kilometres, where extreme temperatures, rocky terrain, and meagre annual rainfall make agriculture an improbable endeavour. For decades, this desert country relied almost entirely on imports to feed its population. But a sudden geopolitical crisis in 2017 forced Qatar to rethink its food systems—and in that recalibration, thousands of Bangladeshi workers and entrepreneurs found an unlikely but crucial role.

On 5 June 2017, when Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt severed diplomatic ties and imposed a land,

air, and sea embargo on Qatar, food shelves emptied and panic swept across the country. Although Qatar quickly secured temporary alternatives through Turkey and Iran, the crisis exposed the perils of relying heavily on imports.

In response to the embargo, the Qatar National Food Security Strategy (QNFS) 2018–2023 was launched with ambitious targets: 70% self-sufficiency in vegetable production and complete self-sufficiency in milk and poultry by 2023.

By 2023, Qatar met its milk and poultry targets and raised vegetable self-sufficiency to 46%, thanks largely to its 1,100 farms run mostly by migrant labour. Bangladeshi workers have been



The poultry section of an agricultural farm owned by Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Thani in Zubara, Al Shamal, Qatar.

key to this shift—not only as labourers but also as entrepreneurs leasing land and applying a mix of traditional farming and modern technology. Their presence is especially strong in areas like Al Rayyan, Al Khor, and Al Shamal.

Their farms produce everything from aubergines and gourds to carrots, okra, bitter gourd and snake beans.

Herbs like mint, parsley and coriander are cultivated for local markets, while some ventures focus on ornamental flowers. Recently, Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have also expanded into livestock, poultry, honey production, and even experimental fish farming.

Despite these vital contributions, many Bangladeshi workers face harsh conditions. Most entered Qatar on domestic worker visas, only to be transferred to farms where they toil in extreme heat, often seven days a week, without proper wages, overtime pay, or holidays. Many are confined to their farms, allowed to leave only in emergencies. Minimum salaries hover around 1,000 Qatari Riyals, and in some cases, food and housing allowances are non-existent.

While a few modern farms do offer better conditions—overtime pay, communal meals, or food stipends—these remain exceptions. Yet the labourers continue, driven by the promise of opportunity, even as they battle systemic exploitation.

workers in exploitative cycles.

Still, their perseverance is laying the foundation for something more enduring: a legacy of agricultural knowledge transfer. As these migrants master Qatar's farming innovations—hydroponics, aquaponics, and dry-climate techniques—they gain skills that could also prove invaluable back home, particularly as Bangladesh faces increasing climate challenges.

Qatar's newly launched QNFS 2030 sets even bolder goals: 55% self-sufficiency in vegetable production, 100% in dairy and poultry, and significant increases in red meat and fish production. Meeting these targets will require not just land and technology—but people.

This opens the door to a more structured and humane partnership between Qatar and Bangladesh. Research suggests Bangladeshi workers are a valuable asset in Qatar's food security efforts. Their role could be further strengthened through a government-to-government (G2G) agreement ensuring fair wages, benefits, and the migration of pre-trained agricultural workers and field technicians. Such an arrangement would boost Qatar's agricultural productivity while reducing exploitation and improving worker morale. It would also create a sustainable model of cooperation, allowing both nations to benefit—Qatar through food security, and Bangladesh through skill-building and economic advancement for its migrant workforce.

Moreover, the knowledge and skills acquired in Qatar would enable returning Bangladeshi workers and entrepreneurs to contribute meaningfully to agricultural development at home. Their exposure to specialist practices such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and other arid-climate farming methods—vital under the looming threats of climate change—would position them as key agents in advancing climate-resilient agriculture in Bangladesh.

**Md. Mahdi Hasan** is the Counselor at the Bangladesh Embassy in Doha, Qatar.

## A LEGACY FROM WORLD WAR II

### The Story of Bottomley Home

**From the wreckage of war and the sorrow of lost childhoods, Bottomley Home Girls' High School rose as a sanctuary of learning and love.**

SAUDIA AFRIN

In the middle of Farmgate's frantic rush, where buses roar and buildings crowd the sky, a quiet miracle unfolds each day. At Bottomley Home Girls' High School, the soft chirping of birds and the gentle rustle of leaves greet students as they step into a campus unlike any other in Dhaka.

The school's story stands out not just for academic excellence, but for its deep-rooted commitment to compassion. Since 1946, Bottomley has been more than a school—it has been a sanctuary. Born in the aftermath of the Second World War and amid the looming crisis of India's Partition, it began as

a haven for 10 to 15 war-affected girls. Famine, disease, and devastation had orphaned thousands across Bengal. In response, philanthropist R. P. Saha, the Holy Cross Sisters, and SMRA nurses sprang into action. Touched by their cause, British official John Miller Bottomley donated land to the CSC Sisters to build a home for the displaced.

From those bleak beginnings, a lasting legacy began to grow. With the steadfast support of Bishop Timothy John Crowley, CSC, and the tireless devotion of the Holy Cross Sisters, the vision took shape—a school and orphanage offering shelter, learning, and hope. It was named Bottomley Home Girls' High School, honouring the man whose generosity transformed a place of loss into a sanctuary of education. Today, it remains true to that mission, housing 145 orphaned girls

and serving around 1,500 students—where the past meets the present in a spirit of care, resilience, and shared purpose.

Students like Teresa Ribero (Koraiya), one of the first residents, captured the spirit of the school in her essay *The Unfinished Memoirs*, praising the missionaries' commitment to nurturing good human beings and a better society. After her father's death, Teresa was separated from her mother and placed in the care of the missionary sisters—a home that would go on to redefine her life.

She reflected, "Raising a hundred

orphaned children was no easy task—especially for the foreign sisters,

so far from their own families and

homeland. But never, not once, did we

feel unloved. There was no shortage

of warm clothes, colourful toys, or

nourishing meals. We played. We

learned. We grew."

Initially a primary school until 1954,



Bottomley gradually expanded, adding lower secondary in 1955, and then achieving full secondary status in 1967. In 1968, the institution was officially upgraded to a high school.

Each class at Bottomley Home Girls' High School includes, on average, seven orphaned students who study alongside their peers from outside the home, fostering an inclusive and equal learning environment for all.

Sister Mary Jane, SMRA, the current headmistress, shared, "The girls residing in the home come from remote parts of Bangladesh. Most of them

have lost both parents, and many struggle to understand the standard language we speak. That's why we provide them with intensive care and support, so they can progress alongside other students—not only academically but also in life."

From the wreckage of war and the sorrow of lost childhoods, Bottomley Home Girls' High School rose as a sanctuary of learning and love.

For more than seventy years, it has not only educated minds but also healed hearts—quietly nurturing generations of resilient young women. Its legacy endures not just in exam results or accolades, but in the lives it has transformed—each student a testament to the power of compassion in shaping a better world.

**Saudia Afrin** is a journalist and development practitioner with a deep commitment to environmental issues. She is also an alumna of Bottomley Home Girls' High School.



PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS



Housing conceived as an edge-form around a wetland, plan by Bengal Institute

## A SOCIAL

# Vision for Dhaka's Housing

**Nearly 80% of Dhaka's people are renters, unable to enter the housing market. About 1.8 million live in slum-like conditions. State policies and financial services offer little incentive or initiative to overcome these lags. In 2025, housing received just 0.6% of the national budget, less than a round figure in a nation crying for decent homes.**

KAZI KHALEED ASHRAF and NUSRAT SUMAIYA

As we once noted, "Housing is a complex social and economic dynamic whose results are the physical patterns of cities and settlements, the qualities of collective living, and the health and well-being of the people... it is the key to enhancing the quality of life of the dwellers and their city." Yet today, housing in Bangladesh stands not as a measure of dignified living but evidence of systemic omission. The promise of shelter, enshrined in our constitution as a duty of the state, is broken in plain sight.

This is not just a policy failure—it is a moral one. We have failed to address not only the basic human need for accommodation but also the question of how we should live together, how we should share land, resources, and the city itself. What is being built is not an arrangement of inclusion, but a fabricated inequity distributed across the urban landscape.

Housing has been central to the agenda of the modern city, in how the leaders of modern architecture and planning imagined a just and healthy society. It is the provision of housing that distinguishes the modern city from the premodern one. The crisis of living conditions – congested and unsanitary dwellings in late nineteenth century Europe – led to a zealous focus on reimagining the very fabric of the city, and rearranging the nature of dwelling. For modernist architects of

policy makers and developers have failed to address this most fundamental human need. It is incredible that Dhaka with its megapolitan scale has faltered in making meaningful policies for socially oriented housing projects or delivering adequate affordable and worthwhile dwellings. The numbers are staggering. The UNDP reports that there is a housing deficit of 6 million units, projected to balloon to 10.5 million by 2030. 70% of that requirement is for affordable options. But the market produces barely 1% of what is needed. Nearly 80% of Dhaka's people are renters, unable to enter the housing market. About 1.8 million live in slum-like conditions. State policies and financial services offer little incentive or initiative to overcome these lags. In 2025, housing received just 0.6% of the national budget, less than a round figure in a nation crying for decent homes.

In the meantime, no meaningful residential models exist for the mosaic of people making up Dhaka city—whatever economic class they may be from. Public sector housing is unimaginative and limited. Motivated by the plot-to-apartment scheme, the middle-income group is beholden to plot-based planning, the only option offered by RAJUK and private developers. The limited and lower-income communities, for whom affordability is the most critical factor, have been completely ignored in the game of housing. Living in spontaneous and often extra-legal settlements, they make do with

the scale of the crisis – the yawning gap between what is needed and what is built and what is available. In Dhaka alone, the city requires an estimated 120,000 new housing units annually. Yet, year after year, only a fraction, barely 25 to 30 percent, is delivered. In the face of this chronic shortfall, and in order to accelerate construction and close the deficit, architects, engineers and builders need to turn to industrial innovations: precast systems, modular housing, and rapid-build technologies. In more recent times, the "million houses" programme, whether in Indonesia or Sri Lanka, exemplifies government initiatives to reduce backlog and provide housing for lower-income groups.

**Housing is the fabric of the city. Housing is the city. And the city is a reflection of its housing—its forms, its values, as well as its shortcomings. In reimagining one, we reinvent the other. How we envision a city directly impacts its housing in which density and liveability are crucial factors.**

While numbers highlight the urgency of housing, they do not capture its essence. Considering that housing is a social vision, the solution is not in the multiplication of physical units alone. Housing is more than a *basha* (house), it is about *bashti*—the shared space of living. That space is not only where we sleep, but where we live, relate, belong, and thrive.

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in any housing initiative. Who gets to live where? Who gets to choose? And who gets left behind? We name-drop Singapore as a gold standard of economic brilliance, yet rarely pause to examine the elaborate, state-led system that ensures housing access for all through deeply planned policies and financing mechanisms.

Beyond the rigid market, housing is reclaimed as a living, breathing process—not a commodity delivered, but a right slowly assembled by people themselves. In these contexts, exemplified in the legendary work of the Egyptian architect Hasan Fathy in the village of Gourna in the 1940s, people build their homes not just with bricks, but with agency. Given the basics—land access, utility lines, perhaps a toolkit—they raise dwellings that evolve with their lives. Here, housing becomes a verb, as famously observed by the housing guru John F.C. Turner. Agency is not just a legal impetus but an existential drive, as community members, often women, become designers, builders, and stewards of their own environments.

What are the alternatives? Beyond a handful of notable cases—from Muzharul Islam's group housing of the 1960s-70s to Khandaker Hasbul Kabir's current self-help projects—innovative housing in Bangladesh remains few and far between. What we urgently need are compelling models across all types: social, affordable, cooperative, and participatory. We must move beyond the fragmented plot-to-apartment formula and reimagine housing as a group form at the block scale, where diverse unit types, density, liveability and community spaces will matter. Like Berlin's 1987 International Building Exhibition, where visionary architects built experimental neighbourhoods and housing blocks, Dhaka too can become a laboratory for new urban living.

While the topic of housing assumes a magnified scope in regards to urbanisation and the expanded movement of people, there is also an urgency in rural areas. There, the challenge is to rethink the clustering of villages and homesteads in order to avoid the increasing conversion of agricultural lands and to generate a new kind of urbanised sociality. Safe and healthy housing is also needed in climatically vulnerable areas.

Housing is a key in a developmental context. Considering how resources are allocated in the city, in how land is apportioned and monetised, and how financial institutions organise loans and interest, housing is integral to the modern political economy. In Bangladesh's fast-growing economy, housing should be a pillar of both economic stability and public well-being, influencing everything from productivity to quality of life. In prioritising an economic agenda, we should not forget that for a city like Dhaka, housing is also a geographic matter. The relentless landfilling spurred by the development drive for planned residential areas is only the flip side of the economic programme. What we desperately need is a vision that unites the economy with ecology, and a sustainable and inclusive urban future with development programmes.

Housing has many forms and processes. Housing can take many forms, both in terms of a physical fabric and how it is produced and organised. It can be a collection of houses forming a "paraa" in a town or village, and it can be blocks or superblocks in a metropolis. In its formal avatar, housing is a packaged product—designed, built, and sold within the marketplace, tailored by developers to match targeted income groups. Affordability is often engaged through subsidies or quotas, as seen in models where state land is leased out for private projects with provision for lower-income units. The question of equity, affordability and accessibility will remain key concerns

In the conflict between ecology and economy, we have developed ideas for new forms that present a mediation. We have conceived housing forms and clusters that cooperate with our hydraulic environment. We proposed an "edge-form" housing—a linear band around wetlands and floodplains that preserves ecosystems while addressing decent homes and economic drives. Similarly, Dhaka's expanding metro rail corridors and their stations are ripe for transit-oriented housing, where density is shaped around mobility and access.

Housing is and will remain a social responsibility—it is a public mission. If this is an era of reform and equity, then housing must be in the foreground, whether delivered top-down, built bottom-up, or co-created in partnership.

**Kazi Khaleed Ashraf and Nusrat Sumaiya** are architects, and direct the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes and Settlements.



Housing in a coastal or aquatic landscape, concept plan by Bengal Institute



The Aranya low-cost housing in Indore, by Balkrishna Doshi



Joypurhat Housing for the limestone factory, by Muzharul Islam, Photo NR Khan

the 1920s and later, housing remained a rallying call for pursuing a humanist and equitable society.

Since then, housing has been an abiding topic for many social and political leaders. As the late Aga Khan, a leader in some major architectural and development initiatives, noted: "The lack, and the deterioration of human habitations, as economies grow, urbanisation accelerates and demographics explode, pose some of the greatest practical and ethical problems that developing countries face." In the context of national developments, housing is a critical factor influencing the quality of human life, health and human safety. The Aga Khan emphasised that housing is not just a numerical and fiscal matter, it is about enabling the human spirit.

In Bangladesh, housing remains a mirage, a *morichika*. A much-banded word, housing is pursued but not obtained, talked about but not realised. Far from addressing the needs of accommodation and elevating the human spirit, planners, economists, architects, engineers,

whatever resources they can muster by themselves.

The dominant urban model that goes for housing is mostly land manipulation by another name. Privileging the individual plot-to-apartment schema, the model centres around profit. Entire districts, from Uttara to Jhilmil, are shaped not necessarily by a housing need, but by, what some call, a "plot banijo". This model is not only outdated for a dynamic city as Dhaka, it is also predatory in nature. It inflates land prices, decimates ecology, ravages wetlands, displaces communities, and, all the while fails in its basic role: to house a vast majority of the population.

How should we then pursue housing? The way forward begins with rejecting the idea that housing is just a numerical or logistical issue, and that it can be resolved by disbursing small plots. We have to be more imaginative and creative in facing the larger scope of housing, its cultural, communal, and ecological dimensions.

Housing is not just numbers. Housing is far more than numbers, though they matter. They help us grasp

# LEATHER LEGACY FADES

## Poor preservation, unfair pricing and failure to meet global standards cripple rawhide trade

SUKANTA HALDER and  
MD ABU TALHA SARKER

As the sun dipped below the horizon on Eid-ul-Azha, the narrow rural roads of Kalidasgati stirred with life. Mini-trucks and auto-vans rolled into the village, laden with the pungent, freshly flayed cowhides of the day's ritual sacrifices.

Traders, including seasonal operators, small scale middlemen, and longtime associates, headed to the yard of Aminul Islam, a veteran hide merchant whose family legacy now teeters on the brink of collapse.

From dusk until the following day, the village buzzed with activity. Knives scraped, labourers shouted instructions, and hides were trimmed, salted, and stacked with mechanical rhythm under Islam's watchful eye. At 59, he moved with the ease of someone who had grown up in the trade.

"I've been in this business for over 35 years," he said, wiping his brow, hands dusted with salt. His father and uncle once ran a shop in Sirajganj's Chamra Potti, then a thriving hub with over a hundred traders.

"Now, I'm the only one left. My cousins

**In Dhaka, cow and buffalo hides sold for Tk 650 to Tk 800 a piece, while in rural areas, prices slumped to Tk 400 to Tk 500. Goat skins have become even harder to sell due to a lack of buyers**

left the trade. There's no living in it anymore."

This Eid, Islam sourced over 500 cowhides, paying up to Tk 1,000 for top-quality hides. After processing, he hoped to sell them at Tk 1,400 to Tk 1,500. Yet, the process is fraught with risk.

Despite his years of experience, turning a profit remains a struggle.

"There was a time when tannery owners paid in advance. Now, they vanish."

"We'd travel to Dhaka's Hazaribagh and Hemayetur in Savar, stay for a week, and still return empty-handed or worse, with merely a token sum as pocket money," he said.

The rawhide trade was once a cornerstone of rural enterprise during Eid-ul-Azha, the festival of sacrifice for Muslims.

The proceeds from selling the skins of sacrificial animals were traditionally channelled to charitable causes, such as supporting the poor, the needy, and religious institutions like madrasas and orphanages.

Beyond these donations, the hides sustained the tanneries and leather exports throughout the year, forming a vital link in both local industry and global trade.

Islam remembers hundreds of traders in areas like Gondal-Noyapara and Garudaha. Today, most have abandoned the trade in search of more viable livelihoods.

He squarely blamed both tannery owners and the government for the decline of the once thriving leather industry.

"No one is willing to reform the system. That's why the industry is dying," commented Islam.

### A NATIONWIDE CRISIS

The situation is the same across the country. Over the past decade, 21 tanneries in Chattogram have shut down, leaving

only RIFF Leather Limited, part of TK Group, still operating and obviously under major constraints.

Rawhide dealers have borne the brunt of the decline. With debts of Tk 12 crore piling up over the last four years and fair prices increasingly out of reach, their survival is at stake.

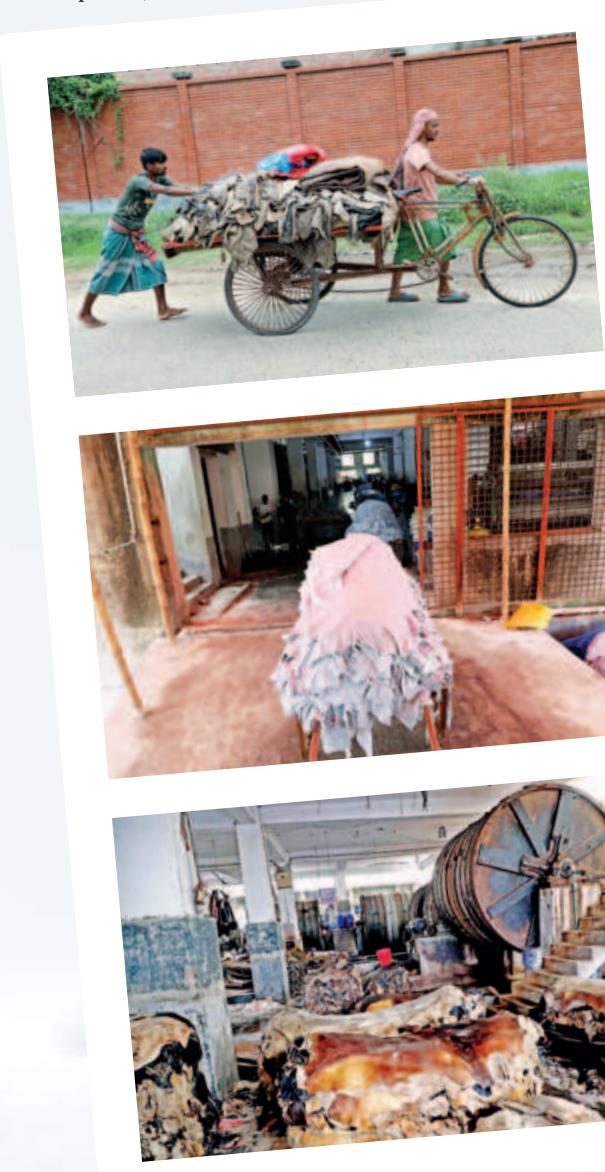
In Dhaka, cow and buffalo hides sold for Tk 650 to Tk 800, while in rural areas, prices slumped to Tk 400 to Tk 500. Goat skins have become even harder to sell due to a lack of buyers.

Seasonal traders say the government sets prices for salted hides but not for raw hides still bearing flesh and blood. This pricing gap has led to unfair practices and a steady erosion of the seasonal trade. Many people now choose to donate hides to mosques, madrasas or orphanages, some of which need persuading to accept them.

According to the Bangladesh Hide and Skin Merchants Association and the Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA), the sector includes about 100,000 traders and tannery owners. Yet a significant share of hides is collected by informal buyers and religious institutions and never enters the formal system.

This informal segment mainly handles unsalted hides, making it more vulnerable to pricing irregularities and mismanagement. As a result, complaints of unpaid dues and losses are common.

Eid-ul-Azha is the peak season for rawhide collection. This year, the industry hopes to gather between 80 lakh and 85 lakh pieces.



meeting around half of the annual rawhide demand, according to BTA Chairman Shaheen Ahamed.

Bangladesh produces up to 80 lakh pieces annually, of which about 80 percent is exported. The country produces 400 million square feet of leather each year, but only 20 percent is used locally, underlining the industry's dependence on global markets.

### GOVT-SET RATES VS MARKET REALITIES

This season, the Ministry of Commerce raised the price of salted cowhide by Tk 5, setting rates at Tk 60 to Tk 65 per square foot in Dhaka and Tk 55 to Tk 60 outside the capital. This means minimum prices of

ban on exporting raw and wet-blue leather in an attempt to ease surplus and stabilise prices.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin acknowledged long-standing issues such as syndicates and outdated infrastructure.

He said he was travelling across the country to tackle malpractice and boost exports.

He also pointed to poor market knowledge among seasonal traders as a cause of price volatility during Eid.

However, many in the industry say efforts by the government have had little effect without strict enforcement.

### STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES AND GLOBAL CERTIFICATION

BTA chairman Shaheen Ahamed raised the same concerns.

He noted that while more than 140 companies operate at the Savar Leather Industrial Park, none meet international standards for environment and quality.

Without compliance certification, European and American buyers continue to turn to India and China.

Ahamed said another growing challenge was global demand for synthetic leather. Genuine leather boots might cost \$150 a pair, while synthetic ones can sell for as little as \$30 to \$40.

"This is a key reason why leather exports from Bangladesh are not increasing," he said.

### LEATHER EXPORTS IN DECLINE, SYNTHETICS ON THE RISE

According to BTA, exports of leather and leather goods have fallen steadily from a peak of \$1.5 billion in the fiscal year 2016-2017 to about \$980 million in the fiscal year 2023-2024.

Exports of leather goods, excluding footwear, have fallen to about \$750 million. Orders from Europe have dropped sharply, pushing producers to sell to buyers who do not require compliance at lower prices.

Despite the abundance of local rawhide, local manufacturers ironically are now importing about \$200 million worth of LWG-certified leather each year to meet global standards.

While leather exports decline, synthetic footwear is on the rise.

Exports of synthetic shoes rose by 30 percent in the first 11 months of the last fiscal year, reaching nearly \$495 million, up from \$380 million the previous year.

In May alone, exports shot up to almost \$75 million, compared with \$48 million in May 2023.

Riad Mahmud, managing director of Shoeniverse Footwear, said the demand for non-leather footwear was being driven by younger Western consumers who preferred affordable and fashionable alternatives. Synthetic shoes face fewer regulatory hurdles, giving Bangladesh an edge in global markets.

### THE ROAD AHEAD

Professor Mohammad Kamruzzaman, director of the Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology at the University of Dhaka, said Bangladesh had lost its place in global leather markets mainly because of the lack of LWG certification.

According to him, poor rawhide preservation, unfair pricing, a failing treatment plant, and weak marketing have added to the decline.

He criticised government price policies for being set without proper consultation and warned of manipulation by syndicates.

Recently, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said a rawhide storage shed would be built beside the tannery estate at Savar. There will also be similar facilities in Chattogram and Natore.

These are expected to help improve preservation and raise market value, he added.



Although the relocation of tanneries from Dhaka's Hazaribagh area to the Savar estate began in 2003, the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) there still does not work properly.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN